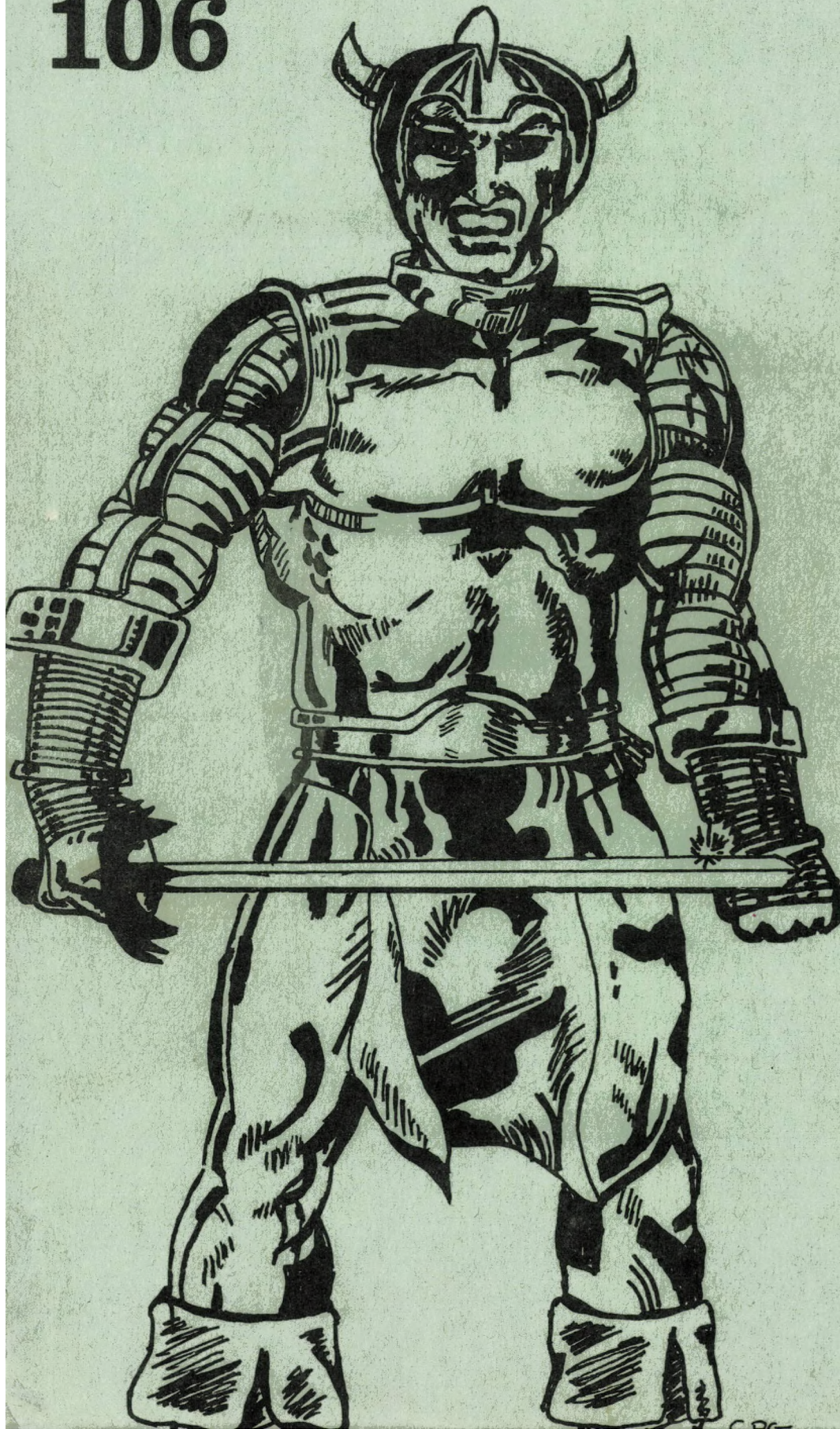
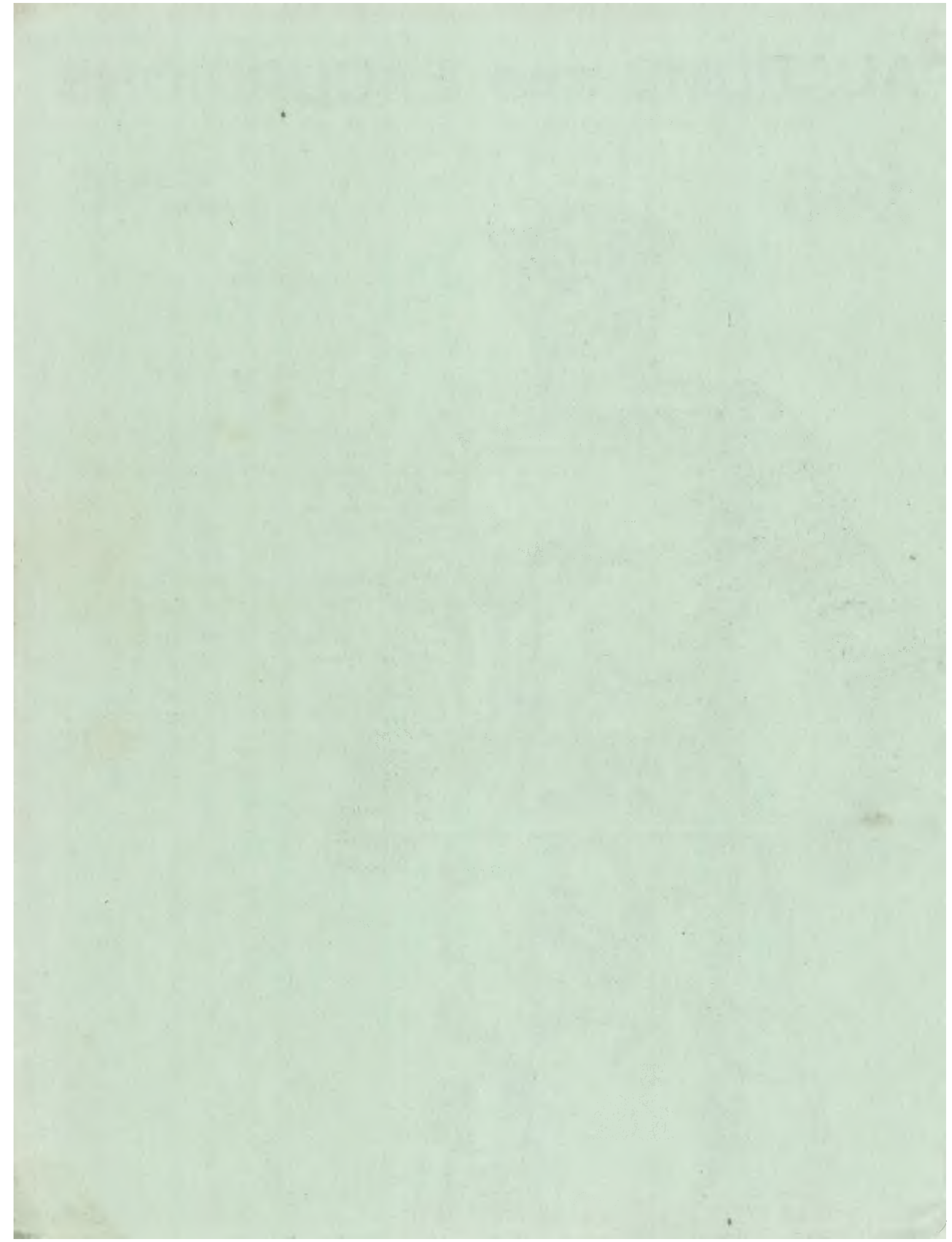


ALARUMS and EXCURSIONS

106

JUNE





A FEW ~~WORDS~~ PARAGRAPHS FROM THE EDITOR (Lee Gold)

This fanzine is set up as a monthly discussion apa (amateur press association) for SF fans and others interested in role-playing games. It should give us all a chance to discuss rules and share ideas, and to write up expeditions we've been on. The opinions expressed in it are solely those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor.

1. If you have a contribution for A&E:
 - a. Type it up on a 9"-wide stencil and mail to LEE GOLD, 3965 ALLA ROAD, LOS ANGELES, CA 90066. Include \$1/stencil. Or use an 8½"-wide stencil and include \$1.50/stencil. Be sure to type only 7" horizontally (centered), lines 5-64 vertically. (PLEASE see the next page for more detailed instructions before trying to type up a stencil.)
 - b. Send it by computer by Usenet (...decvax!allegro!sdcrcdf!ucla-s!lcc!barry) or call (213) 306-7456 so we can warm up the computer, then send it directly by modem. Cost is \$1.20/page or fraction thereof.
 - c. Type or handwrite it, and Lee Gold will stencil it up for you at \$2/page (or fraction thereof). Such typing automatically includes improving spelling and grammar (and may include a few new typos). It may also include rephrasing and inserted comments. Those who want their deathless prose left intact should stencil it themselves or ask for it to be photostenciled at \$2.65/page (or fraction thereof).

UNPAID FOR MATERIAL WILL NOT BE MIMED NOR INCLUDED IN A&E.

2. The fanzine will cost as follows:
 - a. Non-contributors: postage PLUS \$1.50 if you did not contribute to the previous issue. (If you did contribute to the previous issue, you only have to pay postage.)
 - b. Contributors: Free, no charge for postage. US (non-APO/FPO) sent UPS; extra charge for First Class. Canada/APO/FPO sent First Class. Other countries sent Air Mail/Printed Matter.
 - c. For trade with other Roleplaying Gaming fanzines; mailed BOOK rate.
 - d. No fixed cost subscriptions are possible, since postage and contribution credit may vary. But you may send a check or cash (US or foreign currency) to Lee Gold, and she will inform you each mailing how much money is left. If there isn't enough money to send A&E, you will be notified--and your balance will be returned at your request.
 - e. Buyers at stores: pay the store whatever it charges.

3. Back issues: check the Table of Contents for available back issues. Cost is \$1.50 plus postage.

POSTAGE (please indicate your choice of mailing options when subscribing)

US (non-APO/FPO): 1st Class at \$2.58; UPS at \$1.59 (cannot be sent to a PO Box); or Book at 63 cents. APO/FPO: only 1st Class and Book options are possible.

CANADA: 1st Class as above - or Book at 83 cents.,

OTHER COUNTRIES: Book at 83 cents or Air/Printed at \$3.98 to Europe/Britain or \$5.38 to Australia.

If no money is available for the type of postage requested, it will be sent as efficiently as possible. Mailing two issues at once costs much less than twice the cost of mailing one issue by any of these options. PLEASE send a change of address if you move, BOOK and UPS are non-forwardable.

If any copy of A&E has missing or illegible pages, notify Lee Gold and send a stamped self-addressed envelope - and a replacement page will be mailed you.

9"-wide stencils for sale at 20 cents plus postage.

SOME NOTES FOR WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS WHO HAVEN'T TYPED STENCILS BEFORE

1. Buy 9" wide (9 hole) stencils (or 8.5" wide, 4-hole stencils--and think a few kind thoughts for the printer). Your stencil will have a film sheet (transparent plastic), a wax-impregnated stencil attached at the top to a heavy paper backing sheet (DON'T detach it), and a cushion (tannish or white paper or black carbon).
2. Buy STENCIL CORRECTION FLUID aka corflu (usually blue or green). CORRECTION FLUID for xerox/offset typing will not work properly.
3. Type with the typewriter on stencil setting (or remove the ribbon)--with the film between the stencil and the keys--and the cushion glossy side up (next to the stencil) between the stencil and backing sheet. You can reuse the film and the cushion. (Throw out any tissue paper separator between film and stencil.)
4. Type the stencil lines 5-64. (If you bought "church bulletin stencils," start five lines below the top of the first box and type to the bottom of the second box. Type 7" across centered (70 spaces on a pica typer; 84 on an elite). Single space; double space between paragraphs. Don't type a paragraph longer than 15 lines if you want your stuff read easily.
5. Correct mistakes by daubing corflu over them, letting it dry, and retyping.

After typing the first stencil, hold the stencil up to a lamp. If you can't see the light clearly through the letters you typed, you aren't typing hard enough. (DOT MATRIX and DAISY WHEEL typers/printers usually need 3+ impressions on each letter.) If your underlining cuts through the stencil, you're typing too hard and may wind up with ink spots or a torn stencil.

For mailing: remove the film and cushion. DO NOT DETACH THE BACKING SHEET OR CUT THE STENCIL. Do not crease any folds in the stencil. Cardboard backing in envelopes is NOT necessary.

If you have over 15 typos or misspellings per page, the page will be retyped. Please note: ITS = of it, IT'S = it is; THEIR = of them, THEY'RE = they are. No space after an opening quote or parenthesis. Two spaces after a period.

DIAGNOSING PROBLEMS--after seeing how your stencil printed

If a few words or lines are too light, the problem may be corflu. Old corflu gets thick and doesn't spread well because the ether evaporates. Buy a new bottle--or use less corflu.

If your mistakes print even though you corflued them, use more corflu. (A vertical light streak or overall lightness is the fault of the printer.)

Remember to lift up the film and apply corflu directly to the stencil--and wait a minute for it to dry before typing over it. If you don't use a cushion, lift the stencil away from the backing sheet before corfluing; otherwise the stencil will be stuck with wax to the backing sheet and will smudge or tear. When correcting a large area, rub it with something blunt like a paper clip's rounded end before corfluing.

DRAWING ON STENCIL means scratching the wax with a sharp tip that won't cut the stencil. (Try a toothpick if you don't want to buy a stylus.) Put a stencil drawing plate (or a sheet of sandpaper) under the stencil.

If some of your typed letters (the ones with circles like a, b, c, d, e, g, o, p, q) seem blurrier than others, the typer's keys are dirty. Clean out the encrusted ink with a toothpick or unbent staple or old toothbrush. If your typer sometimes cuts out the center of an o or other circle letter, don't worry. If it does so consistently, type less hard or don't underline. NEVER underline more than 2-3".

Back issues: #68, 70, 75-92, 94-105. Or check with Balboa Games, 630 N. Willow, Long Beach, CA 90806 at \$3.15/issue (including postage) or with Dragon's Lair, 8316 Blondo, Omaha, Neb., 68124 at the same price (#58, 60, 63, 65-6, 68, 70+).

DEADLINE FOR #107: June 15th (or 150 pages, whichever comes first). If you're going to be at ORIGINS, let me know and I'll deliver your copy there.

TO APPEAR IN #107: Larter, Brooks & Flin, Wixted, McLachlan, Hein, Towlson, Gilham, Bailey, and Heydt: 45 pages in all. The copy crunch is over at last!

<u>This issue contains</u>	<u>May 20, 1984</u>		
Cover	Kate Gehrke	1	GR
A Few Paragraphs	Lee Gold	4	WH
Tantivy	Lee Gold	5	PK
Filler Prince Mumbles	Mark Goldberg	1	PK
Quark's Communique	David Dunham	2	YE
Notes from the Triad	The Pettingers & Pearson	10	WH
Comments + Courtesy	John Sapienza	1	GD
Ritual Abandonment	Tim Walters	3	GD
Yunshan Shanlu	Edward Wilson	4	BL
Fate Role Commentary	Seven & Woolley	6	WH
The Chronicles of the Ancient Empire	Matt Stevens	4	GR
Golem's Corner	Hal Heydt	2	YE
The Yeti are Nigh	Scott Turner	10	WH
Agents of Fortune	Steve Gilham	4	PK
Memos from Norstrilia	Peter Da Silva	4	BL
Leagues Unlit and Foundered Shores	Brooks & Flin	5	WH
The Legend in the Lines....	Ivan Towlson	3	WH
Fnord	Mark Galeotti	1	GD
The Bloody Drip Writhes Again	William McCord	3	GD
Terra Ferretae	Robert Saunders	2	YE
Montmorillonite Man-o-War-Bird	Nick Larter	7	WH
Fighters, Mages & Sages	Sean McLachlan	1	WH
St. Augin's Book of Days	Scot Fritz	3	GR
The Dark Ages Pages	Martin Wixted	1	GR
Notes from a Bad DM	Brian Lane	2	PK
The Other True Way	Quentin Long	5	WH
Dragonewts' Dream	Mark Galeotti	7	WH
Heinous Tales	Jenny Hein	6	BL
Oh God, I'm So Depressed	Neil Fraser	7	WH
Alyncialle	Denise Gerneth	1	WH
Pegasus	Robert Loutzenhiser	4	GD
Wild West Wizardry	John Kingsbury	2	GR
Another Isle Beyond Time	Oleg Zacharov	4	WH
Chronicles of Zonka	James Robert	4	YE
True But Probably Unimportant	Steve Jones	4	PK
Operation: Chaos	Niall Shapero	6	WH
Scale-Up of Combat Systems	Rob Ellwood	2	BL
The Murdered Master Mage	George Phillies	2	GD
An Anglo-Scottish Chronicle	Peter Clarke	4	WH
Heresy & Blasphemy	Ian Straus	2	YE
The Dark Ages Pages	Martin Wixted	1	GR

GEOFF MILES: what is your new address? I've got the copy of LoA you paid for but don't konw where to mail it to?

PUBLICATIONS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST TO A&E READERS

ABYSS, ed. David Nalle, bimonthly, 1402 21st St. NW, Wash DC, 20036; \$1.50/sample, \$7/6 issues; \$13/12 issues; offset, digest-sized.

DIFFERENT WORLDS, pub. Chaosium, Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706. Offset, slick.

DRAGON LORDS, ed. Ian Marsh, Avalon, Grams Rd., Walmer, Deal, Kent, CT14 7PU, ENGLAND; 60p/issue (checks payable to Mike Lewis); digest-sized, offset.

THE FANTASY GAMER from Steve Jackson Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760; 3 issues/\$8; 6 issues/\$13; bimonthly.

THE FANTASY HERALD, pub. Sun Reach Pubs., 44 Candleriggs, Glsagow, Scotland, 3 pounds/6 issues domestic; international rates on request; digest-sized, offset.

NUTS & BOLTS of Gaming, 3753 W. 80th Pl., Chicago, IL 60652; \$2.25/issue; one year US \$10.20. Prozine.

WHITE DWARF, pub. Games Worskhop, 27/29 Sunbeam Rd., London NW10 6JP, ENGLAND, 75p or \$3 per issue; slick, offset.

THE WILD HUNT, ed. Mark Swanson, 40 Bow St., Arlington, MA 02174; \$1.50 plus postage; Boston-based APA, monthly.

WYRMS CLAW, pub. Original Thought, 95 Norris Rd., Brooklands, SALE, Cheshire, M33 3GS, ENGLAND, 4 pounds or \$15 per year. Offset, digest-sized.

A BRIEF GUIDE TO OCCASIONAL ABBREVIATIONS FOUND IN A&E

D%	percentile dice	HP	Hit Points	RQ	Runequest
D#	#-sided dice	HD	Hit Dice	D&D	Dungeons & Dragons
SP	Spell Points	L	Level	VD&D	Variant D&D
2H	Two-handed	K	Thousand	AD&D	Advanced D&D
AC	Armor Class	EP	Experience Pts	LRS	Land of the Rising Sun
HTK	Hits to Kill	EP	Energy Pts	AG	Arduin Grimoire
PBM	Play By Mail	FP	Fatigue Pts	YRS	Ysgarth Rules System
HTH	Hand-to-Hand	BP	Body Points	LoA	Lands of Adventure
GP	Gold Pieces	XP	Experience Pts	OS	Other Suns

STR	Strength	BVC	Bardic Voice	POW	Power	CL	Cleric
WIS	Wisdom	INT	Intelligence	SIZ	Size	MU	Magic User
DEX	Dexterity	CON	Constitution	AGY	Agility	T	Thief
CHA	Charisma	APP	appearance	Wpn	Weapon	F	Fighter

RAEBNC = Read and Enjoyed But No Comment

ct = comment

A&E	Alarums & Excursions	DW	Different Worlds	WD	White Dwarf
TWH	The Wild Hunt	TD	The Dragon	EGG	E. Gary Gyax

PLEASE express all HP or damage ranges as dice instead of numbers.
That is: say 5D10 - or - 5xD10, but NOT 5-50. Thank you.

NOTE for those puzzled by A&E's Table of Contents:
a zine listing in the ToC includes the fan magazine's TITLE, AUTHOR, number of PAGES and COLOR of paper for easy location in the apa.

BL	Blue	PK	Pink	Wh	White
GD	Gold	GR	Green	YE	Yellow

TANTIVY

by Lee Gold, (213) 306-7456

Electronic Contributing: People are welcome to send A&Ezines by computer. Please observe the following guidelines.

The usenet pathway is ...decvax!allegra!sdcrcf!ucla-s!lcc!barry OR if you're not on the net, dial me at (213) 306-7456 and tell me to warm up the computer (and I'll give you our modem number).

If you use nroff, we have the -ms, -me and -mx macros. Don't specify another set unless it's public domain AND you send it along too. Please specify 84 characters across. (Pages will be 58 lines long.) Don't boldface anything. (A&E computer-printed stencils are printed totally in boldface.) Don't specify hyphenation; we'll take care of hyphenating anything that seems to need it.

Our daisy wheels are American rather than ASCII. Don't use the back prime (aka baquote), back slash, carat (aka up arrow), curly brackets, vertical bar, or tilda. They'll print as other things if you do.

White space may be rearranged somewhat to allow page breaks to fall at appropriate places. All copy will be run through SPELL on general principles.

Electronic contributions will be charged at \$1.20/stencil. (That's \$1 per stencil plus 20 cents for the stencil.)

THE BEST OF A&E is supposed to be ready at Gencon. We're getting a \$500 advance, out of which I have to supply free copies for all but ten of the contributors. I hope to work out some deal at Origins whereby A&Eers can buy it at a discount.

Origins should also see the first playtest of the LoA Asteroid Belt. (See the rules rewritten before your very eyes.) And a Japanese LoA run. And maybe a W&W storytelling run, if anyone's interested.

And the current LA Japanese history subtitled television serial is the life of Miyamoto Musashi. We've also got one about a set of assassins wandering down the Tokaido killing people for Hiroshige.

HERBLORE for Fantasy Roleplayers is now off to FGU. It ended up presenting plants by Habitat (e.g. Seaside, Woods, Gardens) rather than by flowering time (though that is mentioned. Astrological ruler is still mentioned, and a complete table is given of each sign's Ruler, Fall, Exaltation and Detriment. There's also a brief set of suggested rules for gaming the effects of blistering/stinging herbs, itching herbs, poisons, alexipharmics (anti-poisons), etc. And two indexes: one by effects and one by plants' names. And (in response to occasional plaintive comments) each plant is briefly described.

Now would anyone be interested in DIVINATION for Fantasy Roleplayers. I could write up the I Ching, the Tarot, and so on for PC purposes. And then also give suggestions for how the GM could use some of these things to inspire campaign developments.

And speaking of campaign developments....

TOKAIDO NO SHIMBUN

A mysterious package arrived for incognito Imperial Court noble Rakige Mebose. His newly hired servant, Kamaro, couldn't be found, so he asked one of his friends to look it over, then opened it to find a letter from his half-brother (who's deep into politics; the joke in the campaign is that he's so devious he meets himself coming around corners--and whispers "You're late!"). It was a book of poems about deer. There was also an ivory figurine of a wild boar, which he asked Mebose to drop off at the nearby shrine to the Fire Kami at Mt. Akiba.

Meanwhile the medium went down to the bulletin board and found an Imperial Edict there, bidding people pray for peace and the stability of the land. He spent awhile Appreciating the calligraphy.

Mebose told the people on his travel permit to be ready to leave the next morning--and went back to bed with his geisha (and the book of poems). The others went off to their favorite shrines and temples to follow the Imperial Edict. (And the Kannon Temple saw a fiery speaker, a Buddhist monk named Enryo, who took a vow to visit the 32 Temples of Kannon. A number of people decided to follow him.)

Mebose's servant reappeared at lunch, very embarrassed and with a black eye. (and a somewhat unconvincing story about how some people had tried robbing him, but he preferred not to have the ward guards investigate it.) His master told him he desired to pay a brief visit to Mt. Akiba and he arranged to borrow horses from the local daimyo (who certainly owed Mebose a number of favors). So Mebose set off on horseback along with the other samurai in the group. (This included the cat as Chujiro, his samurai persona. And at times the other cat ALSO as Chujiro.)

When they got to Mt. Akiba, they met a large white boar whose eyes were dancing red flames. Mebose got off his horse and cautiously advanced towards the boar. It told him he must go northeast to the next town and kill his former slave. Why? To revenge himself, to preserve the dignity of the Emperor, and to uphold the eight million kami and Buddhas. The boar presented him with a warfan, and Mebose gave it the ivory figurine in exchange. Then they went on to the shrine (where they got some souvenir charcoal).

When they got back to Hamamatsu, they found people buying lunch boxes to eat while on the Kannon pilgrimage. Mebose asked his allies to prepare for combat with the demon who had been his slave in the form of a sword. They received an invitation for after dinner entertainment at the Onu residence, where Onu's daughter entertained them (and her new fiance) by playing a lute. (Later that night Mebose sent her the old lute he'd bought which had once belonged to her family.)

At dawn, the party left town. Their group passport was checked at Mitsuke; then they crossed the Tenryu river by ferry. And the Buddhist priest Zarajiro had developed a new custom. He ordered sake at every place they stopped. (Then he poured some in a bottle and sent it back to the young sake collector of Hamamatsu.) Aside from the scandal caused by seeing a Buddhist priest ordering sake, the party arrived at their destination without incident.

A little past midnight, a number of them woke up, when the charcoal they'd gotten at Mt. Akiba caught fire. It didn't burn anything though, just flew out the window. They followed it to the town center--and the bulletin board. There they found the Wheel of Fire--and a dancer in a Kimono of Flame who was singing a song with the chorus of "To Hell with the Emperor."

Some of the samurai drew their longbows. After a few arrows, the Dancer disappeared. The Wheel attacked one of the Chujiros, and the other one turned ~~tail~~ and disappeared. A few moments later, a cat leapt yowling in panic onto Mebose's shoulder, then transformed into a young hysterical woman. Meanwhile the remaining Chujiro continued attacking the Wheel, which eventually disappeared.

The charcoal lay glowing in front of the bulletin board. They poured sake on it in propitiation. And in its center appeared the sword that Mebose had once owned. He took it home with him.

And over on SCIATHOS...

King Brimus and his friends summoned the palace servants and told them to Tell All. They learned that the man behind the coup had been Stheno (an ally of one of Brimus's rivals for the kingship some months back). The bath they hadn't taken had somehow been crucial to the scheme to convince them they'd never been on the island before. Interrogation of the Master of the Baths was quite interesting. Brimus got a package of herbs that would cause partial amnesia and extreme credibility. He also got a new Bath-master. (The old one was taken a few miles out to sea and dropped off with instructions not to return to Sciathos.)

Meanwhile Ynar sought out the Amazon Zynmara and confessed. His...uhh, her...true name was Ynara. She was Hellenic and had chosen to disguise herself as a youth and go out and adventure rather than stay home and weave clothes and married off to her father's choice. She was accepted for training as an Amazon. Helike, who'd allowed herself to be used by the schemers was thrown to the boars at the New Moon festival to Athene as Crone. She emerged still alive, and the Goddess's judgment was accepted. A few days later, Poseidon was thanked for sparing the island from the tidal wave.

The days flew by quickly after that [because we had a campaign to wrap up before moving some light-seconds off--and some millennia future-ward]. Eventually the first year of Brimus's kingship ended. He went down to the temple and thanked his mother for her kindness over the year--and told her he was ready to die if she chose to call him. She told him that wouldn't be necessary.

Instead he spent the next day underground in the Room of the Dead King. There was red wine to drink and apples and lobsters and such to eat. He spent the time wondering who had been chosen King for a Day--and what he was up to that night with the Queen.

The next day he rose from the dead, went back home to the palace and met the male who'd spent the night with his wife: his son, Vogelos the dove! He spoke briefly to Vogelos, then took him outside and slew him--and thus regained the kingship.

RESPONSES TO A&E #105

STRAUS: Simplified Pain system as requested: If the character is in pain, skills are half standard. (Simplified Pain = torture, half BP/HP down, et al.) I think that's too simple to be interesting myself, but....(The Herbal uses Pain for blistering/stinging plants, bee-stings, and thorn-scratching.)

SHAW: In LoA, the fact that a greatsword is heavier than a broadsword means your skill with it starts out 10% lower. In any case, LoA's algorithm for starting weapon skills is easy enough to change. Just reclassify things as to whether they're Easy/Normal/Hard, I don't mind.

I'll be happy to compare NPC generation systems with you. What algorithm/heuristic do you use to "estimate how much experience over the baseline the NPC has"? LoA uses a $2D6/2 \times \text{Initial Rating}$ for total randoms. More typically a Young Adult has Specialized Skills of twice Initial Rating, a Mature Adult $4 \times \text{IR}$, and an Elder $5 \times \text{IR}$. (Initial Rating can be approximated as $2 \times 3D20/3$.)

For the Himeji Culture Pack, I gave a table of Ratings for the castle Samurai, then wrote (pause to window it in and use the COPY key):

"If the GM does not want to hard-key all 750 Samurai in advance, try the following method for figuring out Specialized Skills during the course of the game.

A Samurai on guard duty always has Specialized melee and missile weapons. A Samurai not on guard duty always has a Specialized melee weapons--and has 5% chance of also having a Specialized missile weapon.

A Samurai's chance of having a given MAN or MOV Specialized Skill is 1-2 on a D6. Chance of a given COM, KNW, OBS, or PER Specialized Skill is 1 on a D6. Chance of a given MAG Specialized Skill depends on age: 25: 5% at MAG Rating; 35: 15% at MAG Rating; 45: 25% (at MAG Rating + D10%); and 55: 35% (at MAG Rating + 2D10%)."

PLAMONDON: But I want a set of rules behind me to justify why I say one PC is writhing and screaming instead of another. And ideally such a rule system will let the player keep track of the pain himself so the GM only has to keep track of the NPCs. (In other words, I don't use Pain to manipulate the players. I use it to let the players have data on their PCs so they can roleplay them.)

AND GENERAL COMMENTS ON #105

STEVENS: Clean your typer keys! Disengage ribbon while typing stencil!// Needing sanity/morale rolls for the effects of fearsome monsters on the PCs usually indicates an absence of adequate roleplaying. On the part of both players and GM.

WILSON: My own personality seems kaleidoscopic enough that I can identify partially with many extremely different PCs. (Put it down to having two life-lines.) In any case, I am less interested in derring-do than in sense of wonder. As GM or player, I'm at least as interested in exploring a different culture as in participating in a heroic plot.

DANSIE: Congratulations to you and Tony.//Okay, you're on the W&W mailing list (now up to Inst 16).//Even a Reform Jew might wonder at eating a pet pig. Then again, the orcish brand of Judaism is probably somewhat...different.

DEL GRANDE: good point about alien-designed weapons. Consider it snatched for the Asteroid Belt (which Goldberg says needs a catchier title; suggestions?). //The basic LoA weapons are pre-gunpowder because I didn't have time/energy to go into Chemical, Nuclear and Force weapons when I wrote the rules. Maybe I'll put some of them through A&E some time. (Personally, I find the neurostim whip more interesting than the gunpowder slug-thrower. Then there's the Neutralizer, which fires a neutron beam encased in a force tube.)//If you want to keep down the number of mages, just rule that Magic (like Miracles) must be the highest Rating or 0.

COLLECT CALL PARANOIDS: A collect call is not a compulsion. You can always refuse to accept it.

SADOYAMA: Restricting magic use in a city can be enforced by use of appropriate ward guards (ward wards?). Nyosa had 16HD Water Elemental Fire Hydrants which put out anyone who started a magic fire. One could in fact have Things which eat spells (and spellcasters occasionally too). Or merely have Typos in the area. (I'll never forget the Fireball that got typoed into a 15' radius Furball: it was one B*I*G tribble.) I'd assume that any FRP city still standing has some defenses against promiscuous spellcasting.

SCIENCE 84 FILLER: Speaking of weird plants, the Dittany (according not only to Culpepper's but also Random House Dictionary) has leaves and flowers that emit an inflammable vapor in summer. It can flash burn off and not even harm the plant. A hedge of those things around your home could provide an interesting effect. Combined with poison ivy, the effect downwind could be even more interesting.

PORTER: It is a well-known fact (among English majors) that American English is nearer 17th century English in vocabulary/grammar than British English. (Therefore Shakespeare should be acted by Americans rather than Britons for definitive performances (?).)

BAUER: LoA Skill Categories were worked out on an abstract basis; then I thought of Skills that fit them. In some cases, RQ's skill categories ended up getting split into several subgroups. STEALTH, for instance, falls into Movement and Manipulation. And there's also Stealthy Observation (i.e. Eavesdropping), Stealthy Communication (Whispering Without Being Overheard), etc. A player recently asked what category Judging a Court Case fell in. The answer was that that depended on what he wanted to do. Knowing the land's laws was Knowledge; Persuading the people his judgment was correct was Persuasion; Observing the testimony well enough to decide who was guilty was Observation. And if he tried to do all of them simultaneously, the GM would want to know which had priority.

LoA's magic was inspired by a little-known British game called REAPER (which I was sent a complimentary copy of (which has since disappeared)). I don't know if anyone ever played it. It also had the feature that you judged a character's HP by measuring the actual miniature used. (It was published by a British miniatures company.)

At one point in its evolution, the LoA Miracle system was also atomic. I decided it was also unplayable that way. If you can come up with a quantacized method of creating miracles that doesn't make it too hard on the GMs or deities, more power to you.

In general, many thanks for your words of praise.

ROBILLARD: Not square foot, cubic foot. Square feet are weightless. (Sorry if I implied otherwise.) Water is 62.5 lbs per cubic foot; protoplasm weighs a little less.

BROOKS & FLIN: Typed And Enjoyed But No Comment on the writeup.//By definition "short" = /shorter than the speaker/. (Me? I'm 4'10" and normal height.)

JOHNSON: Lots of ancient domes/etc fell down. The ones that still exist are the ones that didn't. The famous engineers we read about are the ones whose stuff stayed up, but that doesn't mean all their contemporaries were that good.

MARK GOLDBERG: The Icelandic Sagas I've read had a number of strong (and important) female characters, but none who went adventuring.//Which "invasions of Ireland and Northumbria" did you have in mind? You do realize that Northern England was ruled by Scandinavians for some time, don't you?

PESL: By saying that astrology contributed to astronomy, I meant that astrological observation of the planets/stars produced the ephemerides used by astronomers to figure out what was actually going on. Moreover, it's worth remembering that Brahe, Messier, and a number of other early astronomers WERE also astrologers. (And that Newton spent a lot of his time working out calculations from the Book of Daniel to determine the time of the Second Coming.)

TOWLSON: I agree that a deity is less likely to allow a cleric to heal blasphemers than mere non-believers - and non-believers are less apt to be cured than believers.

EOC

Oleg Zacharov sends a note that one now has to sign a disclaimer for TREASURE TRIP activities (at least if one's a new member). "The organization grew out of a very small private club, and the legal aspects took some time to be noticed."//Rob Ellwood says I should "slip in a nonchalant reference to a hamster or guinea pig in some communication to Peter da Silva. We of The Conspiracy have been much heartened at his recent signs of instability vis a vis rodents and want to keep up the pressure as far as possible." I'm not particularly good at being nonchalant. This will have to do.

And Robert Saunders writes that British TV is now showing a new series called "Robin of Sherwood" in which Robin worships Herne the Hunter and gets tangled up with a sorceror in the first episode. Guy of Gisborne is nicely unpleasant. He recommends it if it ever makes it across to the US, though he says he still a soft spot for the old Errol Flynn Robin Hood. (I liked the Richard Green series myself.) Of course Robin Hood's ties with Paganism go a long way back. See Margaret Murray's GOD OF THE WITCHES for debatable but interesting data..

FILLER PRINCE MUMBLES

by Mark Goldberg, 6910 N. Sheridan Rd. #201, Chicago, IL 60626

COMMENTS #104

STEVE GILHAM: Ahem, although I agree SuperHero groups are more stable--a lot of literary groups exist to fulfill a mission, some long lasting: Jason & the Argonauts, the Knights of the Round Table, the 47 Ronin, Verne's group that made "The Journey to the Center of the Earth," Van Gulik's Judge Dee and aides, Doc Savage and aides, Karl the Great and his paladins, etc. all pre-date Tolkien.

QUENTIN LONG: Would an "emotional machine" be more competent? You could waste space on programming emotions, but is this desirable? Would a more or a less reliable device result? After all, it's just as likely that you won't need a fully creative sentient machine to merely pilot a starship, and I'd prefer an organic sentience to supply direction and a conscience.

ADRIAN BOLT: %age systems are fine, but "common" objects should have a plus to identify them so even non-specialists might recognize them--and rare objects should have a minus, so only a specialist is likely to recognize them, with a further %age roll needed for complete details--which argues that a specialist should have 90%+ to skill.

VINCENT FOSTER: Lock data is excellent. Any pre-gunpowder locks that were effective?

DANIEL JAMES: Various of the American "Founders" were Masons.

R. M. PEHR: Fascinating "simple" FRG; skills, spells, superhero powers? Magic armor?

D. JACOBSON: "Blockhead" hasn't enough endurance to punch; "Biff" is nifty but would blow up itself too; Jake (by the rules) still must spend at least 10 pts/Martial Arts level.

W. HEYDT: Judging by your "Home Computer," will you get a leopard as a "house cat"?//I'd heard Whitesmith as a precious metal smith--gold, silver (platinum).//Your TRAV spacecrafts data shows what's wrong with GDW; do you have as brilliant a method to make TRAV space combat viable/playable?

COMMENTS #105

IVAN TOWLSON: Maybe Carbon for Wood? Is "no dice" worth the effort/effects?

MARTIN WIXTED: Because of the weight being at the end, an axe can do more damage than a sword but but is harder to control/parry with.//The Druid Rite was excellent.

R. M. PEHR: Apparently MIT has genically blended DNA from a frozen Russian mammoth with elephant cells; a hairy baby elephant was the result.

M. JOHNSON: "Dreams of Vishnu" looks terrific. How easily can you Feint vs animals?

ERIC SADOYAMA: Why not just modify BUSHIDO? You want to add powerful magic to mass-produced Futureearth technology/firepower? Why not just play CHAMPIONS?

SHAW: Valid point on NPC Skills/Systems. I sorta like the TRAV military system. First determine specific locations and posts/units/guilds/etc per year, each having a table of skills likely to be learned/practiced there, Maybe a dozen %rolls for an 18-year-old for background/abilities/personal history, connected to the national history, for topics the NPC would know about and in interested in learning/talking/not talking about.//A lot of armor wearers didn't have the armor made for them; they inherited or salvaged it. Mail (like Japanese armor) can "fit" a fairly broad range of bodies with inches of leeway, variable by the required underpadding.

For the latest M.A.R. BARKER data, ask:

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A Call of Cthulu Adventure

My friends were strangely silent about what happened after we got to the graveyard. I couldn't remember a thing until I woke up the next morning in Farmer MacPherson's field, and the Professor's wild stories were hardly credible — as he soon learned in the drunk tank. I got the impression it was something I would rather not know about. I would have liked to know what happened to my pistol, but in Boston it was no problem to steal another.

All the same, I jumped at Carla's offer to accompany her to Egypt, even though I didn't know what she was talking about when she mentioned that an ancient cult was springing up again. I had never wanted to accept my father's offer to send me on a tour — his idea of bringing up a daughter was to throw money in her direction — but this was the perfect opportunity. Maybe I could take a side trip to Europe and meet some of the leading Anarchists. The Professor couldn't resist the idea of going to Egypt, home of archeology, and Joanna figured she could do some buying for her family's import business.

Carla wanted to take a liner, but I suggested that a freighter would be far more interesting (as well as cheaper, not that she was concerned). So we booked passage on the "Harvey Wallbanger." The crew wasn't terribly bright, but I think I was able to convince some of them that they were being exploited by the ship owner.

To help us while away the time, Carla loaned Joanna and I one of her occult books, called Nameless Cults. It turned out to be fairly interesting — I learned that monsters usually turned up after a storm, so I borrowed the Captain's binoculars and made sure the clouds on the horizon weren't getting any closer. Joanna read the book at sunset, and developed an unreasonable fear of nightfall.

The crewmen first inkling I had that something was wrong. Apparently the captain had hired five Neanderthals in New York. They weren't terribly bright — they twisted my advice and decided to sacrifice the Captain as representative of the owners. They asked me to lure him to the engine room at midnight. Didn't they know that would leave the ship without a guide through a storm? I decided to warn Carla and Joanna, and we arranged a 6pm meeting on the deck. I opted to keep watch on the clouds until then — they seemed to be getting darker.

6:00, but no Carla. Joanna was there, equipped with a lantern and an electric torch. After ten minutes, we decided to look in the engine room. No one had seen her there, so we started to move forwards. The Professor was in the hold, where he was opening crates. "Look, these are marked Alexandria!" he exclaimed. "They must hold important finds!" I pointed out that since the ship was for Egypt, Alexandria must be the destination. We continued our search. Joanna found her dress crumpled in the back of a broom closet. Bad news. A sailor in the galley said he'd seen her with one of the cavemen. More bad news. We finally got to the front of the ship, but still no Carla. I managed to open one of the locked doors, but decided not to disturb the sleeping crewman. Just then the Professor wandered up. "Look what I found!" he said, waving several bottles. I grabbed one, then shoved him back in the direction of the hold. Joanna and I went back to the galley. I pulled the bottle out of my coat pocket. The sailor's eyes followed it greedily as I said, "If you help us find our friend, you can have this."

"Have you looked down below?"

"In the bilge? No." Just then I could hear a peal of thunder outside. The storm must be brewing.

"Someone's been down here recently," he said, undoing the hatch. He handed me a lantern (Joanna still had hers). "It's dark down there." He led the way down the ladder. "Lots of rats, too, they always run around during a storm. It's the waves," he added, somehow thinking I had an aversion to rats. Didn't he know I'm not afraid of anything?

We splashed through the murky water, ducking under the maze of leaking pipes. From ahead we could hear a strange chanting. Then we saw the tableau, made eerie by the shadows which shifted as the ship rolled. Carla was tied to a pillar, light cuts across her body. Two of the Neanderthals stood by, while a third was pointing a funny-looking knife towards the ceiling. I already had my automatic out, so I started shooting. Joanna had somehow managed to get her .38 out without dropping her lights, and the bilge echoed to the sound of gunshots — and ricochets. "I'll go for help!" yelled the sailor. No sooner had he gone up the ladder than the Professor came down. "Ah, a fascinating ritual! Let me get my notebook." He clambered back up the ladder, dodging the flying bullets, which had already grazed Joanna and myself. Our first shots had felled the creep with the knife, and another Neanderthal had gone down with about 5 bullets in him, but the last guy had fished the knife out of the water and had plunged it part way into Carla's chest and was chanting hastily. I hung my lantern

on a pipe and frantically reloaded, then blew him away, but not before a ricochet had hit Carla.

Finally the Captain showed up. "What's going on here?" We explained that the Neanderthals had been about to kill Carla. Then it hit me -- we had only killed 3 of them! I informed the Captain, who said the brig was rusted shut, but that he would handle them. But they never turned up. The Professor was upset with us. "I wanted to write a paper on that ceremony! Why did you break it up? It could have been called Sacrificial Rites Among American Seamen."

Carla was in a bad way. She had a high fever, and didn't regain consciousness. Joanna and I persuaded the Captain to let us off in Spain, where we met an Englishman assigned to the Consulate who offered to help us. [To be continued?? As told by Josephine Grayson.]

Comments on A&E 104

Quentin Long I agree that sentient beings should be valued, and your point about their scarcity is a good one, but you make the assumption that anything scarce is desirable. □ I think you are making a mistake not looking at SuperWorld. Why should Chaosium come up with a new system, when they had a perfectly good, albeit oversimple, one?

Alison Brooks I kind of like the Goddess, as presented in Marion Zimmer Bradley's The Mists of Avalon. There really aren't any characters from the mythos (unless you count Morgaine). □ The Token Female class was great (the Movement Rate is what made it).

Adrian Ball Do you think the PBZ scenario is just a ploy by some artifact collector to save himself the work of collecting interesting Earth goodies? Everybody obligingly throws their stuff through the gate, which then closes just before they go through.

Martin Wixted Not a bad story. □ (RP games owned, rated on 1-5 scale): RQ2=4, RQ3=5, Call of C=4, OD&D=3, AD&D=2, EPT=4, Trv=3, SO=4, DQ=3, YRS=3, C&S=4, Arduin=3, WoW=4, TFT=4, (not rated) LoA(-5?), LRS, OtherSuns, Timeship.

Mark Goldberg Your survey looks useful, tho it leaves out things like gaming style, advancement rate, etc.

Hank Griffin I think multi-mind is an excellent superhero power (it's one I've always wanted for myself). I do wonder about coordination, tho. □ RQ POW goes to 1...I had a character that low once.

John Robillard Is Tor Dunham any relation?

John Bambach Your syllabus is impressive, but oriented towards background, rather than skills necessary to design/run scenarios. And you do realize that Fencing is a sport with a lot of rules, not very related to mêlée (tho it is fun, and playing with a blade does give some realization of what real combat must be like).

Peter de Silva Great filk! □ Rogue is available for IBM-PCs, by the way.

Brian Lane In Moorcock, alignment was a feature of the gods. People followed which ever set they chose, but really weren't in themselves Lawful or Chaotic. Most people preferred to remain Neutral. Moorcock never used a dual (GE/LC) alignment. Alignment is OK for determining which side you're on, but it's deficient for determining personality (see my article in *Different Worlds* for all the gory details).

Saving Adventurers

While a tragedy-adventure might be of great interest, most players like to keep their adventurers alive. How can the GM help do this, without having to tamper too much with the game? RON BOERGER gave me this inspiration for this piece by using some of these techniques.

An easy way is to put the adventurers up against a foe who doesn't want to kill them. We've fought orokanths who use Heal 6 on downed foes - they make more valuable slaves unmaimed! And another nasty threw a Heal 6 on one of my characters. It turned out he was a Thanatari, and wanted her head. Ransom is another goal. Most adventurers have their wealth stashed somewhere else, and can easily be persuaded to give it up rather than die. Besides, you can capture and ransom the same foe several times, far more lucrative than just killing them.

Resurrection can be easily given (for a price). My Iszaries woke up and found that, to her discomfort, she had been resurrected by the Seven Mothers, and was expected to join their cult. She eventually had to join Yelmaliu for the same reason.

Adventurers can also get the impression they're going to die when in fact they're not, which is almost the same. The adventurers were sure that an absent NPC had betrayed them, only to be saved when she finally showed up.

Pierre E. Pettinger Jr.; 1517 Superior #9 Lincoln, NE 68521
402-476-7176; Alfred N. Pettinger; St. Joseph's Seminary,
Dunwoodie Yonkers, NY 10704; Douglas Pearson; 1814 East
Harding Apt. 1 Garden City, KS 67846

We're going to start this contribution with a statement from Alfred.

I mentioned in my contribution to A&E #96 that I enjoy a good fight (verbal, not physical) This seems fortunate, since I've managed to provoke a fair number of contributors by my comments, particularly where these deal at all with either ethics or religion. Nevertheless, it was not my intention to ignite people's tempers (as apart from their minds) to this degree. Therefore, I've concluded that it's necessary for me to make some kind of policy statement, so that everyone may know what I'm up to and why. I do not intend here to deal with specific arguments and objections. Where I thought that was necessary, such responses can be found in my comments section. What follows is my general policy for deciding when religious or theological material will or will not appear in my contributions. These principles are actually rather simple, and there are only two of them.

1. I will not devote myself in A&E to discussion of any purely religious or theological topic which does not possess relevance for RPG's (with the one exception noted in number 2 below). Thus, you will not find any doctrinal treatises or spiritual meditations in my contributions. This does not, however, mean that I intend to entirely refrain from peripheral remarks on my faith, any more than I or any other contributor should be expected to avoid random remarks on our political, philosophical, or aesthetic opinions. Certainly, such references are a constant element in A&E (and legitimately so, I think).

2. I consider myself entirely free to respond to insults to, and correct errors concerning, Christianity in general, and Catholicism in particular. The former, I am sure, will be rare. A&E contributors are not notably malicious people. The latter, on the other hand, seem much more common. A&E is not a theological forum. But errors and misunderstandings which appear in print should, in my opinions, be answered in print. In the same way, I would respond to racist remarks in A&E, although it is not a civil rights forum.

Of course not all contributors will be satisfied with these guidelines. It would be impossible for me to please everyone. But to act in any other fashion would be contrary to principles I believe in, and on which (in my poor, rickety, human fashion) I attempt to pattern my life.

The above policy statement is supported by all three members of the Triad, without reservation. We will now return to our regulary scheduled comments by Alfred.

Comments #96

JE NNY HEIN I wasn't aware that the Dragon had ever printed anything on the probability of pregnancy. But what do you mean, "the writer must be a Catholic"? I may (or may not) be offended.

In any event, I think I'll find your work very useful. A 1.6% chance of serious abnormality strikes me offhand as rather high. But who am I to argue with such learned sources? Thank you very much!

RANDALL STUKEY: I'm afraid I can't agree with your claim that V&V is more general than Champions. V&V powers are assembly line products that may (or may not) produce the desired effect. Champions' system is an elegant modular design that allows the use of a vast number of individualized powers. Some powers are difficult to reproduce in Champions; but the careful introduction of new powers and modifiers will remedy this. There doesn't seem to be any remedy for V&V's defects.

PETER SHAPLEY: Placing human norms at the center of a psychological scale is valid for the same reason that it is valid to determine all human characteristics by, say 3d6. Any such scale will be centered at an arbitrary point with an arbitrary value, and the scores for other creatures can be based on comparison with this norm as easily as any other.

EDWARD P. WILSON: One reason that the predator-prey ratio is lower for mammals than for reptiles is that mammals have to operate at a higher metabolic rate to maintain body temperature. This means they require more food, and a given population of prey will support fewer predators of a given mass.

JOHN BURT: Actually there are four Cardinal virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. These are also called the "moral" virtues in contradiction to the supernatural "theological" virtues (Faith, Hope, and Love).

JOSEPH TELLER: It is true that in principle a planet with a stronger gravitational field can maintain a denser atmosphere than a world with a weaker field. However, it is also true that Earth's atmosphere is not the densest possible for a world on its mass and radius. Note, for example, Venus, which has a gravitational pull slightly less than Earth's, but has an atmosphere many times as dense.

Comments on #97

LEE GOLD: The construction of Japanese armor was quite a bit different from that of the western product. There was never the same kind of reliance on heavy steel plates in Japan that we find in late Medieval and Renaissance Europe. I still think this had a determining influence on sword-making.//At the very least, Enoch was explicitly referred to as holy. Enoch "walked with God; and he was not, for God took him." (Genesis 5:24) But I also think (and I'm supported by a number of scholars on this) that the declining ages attributed to humanity (900-1000 years from Adam to Noah, 200-600 years from Noah to Abraham, 100-200 years from Abraham to Joseph) as man moved farther from Creation, and thus from God, is very significant.//I do not want A&E to become a theology APA anymore than you do. But you already have a fuller exposition of my view on that issue.

DAVID DUNHAM: Yes, I would consider any attempt to compel the gods to be magic. It is certainly possible to use "religion" in an attempt to wield power, ut I think this is rather like the Scientific Creationists' use of "science." Just cannabalizing apparently scientific terms doesn't make this science. And just appealing to religion in a bid for power doesn't make such a bid religious.//If morality exists at all (i.e. if it places an obligation on me), then it must be more real than economics. If human beings ought to do certain things, or ought to refrain from doing certain other things, then that obligation must come from something that transcends humanity. Economics doesn't have that transcendent character.

Comments on #98

STEVE GILHAM: If a group of characters has a good role-playing reason for avoiding towns, I have no objection. My comment presumed that there was no such reason.//It might be murder for you o me to "nuke" Sodom and Gomorrah because (a) we do not in any sense "own" other people and (b) we have no means of certainly determining guilt. Neither objection applies to God and neither restricts his right to punish known wrongdoing. In any event to interpret the command to "be perfect" as "your Father in Heaven is perfect" as an order to usurp divine prerogatives is a regrettable (or intentional?) error.//I take it that your comment on Christ's "traveling resurrection show" (a remark I can only interpret as an intentional insult) refers to my remarks on the Osiris myth, et. al. My point is that the whole question of historicity has no meaning in these religions. The "sacred time" in which these events occur, and in which their followers renew

them, has no connection with history. Consult Mircea Eliade's the Sacred and the Profane for more information on this. With regard to the fate of those "predeceasing Christ," let it suffice to say that you have not described "Romanist" belief. Please acquaint yourself with the Church's teachings before you make such comments in the future.//Both ethics and morality refer to the science of moral obligations.//Let me emphasize that I am not a "Creationist." The views you describe are not mine. Besides, I dislike simplistic readings of the texts either by fundamentalists or "debunkers."//Re your "General comment"---My "proselytizing" remark to Vaughan Allen was intended with tongue in cheek. Unfortunately, I carelessly neglected to note that the tone of voice needed to convey the joke cannot be reproduced in print. I have already apologized to Vaughan. Note that my apology was for my manner of presentation, not the desire to see him converted. I even pray for your conversion, Steve.

WILSON HEYDT: Your evaluation of Mother Teresa's work is based on a utilitarian ethic I can't agree with. It also fails to take into account her work in natural family planning. But at least we seem to agree that there are moral norms which bind us regardless of our subjective opinions.//The Catholic position is that we cannot take innocent human life, regardless of the good we might thereby hope to achieve. Thus, I could not sacrifice even one ALS victim to save a thousand Steven Hawkings. I would consider the opinion you describe to be immoral. Whether a person who held that opinion is immoral is not for me to judge.//I was describing the Church's position on magic. Non-Catholics will have to make their judgments on the basis of their own principles.

MARTIN WIXTED: My comments were certainly not intended to offend anyone. And I'm even willing to grant that your caricature of Catholic doctrine was not intended to offend me. But it is this very attitude which has forced me to make so many comments on these subjects: the attitude that certain opinions or beliefs may be attacked in public with any available combination of truth, error, conjecture and falsehood, without even minimal courtesy or the obligation of learning the facts. As for your implication that I have been inconsistent in discussing the historicity of various biblical writings: I can distinguish between the historicity of Matthew, Genessis, and Daniel for the same reasons that I can distinguish between the historicity of Runciman's History of the Crusades, Scott's Ivanhoe, and Anderson's Three Hearts and Three Lions. (P.S. How long have you been seeing Druids under every bed?)

DAVID DICK: I don't agree with your opinion that magic must be chaotic. Let's try your experiment again. Only this time let's assume I'm from a pre-gunpowder culture, and Dingo decides to shoot me with his Walther FPK. He lifts his hand, and points the barrel between my eyes. Nothing abnormal in that. He flicks off the safety. That still isn't abnormal, though by now I may be wondering what Dingo's up to. Finally, Dingo squeezes the trigger. There's still nothing about his actions that can't be considered normal. Suddenly, presto changeo, a not-so-neat hole appears between my eyes. Is that normal? Every law of physics I know has been blatantly violated. Of course, the problem is that I just don't know all the laws. Couldn't that be the case when I fail to understand the appearance of the fireball? And if the appearance of the fireball is not caused by reciting the incantation and pointing the index finger, why would Dingo bother with either one?// Re teleporting troops--Troops teleported from one place to another would indeed be very vulnerable for second or two if opposing troops were ready and waiting for them. How they can be ready and waiting for an enemy who may or may not appear anywhere at any time escapes me. Troops who know they are being teleported, particularly if they have previously trained in teleportational maneuvers, would suffer far less disorientation than an enemy which suddenly discovers that what used to be an empty plain behind them is now filled with men. As for magical glitches: errors occur in conventional warfare too. Unless botched magic became excessively common or serious, I don't think this would discourage a general from using it.

JOHN SAPIENZA: Your remark in A&E #91 did not concern the way in which fictional literature distinguishes between Black and White Magic, but rather the Church's historical attitude toward magic. It was this historical attitude that I attempted to clarify in my comment to you in #96. My brief remark was based on Aquinas's Summa Theologica (II-IIae, Q.96, a.1) in which he clearly states that magic is to be condemned as an unlawful means because it involves covenants with demons and a surrender to superstition. This is the "traditional" definition the Church has used. If it is heavy-handed to insist on historical accuracy before risking insult to several hundred million people, then heavy-handed I am, and shall remain. I hope this exchange will not poison our future contributions.

MARK GALIOTTE: My justification of a universally valid morality is too long and involved to go into here. There is much more to

be said on the subject than my vague hints might indicate. But I have a few remarks on your particular objections> To claim that the universal opinion of mankind has no argumentative weight is certainly excessive. Such an opinion may be an error. But any human conclusion may be an error. If the whole world holds a certain position to be true, that opinion creates a certain presumption in its favor. And we all feel that chill, as of something less than human, in the presence of the rare person who recognizes no moral imperatives.

But your last sentence gives the game away. Even though you intellectually reject universally valid norms, your actions belie your professions. How can you abhor Hitler's Holocaust unless you postulate an objective moral norm which he violated? In the absence of such a norm, no such judgement would be possible.

My comment on anarchy was not intended to be glib. It was short because I did not want to spend a lot of space setting out a full argument. My rejection of anarchism is not a result of prejudice but of careful consideration. I have more respect for the anarchist position than you imagine. But I don't think that all noble ideas will work.

JOSEPH TELLER: I'm sorry you're so sour on the Church. But I assure you, I would not have lasted a month in the seminary if I refused to read pre-1950 texts. I've read the works of Fathers, Doctors, and Theologians from the first century to the present, and I stand by my statements. On the Fear of God for example, I might go to Aquinas: "Fileal fear grows with love, for the more we are in love the more we hate to displease or to be separated from the one we love... The more we love God the less we fear punishment, first, because then we care less about any threat to our own advantage, and secondly, because then our firmer friendship makes us the more confident of its happy ending." (ST. II-IIae.Q.10) On magic see my ct. above to John Sapienza.// Re "Lost Books of the Bible"--I could name a whole slew of Christian and pseudo--Christian books which floated around in the first few centuries A.D. The acknowledgment of certain of these books as inspired was a popular movement from the ranks. Church authorities stayed clear of the issue until the late fourth century, when a local North African Council confirmed the popular canon. The Universal Church made no definitive list of canonical books until Trent.

QUENTIN LONG: Please note, I am not a Creationist. And I'm not claiming that Creationism is a science. I simply pointed out that in principle there are ways of discovering truth other

than what are presently called "sciences". As for discovering truth, I'll use the sciences and God. Laboratories are reliable; God is more so.

Comments on #99

PAUL MASON: As I mentioned above, my comment on Black Magic describes the Catholic tradition on the subject. I would expect neo-pagans to disagree.

RONALD MARK PEHR: RE morality--see ct. above to David Dunham// First of all, I would include Judaism as an historical religion. But as to the others, I am not denying that they began at a particular point in time which is verified by witnesses. I'm saying that religions outside our tradition are not based on acts of God in history which in fact sacralize history. See my ct. to Steve Gilham above.// When I say that Original Sin is self-evident, I don't refer to its origin, but to the condition itself. If you have always and everywhere done what you knew to be right, I stand in awe. If not, then I think there is some factor in you outside of your control which I refer to as Original Sin. This factor is an immediate datum of experience, and thus self-evident. If you reject it, you must do so as a conclusion from other principles. But you still must explain the experience.

ALL: May we now return to RFG related subjects? I honestly do not want to debate theology in my leisure time. I ask only courtesy and accuracy with regard to my faith and my Church. Give me this, and we'll all breathe more easily.

Comments on #101

PETER DA SILVA: Tolkien was an admirer of Hitler? That's not my impression. In 1938 Allen & Unwin had negotiated the publication of a German translation of The Hobbit, resulting in a letter from Rutten Loening asking if Tolkien was of "aryan" origin. Tolkien objected to any such declaration being printed: "I do not regard the (probable) absence of all Jewish blood as necessarily honorable; and I have many Jewish friends, and should regret giving any colour to the notion that I subscribed to the wholly pernicious and unscientific race doctrine." In 1941 he wrote to his son Michael that "I have in this war a burning private grudge...against that

ruddy little ignoramus Adolf Hitler (for the odd thing about demonic inspiration and impetus is that it in no way enhances the purely intellectual stature: it chiefly affects the mere will). Ruining, perverting, misapplying, and making forever accursed that noble northern spirit, a supreme contribution to Europe, which I have ever loved, and tried to present in its true light." And in 1944, in a letter to Christopher Tolkien, he refers to Hitler as a "vulgar and ignorant little cad" while regretting that "there seem to be many v. and e.l. cads who don't speak German, and who given the same chance would show most to the other Hitlerian characteristics." (Quotes from The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, Houghton Mifflin 1981, pp. 37, 55f, 93).

JOHN SAPIENZA: Bravo! Your plea for tolerance of others' gaming styles (especially coming from such a respected source) is just what the doctor ordered.

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: Your article on Old Norse dwarves was excellent. I'm in the process of making some changes in dwarvish society in my campaign on the basis of your article. It seems I'm going to have to re-think the reputed "anti-magical" nature of dwarves.

PIERRE'S COMMENTS

#96

JLT PATTERSON: Re ct Lee Gold/ You say that D&D has no provision for a shock roll? What then do you call the System Shock percentage? It's not an obscure rule either as it is used for resurrection survival or any other use the DM desired.

DAVID WEBB: I can't agree with you on your comment about .45 bullets not knocking down a target. Firstly, simply saying that the bullet will not impart more momentum to the person hit than the firer recieved as recoil is not entirely correct. Momentum conservation is a three dimensional equation. I cannot now give you a detaile momentum analysis (for one thing, I really don't have the data for such an exercise). Secondly, the firer is going to be prepared for the recoil of the gun. The target is certainly not going to be able to brace himself for the impact of a bullet, even if he is just intended to stand there and get shot. The human mind is just not quick enough to analyze all the variables.

JOHN BURT: Re your ct to me re Amazons/ "...by Aphrodite's law--no man may set foot on our island--or all Amazons will instantly lose their powers!"--Queen Hippolyta to Bird Boy, Wonder Woman 200, June 1972 and "...men cannot set foot upon Paradise Island--not without all the Amazons instantly losing their

powers and immortality."--Wonder Girl to Cyborg, Teen Titans 11, SEpt. 1981. Now, who's contemptuously correcting whom. I do not feel that I need to produce documentation every time I make a comment to someone. As to the point about the Amazons--you must remember that DC does not have as consistent a universe as Marvel does. (yes, I know they're not perfect) Until DC comes up with a clear explanation of their universe, such disagreements as ours will continue. Please remember, that almost any quote you can give on the DC cosmology can be countered with a contradicting point. In general, I try to follow the preponderance of the evidence.

DAVID DUNHAM: Re ct to me/ Economics does not equate to money. And by the way, try to distinguish between my comments and Alfred's. There seem to be quite a few errors of this type.

#97

ELLIS SIMPSON: Leadership is appearance-based? Hitler was a powerful, charismatic leader. He was also a homely, if not ugly little man.

#98

JOSEPH TELLER: RE ct on Superman/What is this about Superman's original suit being destroyed. I remember no such incident. On the very few occasions that his suit has been torn, he has repaired it by reweaving it.

#100

DAVID NALLE: RE magic/I think you're confusing the proportion of player character mages with the proportions over an entire world? Perhaps not. This would be an interesting topic to pursue. How many mages do most GM's in relation to the world's population.

ROGER ELLWOOD: Your type is too small. If you had anything interesting to say, I wouldn't have seen it because I couldn't decipher the print. (and I have good vision)

ALISON BROOKS: Re ct Foster/ You Brits don't call mastodons Mammoths. Mastodons and Mammoths are two distinct varieties of animals.

ALISON BROOKS: Re ct Foster/ You Brits don't call mastodons mammoths. Mastodons and mammoths are two distinct varieties of animals. Mammoths are more closely related to modern elephants than are mastodons.

ALASDAIR McINTOSH: Re ct. Galeotti/ Lucifer's Hammer concerns a comet striking the earth, not a meteor. This is why the

strike is so catastrophic.

HANK GRIFFIN: Re Metarules/ Metarule #1 (Players should control a character's starting stats, skills, and background.) is not a metarule. It is an opinion on rules, not a rule for writing rules.

A PLUG!

Two friends of mine have recently started a publishing venture and I'd like to promote their first product. Their company is called "Probability Enterprises" and their first product is The Order and the Rescue. The Order is a two part item. First it defines the Deryni, a character class inspired by the books by Katherine Kurtz. This is an impressive effort. The authors have only included spells and items found in the books themselves. There are no specious additions from the speculation of others. This alone is worth the price. The Rescue portion is an adventure including the Deryni defined in the Order. This adventure involves the rescue of a maiden who has been captured by one Urgak, a lich. The most important goal of this adventure is to rescue the maiden before she is sacrificed. Killing Urgak or his minions is a secondary consideration.

The Order and the Rescue is available for \$8.95 plus \$1.00 postage and handling (Nebraska residents please add 5% sales tax) from

PROBABILITY ENTERPRISES Dept 4
P.O. BOX 2508
Lincoln, Nebraska
68502-0508

This zine is getting long enough. We had hoped that we could include some original material this ish, but time presses and even these comments have taken two months to enter on the word processor. Maybe next issue. See you then.

But it is not. Altogether too many contributors consider verbal abuse of another author a standard arrow in their quiver of techniques. They take disagreement as an excuse for a fight instead of making a reasoned argument. Yet this is contra-productive at best, if your purpose is to persuade someone of the soundness of your reasoning. Once you cause the other side to get angry at your bad manners, all chance for persuasion goes out the window.

I had hoped that other contributors would read my protest and call upon Dawson to explain his behavior, but this did not happen. In fact, the opposite occurred; a series of people wrote to say they did not believe Dawson had meant what he had said as a personal attack. I find this most curious. First, he published words that could be read as an insult; then he publicly refused to apologize or explain his actions. From this evidence, many people concluded his behavior was perfectly acceptable and rebuked me for being offended. By what reasoning could one come to that result? Can you read Dawson's mind? His intention is hidden and can only be explained by him. Why am I not entitled to the benefit of the doubt until Dawson responds properly to my complaint?

I apologize to those who may be offended at my raking over this old injury. But I have been hounded for half a year by Dawson defenders, and I am exasperated. Dawson was thoroughly discourteous to me three issues in a row, a fact nobody seems to have taken into account in their judgment on my complaint. And I am sick and tired of being treated as a target.

[illegible]

This might be a good time for those who've appreciated reading John's zines to write him privately and say that they respect/like him. (Zine comments should be brief. After the recent British and Australian coups, we don't need another special issue, even though a John Sapienza Appreciation one might otherwise be a good idea.) --Lee Gold

Abdul's Curry Palace
10816 Colton St.
Fairfax, VA 22032
(703) 391-0917

RITUAL ABANDON first
(theatrical thaumaturgy)

SORCERY IN RQ:

One of RQ's few drawbacks, to my mind at least, is its lack of really interesting magic. While battle magic and rune magic are quite workable and sensible, most of the spells, with a few exceptions such as Chaos Gift and Fireblade, come across as somewhat drab and everyday, without causing the wonder, awe and/or dread that Gandalf's, Turjan's, or Lord Foul's sorceries, or even D&D spells, can evoke in the reader/player. In other words, RQ magic is not flashy enough for me. The following system is an attempt to do something about this. Note: this system is still under development and has not been playtested; any comments, criticisms, or general invective you may have will be appreciated. It is loosely based on my memories of reading Authentic Thaumaturgy about four years ago.

A new skill (and class of skill) is introduced:

Sorcery

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>1-4</u>	<u>5-8</u>	<u>9-12</u>	<u>13-16</u>	<u>17-20</u>	<u>21+</u>
Intelligence	-10	--	--	+5	+10	+5 per 4 pts over 20
Power	-10	--	--	+5	+10	"
Dexterity	-5	--	--	--	+5	"
Constitution	-5	--	--	--	+5	"

Sorcery has a basic chance of 25%. Note, however, that this is the chance for the character to successfully cast the very simplest spells, such as curing warts, or drying up cows' udders. More powerful spells will have die roll modifications appropriate to their value, e.g., creating the One Ring will be about minus 250-300%. The character does not always have a 5% chance to succeed.

A fumble will usually cause reverse effect. A critical will usually double effect. Of course, this depends to some extent upon the spell.

There are further side effects associated with increasing spell power. All sorcery costs battle magic POW, better spells cost more. Also, powerful spells may only work on a certain day of the week, season, or year, and perhaps only in a certain place or type of place. Casting time ranges from about half an hour for the simplest spells to years for making magic items; most spells will fall in the 1-6 hour range. Also, better spells require rarer and/or more expensive ingredients; curing warts could require a leaf to shrivel under heat, while making the One Ring might require an ounce of gold stolen from the roof of the Sun Dome Temple at high noon on a Yelmialio High Holy Day, as well as a bucket of water from the Lake of the Ancient Word to temper it in. Difficult/dangerous spells might have higher fumble chances than 5% of failure (demon summonings come to mind). Some spells might drain hit points as well as power points.

Training (costs and times are per %))

Skill	5-25%	30-50%	55-75%	80-90%	95%+
Sorcery	1000L 1 season	2000L 2 seasons	4000L 1 year	8000L 2 years	EXP whenever

Apprenticeship is also possible. An apprentice to a master of sorcery will learn sorcery at no cost indefinitely; however, it will take twice as long as for a paying customer. Also, she may be sent off to find hippogriff eggs or whatever. Both paying customers and apprentices will gain one spell per 15% learned. The spell will be powerful in proportion to their skill.

Experience: every time a character successfully casts a spell that she has less than a 75% chance of success with, she has a chance of going up 5% in sorcery equal to INT or less on D100. However, she will automatically go up 5% in her chance to succeed at that particular spell.

Mastery: When a character reaches 90% ability in sorcery, she may elect to bind herself to the Magic rune. She does not have to do this, but if it is not done the character can never go above 90% in sorcery. The effects of binding oneself to the rune are:

1. The character can then write spells. The reason that a character cannot write spells without binding herself to the rune is because there are a very large number of apparently reasonable ways to accomplish a magical feat, and only a few of these will actually work. Without inner knowledge of the rune, one cannot distinguish between the real and the bogus - a gryphon feather might work where an eagle's feather would not, for example, with no obvious reason why this should be.

A character will start at 40% spellwriting ability, and this skill is increased normally, through experience only. This is also the character's chance to tell a fake spell from a real one. Note: the character will not be able to tell whether spell failure was due to bad writing or bad casting.

2. Once the character is bound to the Magic rune, she may never become a member of a cult that is not affiliated with that rune, which for all practical purposes means that she may never join a cult, unless you create a cult based on the magic rune. If she is already a member of a cult that is not Magic-affiliated, she must disavow it before the binding can take place.

To bind herself to the rune, the character must meditate on it for a week. At the end of this time, she rolls D100. 01-95 means successful binding; 96-99 means that the character must try again after at least two seasons; and 00 means that the rune has turned away from her, and she may never be bound to the rune.

Sorcerers are feared and disliked by the general populace, and tend to live in out-of-the-way places where they can do research in peace, although a few rulers keep one in their basement to do research on the Ultimate Weapon or turning gold to lead or whatever. Fortunately for the Gloranthan economy, sorcerers are easily distracted from such dull projects by, say, a desire to make a walking stick that really walks, or even dances the galliard. (By the time a sorcerer

becomes a master, she's probably been memorizing incomprehensible incantations for 30+ years, which does tend to Do Things to the Brain.)

Sorcery spells can do almost anything you can think of, the only restraint being the Law of Conservation of GM Sanity. They can be found in treasures, Lhankor Mhy Libraries (try the Cookbook section), under rocks, carved in meter-high letters on the north face of dread Mount Krazznydang, etc. Here's a couple of modest examples:

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS: causes the sun to be visible to all within 100 meters of the caster from dawn to dusk of the three days following casting of the spell. (This spell will not change the weather at all; however, sun-sized holes will open in clouds as necessary). Modification: -15%. Casting time: approximately one hour. Procedure: the sorcerer must first obtain an arrow, a Wheel, and a (preferably) expert archer. First she recites an invocation to the sun, which takes 10 minutes. At the end she will find that the Wheel has become somewhat liquid, and she holds it over the arrow, reciting "Gold for light, golden light" 999 times in Old Wyrnish. At each repetition a drop falls from the Wheel onto the arrow, coating it with gold. When this is completed, the Wheel will be used up and the arrow will be completely covered. She then casts a Light spell on the arrow, after which she gives it to the archer, who shoots it at the sun with normal hit chance plus 25%. If the arrow "hits" the sun, the sorcerer's chance is rolled to see if the spell takes effect. Uses: Assisting Yelmadio celebrations, helping to repel troll invasions, getting a good tan.

BUT WHAT IF THEY ARE OUT TO GET ME? This spell simply makes the victim's next idle (or not so idle) paranoid fantasy come true. Modification: -75%. Casting time: 4-6 hours. Material components: Item from victim's body (hair, fingernail clippings, smelly gym socks, etc.), golden statuette of hand with pointing index finger (cost: 3000L), a severed Dream Dragon's head (cost: ? availability: ?), a rare hallucinogen (cost: 1000L if you can find it). Procedure: The dragon's head is placed in the center of a magic circle. The sorcerer then chants "Glorantha preserve us from ghoulies and beasties and things that go bump in the night," at which the dragon's head begins to laugh maniacally. The sorcerer then ingests the hallucinogen and goes into a state of complete paranoid freak-out for four to six hours. Eventually she realizes that the only way to save herself from all the things that are after her is to rub the outstretched finger of the hand against the sample of the victim's whatever, and does so. The hand then flies away, the trip wears off, and the sorcerer is down 6 points of battle magic POW. Roll for success at this point. If the spell succeeds, the Flying Finger of Fate touches the victim in the night, and her next paranoid fantasy comes true. The nature of this fantasy must be determined by the GM. Samples: my daily newscroll is trying to unroll itself so that I can't read it; my daughter is out to kill me and take my throne; my kingdom's motto actually means "go stick your head in a pig" in Old Wyrnish, and everyone who knows this language is laughing at me; etc., etc. Note: the victim will probably think that this is just an idle fancy until shown otherwise.

This issue of "Ritual Abandon" has been brought to you by Balrog Beer, the potent potato of potentates.

雲山山

by Edward P. Wilson. 3700 Mass.
Ave. #528. Washington DC 20016.
(202) 298-8252

Yes, I'm afraid so. It is in fact time once again for Yunshan Shanlu. I have totally lost track of how many issues I have done so far but I think this is about my tenth. This little 'zine is into its second decade already! What's that? What do you mean "So what!" *harumph*

Well anyway, on to the swill. I was hoping that my previous sub-mission would make it into #104 but apparently it will be in #105 instead, which puts me behind schedule. This issue will contain a few comments on #104, RAEBNCs on same, and a review of Lands of Adventure. I may be able to put in my mechanics for the "Generic SFRPG Weapons" system I outlined in my previous issue.

RAEBNCs on #104

Lee Gold, Steve Gilham, Quentin G. Long, Alison Brooks// Dave Flin (the whole zine), Jenny Hein, Matt Stevens, Peter A. Clarke, Adrian Bolt ("Cheating or Rulebending"), Martin Wixted (TDAP#9:all), Nick Larter, Vincent M. Foster, Kate Gehrke, Hank Griffin, James Robert, John T. Sapienza (the entire issue), Michael A. Johnson, David Jacobson, Paul Waters (lycanthropes). Quite a lot actually.

MARTIN WIXTED: In answer to your poll on our games and how we rate them here's my list. (When you've got all the answers in, perhaps you could average the scores and tell us which are most popular.)

Chivalry & Sorcery I: 3

Chivalry & Sorcery II: 4

Call of Cthulhu: 5

ICE Arms Law: 1-2

The Mechanoid Invasion: 3

AD&D (all but Players' Handbook): 3

Traveller: 3-4

Lands of Adventure: 5

Space Opera: 4

Ysgarth Rules System: 4

Land of the Rising Sun: 3-4

Striker (RPG-related): 4

I would also like to add that I have No Interest At All in Superhero RPGs. I think the genre is dumb and I refuse to even consider purchasing one; that's why there are none on the list.

MARK GOLDBERG: Your Campaign Survey looks quite comprehensive. Did you present it just in case we wanted to try the idea out or do you want us to fill one out for you?

DANA CARSON: (re stats) It seems to me, after looking over your list of stats, that some are unnecessary. My experience with SO has shown that it is easy to have too many stats and end up having a lot of them ignored in play; some stats seem like good things to know about a character but really have no use in play. The list of stats I think would be most useful are:

STR CON

DEX Intelligence

AGI WIS/PER/INTuition

ALI WIL/BRA/COURage

LUCK

POW/SOUL/TAL

CHA

SOCial status

APP

SANity

Instead of having BUI and SIZ, just roll height and weight. REAction time, HEALth, PAIn level, PERception, INTuition, COMeliness, Shapeli-ness, and LEAdership are all fairly specific and probably better off included under one of the above more general categories. LOYalty, ZEAl, and GULLibility are more properly part of the PC's personality. Let the player roleplay those instead of quantifying them. WIT and IMAGination will cause trouble if the PC has higher scores in them than his player. A person with low wit and imagination can't play a PC with high WIT and IMA. Let the player roleplay them as part of the PC's personality if he is able. The stat EMPathy I, personally, would drop because I can't see how one would apply it in the game.

PETER da SILVA: (re A&Equest!) Before you can get the A&Eers to pool their talent for collaboration on a game you'll have to settle some basic conflicts in design philosophy. A couple which have been mentioned often are whether or not to have alignments (D&D-style) and whether or not to have character classes. I happen to like both and would want them in a game. Other people would reject them out of hand, preferring alignment through the personality and a RQ!-style skills-based system. Some want a very simple set of rules; others (like me) demand detail. The problem is that everyone has different tastes. I do have to agree that having to use a whole different set of rules for each genre/setting one games in is cumbersome. We should be able to do better than that.// Is that pleasant chap pictured at the end of your 'zine of lupine or vulpine extraction, or something else altogether?

WILSON H. HEYDT: Yippee! Yay! At last a reform of the TRAV ship-building rules. The original ones didn't give nearly enough weight to the effects of TLs on all aspects of design. I must say though that your stuff makes a good calculator de rigeur. Don't you have trouble making alterations late in the design process though? I mean, suppose you get along to weapons and find you haven't enough room for adequate firepower or suddenly realize you'll have to enlarge the Power Plant to give you more EP. It seems to me that it might take a bit of refiguring and re-refiguring to get things to come out right. The original rules were simple enough to do the figures in your head. I'm going to give it a shot, reconvertig some of my old designs, and then get back to you with my impressions.

Well gang, my copy of LoA has arrived. The Post Office committed numerous acts of violence upon the box but the contents were unscathed. The cover art is decent; I recognized Mr. Willingham's work from his stuff for D&D right away. Inside are two booklets, one with the rules and the other containing the two culture packs. LoA is only 32 pages long, which was a bit disconcerting for an old C&S fan like myself.

There are 11 characteristics for characters. The list is fairly familiar but for the inclusion of CREF (craft) as a stat rather than as a skill area or something. 7 out of the 11 are derived from the others. CON, for instance, is STR/2 plus 10. This didn't look too good at first but it gives good results.

An optional method is to let players allot 110 plus 2d10 points (all stats are on a 1-20 scale). I'm glad to see this as optional because this method tends to produce the "Quasimodo Syndrome" and similar problems.

The weights given on the Ht. & Wt. charts are terrible. But one could argue forever on what the correct weights should be.

The Piety stat is cleverly done. One picks the PC's customary religious activities from a list and adds up the value for them to find his PIE rating. It thus makes clear to the player exactly what must be done to maintain or alter piety and what the effects of specific actions on it will be.

For HP, Energy pts., Body pts., and Life pts. are given. One generally has more EP than BP than LP. EP are PRU, AGY, and STR added; I can't see why PRU is in there: CON seems more appropriate. (quibble)

The method for regenerating HP looks a bit messy and involved, with a fair amount of rolling and book-keeping, but I haven't used it in play yet so we'll have to see.

The skills section is well done. Each character has %ages in 10 basic skill areas calculated from his stats. Within each area specialized skills may be developed. Weapons-Melee is one general skill area; within it are all the individual weapons as skills. Each player gets some

Yunshan Shanlu, page three.

points with which to raise the starting %ages with his specialized skills. A good solid section/system(whatever).

Each skill area has a separate section to explain the skills. This brings us to the two portions of the rules which are not of the same high quality as the rest: MOVement and MELEE skills.

A chart allows you to calculate the speeds of creatures, based on the height(shoulder height for quadrupeds). But a look through the speeds given for various animals on p.26 reveals some flaws. A Warhorse sprints at 120'/2sec. and an elephant at 240'/sec. This comes out to 40.9 mph for a 2000lb. warhorse and, for a 10,000lb. elephant, 81.8mph!!!!? Lee, do you know something about elephants we don't? I hope there's a typo at fault somewhere.

Also under MOV are attacks with body parts(claws, breath, fist, etc.) with damage based on user/owner's BP. The results here, however, are good and make it easy to fit in new Things.

The Melee Weapons section begins well with a system for figuring out whether a weapon counts as Lt., Med., Moderate, or Hvy. for its user, based on his carrying capacity(heavier weapons are penalized To Hit).

But then comes a section on the various "families" of weapons. This is one of the worst sections in LoA; it mars an otherwise excellent set of rules.

The "families" given are:

Chopping (axes, etc.)

Entangling (bola, etc.)

Poking (staff, etc.)

Slashing (scythe, etc.)

Smashing (mace, etc.)

Stabbing (dagger, etc.)

sigh The weapon families which exist in real life are more like:

One-handed, balanced (swords, clubs, etc.)

One-handed, unbalanced (hammers, axes, maces, etc.)

Entangling

Jointed (morningstar, flail, etc.)

Two-handed, balanced (greatsword)

Two-handed, unbalanced (battleax, tetsubo, etc.)

Spear/pike types

Polearms (halberds etc.)

Stabbing (dagger, shortsword, etc.)

See the difference? How a weapon handles and how it does damage are two entirely different things.

Then the author proceeds to consider sharp points and edges superfluous. Weapon damage is based on weight alone.(With jointed weapons treated as missile weapons). I have heard that there are masters in Japan who specialize in putting the edge on swords, sometimes taking a year to do so. Apparently they see some point to the exercise.

Armor is handled by (temporarily) multiplying the wearer's BP by an armor factor. Though this method is simple and does make the wearer harder to kill, I don't like it.(another quibble)

I could go on but suffice it to say that I think the combat section is a major disappointment.

However the magic system is good and, happily, very simple. There are four types of spells totalling about 24 separate spells. Most spells are very generally defined. Upon casting, the mage specifies what he's doing; A spell called "Inhibit Behavior" would be defined by the caster as regards what behavior is to be inhibited in what manner. This is a refreshing change from the usual huge spell lists, each spell with its own peculiarities which must be remembered.

The next part, on deities, religions and clerics and all that, is great. I have always liked playing Clerics but was never happy at having them treated as mere spellcasters. An LoA priest must invoke his deity and ask for what it is that is needed. The deity's mood must be determined to see whether the prayers are answered or not. I would buy LoA for this whole section alone.

Actually there's lots more to the combat, magic and clerical sections but if I tried to discuss every little rule (though I would prefer to) I'd never get finished.

The encounter and "treasure" tables near the back are okay. "Monsters" are doled out sparingly; D&D munchkins would turn away in disgust. The selection is small but quite adequate. Most are based on Nature, fiction or myth: no silly "jellies" and such.

The two culture packs are in the other book. Both are very good, though not quite what I'd expected. The Ancient Greece one looks especially promising. They not only give historical/cultural stuff for running a campaign but each also has two scenario outlines and a bibliography.

The general style is very pithy, which might cause people new to the hobby a spot of bother, but examples are plentiful.

To sum up: buy this game. I hear that the author has offered it at a discount to the bizarre types who read some cheap rag she edits. Unless you can dig a copy out of a trash bin somewhere you'll probably have to buy it in the store at full price.

Another/More Comment to Wilson H. Heydt: Well, I made a stab at using your new TRAV ship design stuff and have found some problems in using them.

How can one know how many people will be on the ship's bridge? In the regular TRAV system the number of people required on the bridge was never specified (for large and/or military ships).

What about the cost for streamlining? Just use the old values? I should think that it can be based on the hull surface area with the appropriate Tf and Cf applied, as for armor. Use the armor formulae with "af" set at 1 or $\frac{1}{2}$.

This brings up the problem of finding the surface area of the ship. Some have very complicated shapes: hourglass, needle, 'flying saucer', and even worse ones!

Allowing only one turret per 500m² is fine for the little turrets, but what about barbettes, spinal mounts and bays? And some turrets are 2 or 3 tons, instead of only 1 ton, what about them? Well, the 2 and 3 ton turrets aren't all that much bigger so we'll say they need 50% more area: 750m². The barbettes are 5t so allow them 1000m². The 100t bay we can define as being 5mX10mX14m; the 50t bay as being 5mX10mX14. I've always pictured these bay weapons as looking like emplacements dug into the side of the ship. Hence they only need about 3m clear out around them, as the weapons fire sort of up and out at an angle of 40° or greater. So, you can have one 100t bay per 520m² and one 50t bay per 260m².

Spinal mounts are a bit more difficult. I immediately ditched the rule that only one was allowed per ship. Why can a 900,000t dreadnought have only one 2000t C-factor Meson gun? Particle accelerators are long and thin so we might arbitrarily decide that the aperture is always 3mX3m and allow a 3m "buffer zone" around it. Thus 81m² must be subtracted from the available surface area for each "spinal" mount aboard.

Okay, that's it for this installment from the foot of the Cloud Mtn.s. Keep those cards and letters coming but, ease up on the letter bombs.

FATE-ROLE COMMENTARY #1

(c) 1984 by Karl Seven and Jonathan Woolley 405 Serrano Dr. #6D, San Francisco, CA 94132; (415) 585-9123; typed by Lee Gold

WELCOME

Welcome to Fate-Role Commentary. The purpose of Fate-Role is to make the joys, sorrows, humor, etc. of roleplaying available to everyone. The purpose of the Fate-Role Commentary is to provide a forum for communications that will make Fate-Role more available to you and enhance your ability to make it available to others.

CONTENTS: An Invitation; Responses to Comments in #103; Questions to You; A Brief History of Fate-Role; Fate-Role and Story-telling; Seven Fate Selection Methods; Introduction to Story; You're All Wet!; and Notes on Story.

An Invitation

All A&Eers are invited to an afternoon of Fate-Role, starting at 2:00 PM, the first Saturday of each month. Call us for directions and to be sure there has been no change of plans. The following A&E contributors who live in the San Francisco Bay Area are specifically invited: Scott Bauer, Dorothy Heydt, Wilson Heydt, Michael Johnson, Bill Keyes, Quentin Long, Robert Plamondon, and Marc Willner.

What other A&Eers live in the San Francisco Bay Area? Whom else should we be inviting? Let us know.

Responses to Comments in #103

FRASER: The basics of Fate-Role are described in #100. We're glad you liked the story POISONED WOODS. It's very easy to write-up Fate-Role games as stories, because of the close relationship of Fate-Role to story telling. (See FATE-ROLE AND STORY TELLING below for more on this.)

FOSTER: We are fascinated by your comment that Fate-Role looks like an adaptation of a combination of Children's Story and RPG popular in years past. Do you know how the combination Story/RPG was played? Do you know of any write ups, examples, etc.? (See A BRIEF HISTORY below for our understanding of the history of Fate-Role, with the aspects relating to your comments emphasized.)

DUNHAM: We're glad you found Fate-Role interesting. We feel it develops an alternate view of FRP. What do you think?

LARTER: We're glad you're impressed with the rules for Fate-Role.//Like you, we think that Fate-Role is an unusual introduction to FRP. For people who want to emphasize role playing, story telling, and simplicity, we feel it is superior to traditional FRP.//We've thought about using Fate-Role in combination with other FRPGs but not in quite the way you suggest. Our emphasis has been on Fate-Role as a stand alone game.

FRITZ: Thanks for saying it took a lot of guts to stray so far from traditional FRP. Actually, it's Jonathan who strayed; see A BRIEF HISTORY for more on this.//Thanks for your encouragement in developing FATE-ROLE. We have nearly finished a writeup of "Fate Selection in Fate-Role" which clarifies and expands on key concepts. More will follow. This commentary zine should also help.

You may be right that Fate-Role should have more examples. We felt one would be enough to get across the basic idea, and we wanted to keep the write up short. See #98 and YOU'RE ALL WET below for two examples in story form. "Fate Selection in Fate-Role" will also include a full transcription of a game. And there will be more.//We're not sure what you mean when you say we apparently had trouble isolating more than three fate determiners. There are an indefinitely large number of fate determiners. We've been making up a new one almost every game. We gave only a few examples to keep things short. See SEVEN FATE SELECTION METHODS below.

ALL: It's really exciting to know people in three different countries have thought about Fate-Role and commented on it. The comments responded to above are from Australia, England, and the US (Texas and Connecticut); we don't know where Vincent Foster is from. And Michael Johnson came up from San Jose to play with us at our monthly game in February. Fifty miles on a motorcycle is a long way. Alarums & Excursions makes all this possible. Many thanks to Lee and all of you.

Questions to You

1. Are any of you playing Fate-Role? What has been your experience? Is there anyone who learned just from reading the write up in #100?
2. Is anyone familiar with the game Vincent Foster referred to (see above)?
3. Where does Vincent Foster live?

A Brief History of Fate-Role

We both feel that role-playing and story-telling are the essence of RPG--and value them highly. We want to play an RPG together that expresses this essence. We want everyone to experience the essence of RPG. Fate-Role is the result.

Karl Seven is the father of Jonathan and Rachel Woolley. When they were little, he would tell them bedtime stories. These stories were always made up on the spot and often involved some audience participation. Characters were often chosen so that Jonathan and Rachel would be sure to identify with them. The children's reactions influenced the stories a lot; they were sometimes asked questions like: "And then what do you think happened" or "And then, what do you think came out of the shadows?" If they came up with something good, Karl would say, "That's exactly right." or "How did you know?" However, the children didn't role-play: i.e. they didn't explicitly choose the actions of the characters or speak for them. Later, when Karl Seven moved to California, and Jonathan and Rachel moved to West Lafayette, Indiana, Karl would send them stories.

Jonathan got interested in war games when he was 10. Eventually, some of his friends introduced him to D&D. He played D&D and war games a lot, fiddled around with rules, and sometimes GMed. After he moved to Evanston, Illinois, he began to get involved with other games like Monsters, Monsters; Tunnels and Trolls, and Runequest. And he began to invent his own games.

When Jonathan and Rachel visited Karl in California, he saw them playing RPGs and was very impressed with role-playing. A couple of times he tried to play D&D with them, but the games never got very far, because it took so long to get to the action, and Karl was busy and mainly interested in the role-playing.

Eventually, Karl said he could create a simple role-playing game. He created a silly game with an opportunity (or problem) and used a D6 roll to determine the result. If your character didn't die (one of the six possible results), you could play another game. To play one game took a few seconds and wasn't particularly rewarding, but the point was made: RPGs can be simple.

We didn't play the original game except as a demonstration or a joke. But we did begin to play a game we called "Fate Roll." The GM rolled the die but you didn't see the result. This was pretty much like Fate-Role except that it was much more restrictive (only one fate selection method), and it used an intrusive mechanism (the die roll). Eventually, instead of a die roll, the player would pick a number which the GM used to determine the protagonist's fate. In some cases larger numbers were used, which allowed multiple aspects of fate. Eventually the numbers were dropped as too intrusive.

During this evolution, we became more aware of our purpose (see original paragraph). The implications of that purpose also got clearer: no intrusive rules. Also during this period, Jonathan moved to San Francisco to live with Karl and decided he wanted to be a game designer.

To make Fate-Role truly available required writing it up, which we did. (It may look simple, but it took a long time and a lot of hard work.) We decided to publish it in A&E #100 because of the excellent feedback and exposure it would get. There is much more to write concerning Fate-Role including expansions. We intend to do this through A&E. Eventually we will probably package some documents together. In time we'd like to be acknowledged as the creators of Fate-Role.

We want to use Fate-Role to fulfill our purpose of having people experience the joys, sorrows, humor, etc. of role-playing. People can learn from the "Fate-Role" document. We described the game in several ways to make it easier for different types of people. But it's easiest to learn by playing. One game as a player, followed by a few comments, and Shazam! Instant Gamemaster. Anyway, we'd like you to play Fate-Role, teach your friends, comment on Fate-Role, and come play with us if you can. What's your character's name?

Fate-Role and Story Telling

One way to see the relationship between Fate-Role and a story is to see how a transcription of a Fate-Role game could be turned into a story. Here's part of a transcription of a game, with the resulting story next to it.

<u>Fate-Role</u>	<u>Story</u>
GM: Want to play Fate-Role?	
PL: OK.	
GM: Do you want to play Lysthial?	Her name is Lysthial.
PL: Sure.	
GM: How about reminding me of about her powers?	
PL: OK. She's a half-elf....	She's a half-elf....
GM: What else?	
PL: Hmm, those are the major points.	
GM: OK. In her wanderings, she finds herself....What do you do?	In her wanderings, she finds herself...
PL: She goes into the cave behind the waterfall....	She goes into the cave behind the waterfall....
GM: She gets drenched in the process. Next time, maybe she shouldn't....	She gets drenched in the process.
PL: Did I say....	
GM: But you didn't say she did it any other way. Too bad. She's all wet.	She's all wet.

A game of Fate-Role can often be turned into a story by leaving out the irrelevant parts, such as:

1. Whether the GM or player is talking.
2. Most GM and player questions to elicit information. (Parts of these questions may need to be incorporated into the answers, if the answers are needed for the story.)
3. GM questions asking what the player does next.
4. Suggestions, comments, complaints, etc. about the GM's GMing or the player's playing.
5. Comments, etc. about the story.
6. Things the player wants the character to do but which aren't possible (unless these are treated as attempts that fail).

After eliminating irrelevant parts, some patching may be needed to get correct grammar. But the major changes other than deletions are to improve the story's presentation. The most important thing that's lost in changing a Fate-Role game transcription into a story is the interaction of the GM and player. On the other hand, if we created a transcription of a story-telling session with some listener participation) from a story, what would be introduced would be mostly the interaction of the story teller and the listener. So, very roughly:

Story Telling = Story + Story Teller + Active Listener

Fate-Role = Story + GM + Player

So what's the difference between a listener and a player? A listener listens to the story, sometimes comments on it, may identify with a character(s) but does not act or speak on a character's behalf. That is, the listener does not roleplay. A player, however, acts and speaks on behalf of his character, i.e. role plays. So, very roughly:

Player = Active Listener + Role Playing

The differences between a GM and a story teller are largely explained in terms of the differences between a player and a listener. Again, very roughly:

Fate-Role = Story + Teller + Active Listener + Role Playing

or Fate-Role = Story Telling + Role Playing

But this leaves out something that is also left out of a transcription of a game of Fate-Role: i.e. Fate Selection. Including it, we get:

Fate-Role = Story Telling + Role-Playing + Fate Selection

Since Fate-Role is a perfectly good game even without Fate Selection, let's give it a name. How about "Story-Role"?

Story-Role = Story Telling + Role Playing.

Story-Role is pretty much what many people call Free Form. So we might say:

Fate-Role = Free Form + Fate Selection

How would you define the relation between Fate-Role, Story Telling, Free Form, etc?

Seven Fate Selection Methods

We want to convince you that there is no shortage of fate selection methods--and to start you thinking up your own. We'll create seven methods from one idea. This idea is that a fate selection method can be built on a theory (or slogan) of success or failure. Then we'll ask you to make up two more theories of success and create a fate selection method for each. Okay?

The seven theories of success and the fate selection methods derived from them are:

1. YOU ARE TREATED AS YOU TREAT OTHERS. Whatever the protagonist does, the environment and other characters respond in kind.

2. CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN (Yech!). The protagonist succeeds or fails to the extent and in the manner implied by the impact of his/her clothes on the GM.

3. VIOLENCE IS THE LAST RESORT OF THE INCOMPETENT. The protagonist fails if he/she is violent, and the failure is magnified by the extent of the violence

4. YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT. The protagonist overcomes the giant only if he/she eats his/her spinach. Well, something like that.

5. BELIEVE IN YOURSELF. The protagonist succeeds if he/she acts as if he/she believes in him/herself--and otherwise fails.

6. STYLE IS EVERYTHING. The protagonist succeeds if he/she is classy in speech, dress, action, etc--and otherwise fails.

7. LOVE MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND. This could be tricky. The protagonist succeeds to the extent he/she is in love and is true to his/her love.

Any of these ideas could be applied at one point in time, and the character's fate could be determined from there on. Or they could be applied on an ongoing basis.

Okay. Your turn. Make up two more theories of success. If you draw a blank, ask a friend. Now make up a fate selection method for each. See, it's easy. (Let us know if it's not.)

Introduction to Story

The following story is basically a game of Fate-Role transcribed as a story. The main things not transcribed are the fate selection method and the interactions between the GM and player (which were often humorous).

YOU'RE ALL WET

Lysthial is half-elven. She has the ability to communicate with animals, and she has the ability to detect, identify, and dispell magic.

One day Lysthial is walking through the woods, and she sees a very healthy-looking squirrel leaping from tree to tree. It jumps farther than a squirrel should jump. She ignores the squirrel and continues on her way.

In time Lysthial reaches a stream and begins to cross it, but slips and falls into the water. She's all wet!

As she swims towards the other side, a lot of fish swim by, going rapidly upstream. When she reaches the other side, she takes off her clothes, hangs them up and gets back into the stream to take a bath. While she is bathing, she sees more fish swimming very quickly upstream. After awhile she gets out, gets dressed, and goes on her way.

As Lysthial continues, it starts raining. She finds a large tree and hides under it. The rain is coming down very hard, and it continues for a long time. Eventually the giant leaves of the tree begin to bend under the weight of the water --and finally, all at once, the leaves dump all the water on her. She's all wet!

Although Lysthial's completely soaked, she continues to wait under the tree. When the rain finally stops, she heads for the creek. Along the way, a shocking pink rabbit crosses her path. She disregards it. When she reaches the creek, she takes off her clothes and takes a bath. While she's taking her bath, there is a flash flood which carries her about half a mile downstream. She's all wet!

When she starts to get out, a jester swinging on a vine knocks her back into the creek. She's all wet! He lands on the other side. She chases him for a long time but is unable to catch him.

Suddenly he goes down a hole. She goes down the hole too and continues to chase him underground. After awhile she chases him onto a balcony. The jester dives into a pool below. She does too. When she comes to the surface, the jester is on the other side. He yells, "You're all wet!"; and she yells back, "You're all wet!"

The jester gets out of the pool, goes through a door, and slams it behind him. When Lysthial reaches the door, she opens it. She finds herself in a spacious cavern filled with beautiful things. At the other end of the room is the jester on a throne. There are pots of gold and cornucopia filled with flowers and fruit. And there are many unusually healthy-looking wild animals, including hundreds of shocking pink rabbits.

The jester is eating a pomegranate. He offers her one, which she accepts. A bit later he offers her a banana which she also accepts. Then he offers her a shocking pink rabbit. Lysthial says, "No thanks." Nevertheless a large number of shocking pink rabbits begin to snuggle up to Lysthial. She ignores them.

THE CHRONICLES OF THE ANCIENT EMPIRE #4

by Matt Stevens, 20 Hallowell Rd., Foxboro, MA; (617) 543-6234

Well, this is my fourth contribution. It should appear in issue #108 or so. Before I begin, I would just like to thank Dave Nalle for the Abyss. The only problem with it is that I've never read Ysgarth or TCF, so I don't understand a lot of it. Oh, well. Thanks anyway.

I don't feel like correcting spelling errors on this, so it might come out a little messy (just though I'd warn you).

COMMENTS, issue #101

SCOTT R. TURNER: I liked the one-page rule system. I used to do things like that; say, "let's try to write an RPG in the next half hour". I usually could do it, though the games themselves weren't too spectacular.//One problem with games that don't generate characteristics randomly is that characters can be very difficult to think up. What you might want to do is roll D6 for each characteristic, and then be able to shift points from one to the other. The maximum level for an attribute would still be 14.

JOHN L. T. PATERSON: Actually, I agree (somewhat) that the U.S. is culturally inferior to the U.K, especially in music. (Just a note: I have known who Altered Images are, for quite a long time. Don't take it personally, but I think they stink.) There are a number of reasons for this. First of all, Hollywood, our "cultural center", is all messed up, and pathetically decadent. Secondly, our radio stations aren't broadcast to as many people, so ideas don't reach quite as far. There are probably other reasons, but I don't feel like getting into them.

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: Enjoyed the article on dwarves. I've always been fascinated by Norse mythology, but this is one facet that I knew nothing about.//Re comment to SAPIENZA: With random generation of characteristics, you run into the old problem of having to roll up 5 guys before you find one that's adequate. Besides, when characteristics are rolled up, you run to the other problem of, "Well, with those rolls, you're gonna have to be a thief or an assassin." If a character wants to be a paladin, why not let him be one?

PETER SHAPLEY: How about using a CHAMPIONS-type luck system. Every once and a while, roll 1 to 3 D6, depending on how unlucky the character is (rolling 3D6 for very unlucky types). Each 1 rolled equals 1 level of unluck. It's explained better in CHAMPIONS.//I agree about the Clash; usually, Joe Strummer sounds like a broken trash compactor. Of course, I can't see Michael Jackson singing for them.

DAVE WARING: I've been using the name Uriel for quite a long time, as an Earth goddess. While I always thought that just made it up, I think I must have gotten it from somewhere. Where did you get it from?

Well, that's it for comments on A&E #101. All together, I would say that it was a pretty good issue (maybe it just seems good, because it's my first issue in two years).

R.EBNC to all other contributors. Before I go on with my usual squablings, I'm going to turn over this typewriter (I know, I skipped an 'e') to a friend of mine, Clayton Upper. (Yes, that's his real names!) He's going to write up an adventure that we had. (He was speaking as player, I as referee) This was pretty typical for our adventures; while there isn't all that much role-playing, there isn't much monster-bashing either. Mostly, our adventures involve PC-NPC interaction. Anyway- see how you like it.

(Note: while I described Penarther government back in TCCTAC #2, I failed to mention the title of Lord High Commander. This is a rank that is occasionally given to heros of the state; it gives the person ultimate authority over Parliment. You should know this before reading this adventuer.)

INTRODUCTION: This adventure is only one in a series that I have had with Matt using the same characters and setting. The three main characters are Darkside, a PC thief, Drakaar Firous, a PC mercenary-infantry, and Mythesa, Darkside's NPC air-head girlfriend.

Against the Vangorn

by G. Clayton "Rocco" Upper III

Two men and one woman walked easily up the slope of a rather large hill. One of the men was slight, not mucj taller than the woman, and dressed all in black. At his side hung a fencing blade, opposite it hung a long dagger. He was good-looking, with sharp features and deep blue eyes.

The other man was larger, with broad shoulders and a barrel chest. His only weapon - a huge broadsword which hung at his side. With his dark brown hair and small brown eyes, his dark complexion was hardly noticable.

The woman was extraordinarily attractive. She was dressed in men's clothing and wore a dagger at her belt. Her brunette hair lay about her shoulders in waves, and her cobalt eyes hid a fair-sized lack of intelligence.

"Whaddya think, Darkside," asked the bigger man. "Did we lose 'em?"

"I think so, Drakaar," the smaller man replied, grimmacing. "I hope so. I don't ever wanna go up against one like her again." The girl shuddered.

"What are they called again, Darkside?" she asked.

"What are what called, Mythesa?" Darkside inquired. "The cults or the woman?"

"I know they're the Cults of Vangorn," she replied. "But what was their High Priestess called?"

"She's now called the Late High Priestess," Drakaar said, and smiled grimly.

"She was a Penenggalan," answered Darkside. Let's not talk about it, okay? I'd rather just forget the whole thing. A few more hours of walking, and we'll be through Camatote and on the bank of the Xyzee river, where we can hire a boat to take us to Segotine so we can spend some of our reward."

About four hours later, a flat barge pulled up to one of the many Segotine docks along the Xyzee River. As they climbed

up onto the dock and began to walk inland, Darkside noticed a pair of city guards watching them intently. The guards walked over to them.

"Which of you is he who calls himself Darkside?" one of them asked.

Drakaar and Darkside pointed to each other.

"He is," they said simultaneously.

"I have warrants for the arrest of Darkside, Drakaar Firous, and Mythesa of Penarther. Please place your hands behind your backs, that we may tie them."

Mythesa and Drakaar looked at Darkside, who nodded assent. They each placed their hands behind their backs, and were bound. Their captors led them several blocks to the city square. In the square were set up a gallows, an executioner's block, and four horses hitched together in typical draw and quartering style.

At this point, the trio began to struggle, but the two guards who held them were soon reinforced, so that ended that.

Across the square there was a small wooden platform, upon which stood what looked like a member of the aristocracy. There was a small crowd of peasants surrounding the platform, as well as a few who stood gazing in morbid anticipation at the tools of execution or at Darkside, Drakaar, and Mythesa.

"We have the three," called one of the guards to the noble across the square. "What are your orders, Lord?"

"Release the girl - recent information shows that she had no part in this. As for the others... well, I suppose that they must be executed to get the Cults of Vangorn off my back. Let them die together."

"Wait," Drakaar yelled, but no one paid any attention. Drakaar was forced into a kneeling position in front of the chopping block, and Darkside's head was placed in the noose. Covertly signalling each other, their bodies tensed for action.

The nobleman, who Darkside guessed to be the Marquis of Segotine, raised his hand for silence, and signalled the two executioners. One of them placed his hand on the lever which would drop the floor out from beneath Darkside, and the other drew back his broadsword for a clear strike at Drakaar's head.

The Marquis of Segotine raised his riding whip, and then brought it down, signaling the executioners to do their job...

Will the executioners strike? Is this the end for Darkside and Drakaar? Just what influence do the Cults of Vangorn have over the Marquis? Will Matt kill me for ending like a Bat-Man rerun?

For the answers to these and other questions, look for The Chronicles of the Ancient Empire in your next issue of this magazine.

CONCLUSION: Just wanted to apologize for all the typing errors in this thing. I'm a writer, not a typist. I corrected some of them, but missed a few.

What was truly dreadful. Believe me, Mythesa was not supposed to be an airhead; that's just the way that this player thought she was. (Sorry, folks. It's late at night, so my writing ability is pretty awful.) Before I leave, I'd like to present to you.....

MORE RUNEQUEST CHEWING!!!!

I hate to see somebody be dumped on by everybody else (David Valle is the victim in this case), so I've decided to stick my neck out and attack RQ. This time, however, I'm going to bitch about the rules instead of the world.

- 1) RQ is monster bashing oriented. A whole section is devoted to treasure hordes, and it's assumed that every monster has its own horde of money & magic items. Then we learn that money is supposed to be spent on skill increases, which, as I've heard many times, is the major goal of RQ. Next subject.
- 2) There is 1 goal in RQ: become a rune priest/lord/initiate/whatever. At least in D&D gave you a chance to learn more spells, or get more followers. RQ doesn't tell you anything about that. That brings us to the next point.....
- 3) RQ magic sucks. No ands, ifs, or buts. In this game, you learn magic, the dark, deep secrets of magic, in the same way that you take a first-aid course. You go down to the local cult, make an appointment for 10:00 a.m., and bam! another way to kill orcs. The way it's presented, everybody & his mother how to cast spells. One of the most unoriginal methods I've ever seen.

I think that's enough for now. (Will I be allowed to speak in A&E again?) Don't get me wrong; Runequest is still a better game than D&D. (Then again, what isn't?) Yet, despite the fact that we put the two on opposite sides of the scale, the two games are really alot alike. RQ is a step in the right direction, but I don't think that I'd really want to play it. (Other people can play it all they want, but I think that someone should be able to criticize it without being attacked from all sides.)

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Robert Sacks sent me a one page flier for Empiricon 5 without checking. I hereby known to All and Sundry that I won't take one page fliers for non-gaming conventions. However, I will put the information into a filler.

### EMPIRICON 5

The New York City SF Convention

July 6-8, 1984

Sheraton Inn at LaGuardia (\$70/day for single, double, triple or quad)  
\$20 at the door (pre-registration closed June 2nd)

Pro GoH: G. Harry Stine

Art GoH: Jim Odbert

Fan GoH: Juanita and Buck Coulson



# Golem's Corner #19

A contribution for *Alarums and Excursions*, by Wilson H. Heydt,  
1125 Neilson St., Albany, Ca. 94706, (415) 524-8321.

There have been frequent "complaints" in *A&E* about the difficulties of making comments or keeping up with this or that. My problem is in keeping up with my reading. Does anyone have a solution to holding down a full-time job, maintaining a household (with two children in it) and reading two newspapers a day, several monthly magazines, and trying to keep up with various books? [Well, my dear, you could read fewer newspapers, considering that between you and Kate four or five are brought into the house daily and I have to pick them up. —djh] Seriously, I only seem to be behind by three books at the moment—but except for *A&E*, the March magazines haven't arrived yet.

*Golem's Corner 18* went to the typesetter the Thursday before *DunDraCon* and did not contain a con review. This issue will have a report. The muse has not struck, so it is very unlikely that I will have any other expository material. After dealing with the ship designs last time (not to mention paying for them) I think I'm entitled to a short 'zine.

In the mean time I have also managed to finish reading *Cave Dwellings and Cliff Castles of Europe* and a review of the work appears at the end of this 'zine.

I am more than a little bemused by having had the recent piece on scenario ideas from Gilbert and Sullivan requested (and subsequently accepted) for publication by the new Avalon Hill prozine *Heroes* with only trivial changes. I never seriously expected to sell anything I wrote.

## Comments — *A&E* 103.

I don't have very many comments on this issue. This is not due to a lack of interesting material. It is caused by the lack of inspiration on the part of the reader.

Lee Gold. (re System). Congratulations on your machine. I see that Barry convinced you (or should I say that you convinced yourself)

about the usefulness of UNIX on a "home" system. Should there be a move to put the household system up here on line, perhaps we could start an FRP UNIX net. By the bye, does your system have the 4.2 BSD upgrades?

John T. Sapienza, Jr. (*Dragonsgold 21*, re Computer Users). *Golem's Corner* is typeset, photocopied (IBM Copier III) and then electrostenciled. The photocopies seem to stencil better than the (rather shiny) originals. I will be happy to show you originals at *LaCon* for comparison, if you wish.

Matt Stevens. Welcome to *A&E*.

Vincent Foster. (re Guns). Ask your attorney how the U. S. Supreme Court has interpreted the Second Amendment.

(re Myself). So psychology is important. I won't argue. If it is, then Willpower (or some equivalent) ought to be a combat modifier. At least to the extent that it determines a character's ability to stay in the fight.

Lewis Stead. Welcome to *A&E*.

I very much like your term "onion skin scenario." It took me a bit to see how you were using the term, as my original conclusion was different and is the way I like to think of it. I would use the term to describe a scenario that relies on thought, research, planning, and paper work to play out. The last item is the onion skin.

Harry Robinson. (re Myself). Stitches for a cat scratch are probably an artifact of modern medicine and a desire to eliminate "cosmetic" damage. In any case, such a wound should not cause the end of a fight.

I never meant to say—or even to imply—that a realistic combat system would be easy to construct. My intent was to see that humans were given a chance to perform in ways that are not obvious, but are very effective. By the bye, the examples that you cite about dogs are adult dogs against human

children. The reciprocal situation could also occur—adult humans against juvenile animals. The results are much the same. The adult wins.

**Mons J. Johnson.** Welcome to *A&E*. Where are you stationed? The APO address only tells me that you are not actually located in the U.S.

Somehow, 4th level feels too low for elemental shields. Other than that, they are a very interesting idea. They could easily be integrated into the various elemental magic systems that have been written up in *A&E* over the years. Have you given any thought to the fifth traditional element—Aether? Could such an elemental shield have a general magic or psi counter potential?

**Niall C. Shapero.** (re *Other Suns—Guns*). At last, a game designer with the same idea that I have been pounding away at.

(re *America's Cup*). The trophy was named for the first yacht to win it. It was originally offered in 1851 as the *Royal Yacht Squadron 100 Guinea Cup*. The yacht *America* was specifically designed to win races.

#### DunDraCon VIII Report.

My primary activity at *DunDraCon* has always been to help with registration, so this report will be rather sketchy.

The con seemed to go well. The only game I was involved with was a run of *Legends* run by Ray Turney. My activities there started with helping get characters set up, since there was no way for any of the other players to know the rules in advance. The second main task was to help run those parts of the scenario that called for mass combat. This requires a digression on my part.

*Legends* contains rules for dealing with medium scale combat that has interactions among PCs, NPCs, and small units of various types of troops. The units may cover the entire spectrum of possibilities—rabble, armed peasantry, elite regular military, what have you. During playtest, there was a run involving total forces of around 400. It can be done, but it is slow. For my own amusement I wrote a BASIC program on a TRS-80 Model 100 that uses the *Legends* mass combat rules.

During the con run of *Legends* the computer was used for all of the mass combat. The machine did not handle the PCs or NPCs, but all of the unit combat was done that way. Had any doubt come up over the results generated on the computer, we could have fallen back on dice. Not only was that not necessary, but the players seemed to take having the machine roll the dice for their units as a matter of course. This exercise worked very well and probably cut up to two hours from the time needed to game the scenario.

The whole run went very well and the *Legends* rules were well received by the players.

One advantage of staying at registration most of the time is that sooner or later, everyone comes to you. During the course of the con I saw Harry Henderson, Ray Turney, Marc Wilner, Jeff Hudelson, Quentin Long, Bill Keyes, Steve Perrin, Daniel Nolte, David Jacobson (briefly on Monday). I am only listing current or former *A&Es*.

Sunday night I made an abortive attempt to throw a APA party, but Jeff Hudelson was the only one who made it. Still and all, it was a nice weekend away from home.

#### Review — *Cave Dwellings and Cliff Castles of Europe*.

This is a very interesting work on various types of wholly or partly dug fortifications, churches, and dwellings found throughout Europe. It was largely inspired by work done on the Hopi pueblos in Arizona. The work in the U. S. southwest being examined rather shortly before this work was published in 1911.

The descriptions of various structures is frequently quite detailed and there is a considerable body of illustrations and photographs in the work.

This work is also very interesting in its unconscious exposure of Edwardian attitudes—not to mention errors in archaeology that can only be seen from reading later works. There is also a wealth of data that could be used to create scenarios from historical incidents surrounding the sites discussed in the book. I don't know the history of France well enough to vouch for the historical accuracy of many of the incidents cited, but if the book is correct, hack'n'slash *D&D* may be nearer the truth of medieval conditions than many of us would like.

All in all, this book is a good read even if the verbiage is a bit stilted for modern taste. A definite read recommendation for those tired of the same old fictional sources who want a look at the world of antiquity as it was thought to be 70 years ago.

As I now have *Lands of Adventure*, I will find time to read the rules thoroughly and review them within these pages.

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Scott R. Turner, #304  
7533 Lexington Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
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THE YETI ARE NIGH

This zine was sent to the Golds over a computer net and printed on their new computer. (which is a nice machine, in my opinion.) Of course, they don't have a laser printer (more's the pity) so the formatting isn't quite as pretty (but much cheaper). I've decided to abandon two column format since it isn't really necessary unless you are reducing your zine from a larger format. Onward and upward.

=====

Comments on 103

James Roberts Chronicles of Zonka is getting better, partly because it is long lived. I still find it a bit too wooden, though I can't place a finger on exactly why. For one thing, the game sounds a bit too contrived. The people I play with would have done some terrible damage with the machine (ah, we aren't as nice as your friends, apparently). The conversation in this issue was appropriately cryptic. There is a further comment on this below, I think, re the installment in 104.

The Rimon Simon character is pretty clever. You must be able to think quick on your feet to handle running him. We must all have such one-shot characters in our campaigns. Maybe we should try to pool them all.

One of my favorites was a skinny little guy in a leather vest who hung out, apparently drunk, in the wild section of town. PCs would try to rob him quite often. Unfortunately, he was a fair thief with magical leather armor and fantastically high dexterity. Even though he was only armed with a dagger, no one could hit him often enough to kill him. The law allowed duels if the victim of a crime desired it, so the PC who tried to rob him couldn't back out. Killed several PCs this way.

Wilson Heydt Nice looking zine, as usual. Are you going to start uucping yours to the Golds as well? // As far as Scenario Sources go, I find that I don't have that much trouble. All I have to do is think up one initial scenario, and play develops all the material I need. Usually characters have their own idiosyncratic goals by the end of the second "adventure". But good ideas for that initial scenario, anyway.

Nick Larter Liked the Firevendors article. This is what I find really interesting in A&E, a piece that explores the rationale and ramifications of some hypotheses in a fantasy setting. Unfortunately, I can't comment much more than that. Thanks.

David Dunham I must admit that I initially skipped over your story about the Enchanted River but enjoyed it when I returned to it.  
True immortals might not have a creation myth -- they might have been there.

Comments on 104

Lee Gold / General I have a nice short path over to Barry, so this should work well. If anyone is on ARPAnet and not UUCPnet, they can send their zine to me (cs.srt@ucla-cs) and I will forward it to Barry. In fact, I'd like to hear from anyone who reads A&E and can send electronic mail over either net, so feel free to write. I'm offering to keep a directory of electronic addresses, if anyone is listening...

Lands of Adventure seems very interesting from what I've managed to read so far (been very busy). Perhaps I'll review in detail at some point, but I'd like to make one observation now.

When I design a system, I do it out of a desire to embody some general principles in a game and see how they work. LOA is designed in a different way. You've taken your vast experience in FRP and culled out what worked and what you found enjoyable. What someone should do now is analyze this game for potential general principles that might be fundamental to (good) game design.

Alison Brooks Interesting points on good game writeups. For the most part I think you are right on the money. The most important facet of a good game writeup is to involve the reader in the story. Consider for example this quote (from Nick Larter's writeup in 103):

Varg and Alkar decide to continue pursuit and head round the back of the hotel to the stable, intending to borrow a couple of horses. But they surprise a loyal ostler and have to kill him to fulfill their immediate goal...

The action in this writeup is fairly interesting, but the reader doesn't feel particularly involved in the writeup. This is partly because Nick uses the omnipresent third person point of view, and partly because he follows the actions of all the characters, resulting in a rather disconnected narrative.

In 104, Nick shows signs of improving on this:

Lyra is putting on weight enormously quickly and is getting unhappy with this. Moreover, she remains strangely ambivalent to Sir Rathmed's advances...

A bit more personal, and therefore more interesting. Strangely enough, Nick's most compelling writing is in his headers:

I sit in my room watching silvery clouds of condensation melt from the window. On the hoary lawn beyond, magpies caper in the first cold rays of the sun...

Here, we get an impression of what Nick is actually feeling. Perhaps his prose is too purple, but he's putting us INSIDE his head. That is very compelling. [Hope you don't object to being singled out, Nick. Of course I mean no insult, and I only picked you out because your improvement made such a vivid example.]

So here are my guidelines on doing a writeup:



1. Write in the focused third person. Pick a character and tell the story of the adventure in terms of how it revolved around this character. Don't write in the first person (i.e., avoid "I"). It is damned hard to write a good convincing story in the first person.

Don't jump off to scenes that the character could not possibly have experienced. If that information is necessary to the story you should try to work it in in another manner -- the usual hack is to have some other character tell the main character what happened.

2. Write in scenes. You don't have to follow the whole adventure step by step. Concentrate on the big scenes. If something happened in between, you can either slip it in (see above) or ignore it entirely. Readers are fantastic understanding machines. Trust in them.

Scenes should start and end in a clear fashion. Pick a good point to pick up the action and a good point to drop, and then write in between those two. For example, suppose you are writing about a fight in a tavern that takes place the night before the group heads out to a dungeon. Your writeup might look like this:

The first bottle smashed into the wall just above Wanda's head, showering the table with cheap wine...

Varn tossed the barkeep a gold piece and sauntered out the door.

The next morning Sam was still nursing his arm ten miles into the ride...

Even with that minimal example, you as a reader can pick up what is going on. Filled in, anyone can handle it.

A good technique for me in plotting scenes is to imagine what kind of a movie this story would make. You might want to try that.

3. Plot. This is what Alison & Flin meant when they said "sense of purpose." Your story revolves around some character, so there must be some reason for him to tell it, or want it told.

I'm not about to go into the various "good" plots there are. Suffice it to say that the story should have a conclusion. One problem I have with the Tefarm story (James Robert) is that it has only a vague motivation (Zonka's desire to build up his inn). That isn't really sufficient motivation for a dramatic story (though it is a good motivation for a soap-opera style story, which is the way I enjoy The Chronicles).

So pick out a goal for your story. It can be something as mundane as boating through a swamp (In the Swamp, me) or saving the universe from psychic aliens (Fire in the Morning, George Phillies). Then tell the tale of how that goal was resolved.

4. Avoid hackneyed usages. There are a ton of these that pervade fantasy writing:

Forget the diary. This is a writing hack that rarely works and which we've seen too much of in A&E already.

Long, purple descriptions. People fill in a lot of detail with very little effort. In describing something you can usually make do with a single vivid descriptor: "blinding light" not "blinding white light", "velvet cape" not "deep midnight velvet cape". It is far better to write in a sparse style than in a florid style. The exception is at the beginning of the story, where many authors use a detailed description to draw the reader into the story.

Fight scenes. Who cares? You and I have gamed hundreds of fight scenes. I don't really want to hear about how the group beat up 27 orcs unless it has some interesting point to it. Usually it doesn't.

If you must write a fight scene, try these suggestions:

1. The hero should be in deep trouble. No way he is going to win this fight.
2. The hero is fighting because there is something incredibly important at stake. The princess is being eyed by orcs, or the Gem of Arkasus is about to be stolen.
3. The hero has a secondary reason. The "Enter the Dragon" principle, where you kill the main character's family in the first scene, so that when he does start fighting, you KNOW he is going to kick some butt.
4. The hero is fighting only despicable enemies.
5. Others have failed at what the hero now attempts.

There are other such principles, but I think you get the idea.

Sorry, Alison, that turned into more of comment than I expected.

Jenny Hein See, you follow all of the above rules, and "Shadow Game" is pretty good. I must be right. Oh, oh. Just saw Sam's Story, where you violate all the above rules. I'll let you be the judge of which story is better. (I think you can guess my opinion.)

Peter A. Clarke Your bit on religious artifacts is much like Firevendors (see above), which is to say that it is the kind of article I enjoy seeing in A&E but don't necessarily comment on. I loved the examples in this one, though.

Martin Wixted Oh, oh, first person diary format. Save me, Mr. Wizard! (Actually the tale is not that bad, though reminiscent of a certain other book that features a Hobbit.)

Nick Larter Your promised comment on 104, though you almost didn't get it because you put your title on the second page (which really threw me the first time through). See also above, where I use you as a good, bad and improving example (lucky you).

Vincent M. Foster Classic article on lockpicking. I'm tempted to fabricate up the tools you describe and have a go at it myself. I'm not exactly sure how the rake works, though I get the idea. The question is, how does the torc bar hold the tumblers in place? I thought that was the purpose of the rake. My guess is that you use the side pressure of the torc bar to keep the tumblers from falling back down. No wonder your hand loses feeling quickly.

David Jacobson I was going to object to "Smegmaward" until I realized you gave the first one to yourself. There's a man who knows his own worth, eh?



Hank Griffin Thanks for your praise re Along a Winding Road. But really, the best short fiction you've seen in years? Perhaps you don't read much... At any rate, you are free to repeat your comments (LOUDLY) in any future zine.//I'm going to do a bit on different die rolls sooner or later, prompted by your discussion. I think someone mentioned L/M rolls some time back (like A&E 40 or so). But this is timely, since J. Sapienza's difficulty dice have also been mentioned.

Dana Carson I object! The rules are only one page long (actually, less than one page). The examples take up the other page. And even if you want to count the examples as part of the rules, they only together cover both sides of one page. So I think I made it by all counts. Not too mention that I could have used a smaller font and put it all on one side of one page.//This was a bit of a silly comment, wasn't it?

Peter DaSilva Boy, I like your zines. Always interesting.//Thanks for the complement re my story. You are right, it would have been hard to game that. It was pure fiction, though obviously it could have been a game.//Sorry you didn't like Power Points. It was a concession to the universal emotion: greed (in players). I challenge you to write a one page rule system, then! (\*thunk\*, the sound of a glove across the face).

Ronald Pehr Some crazy stuff happening in the Shattered Land.//Thanks for your continued praise of my one page rule system. I have some thoughts on Simple is Good. They should be below in the form of an essay or some such.

Wilson Heydt Boy, your sister sure knows how to purchase a computer. We don't have equipment that good here at UCLA. (Okay, maybe we do. I'm working on an Apollo 460 at the moment.) Still, that's a nice hunk of machinery.

To be frank, I'm just going to have to assume that your Spacecraft Design article is brilliant. Not being an SF-Gamer myself, I can't bring myself to wade in. Oh well, it looks great (yeah for EQN).

Paul Waters Thank you, I am enjoying your story.

### In Praise of Simplicity

As my recent one-page rule set indicates, I have lately been drawn to the dark side of the Force, uh, excuse me, I mean the simple side of game mechanics. I offer here a few thoughts on the subject.

First of all, attributes are outmoded. All attributes do is cluster skills into categories. A character with a high strength simply does better with certain skills. It seems to me that one of these two things is thus superfluous -- either skills or attributes.

My thought is to abandon attributes altogether and allow the player to pick a group of categories at character creation time which the character will have an advantage with. He will be at a disadvantage in other categories.

I think that any such grouping can be rationalized in fantasy world terms. Of course, someone who picks Sword, Pick Lock and Fire Magic is going to have a much stranger background than someone who picks Sword, Shield and Bow. Will the result be unbalanced? Not if the skills are all approximately equal (or weighted so that

they are equal). I don't care about this too much anyway, as my campaign does not favor minimaxing (and I don't particularly care if a PC gets an advantage, anyway). Less scrupulous DMs could give the character "bad luck" to counteract minimaxing.

Along the same line, I favor a smaller set of general skills rather than an exhaustive set of more specialized skills. As Wilson Heydt pointed out in his comment to Hein and Murray in 104, you can always break even a well thought out set of skills into more specialized skills. Specialized skills also force you to make rules about "bleed" from one skill to another -- how good is a whitesmith at shoeing a horse? So I favor fuzzier skill definitions.

Secondly, most FRP games concentrate too much on melee mechanics and so on. I can't recall what weapons most of my characters favor, and that leads me to believe that the whole question simply isn't that important. Combat systems come down to two things: comparative strength and strategy. Any combat system that combines these two effectively and simply is fine by me.

[As an aside, why is it that almost every new combat system deals so heavily with comparative strength? My conclusion is that strategy simply does not play a major role in medieval combat. Most strategy comes down to three things: surprise, pairing of opponents, and weapons used.]

Things I can do without in a combat system: Exhaustive weapons charts. Hit location charts. Critical hit charts. Defensive stance vs. offensive attack charts, and so on. On the other hand, I do like additions that add "color" to the system, even if it is done very simplistically.

Third, why don't we separate advancement in skills into two categories: by experience and by training. This seems a logical thing to do but no one has fully developed this idea yet.

Let each skill have a maximum amount of advancement due to training and a maximum amount due to experience. Skills that are 'learn by doing' might require all advancement in experience (i.e. a maximum advancement of 0% by training). Other skills can lie anywhere between, giving a full range of possibilities.

For slightly greater realism, this can be augmented by a rule for each skill that indicates the required proportion of trained skill to experience skill (i.e. training must be less than experience or training can be no greater than twice experience).

Fourth, 90% of an FRP campaign is the world, and 10% the rules. Unfortunately, 90% of the effort in FRP design is concerned with rules. Scenario design simply hasn't come as far as rule design. For my money, City State of the Invincible Overlord is still one of the finer scenarios available, and look how long ago it was written. I know a LOT of people who still use it. Maybe that is because of its size and because of inertia, but I think in part it is because it is a good scenario.

Writing a scenario is harder work than writing a rules set because scenarios involve content. Rules are mainly concerned with form, i.e., how does a 3rd level fighter match up with a 2nd level mage...Is this going to be unbalanced?...etc. Scenarios involve tougher questions: Why would he hide this here?...What is a realistic death rate for peasants in this kind of situation?...etc. The problem of how do this hasn't been addressed. We need rules (or at least advice) on how to write scenarios.



Overall, I favor a very simple simulation. The extra details that make a game unique and enjoyable never come from the rules anyway. They come from the imagination and the care of the DM and the players. A set of rules that flavors play without restricting it allows this mind play to come out more fully and more enjoyably.

### The Lord of Sight

In the continuing tradition of fine fiction, we present here a tale in the vein of Wizard of Earthsea, Damiano and Heir of Earth and Sea, a tale of a young boy coming into his magical powers.

#### Chapter 1 - The Castle Magic

Avigon by the Sea was a thriving, bustling city. The laws were loose and the trade brisk. It was located at an opportune point at the bend of a great continent, and the full-bellied trading ships that plied the sea's highways all stopped at Avigon for rest, refreshment and merriment.

Whoring was a big trade, and savants said that the motherless orphans of the street outnumbered the legitimate children of Avigon two to one. About half of these children found honest employ sweeping streets or cleaning stables. The rest migrated slowly into the great turning wheel of crime.

The usual route for an orphan was to join a "den" - a ritualistic youth gang. The dens were hard on their members. The rude pack psychology left most new members dead by the end of the first year. It was an effective form of population control, and subtly encouraged by the Guard and the wiser of the political citizens.

A few youth steered clear of the dens and of honest employment. These freelancers tried to earn their living through independent crime. The dens hated such scavengers and hunted them with a vengeance. Scavengers had a short life expectancy.

Ham knew all of this, at least instinctively, because he had been a scavenger for two full summers. In fact, he thought ruefully, he and Glaive, his partner, were probably the most famous scavengers in all of Avigon. At this moment they were certainly the most hunted.

A week ago Ham had successfully plundered the bedroom of a Council member when he and Glaive had been overtaken by three toughs from the Snake Den. In order to escape, Ham had thrown the Councilor's jewels back at the pursuers. Glaive and he had escaped, but the incident rankled Ham mightily.

So last night, much against Glaive's recommendations, Ham had snuck into the Snake Den's secret headquarters. Inside, he made his way to the inner sanctum and removed the Snake totem. Unfortunately, he had been glimpsed on his way out.

Now Ham and Glaive were on their way to their most secret hideout - an old abandoned mansion on the outskirts of town. It was said to be haunted, and probably was. Some nights the windows were filled with moving lights, and occasionally weirder occurrences had been reported. It was an indication of how desperate affairs had become that Ham was headed in this direction at all.

They had reached the mansion just as twilight had settled. In the gloom Ham - his full name was Hamilton Frederic Corsair the Third, a bit of a vainglorious title - looked definitely satanic. He was a tall youth, come into his puberty and just now beginning to fill out a frame that had the proportion but not the weight of a man's. His hair was dark, curly and unruly, with eyes that matched.

Glaive, on the other hand, was built more like a thief. He had dusky red hair that hung to his shoulders and a rather ordinary face. Like Ham, he was slightly built, though that was more a matter of his existence than predisposition. Glaive was also smaller and probably younger, though neither boy knew his birthdate.

Currently the two were crouched outside a side door of the mansion, waiting for the moon to clear the trees and give them light enough to enter. Or perhaps they were waiting to get their courage up. In the early night, the mansion looked like quite an uncomfortable place to explore.

"Can you see anyone following us?" asked Glaive in the silence. Like Ham, he had chosen his own name. If he hadn't grown to the strength of a glaive, it wasn't his fault. He had learned a quick and sharp tongue that many likened to a weapon.

Ham faced back toward the town and closed his eyes, turning his head from side to side like a dog testing the wind. "No," he pronounced finally.

It was Ham's bizarre powers that had kept the two of them independent for so long. Ham had Power, if not training, and his natural talent had saved the boys lives more than once. Ham could see things at a distance, and at night he Dreamwalked. In his dreams Ham investigated places far and near. He had little control over where he went, but what he saw often proved useful. He had searched the mansion in one Dreamwalk, and that is how he and Glaive came to choose it as a hideout. In another Dreamwalk he had found the Councillor's bedroom from which he had stolen the ill-fated jewels.

However, Ham's Power was erratic at best. Tonight it was strong, and had kept Glaive and he a step ahead of the Den. At any moment it might vanish, and this made Ham anxious to be inside and well hidden. As soon as the moon cleared the trees, Ham motioned Glaive to the door and they were off.

Inside the door was a small antechamber. Ham remembered it from his Dreamwalk and push Glaive on inside into a short hallway. This debarked into a side kitchen still filled with dusty utensils and old cookware. It was testament to the mansion's reputation that it hadn't been looted even this close to a door.

"Looks like a good place to hide," said Glaive, a little hopefully.

Ham was already heading deeper into the mansion. "There's a room in here somewhere that I saw during the Dreamwalk. All the strangeness seemed to emanate from there. Let's look for it."

Glaive spared the kitchen a last hopeful glance before starting after Ham. "Don't you think we are in enough trouble, Ham? I'm not up to tangling with spirits tonight."

"Well," said Ham, "my father always used to say 'Better to be boiled in a big pot of water than a small one.'"



"You never knew your father!"

Ham stared at Glaive. "True, but if I had, I'm sure he would have told me something of that sort. Now, c'mon along."

They disappeared into the dusty hallway.

Ham found the room quickly enough. Certain places set his Power to humming in his ears. Normally Ham avoided such places, because they indicated strong magic, and in his trade it was protective magic he usually came across.

This place had a different feel, however. Not a destructive potential, but an expansive potential. That was as close as Ham could put it in words in response to Glaive's constant questions. He didn't feel that Glaive would be reassured to know that the room reminded him of candied apples. He wasn't too reassured by that himself. Sometimes his Power worked in strange ways.

The room was an old ballroom, long and narrow and flanked on both sides by stout granite columns. Like the rest of the manse, this room had a thick coating of dust.

"In here somewhere is a key of some sort," Ham told Glaive. "I can't seem to spot it. Have a look around, but don't touch anything unusual."

They searched a long time, for there was nothing obvious to be found. In the end, it was Glaive who made the discovery. The key turned out to be a black flagstone, forming part of the mosaic that adorned the floor. It didn't seem unusual, except for the fact that it had no dust at all on it. It was just big enough for a man to stand comfortably upon. This fact wasn't lost on Ham.

"I'm going to hop on here, Glaive, and we'll see what happens."

"Please, Ham, don't. I'm...I'm a bit scared to be here alone. What if you should get killed? Or, or possessed? I wouldn't know what to do."

Ham grabbed his friend by the shoulders. "Glaive, don't worry. I haven't abandoned you yet. We joke about our parents, but you are my family. There isn't anything in the world that can separate us. Now stand back a bit, and keep a close watch."

Glaive stepped back, and Ham hopped lightly onto the square. Anticlimactically, nothing happened, but on the square Ham could sense an opening of some sort.

"There's a door here, Glaive. One you can't see. I think I can open it. I'm going to go through."

"Wait!" cried Glaive. Ham looked at him as he dug through his shoulder sack and came up with their second story rope. "Grab this." Glaive threw one end to Ham, who nodded and tied it around his waist.

"See you soon!" Ham face twisted with concentration and his body slipped sideways. There was a quick shimmer of light and Ham was gone. Glaive held a slack end of rope in his hands. Ham's end was sheared cleanly off.

Ham found himself alone in the room. With mounting horror, Ham realized that the whole thing could have been a clever trap. He jumped forward to where Glaive had stood, hoping to find some trace of what had happened. But the floor was clean and - he noticed slowly - unsullied by footsteps anywhere. He was someplace different.

Curious, Ham wandered to the doorway and opened it. Outside lay a hallway, but not the one he and Glaive had traversed minutes before. At the far end was a window, and Ham wandered in that direction.

The window looked down from a great height upon a stretch of seashore. The sand blazed white under a glaring noon sun. All about, on the sand, under the wood and in the water, life boiled and fought. The whole view was alive with beasts of a thousand colors and features. As Ham watched dumfounded, the creatures fought and clawed, flowing constantly from one form to another in a swift battle for dominance.

"Enjoying the view?" a voice asked, and Ham jumped and spun around so quickly that he almost fell out the window. The speaker was an elderly gray haired man, shorter than Ham but more stoutly built. He was apparently unarmed, Ham noted with relief, but had his hands tucked into his sleeves in a way that might conceal a dagger.

"It is one of the most popular views. I'm not surprised it attracted you. You were lucky to come along when you did, though, as this wing is rarely around for long. Good thinking of you to jump aboard when you did."

"What?" asked Ham, slowly comprehending what the man was saying. He dashed back to the ballroom.

The man caught up with him at the doorway, where Ham was staring uncomprehendingly at a small smoking room where the ballroom had been moments before.

"You did this!" he snarled. "Bring it back, old man."

"I can't," the old man replied mildly. "The Castle Magic has its own views about these things. It changes when it feels like."

"Well then, I'll bring it back." Ham turned to the room, thrusting out his Power and calling forth an image of the ballroom as he had last saw it. For a moment the room wavered and took the form of the ballroom, with Glaive inside, looking surprisedly at the door where Ham stood. Then it vanished.

The old man's right eyebrow rose up and he gave Ham an appraising look. "It seems you've found the right place, lad, intended or not. I'm called the Scribe, and allow me to welcome you to Castle Magic, home of the Avalon School of Wizards."

Ham stared at the old man in amazement.

=====

That's it for this zine, which is probably one of my longest. Being able to do this on a computer and paying only stencil rate has prompted this massive outflux of drivel. For those of you who care, this zine has 662 lines, 5K words, and 30K characters...

[It has been nroffed, catted into a word processing document, and then repaged, spelled, and otherwise slightly altered.--LG]



and from the consistent mistyping above, you can see that my userid is steveg on the machine at work.

Comments 104

Quentin Long : L3s - well those we saw had immunity to disease (incl caries), better 'vibes' for dancing with and extreme longevity. There was nothing saying whether this was psi or just a perfected (all that eugenics) human body.

- re Hein & Creationists - New Scientist recently mentioned in passing the realisation of one UK Creat ionist group that they'd have to start palaeontology from scratch, classifying things as creation-week, pre flood, flood, post flood, and divide from that. The scientific creationists who take the science bit seriously are going to have fun . . .

Adrian Bolt: again, this was just fiction, with no magic system (I can't write systematized magic or vice-versa).

JTS: re Magical Thinking - like all profound observations, obvious in hindsight, and very true.//re D&D Lawsuit - If anything does come of subsequent action, I'd like to see a parallel case against football, because that can cause physical injury too! That should be enough to make the D&D case a laughing-stock.//UK & insults in 'zines: this is only possible because of the very close knit (incestuous) nature of the UK FRP fan press, who are a very small group within the hobby, but who have a high profile. In A&E, the social contact isn't there in the same way as in the UK, but some write by reflex.

Daniel James: If in doubt see Allen's 'Astrophysical Quantities'. The Dole book should be in the Bod - it was in the public library in Chelmsford, where I first saw it. 1st ed - Rand/Blaisdell 1965; 2nd ed Elsevier Press 1970. //Also see WD58 (August) in which a version of my planet generating program will appear, with all the relevant formulae embedded in it, and a table of stellar mass by type, which goes M .02-.45; K -.74;.8 -1.04;F-1.57; A-3;B-10;O for 10+ solar masses (on the main sequence). Off mainsequence I don't have values- things vary and mass and class no longer correlate - but there are unlikely to be usable worlds either - as the star grows to red giant state, it will encroach on its worlds, engulfing the inner ones and heating the rest up for a few  $10^6$  yrs, before lapsing to a white dwarf (and I don't have any formulae to hand)//Mass-luminosity - the cutoff is an empirical one, the reasoning being purely statistical. The source was a copy of 'the Observatory' for 1983. Write if any more queries.

Peter daSilva : but leadership struggles are non-damaging by design, so the winner is still in a fit state to lead.

Lee: cats hunt because their stalking reflex is very sensitive. In experiments, cats will stalk, catch, kill and eat mice, sometimes until they harm themselves if continually supplied. Even if sated, they still hunt and catch, if not kill. In the wild death of starvation is possible, death from overeating is rare, and animals are ready to make hay while the sun shines. Only the superabundance of food in human society has made obesity a problem.

Martin Wixt ed: The combat round is primarily of convenience for book-keeping. I see it more as the book-keeping phase, and not the exchange of blows, being used to multi-blow per round melee systems (usually similar to the countdown in Arduin Adventure or Superworld).

Danner: Magic is just another field of knowledge: C&S artificiers are both magical and mechanical engineers. Anyway, in the end, technology is hifi and central heating, TV and computers, -not the principles that go into them. Further, much of the early Industrial revolution was based on engineering and not scientific advances - bigger blastfurnaces, machines to weave rather than human powered frames.



Wilson Heydt: re Fraser - you neglect to point out that the characters are indulging in miscegenation of the worst kind (well, it would be worse if they were Gloranthan) (burying elvish vampires with steaks through their hearts and all that).

Silly bit: a new disease for RQ - the Munchies

An attack of the munchies causes the character to feel faint with hunger, and so must eat large amounts of food and quickly (fill in the details), preferably junk type foods with an instant carbohydrate rush, or fall into a retching attack and faint, losing 1pt CON as if poisoned.

There is a sketch in the Monty Python film 'The Meaning of Life' showing the results of a terminal attack of the Munchies.

Mean bit: a review of the first Superworld module.

I can't describe it better than that so the cover says it's called 'Bad medicine for Dr Drugs', and the title page says 'Bad news for Dr Drugs'. This shows that Chaosium is going the TSR route, putting out slickly produced but shoddy products.

The big black mark was that the <sup>in</sup>copy I saw (Phil's for review in WD) that the culture pack was missing. This side of the water, American High School is on a level with Shogunate Japan as far as role-playing goes - an unfamiliar culture with strange language and rituals. That to one side, it felt more like a 50's-60's environment, yet internal evidence (Walkman tape recorder, date of the funeral in the first episode) put it firmly in 1983 - but where are the video-gamers and D&Ders in the highschool?

(Oh, the module is kiddie supernurds vs drug-pushing villains)

Other flaws of consistency - the world is assumed to contain the San Francisco flying squad (superworld) and presumably other heroes) yet one character has only old. Batman re-reuns as a role model - what about the news for Chrissakes! The dynamic behind the characters is also poorly representative of the current run of teenage heroes (Kitty Pryde, the X-babies, even - Ghu help us all - the Power Pack (cringe!)) (those latter seem 8-12 age range) - being all said to be extremely weak.

The game was poorly edited - Dr Drugs, the aging hippie villain doesn't have Telepathy, except in the last episode where he is allowed to use it (whoops!) - for example. According to Phil the Champions conversions of the characters (the module is notionally dual keyed) are poor translations of the SW numbers, and not of the effects that the SW characters can cause - Flashdance's martial arts should have been bought multiply, not with levels, to conserve the balance against Blossom.

Over all, it's the weakest product (outside of DW 31,32) I've seen from Chaosium, and continues the downward trend that started with Questworld, continued thru Soloquests I-III, and infected Big Rubble. I don't mind in-jokes purely as in-jokes, like the Dragon Pass map, but feeble humor is the pits.

In all, this module grabbed me (as a potential buyer) less than DDG, and somewhere about as much as MMII (i.e. not at all). Ken Rolston (co-author) should have known better.

Somewhere along the line, disillusion seems to have struck. Chaosium now seem to be going the way of TSR, and where I at first accepted RQIII, I now feel they should have kept true to themselves and just issued the new stuff with the Gloranthan cultural detail, as 'Knights and Wizards', or 'Men of the West' or whatever. I'd now be very surprised if we ever see Heroquest (I remember when their catalogue gave it a summer 82 release date).

I'm sorry for going on so, but this has all left a bad taste in my mouth and I want to express my frustration, and feeling of betrayal. So let's have a cathartic moan to ourselves, and then go on to the next page feeling refreshed.



Daniel James or now I switch my mind on I realize you meant Dole's paper in Icarus vol 13. (1970). Also for climate models see the papers by M Hart in Icarus vols 33('78 (1978) and 37(1979).

Simon Cornelius: Move Quietly requires no hiding when moving up behind someone. Also for Spot traps use See (darksense Scan); for spot hidden Search (Scrutinize) as in Trollpak.

Figures - what I miss is figures for superheroes - blanks like the ones in Champs or Superworld, with a basic range of heads, and bodies so as to produce normal/muscle/giant bodies with hooded/bare heads in both sexes - rather as Citadel do their varied ranges of fantasy figures.

Plea: Anyone out there with access and interest to academic journals containing climate models that might be simplified and adapted to home computers for SF games - so varied planet size, atmosphere, inclination, insolation and geography should be available as input. I'd be interested in hearing what you could rake up.

Cause or effect in superhero games: In Xmen 182 Rogue uses coins, thrown as missiles, as a penetrating energy blast. I'm not sure about Champions' attitude to small thrown objects for STR bricks, but in Superworld this is viable - though the range falloff is steeper and the base damage bonus is more expensive.

Now surely, the cause is STR, the effect is just another EB (though buying STR as zero-range TK, kinetic attack (~~and~~ limited to zero range or through thrown focus) seems extremely long-winded). And how would you cost up the thrown objects limits to the energy blast (the Marksman vs Darkshot problem from another point of view)?

More oddities at CAMRA: (or further blatant assertions that free-form works)

You may recall a while back that I mentioned the team's illusionist Shift (real name Nina), and the nightmare she had which nearly trashed the entire group before she woke up. Last weekend, the game we played, it came to visit us for real, with much the same effects, a year after the first visitation.

This time, Shift, with the aid of a visiting psi from Karen's New York based superteam and most of the rest of the party being tapped for energy, was able to hold it at bay, simply by creating another illusion of the creature that could just about fight on equal terms with it until help arrived (that world's Doc Strange equivalent). Now why is our illusionist really a precog? There is something going on in the GM's mind that handing out experience points couldn't really produce, without holding back a few for his own purposes. (\* called Brahman)

Now we'd also invited Phil Masters over to play, and during the fight with the creature were tempted to contact him by phone to precipitate the arrival of his own sorceress for help). Raven did appear in time for the second scenario we played, which was another rematch time, this time with the first villain we'd ever met (the Druid). Since Raven hadn't met any of CAMRA before, when she arrived in this mid-West town where people were turning into trees she focussed quickly on a source of evil vibes - Shade, CAMRA member, whose origin involved spending the wrong night on a hilltop in New England (near Dunwich, now you ask)). After persuading her that the Druid was the more immediate threat, we were led a merry chase by this guy - including Salamander falling victim to Charm Person and trying to cremate Raven, and then being marched into the lake nearby, and the inevitable Teleport via Plants, he managed to get surrounded by Shade, who could absorb enough of his energy to trap him. So Bear arrives - after some distractions with a bear-sow on heat- and pulls off a few twigs from the tree-shape the Druid had adopted. Suddenly a very dead and maimed body falls at his feet. In a rare burst of pragmatism, a simple funeral pyre is agreed upon, whereupon a flaming chariot bursts out of the pyre carrying away a cackling Druid. I thought we should have cut off the head and stuffed it with garlic - of course the guy had been using Feign Death on us until our guard was down. Getaway vehicle was courtesy D. Sustare, of course.



I guess it's just as well there's no power-around type in the party - the good old Heat Metal on the fighters (Nasty Druid!) trick is too well known. It would be bad enough if cast on a car (Boom!).

Raven's mystical sense also provided us with new info on our characters - like Bear, the werebear, isn't a werebear - well not in the sense of being under a curse or a magical creature. On the other hand Gröss, the walking concrete block, is very magical - more so in human form (is he an earth elemental with the power to become human ??). Again, these things can only come out with surprises, because there is no system to take the secrets of the characters out of the GMs control, and the game thus comes over much more like the comics.

A spell idea (from Raven) : the Warlock's Mixmaster - much like the Warlock's wheel in drawing up all the magic of an area, but this spell then spits it all out again in a randomized form.

The only serious problems I foresee are in the interactions between groups set in the same world if run free-form, with characters being interpreted in differing ways - much as the comics. This usually leads to some fairly bizarre fun ideas from the notorious continuity freaks, but has led to such unpleasant episodes as Avengers 200/Avengers Annual 10 (the Rape of Ms Marvel) or the Trial of Reed Richards, where animosity between writers has broken out into view.

New Character Failing for systematized games : Overwritten by Author (inspired by Quentin Long): This is for characters like Sebastian Shaw who manage to depower themselves by opening their mouths because the author writes all his characters like that.

"It can't happen here . . . " but it always does: Last Friday, the Guardian carried, in its bottom-of-the-front-page slot reserved for silly news (such as court battles over the ownership of a ginger cat), an article entitled "Child's play for Satan".

It was the usual thing you'd expect, a bit of fun poking by the Gruniad at the sudden outburst of some supposedly Xian group, repeating all the usual MM stuff - like 'it teaches children spells'. And JTS's bit on magical thinking was well exemplified by one quote from the antis "The game embraces demons, and they are not fantasy. They are real."

I wonder what they'd make of the infamous 'Sage Advice' question 'I have killed the Big A ten times now. Is he really dead, or can I kill him again?' (interpreter's note - we played under a strict 5% chance of named demons turning up at a mention - hence a whole new load of euphemisms).

Defending was Don Turnbull with the usual line on "Monopoly doesn't turn kids into young Rachmans" line, but the gem of the piece was the revelation that there are supposed to be at least 15 D&D societies at Cambridge University (and that's 14 more than I knew about; unless they mean just unofficial groups, in which case I think they underestimate) . Maybe it was supposed to exemplify that CU was still morally corrupt (fifty years ago it was the Communists, now it's the Satanists . . .), but it's feally got nothing to do with corrupting children.

Back to Superheroes: Got Alpha Flight 12 today. It's true. After all the hype is to one side, John Byrne is writing comics these days like D&Ders play Champions. With big name writers piling up massive body counts, and generally setting a bad example, how can we succeed in providing good examples (I mean even Claremont is getting as bad these days - not to mention his love of hypothetical 'everybody dies' issues) While I will defend the death of Jean Grey as an artistic necessity (and one I never thought they'd have the guts to go through with), and could ignore having Ego the tedious living planet destroyed, but the body count these days is sheerly gratuitous.

Th-th-th-that's all folks!



Brought to you from ...rice!baylor!peter, by the tender mercies of uucp, proffed by Barry Gold, the first experimental issue of...

Memos from Norstrilia, Inc. Peter da Silva

currently residing at 9950 Club Creek Drive #602, Houston, TX, 77036. My telephone number, for those lucky enough to catch me when I'm both at home and not logged in, is (713) 776-3984. This is Sapristi Nockos #100, for future reference.

1. Comments! That's all I've got time for this time.

1.1. Comments on A&E #103

John I. Sapienza: I've been electrostencilling it up to now. This one will be directly printed at the Golds, presumably printed on a stencil. This should give a good comparison, no?// They: Well, I've got enough problems already... imagine this: "I entered the tent, and a dark form rushed at me. They drew their sword..." Singular vs. Plural is meaningful. You, I can handle, since the subject generally knows whether they are single or plural... they is is used in cases where number is not known, such as this one... but I'd rather add an extra word for the situation where gender is unknown, rather than coarsening the resolution in other places.

John Redden: Re: Illusions... sounds like what I do with my different schools of magic, but with the added gotcha that, since magic is based on belief, learning too much about how other people do things is a sure way to lose your mystical (or psychic, if you happen to think of them that way) powers. Leads to a nice self-limiting magic, and interesting ideas: "Ok, now I'll just sneak this Sorcerous incantation into his book, and watch that damned Thaumaturge die in the arena."

Adrian Bolt: Sorry about that, chief. Since I don't have it right where I am sitting now, I'll just give you the author: Robert Anton Wilson.

James Robert (103 & 104): Chronicles of Zonka: I'll give them a 3 out of 5... I like muchly the non-combat environment and the non-violent solution, though the characterisation of chaos as evil is getting a little old.// Rimon Simon: He'd get along well with Suenteus Po & Darryn, Metagod of picking up and dropping small objects. Noxious Norman of a friend's world is also in the same league: He's got a CHA of -40 due to a curse... He's also a 40th level MU, and proprietor of the local Magic Shop in Arthur (now defunct). When you see him for the first time you have to save vs. magic or go amusingly (to the DM, at least) insane.

Wilson Heydt: What's your net address?// Sigh language: I know people who insert liberal quantities of sighs into their mail. Sigh. It seems to be an ex-californianism.// Re: high surface pressure w/out high gees: what about Venus?

Nick Larter: I would think the underground firevender would not live near his still, either, but put it out in the woods (preferably on someone else's property).

Vincent Foster: Well, I don't think humans had tails to start with. I don't. But then I'm part Manx so that doesn't count.// Maybe youse guys just are Gun Freaks and Violence Mongers (hold on a sec, I've got an article to write for TASS).

David Dunham: MIND, BODY,... are actually the real characteristics. The derived ones, since they can change, are analogous to a set of broad skills.// Re Vetch



doing away with magic: he may want to make combat too horrible to consider, and promote peace that way. See "What Good is a Glass Dagger" by Larry Niven for more details.//Immoral immortals: They may be immoral, but they have natural law to make them ethical. Immortals may not die, but there's nothing to prevent them from being born... -- Peter da Silva, immortal in training.

Rob Ellwood: I'm beginning to think some form of hierarchical skill system is the only way to fly.// Aren't you starting to feel a little left out of Ylam?// Who needs victories?

Harry Robertson: The three dots... they're called ellipses (elipseez in SR20), and ~~have nothing~~ to do with ellipses (eelipseez). I'm probably more entitled to the title (yech) than you... I still have to get the hang of semicolons.

Phil Masters: Re Champions: I'm running a TFT mage in it, and he keeps running into weird restrictions put in by the GM to balance things out. Bummer.

Mark Galeotti: Another loony with trialist leanings (one step beyond dualism). I chose mind, body, and spirit... and ran with it in pretty much the same direction as you, as you undoubtedly know by now. Weird.

Mark Galeotti: Hey, there's this other guy using your name... right next to you. Watch out!// Re hypnotism: one interesting thing about it, when you look at its history, is that it tends to act the way it's popularly thought to act. It seems to be some sort of role-play, where the subject plays the role of a hypnotised subject. Julian Jaynes (whom I have mentioned previously) has done much with this in The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind, a book nearly as thick as its title.

Mark Galeotti: You even take over part of Mark's zine! Not fair!// Occam's razor? You are dangerous, man.

Denise Gerneth: Called White Pegasus, but busy or no answer (don't remember). I'm running a version of my PBM on Zachary\*Net: (713) 933-7353.

Mons Johnson: I used a Tarot Deck for the Deck of Many Things back when I was still running D&D.// Titan: Isn't it great! I have a mint copy of the original, Pre-Avalon Hill version. I'm still trying to get an address for Dave Trampier so I can get into the Legion.

Phillip R. Adams: Sputter? Ghods, that's sick.// What about Science Fantasy Role Playing? How does that fit into SH/SF?

## 1.2. Comments on A&E #104!

Lee Gold: Re: rule bender: How about system phreak? We already have Phone and Computer Phreaks out there...

Steve Gilham: Thank you. In this APA an AAAAUGH is high praise indeed. I've gotten, at last count, about six reasons it won't work (apart from "RIDICULOUS!"). Next: how to build a black hole in your bathtub and finally get rid of that ring (and the tub, too, but that's a mere detail).

Quentin Long: Your Insectorids still won't work. Neither will my black holes.



Let's not worry about reality, though.// Maahem in xe klahsruum obveeusli uuzuz difrent roolz xan SR20.// Xe trub1 wix naakud singuulariteez iz xat xaa ahr les fun xan sum uxer naakud xingz.

Alison Brooks: Favorite world... well, Poul Anderson's with some mods. No great favorite worlds in fantasy & myth, but I like Anderson's Operation Chaos world there. Xanth is kinda fun, in a sick way.

Adrian Bolt: Well,... the names aren't hard & fast, but I think of Insight as a mental attribute... it's what's tested on IQ tests, after all. Discipline is spirit for the obvious majikal reasons. How about Morals for spiritual health, if you don't like Piety? Mental speed has nothing to do with intelligence: look at Einstein. It's more related to word-play and, ahem, quick Wit. Strength related to control? You mean like in the Hulk? Knowledge seems related to memory, thus Awareness. Will and Discipline are something I'm not sure about, but I couldn't get a better name for spiritual speed. Insight isn't it, since insights may come only slowly. The names are purely mnemonic labels, after all, but I have spent quite a bit of time on this... As to what you do with them, ... read the article more carefully. I have had occasion to use all of them except (aha!) Piety. I may change it to Morals after all. Thanks for the inspiration (drawing of breath).

Jenny Hein: I like shadow game a lot. Interesting magic. Consider it stolen.

Martin Wixted: What's wrong with the other end?// Games:

|                     |                        |                    |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 2 Greyhawk          | 3 Basic Wizard, Melee  | 4 The Fantasy Trip |
| 3 RuneQuest         | 4 The Complete Warlock | 4 Other Suns       |
| 3 Bunnies & Burrows | 2 Traveller            | 5 PHAHRPS [1]      |
| 3 Arduin 1-3        | 3 Tunnels & Trolls     |                    |

[1] Peter the Hacker's Ad Hoc Role Playing System, of course! Pronounced raspberry.

No '1's, only one '5'... really bad stuff I discard. I haven't found anything as well adapted to my style of play as PHAHRPS, for obvious reasons.

Nick Larter: Well,... there are also cases of deer actually killing coyotes that spooked them. I like your ideas on animals, mainly because they agree with mine. I would like to point out that there is at least one case where a mother wolf proved an exception to your exception, but then wolves are smart enough to realise that humans are pretty dangerous predators.

Vincent Foster: Useful info on lockpicking. It's gems like these that make A&E really worthwhile (so why haven't you put some in) (shut up, Kevitch).

Kate Gehrke: Good cover sheet idea. I'll have to work something like that up meself.// CHAOS IS NOT RANDOM. Try thinking of it as Law vs. Freedom and you'll see what I mean. I, personally, am a chaotic... so I don't like this sort of thing any more than the next minority.

Hank Griffin: Great minds and all... we've had the equivalent of yoyos for a long time, including one guy that had a transfer suit implanted in his skin, connected to an EEG monitor. When he got offed, it transmatted him to his autodoc minus his skin, which was easily replaced.

Torbjorn Ragnesjo: Sorry, I don't have a Scandinavian keyboard... anyway: values: For example, at MEMory, add 1d6+MIND+POWer. MIND, BODY, and SPIRit are the row values, and CONTrOl...CHARisma are the column values.// The '0' stands for



Original or Old, as opposed to generic.

Lew Wolkoff: Rabbinical spells...

1. Balanced?

a. I would be comfortable playing this.

b. I doubt it... unless the other mages have to deal with all the weird spell requirements.

c. Dunno... see 2., below.

2. If you're reciting from memory, since the wording presumably has to be perfectly right, I'd have each cost 1 MEM. Reading from a book, you'd have to make MEM rolls to find them... rolling each turn. I'd have spell efficacy depend on PIE. Cost would be 1 PIE (recovered at the rate of 1/prayer session, however that goes). Actually, now that I think of it, that's a good system and fits into my world. I'll use it, thanks.

3. I'd also want to add bibliomancy, handled by the GM actually looking up some reasonable verse in the book. I don't know enough about Qabala to suggest anything there...

Glorkz, he said, thinking about the possibilities of Jewish Bats. Funny animals, remember. How would a herbivore keep Kosher? I hope I'm not going to get any of you lot down on me for this...

Richard Schwall: Interesting stuff on power pricing, but seems only applicable to wargamers. Sounds like it could be REAL useful in Champions, though.

John I. Sapienza: Magical thinking, eh... there's a lot of magic possible in computers. I hope us Hackers don't get spillover. Probably not, they don't recognise "adb -w /dev/mem" as an incantation (and a highly dangerous one at that, only usable by high-level users).// Re: characters: how do you feel about tragedies?

Daniel James: Stealing my thunder, wot? (Look at the number of this Sapristi Nockos!)// Well,... I can occasionally produce something that has some remote resemblance to drawing. Thanx.// I'll stick with "Honorable Sapients", except where it will cause confusion with John T.

Peter da Silva: Brilliant zine. Don't care for the picture at the end, though. You can do better.

Ronald Mark Pehr: What gives you the right to use all three names?// Have heard rumors of 3 gigabit desktop units in the near future. Eventually everyone will have the goods on everyone else, and the game will end in a draw, and we can all go home. This is a game, isn't it? Hello? Anybody there?// Animals: I think just //5 would be enough. Most fur would be as tough as cured leather with cloth. That's what it is, after all. Animals learn, albeit slowly. They're just as hard to kill, but tend to run away: the incident with the bear and bowman seems to have been a critical hit. The main thing is that since predators kill to live, they won't go in for suicide attacks, except for species like the wolverine where it's group-selected.// Therios: I'll have to pub an updated version of the lives and times of Neotherios sp. Sapiens some time.

Brian Lane: Shark toothed elves? You're batty!

Wilson Heydt: Az II hav nootd tuu Kwentin, II havnt seen Maahem in xe klahsruum. Hav ue aa pointr tuu it?



(c) 1984 by ALISON BROOKS, 52 Brent, Tinkers Bridge, Milton Keynes, MK6 3DL, UK  
and DAVE FLIN, 69 Frobisher Rd., Bilton, Rugby, CV22 7HS, UK; typed by Lee Gold.

Straight into writeup; if you don't know what's going on, we had an extensive recap lastish. Suffice it to say that our heroes, having driven off a Nazgul, are now embarking on traversing the Paths of the Dead. Read on....

#### ALDARIN

After the Dwimmerlaik had been driven off, it was necessary that we move quickly, for it would soon have brought servants of the Dark Lord to this place, and we were unweaponed--neither Cygnil nor I had a blade. And yet, despite the need for haste, we had to spend a little time resting, for all were exhausted.

Fear flowed like a grey vapor about us, as we entered the lightless tunnel where the dead had lain, the one place where the chattels of the Dark Lord could not follow.

"I am Aldarin, son of Eskaron, heir of Elendil and Isildur. I and these in my company wish merely passage through this place." The gloom swallowed my words, and echoes seemed to mock from deep in the darkness. I called forth light from the brooch, just sufficient to guide our steps.

Soon we could hear whispers inside our heads. Formless at first, they quickly became clear. The only power left to the Dead seemed to be that of their voices. They told of all the ill that had befallen innocents because of me, those who had died in Dol Amroth, those who had been slain by orcs in frustration at my doings, those who had lost their loved ones. "What man of honor callously sacrifices the lives of innocents?"

And they spoke of the future. "What will happen to Rohan when you emerge?" "What chance have you of defeating the Dark Lord?" "A fool's chance. No chance. A hopeless cause." "And how many will die for the Fool's cause?" "More than there are stars in the sky."

"The grey-haired one will have to choose between love and honor." "Why is that?" "Starlight, the gift of the Dead, is his." "Why should he have to choose?" "He is free to take or leave it." "If he leaves it, all hope shall fail. All shall fail into darkness unending."

"Cygnil is worthy. Aldarin, son of Eskaron, heir of Isilur, he is not judged to be the one to accept the gift." "A gift to drive away the dark, but the gift has a price." "If he takes it, he shall die in a short span." "If he takes it, the one he loves shall fall by his hand."

They told me how they were tormenting the others simply because they followed me. I could feel Linrael shivering. "Be silent, Oathbreakers and trouble us not with your words. These people are under my protection, and you are still bound by oath." There was a silence, and the others breathed more freely.

We carried on through the dark, fear-filled Halls, the brooch lighting our way only feebly. The air was cold and still and heavy, the sounds of our footsteps echoing.

There appeared a glow just ahead of us, the soft glow of starlight. We approached, and there on the floor lay a sword, half out of its scabbard. The glow arose from runes upon the ebony-black blade, and the sword had a strong air of power and of doom.

"The gift of the Dead," a whisper said.

I looked at the archaic runes on the blade. They read:

"Sword of doom, blade of might,

Elven magic-forged Starlight."

Cygnil stepped forward and, grasping the scabbard in one hand, sheathed the blade. The madness in his face showed that he knew of the price of this gift.

On we journeyed, but the whispering began again, and I could see the pain in the faces of the others. The Dead, those that had proved faithless to their oath more than once, had again not abided by their given word.

"I have said that these people are under my protection. Leave them be." I was determined that these Dead would obey me, an heir of Isildur.

And with satisfied malice, the Dead's reply came, "If they are under your protection, then you should carry their burdens as others have carried yours."

"So be it."

The whispers redoubled upon me, but I could see that the others were now free of this torment. "The twins Linrael carries shall never know their father." "You have gladdened Linrael's heart, only to break it in the end." "She shall grieve for you for many long years after your death." "Cygnil shall lose all; that is the price of your victory." "Leea shall lose all; that is the price of your victory."

"Linrael was captive of orcs and suffered much torment at their hands." "Shall we tell you what they did to her?" "But what can be said of a woman who sacrifices honor for survival?" "What can be said of an heir of Isildur who would wed such a woman?" "What can such a woman think of a man who would wed her?" "Shall we tell you of the torments your twins will suffer? The twins you will never see?" "Will they pray for death, cursing their father who will have brought them such misery?" "Happy is Aramis."

I could feel darkness begin to encompass me, and I could feel the Dead begin their whispering on Linrael. "Help him? How could you help him?" one said to her.

"I said silence," I snapped, as the darkness grew. Then I could feel strength flow into me; Linrael was giving me strength as when I had faced the Dwimmerlaik. And so it was that we were able to stagger the remaining distance to the end of the Paths and out into the clean twilight.

Leea guided us a short way down the valley to a small cave, unused by animals. Leea and Cygnil took the watch, as Linrael and I slept in sheer exhaustion.

#### LINRAEL

The next day we rested. The area was deserted, and we could wash away the dirt of our battles in a clean, cold mountain stream. I'd have wished to stay there with Aldarin forever, if it were possible. Just to be free of the fear, it was idyllic.

The wound the Nazgul gave Aldarin was clean, at least. It was going to leave a scar, but that was a small price for his life.

The next day we had to move on. Cygnil and Leea were going to find the Rohirrim, while Aldarin still wanted to get to Tirith. So they were heading north while we went east, skirting the mountains.

Rohan seemed deserted. We traveled quickly and didn't meet anyone, till one day Aldarin said he could sense magic ahead. He did a scry to see what it was: Aratar and his friends, camped about a day's journey ahead.

The next day we reached a wood, with a tall hill rising out of the woods. There was a man looking just like Antar, obviously Aratar. He and Aldarin greeted each other like long-lost brothers. When Aldarin got a chance to introduce me, Aratar seemed to approve of me as his sister.

Aratar described briefly how they had crossed Rohan and met someone who had told them that their burden had been flawed by treachery and been made unusable. "He said that we would meet you here and that you, Aldarin, can mend the flaw."

The others were up in a cave on the hillside. There was Iardin, Leea's brother, the first male elf I'd met. He's very charming and seemed delighted that I could greet him in Elvish. (Aldarin'd been teaching me a little.)

There were Hardag and Nadail, brother and sister, Rohirrim, very much like Ikurni. I couldn't fail to like them. They welcomed me to Rohan.



Falgamir pointed out we weren't in Rohan, but a couple of miles in Anorien. He was concerned about the welfare of the White Mountains region. "Or, in the elvish tongue, the Ered Mimraï." All I could say was that the war hadn't reached it yet.

Galev the dwarf grunted a sort of greeting.

There was only one person in the cave I'd met before.

Have you ever been starving? There's been a fair amount of hunger in Gondor in my lifetime. It was very bad the winter of '32-33. I was twelve then, and my--let's call her mother, even though she didn't bear me--my mother died of a fever.

I'd no money. I couldn't earn a living; I hadn't the skills. I didn't even know the sorts of things the street kids learn from birth: how to catch rats, how to get what's going. They look after their own too, and I was an outsider. So I was starving.

I took to stealing. I was bad at it, and I usually ended up with a beating, but I made just enough to survive.

'Cept one time I got caught, and the man handed me over to the law.

I was just thirteen. I was a virgin.

They shared me round once, then left me bleeding and crying and cold in one of the rooms in the Citadel. And all that I could think of was that I didn't want to die; I'd do anything if they'd just let me live.

And funnily enough, they agreed to that. I became a sort of pet to them; I think. I don't suppose they ever intended to let me go. They didn't even get round to mutilating me, partly because they could hurt me enough without that, partly because they got some other prisoners in not long after me, so they didn't have a chance to get bored enough. And one day they got careless, and I was desperate, and I managed to sneak out.

The other person in the cave, Scafloc, was the man that had handed me over to the orcs.

He came over towards me. I was certain he recognized me, especially when he studied me through half-closed eyes. But all he said was, "A pleasure to meet you," and disappeared out on watch. I hadn't realized how tense I was; by the time he left, I was starting to shake from the strain.

#### ALDARIN

Whilst Linrael was being introduced to the others, Aratar explained more fully of the task that I had to perform. It seemed that one of the Fellowship, an elf named Moondog, had fallen into evil, and that his touch had caused a corruption in the crystal that had rendered it unusable. It was necessary that the crystal be purified but, save myself, the closest with the power to do this was in Rivendell. Unfortunately, the crystal was of such destructive power that to effect such a transformation would almost certainly cost my life. The Dead had told me that when I died I should break Linrael's heart, but was it to be so soon?

\*\*\*

COMMENTS - by ALISON (Thanks for all the egoboo, folks.)

A&E 103 (I got this first)

JOSEPH REDDEN: Sorry, but I have a headache right now.

WILLIAM PIXLEY: Do your Giant Amazons wear chainmail bikinis?

PHILLIP ADAMS: RAEBNC on Sputter.

JENNY HEIN: re ct to me: My point was this. Someone said, "Oh look, don't start going on about the mystery of the disappearance of the Neanderthals; they were humans just like us." But H s neanderthalensis did disappear. It certainly doesn't contribute much to the modern gene pool. So I used the example of a group of unarguably H s sapiens to show that a race/group/subspecies of a species can

disappear even if the species does not. As to why Neanderthals are extinct, humans are such a successful lot I can't think of anything else likely to kill them off but other humans.//Aargh! You get me hooked on Gwynne, then stop! How could you?

PHIL MASTERS: Re ct to me: We were using modern society to compare with others. On an absolute scale, our society is not very compassionate. Look at all the nice shiny mental hospitals--built not for the patients' welfare but to keep them out of our sight. Material production isn't the limiting factor here. Enough food is produced to feed everyone on Earth, yet millions starve. (I'm getting bored arguing on compassion. Can we drop it?)//I have never seen social progress done well, and surely it would have to be run even slower than skill progress? Anyway, look at the F&SF books on which our hobby is based. Most have appreciable power increases; in some, power increases at a far faster than in self-respecting games. See McKillip's Harper series, Abbey's Rifkind books, Maxwell's Firedancer series, Kring's Space Maverick books.//I don't like one-off magic items and tend to ignore them. I don't think they are a special case, though; if used, they give players a large momentary advantage; if not, they accumulate.

BROOKS & FLIN: Couple of misprints: Alison ≠ Allison; Melonil ≠ Melondil.

A&E 102 (this arrived late)

SIMON CORNELIUS: Charming? Me? \*blush\*//Re female armor: I'm still not convinced there's such a thing as off-the-peg armor, for either sex. If there is, it's the chain-shirt type, usable by anyone of the approximate build. (I always think of motorcycle clobber; I wear a jacket advertized as "male" build with no difficult.)//What makes you think there are fewer rabid feminists in the UK: didn't you see my "manhating, humourless feminist" badge at Gamesday? Personally, I despair of ever convincing artists and figure-makers that their typical females would have died of influenza long before they even reached the dungeon.//½" humans: the pygmy shrew is geared to eating its own weight in food every day or so and maintaining a high metabolic rate to offset the cooling-effects of its surface area. I don't think ½" humans could survive for long without considerably redesigning. ('Course this is is fantasy.)

PETER CLARKE: Your ct re the Knights of Ascension is, put simply, brilliant. The analogy hadn't struck me before, but they are very Donaldson-ish.

KEYES: I play for fantasy, not to look up Life Insurance tables. Sorry.

EDWARD WILSON: Like the psi probe.

QUENTIN LONG: I agree with your statement on compassion as far as it goes. For the rest, I'm prepared to agree to disagree.

And thanks for extra cliches go to: JOSEPH TELLER, PETER CLARKE & MARK GALEOTTI. (How does a wolf smile?)

COMMENTS - by DAVID

A&E 102

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: Re reacting to objectionable characters: It's all very well to say one should react only on the character level, but how does one react to a player with a variety of characters, all objectionable in the same way? For example, the player who seems only capable of playing gold-bricking, magic-greedy dwarves who cheat, lie, and backstab party members to acquire more than a fair share, in every persona?//Re THE HOBBIT and private adventures: It is fairly clear to me that in The Hobbit, JRRT is a beginning GM with but one PC (Bilbo) in his campaign and a host of NPCs. In LotR, he has gathered a number of players and had about a 50/50 mix of PCs and NPCs in the major groupings. I wonder what his next campaign will be like.//Love the barbarian referee.

SIMON CORNELIUS: Tall? Me? If I were any shorter, my feet wouldn't reach the ground.

NICK LARTER: re flammable oil: By all means call it "magic oil" and price it accordingly. But the dirt-cheap aviation spirit one can see in some campaigns ruins my suspension of disbelief.

FORRESTERS & LOSS: RAEBNC on ISPPIC.



PETER CLARKE: Re combat: I prefer to play in the style of heroic fantasy, with courage and determination as important factors. I have seen and played in combat systems in which sneak attacks were devastating, and to act like a typical hero was fatal. Every time. Trickery and deception, surprise and missile fire will always benefit the user tactically somewhat, but I don't like systems in which this is the only viable approach, in which one CANNOT be a hero. I grant you that combat is about deciding winners and losers, and a good GM will set things up so the PCs should win. Just. But systems in which the same tactics are always clearly optimal, especially when such tactics are against the heroic tradition, do not interest me.

#### COMMENTS ON A&E 103

V FOSTER: The Mastodon Season opens on the Glorious Twelfth, as anyone with breeding could tell you. Colonials are, of course, invited to the first hunt, which starts 20 miles south of Rockall. Mastodon hunting is the fine art of pitting human ingenuity against animal brawn. Actually, mammoths are mastodons without class. Have you ever seen a mammoth with a smoking jacket at the appropriate time?

PHIL MASTERS: re combat lethality: If a system promotes one style of roleplaying at the expense of another, then it limits roleplaying options. The combat system should encourage the style of the genre being simulated. Don't expect PCs to be heroic if the only one to get on is by sneak attacks. (See also ct above to Clarke.)

D NALLE: whilst Steve Gilham can speak for himself, it should be pointed out that his cts on techno-evil were concerning Middle Earth variant campaigns, not all conceivable forms of evil./Agree on PBZ; I also feel it takes up too much space.

DAVID UNION: Re Middle Earth write up: Tain't fiction, guv. (Do you mean it's fact, boss?) There are seven players involved at present; nine have been involved at one time or another. A roll of honor may be given when it concludes.

WAYNE SHAW: While I agree with most of yr ct to MIKE DAWSON that a character should be developed with a personality that allows it to be playable, I disagree totally with your conclusion that out-of-character play is acceptable if needed to maintain the game. I'd rather die in character than live out of character. (I mean my characters would, not me.)

#### At last, comments on A&E 102

W KEYES: "Average strengths," etc. in this society are not very meaningful in the context of exceptional people in a different society. If you give such averages, it would be useful if you quoted the standard deviation and defined which average you were using. Not everyone has a calculator/computer to hand. I don't, nor do I see any great advantage in overcomplications. Shackling imagination and fantasy to a ream of stats and %ages is cutting the fantasy out of FRP.

Would a realistic game system let an 87 year old man run 135 miles in three days in full equipment, intending to fight at the end of it? Like Aragorn. Unrealistic? Yes. But it is the stuff of heroic fantasy. Internal consistency is more important than mundane reality.

#### DRAGONS

Tired of the D&D dragons with a mere 8 HD? Or do you despair of ever being tough enough to take one, due to your campaign's low level nature? From reading the sagas and the like, we offer our definition of the toughness of this most fearsome of beasties.

A dragon is tough enough so a fight between it and the toughest hero in the campaign (PC or NPC) will result in mutual takeout (viz Beowulf). This assumes a straight fight, without taking advantage of surprise or using missiles (Bard cheated!) or spells (so did Smaug when he got a chance!).

'Twilight Gods in a Foreign Land'

1.....Exiles from the Firstborn

Over the town the raven circled. It croaked. No reaction.

Again. Still nothing.

A third time. No-one heeded it.

The raven died.

"Lights on again, Carol," called the girl. She was about twenty-one, slim, about five foot ten and dark-haired. She was wearing a navy blue sweater and light blue jeans. Her name was Lisan Theresa Martins and she was a naturalised British citizen according to her passport. She was also a powerful telepath and was good with animals, especially birds. She had no relatives except her sister Carol.

Carol Miranda Martins was shorter than her sister--about five foot seven--and appeared to be three or four years older. She too was slim and looked slightly Nordic. Although only a weak, latent telepath she had an excellent memory and her strong religious beliefs had led her to show it off by learning the Book of Revelation. She switched on the lights and opened the curtains. It was raining and Lisan groaned. "When are we due for some good weather in this bloody city?" she demanded angrily. "That makes three days running it's rained now. Some day I'll raze this damn place to the ground for what it's done to me. Some day."

"Actually it's four days now," replied her sister in a superior tone. "It drizzled on Monday, didn't it? It must have done--I remember you left your wet clothes all over the floor."

"You're not still on about that, are you?"

"Too right I am--but I suppose it doesn't matter really. Did you get through?"

The suddenness of the question surprised Lisan for a moment; then she sighed.

"I was so close," she said, "so close. I got through out I couldn't attract anybody so--poof! I need a form that's not particularly massive but gets attention."

"Bleeuurr. How about a blood clot in the brain?"

"Listen, it's not funny and you know it as well as I do. Time?"

"Half-four. You're not going out again, are you? Where on earth do you go?"

"Three hours...what do you do with three hours? Too much time, too little time, it's as bad as the weather." Lisan stood up and joined her sister at the window. Outside, a man with an umbrella ran down the street. "Soon," said Lisan. "I should be there soon. It's the mass problem that I'm stuck on, and when that's done we've got it made. Have you contacted Mirriam yet?"

Carol shook her head. "I'm beginning to wonder if she's actually in London. Certainly not in ~~land~~ this district--I may have to start looking for one of the others instead."

"No. Mirriam has to come with us. Think about it--we need someone as strong as her to take out Lyn and the weaker ones while you deal with Arlenvast and Kaen-roster and I do my stuff--Karen simply hasn't got the power to beat anyone stronger than Araen even with considerable experience and no way, out no way, could she manage all four of them. Anyway, for all we know the other two aren't even here and we haven't heard from Karen since last August."

"So they aren't. Is Mirriam?"

"I hope so. Because if she isn't, then we daren't go home."

Then the storm broke.

The storm had been hovering over the Atlantic for several days before it caught itself on a force eight gale and arrived in Britain. Its approach was heralded by thunder and lightning, and it broke over London with a terrible fury. It poured water into the River Thames. It poured water into the streets. As the North Sea drove itself into the heart of London, someone raised the flood barrier.

And the rain just kept on coming, driving itself with an almost sentient anger into the sodden city.

7:30, November 25: By now the storm had abated to some extent and Lisan and Carol



were going their respective ways--the latter to the local hospital, the former to destinations unknown. Carol was the first to reach her objective, ten minutes after setting out. That made her five minutes early, so she sat down to read, meditating on the printed words until her mind withdrew from her body and she could begin seeking the being Lisan had called 'Mirriam'. She expected nothing, but got an immediate response:

"Carol! Where's Lisan? No, don't argue, just tell me. This is important."

"Well--I don't know."

"Find her, quickly. Tell her to come to the bottom of Nelson's Column as soon as possible. Tell her I've got some very important information. Can you come?"

"Not really. I won't bother if you don't need me right away."

"Make sure Lisan passes on everything I tell her, then. Speed is of the essence." She cut off. Carol began looking for Lisan and found her after a few minutes.

"Lisan. Where are you?"

"Waiting for the seven forty-seven. Is this urgent?"

"Yes it damned well is. Mirriam--"

"You got her?"

"Other way round, actually--anyway, she has some important information and wants to see you at the bottom of Nelson's Column soonest. Right?"

"Fine."

Neither of the three girls involved had said a word, and the whole conversation, excluding search times, had taken a few seconds. The hospital clock read 7:45 when Carol returned to her body; she went off to check in.

She was back home at midnight, having had an extremely boring evening.

Trafalgar Square was dark and dead, silent except for the rain and the thunder. The whole place seemed totally lifeless except for a tall, Mediterranean girl sitting at the bottom of Nelson's Column. Above her, the famous admiral stared blankly into the angry maelstrom.

Lisan discarded her ticket and stepped off the bus, which drove off through the rain. Damn you, Mirriam, she thought, if this is anything to do with you. She soon reached Trafalgar Square and quickly located Mirriam. She was sitting in the place arranged and seemed to be lacking an umbrella; she also appeared to be asleep. Lisan hurried over and demanded, "Is this yours?"

Mirriam opened her eyes and said distantly, "No..."

"Then whose is it?"

"That's what I'm worried about... But listen. Which sun sign are you?"

"You how-much?"

"Listen. Someone in high places is onto you--could be the MoD, could be MI5, could be the paras--but your personality is being checked. And you're an astrological misfit. The paras'll be watching you by the New Year."

"British Government no way. Arael is involved."

Mirriam looked worried. "Are you sure?"

"Someone, anyway. Those agnostic idiots haven't got a clue about astrology."

Mirriam looked even more worried. "That means it's important...and I haven't got to the interesting bit yet. Listen. There's a weak point due in three days interfacing Skye and Aesalyn. Transference possible circa...oh, six-ten."

"Do the others know?"

Her face registered puzzlement. "Others?" she asked.

"Karen. Marion. Anneth. Those others."

"Karen and Marion achieved transference via a weak point in Geneva about a year ago, and Anneth disrupted the interface so that she did a complete circle, came back where she started and scored six sixes. Nice one. Apparently the weak points are offshoots--sort of echoes of the disruption."

It was now Lisan who looked puzzled. How come you know all this and I don't? It seems pretty suspicious to me."

"Give over, Liz, I haven't got the time to explain." Lisan's face began to cloud with anger, so she preempted the outburst by saying, "On, the hell with it. Briefly, then." She sighed and tried to ward off the effects of her exhaustion.

"Listen. You know I passed through the interface fifth. So I was just arriving here when all crazy chaos and disruption erupted behind me. I was practically blown through. So I spent very little time between--and it seems that that helped retain some of my power. It doesn't matter. Here's something that does. This city is full of spies listening in on telepathic conversations. So don't try to contact me. Just do this. At twelve noon tomorrow, start walking around at random until you come to a bus stop. Get on the first bus that arrives, and take it to the end of the line. Don't look at the number or anything. And bring Carol--but you must lead. What I'm going to do now is to predetermine your random decisions--so. No-one will know where you're going--except me. Not even you."

As she climbed onto the bus home, Lisan looked at her watch. It was four in the morning. She blinked--no, five. Five?

As the bus pulled away from the kerb, she took a surreptitious glance at Mirriam, still sitting in the rain. Her head was slumped forward in a position of utter exhaustion, and her hair lay straggled at random across her knees. The little that could be seen of her face was deathly pale.

Her mind was a maze of tired and confused fear.

Lisan let herself into the house just before six o'clock to find Carol staring at a blank TV screen and sipping black coffee. "You took long enough," she complained as Lisan searched for a clean cup.

"Yes. I don't know why, though...I got there at half-eight, spent a few minutes talking, and it was five in the morning. Hell and damnation! Who was meant to do the washing-up today?"

"You were," said Carol in a tone that brooked no argument.

"I was? Bats! You get some sleep; I'll get a dishwasher."

"I've got a dishwasher."

"Except that it doesn't work. I believe one of your friends was going to mend it--a month ago," returned Lisan viciously.

Carol changed tack. "What did Mirriam say?"

"One, the paras are onto us. Two, she's found a weak point. Three, we're going on a mystery tour tomorrow. Oh, and she told me what happened to the others. Karen and Marion went home via Geneva, and Anneth disrupted the interface and never left--I don't know how. Our weak point is via Skye."

"Don't waste your time; we'll still end up in that well-known holiday resort called by its firends Aesalyn."

At that, Carol groaned out loud. "What a homecoming! Hey! Where are you going?"

Lisan called round the door into the hall that she was going to make a telephone call, and Carol heard her pick up the receiver and push buttons. Pause. Then Lisan said, "Hello. Yes that's right--look, I'm sorry I didn't turn up to-night, I was otherwise engaged...o, I couldn't warn you...No...Yes...He'll keep, won't he? In any case, the plan's changed. We're going to delay the attempt. Till the 26th. I'll leech him tomorrow and the day after. Then I've got to leave.. Yes, now listen. Then he's drained--on the 28th--then you sacrifice him. Got it?"

She put down the receiver and walked back into the lounge. Carol smiled evilly at her, a smile of congratulation, and Lisan smiled back to her, likewise.

It was practically over.

next--

Death-Knell for a City

=====

THE ART OF LEADERSHIP. Any messages from outer space are the responsibility of the BBC and the Post Office. It is their responsibility to track down illegal broadcasts. --MoD spokesman, quoted in the Observer, quoted in Cosmos (Carl Sagan)

EMERGENCY THOUGHT TO RANDALL STUNEY: Some time ago you mentioned setting up a Lensman APA. Why not extend it to a general P/SF literature zine? (please).

That's your lot.

++/hee-Plop++



Mark Galeotti, 5 St. John's Road, Hampton Wick, Kingston, Surrey KT1 4AN

Comments on A&E 104

QUENTIN LONG (Other True Way): Hello, again. Could you mention a few recent examples when anarchy has meant the rule of thuggery. That is, where the consensus of society is for anarchy rather than just incidents when social control has been withdrawn from people used to and embracing the rule of authority (whether "Western civilization"'s dog eat dog or "Eastern civilization" with each dog being eaten by the pack while being part of the pack eating each other dog...).

You obviously know about computers. Is it likely to be practical in the nearish future to store images of an area seen from various perspectives in a computer, so a moving image can be projected on the VDU showing what the PCs see as they travel? It would require lots of memory, but the way computer technology seems to be progressing, that looks like being less and less limiting a factor.

ADRIAN BOLT (Death Stars for Fun & Profit): Behavior of players like those is plainly anti-social. I would like to think that other players' irritation and eventual ostracism would change their attitudes, but having experienced similar types I have no such illusions.//One way to change characters is to put them under pressure from the outside world. One player in a WW2 campaign I ran had a thing about playing hard-core Nazis. No way was I going to let that continue, so I had his father tearfully tell him the truth about his ancestry: he was half-Jewish.

MARTIN WIXTED (Pages 9): Great story! As for your poll:

|      |   |     |   |             |   |            |     |           |   |                  |   |
|------|---|-----|---|-------------|---|------------|-----|-----------|---|------------------|---|
| RQ   | 5 | C&S | 4 | Space Opera | 5 | EPT        | 3   | Universe  | 2 | Arduin Adventure | 4 |
| AD&D | 2 | YRS | 4 | Gamma World | 1 | LoA        | ?   | Traveller | 3 | Morrow Project   | 5 |
| OD&D | 2 | DQ  | 4 | Space Quest | 5 |            |     | Aftermath | 5 | Champions        | 4 |
|      |   |     |   | Bushido     | 4 | James Bond | 007 |           | 5 |                  |   |

ALISON BROOKS & DAVE FLIN (Leagues/Shores): I also like the Norse mythos best, with Heimdall as my favorite character (the DeCamp/Pratt Heimdall: the resourceful and honorable guardian rather than the humorless and colorless sentry).

MATT STEVENS (Ancient Empire): One of the skills on your list of examples is ARMOR, based on CON. Could you elaborate on this?

TORBJORN RAGESNJO (Sporadic Viking): Hello.//I agree with you over the term "role gaming."

JOHN BAMBACH (Elfin Kingdoms): A very interesting curriculum. (I certainly wouldn't have minded taking it!) Personally, I would have added some more general subjects (Psychology, Geography, and Politics) rather than giving quite such a detailed knowledge of numerous specific folklores and literatures.

LEW WOLKOFF (CIA L9 MU): Just from looking through it, a very interesting list, along with a fascinating method of casting spells. Just think, maybe the real world is as interesting as a fantasy world!

RONALD PEHR (Tales of Magic): I haven't thought to say it before, but I like your ADVENTURES IN THE SHATTERED WORLD a lot. The "reunification" of Nertz and Nariss was extremely well done, a very "mythic" end.

As for legislation on "archaic" weapons, naturally they will be seen far less fearfully than the latest, leading edge zapper. But does a line not have to be drawn between "archaic and interesting" and "outdated but still deadly"? Even if 2100 sees micronuke-powered, killer-ray rifles, a laser-scoped Heckler und Koch PSG-1 firing AP1 bullets or a FA MAS firing on full auto are still threats to be taken seriously. Take knives. Most countries have some upward limit on size, don't they?

continued in three pages at the end of THE BLOODY DRIP WRITHES AGAIN

THE BLOODY DRIP WRITHES AGAIN!

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5406 Patriot Dr., Toledo, OH 43611; (419) 729-5201

This is my first try at this, so bear with me, folks. I finally decided to give it a try after reading A&E for a couple of years. Let's see...been FRPing since 1977 or there'bouts and fascinated, even though in my first dungeon run as DM, I blew it with the flying/attacking dagger from the coffin. After they knocked it out of the air, I said (while reading directly out of the old D&D bluebook): "...and of course if the party puts it back in the coffin, it won't attack them any more!"

The dwarf looked puzzled, then asked, "But why tell us that..." and trailed off looking thoughtful, as I suddenly said to myself with fury, "Why did I tell them that? ARGH!" Oh well, it doesn't happen any more...mostly.

Anyway, I'm happily wedded to a game-playing second grade school teacher and three conniving cats, along with an international Folk Dancing group that I've been leading since 1970.

#### Comments on A&E 103

LEE GOLD: Yes, I think I can handle taping the charts to a screen myself if you send them, and the box did have the dice. A very nice game design, with many new ideas about many things, including the nature of spells, armor (Like it!), shields, and skills for game use.//I've been on the track of a lot of this for some time. I've designed a lot of game systems for personal use since about the second year I started playing D&D, including spells, shields, armor, weapons, crits, fumbles. Never happy. Anyone out there got systemitis as bad as me? You don't say! Anyway, a good game, Lee! Be waiting for further culture packs, and I hope it sells well for you.

JAMES ROBERT: Rimon Simon! YES! Great stuff! May incorporate him into mine...especially like the wilderness theft encounter..."Tanstaaf1," all you bloody gimme-grabbers out there!

MATT STEVENS: Argh! I wanted to see the combat/spell system! Be watching future ishes.

DENISE GERNETH: I can see why you want to rave all night. What I don't understand is what you want to change. If it's the AC system (which is about all I can figure from the article), you might try the MAN, MYTH & MAGIC combat system. It is a D% hit system (which could be easily converted to D20; I have tried it with success), that incorporates all hits/damage/armor into one D% roll, somewhat like Arms Law without the cumbersome charts.

All characters have THN% (To Hit Number! Cute, huh?), which they must roll above to hit. If they make it, they add weapon damage and subtract the total down to their THN%. The remaining % is applied vs the target armor, which further subtracts points. Any remaining points are taken off the victim's Life Points.

All characters have 100-600 LPs based on six stats rolled on D%. For D&D-type thingies, this could be easily transferred to one point per 5% and rolled on D20 instead. Or keep the roll-up system as is, using D&D's 3-18 stats for LP.

Some tinkering would be needed on monster HP and spell damage.

An example of MM&M combat: If the PC has THN 50% and rolls 01-49%, he misses, doing no damage at all. If he rolls 50%+ (say 70%), he would do damage (20 points with a roll of 70). If he had a 30 point sword, he would add 30 to 20 for 50 points damage. Versus a target armor of 30%, he would then subtract 30 from the damage roll and thus end up doing 20 points damage to the target's Life Points.



Converted to a D20 roll, these numbers would be THN 10+, 14 on the hit roll for 4 points damage. The Sword would be +6 damage.  $4+6 = 10$  damage. Armor subtracts 6 damage points, making final damage taken 4 LP. ; It's not as complicated as it sounds. Really.

Otherwise, I've been using spell points with fungoes and crits a lot like what you mentioned, with success in AD&D for some years now.

There are no new ideas. Just new ways of expressing them. (Who was it said that? Besides R.A.H., that is?) Anyway I don't see what you're worried about, Denise; it all sounds good to me.

After the 4th spell fumble of the evening, Otilia the Cleric/MU threw the % dice on the floor with an unlady-like oath! After seeing the smoking ruins of the last attempt, the party hastened to assure her that the expensive healing potions would work just fine until her deity cooled down some.

Game balance, EGG? I'd say so!

DAVID DUNHAM: Re HP-less combat: interesting but in the final analysis, don't you just have 3 HP indicated by the 3 dice wound levels? Sure, you can subtract or add points as the person's wounded and healed, but if you drop a die size or a whole die, it still sounds either like 3 HP (indicated by 3D4) or like 9 HP (indicated by 3D4, 2D4+D3, 2D4+D2, 2D4, D4+D3, D4+D2, etc.), as the person gets weaker before death occurs. But still interesting; it made me think a lot.

I've been looking for a HP-less combat system for a couple years now. One of my ideas is, for whatever system you use, roll the chance to hit; then each weapon has a chance of killing or wounding depending on the armor/non-armor worn--and possibly also on the weapon's size relative to the target.

This involves being creative with many weapons/armor or lumping everything into Small, Medium, Large--your choice. Wounds would affect stats, cutting them in half unless a SAVE vs CON? Wound? Luck? is made. If "death" is rolled, a Save vs CON? Death? Luck?--or the character is dead in "so many" combat rounds (determined by CON? Luck?), unless helped, healed. If the save vs death is made, it is either a wound or KO, depending on how you want to run it. If the wound roll is made, "It wuz just a scratch, ma!"

So then levels (shudder!) or fighting/parrying/picking/spells/etc. may go up, but no more HP going "up, up, UP, Godzilla!" as in D&D and others.

If the above system seems very complex, it is certainly no more so than RQ or C&S, and lot more so than Deed&Deed. Combat tends to quick and fatal, or long and boring (but what's new?), and has some drawbacks, but somebody asked a few wishes back, so I thought I'd throw it out. (So now you can too!)

If anybody comes up with a combat system using what I just wrote, I'd be interested in eyeballing it to see how it compares to mine.

MONS C. JOHNSON: Your new counterspells idea is very interesting, and I assume open to PCs as well. That would give the Lich more trouble than he wants, I think.

PHILLIP R. ADAMS: Frankly and unhappily, I'm sorry to say, I don't believe "D&D breeds killers" any more than Dirty Harry, Mike Hammer, Halloween III and Hill Street Blues do. Through TV, movies, novels, comics, jokes, news stories and history, indeed through almost our entire way of life, runs the idea of "Kill th' fuker, and he won't bother us no more!" This philosophy permeates our whole culture and indeed the whole world, with only a few lapses from time to time. You need only peruse your local newspaper for far more examples than I want to type up.

I agree that D&D and others make it easier in the game to hate your enemy than to love him. But if it weren't there in all of humanity to begin with, it wouldn't show up in roleplaying at your dining room table. It comes down to, "Anyone who disagrees with me for whatever reason is a 'monster' and deserves whatever he/she gets if he/she looks cross-eyed at 'me and mine.'" (Says TSR: "All NPCs are monsters!" Go, Gary.

Even men of peace, when you come to think of it, like missionaries, have problems dealing with the "Devil-worshipping monsters" they are trying to convert to "Pure God-fearing Christians" or whatever (that's PGFCs for short).

It is there to some extent in all of us, friends. Anytime we look at someone who thinks, worships, or only looks different from us and condemn him/her for it, it is there! The best we can hope to do is to contain it, cure it in ourselves or others if we can and just know if we can realize it that "everybody is not just like us in the next whistlestop up the line from Podunk."

Anyway, all I can say is it's not only D&D breeds killers, but among RPGs I will admit it does continue a job started elsewhere.

Comments A&E 102: "Round up the usual suspects"

I wanted to mention that I very much liked the short RPG called Dawntime, but looking through the zine I can't tell which of you four authors wrote it. Anyway, congrats to all. A small quibble: I know the stats rolled count towards skills, but why not at all towards fighting too? All humans have a 35% chance to hit is it? No modifications at all? Oh well, too picky, I guess.

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: Interesting to hear of your adventures as a Barbarian Ref; must have been fun.//Re yr cts to J. SAPIENZA: I've found that if a group is playing as a team and there is constant bickering (in character, mind you, like a dwarf vs an elf), it produces great unrest. And if a character goes to the extremes of killing another PC deliberately (not controlled into by the GM), it causes VERY hard feelings, whether done "in character" or not. Maybe this should not be, but it is more often the cast than not.

A CLOSING RIDDLE: My color is of the moon, and I am soft to touch  
But a blanket of me would not warm you much.  
What am I?

FNORD--continued by Mark Galeotti

WILSON HEYDT (Golem's Corner): But to what extent is the lack of public outcry over crossbows a matter of perception rather than lethality. The power of the gun is indisputable greater, but it is also far more in evidence. Do Starsky or Hutch carry crossbows? Did John Wayne?

Crossbows may be as deadly under the right conditions, but considering that it is the effects of guns that we hear about the most, how many people know that? The criminals largely don't, so they opt for guns, and we hear about what their guns did....It's a spiral. Anyway, I take your point.

Your piece on Traveller spacecraft was...well, awe-inspiring. I'll have a close look at it sometime--when I've got a week or two free.

That is all that springs to mind on the first read through. See you around.  
--Mark.



TERRA FERRETAE 9 25/3/84

Robert Saunders,  
4, Viewforth, 1  
Edinburgh, UK

### Real-Life Zombies

Leafing through some oldish copies of "New Scientist" recently, I came across an article entitled "The Chemistry of the Living Dead", which I thought might be of general interest to some of you. (The reference to this would be Vol. 100, p796. It's dated 15/12/83).

In Voodoo tradition, zombies ~~are~~ individuals raised from the dead by voodoo priests. They have no will of their own, and are basically slaves. A certain Dr Douyon in Port-au-Prince has tracked down several cases of "zombification". All 15 cases could be explained as being due to epilepsy, alcoholism, or mental illness. However, in early 1980, a woman was approached by a man claiming to be her brother, Clairvius Narcisse, who'd died in 1962. Narcisse claimed to have been made a zombie by his brother, and to have remained so for two years, before being freed by the death of his ~~master~~. Since then he said he'd been in hiding from his brother. It was easily confirmed that he was indeed who he claimed to be. Douyon reckoned a drug had been used to dramatically lower his metabolic rate to simulate death.

An ethnopharmacologist from Harvard, named Davis, then visited Haiti to find the drugs involved. Poisons were collected from four villages, and all were found to contain a variety of hallucinogens. The major ingredients, however were an extremely poisonous species of toad, and several species of puffer fish (from two genera). The latter was the most potent ingredient, containing Tetrodotoxin, a nerve poison. Several individuals in Japan have indeed been diagnosed as dead while in a state of paralysis following consumption of improperly prepared puffer fish (though of a different genus to those found in Haitian poison. Davis noticed similarities between cases of accidental puffer-fish poisoning in Japan, and stories of "zombification" in Haiti.

Before Narcisse "died" he suffered hypothermia, hypotension, and nausea. His eyes dilated, and he had difficulty breathing before paralysis set in. Narcisse claimed to have been conscious throughout, including his burial. Rats injected with the poison became paralysed, and later recovered totally.

According to Davis, the zombie, after recovery from his "death", is fed a paste made from a plant or plants from the genus Datura. Datura spp. contain many alkaloids that can cause amnesia, and hallucinations. By this hypothesis, "zombies" are sold as ~~slaves in a state~~ of "Psychotic Delirium" (whatever that is- basically I think the poor sods would be stoned out of their skulls). Presumably these slaves wouldn't really be much good at anything remotely requiring brain power, and walk about in a daze. This would, I suppose, explain pain resistance as well.

The introduction of "real" zombies to RPGs as an encounter would be quite rewarding. In CoC (I think) the rules suggest that not every encounter should involve things supernatural or of the Cthulhoid Mythos. These zombies could prove to be the basis of an interesting adventure, especially one set in the Caribbean, where after all, the players will be expecting genuine zombies.

Another use that springs to mind is in a magic free PRP such as I'm currently running. I would imagine that PCs encountering a field of labouring zombies would be quite convinced that they had finally stumbled upon something genuinely supernatural.



Ferret Mumbles ; Comments on No 103

DUNHAM : Re your short piece on death in RQ. I too dislike killing PCs. I run an old local rules variant dating from my schooldays (and the old OD&D campaign), in which unconsciousness occurred at HP=0, bad or mortal wounds at HP= -1 (save vs CON), and death at HP=-2. I later ruled that rapid action at HP= -2 could stand a chance of saving the PC. This rules modification was a clear response to a system in which HP increased as a PC advanced, but were low at low levels. It was seen as better than increasing HP from D8 to D10 as was done in the AD&D rules.// Am I right in thinking that your wound levels aren't additive? And that their effect is mainly to make it more likely that a more serious wound will occur? If so, I think I'll give this a try (this seems to be genuinely ~~in-1000~~). I reckon that multiplicative skill loss (there has to be a better term) is the better of your two options. It could be easily handled using a mechanical multiplier, and is fairer to low skilled PCs as are found in my campaign.

BROOKS : I agree regarding gaming at Games Day. We really ought to all get together next year, and organise a game. There are quite a number of UK contributors now, and between us we should manage some kind of Gaming/APA do next year.

MASTERS : I've found that really lethal combat systems reduce bloodshed in my campaign. Roleplaying is encouraged by it, to an extent, as players begin to feel for their character when he or she is very much under threat. Especially new players.//What are you going to do when you run out of Howard Devoto lyrics?

ADAMS : Thanks for the comment re the CoC. I had intended the write-up to demonstrate the ease with which my players started to role play with this system. I'm still trying to get Drummond to finish the thing, as Peter Worthington has now recovered his notes (though not, unfortunately, his wife).

ROBERTSON : I believe that in France recently, a child was gobbled up (literally) by a dog so quickly it couldn't shout for help. The own owner, incidentally, objected to having his dog put down. This et ~~is~~ re yr ct to Heydt.//Re VA write up, Drainage Inspectors? our usual line was that we were from the Ordnance Survey!//Are you sure the Strangled Pigeon isn't a Tardis? after all, it seems to appear in many worlds and times. Hm: the Eternal Publican?

LANIER : Liked the Firevenders. Some of this could be useful in a low magic system.

HEYDT : This isn't really a comment on 103, but another Asterix film has come to my notice: "Asterix and Cleopatra".

TELLER : Since I wrote that bit about my players' PCs being evil, dishonest etc, the situation has deteriorated somewhat. The PCs have been forced to leave a city twice (once virtually run out), and have now relocated about a hundred miles further West, and are causing yet more mischief.

-----  
A few final things. Has anyone out there invented a "Stingray" RPG? Do any of you remember "Stingray"? It just occurred to me the other day that the Gerry and Sylvia Anderson TV series' (there were several of them) would make admirable, if a little light-hearted, RPGs. Hm. Maybe I can get Harry to collaborate on this.

Till TF10, ...



1. Sample is sticky; can be balled and polished:
  - Ball very resistant to deformation ... Clay
  - Ball fairly resistant to deformation ... Clay Loam
2. Sample is silky; can be balled but not polished:
  - Ball resistant to deformation, silky ... Silt
  - Ball has little cohesion, crumbles ... Silty Loam
  - Ball resistant to deformation, smooth ... Silt Loam
3. Sample has beak: ... MONTORMILLONITE MAN-O-WAR-BIRD

Instalment the ninth for A&E 106, compiled 4/14/84 by and (c) Nick Larter of Silwood Park, Ascot, BERKS, England.

## A&E 102

HARRY ROBERTSON: Enjoyed your piece on fairies. I can recommend Little, Big (reviewed later thish) to you with some certainty. Even though the book does lapse into six inch, little old lady mode from time to time, the rationale for this is rather splendid. The concepts of seelie and unseelie are worked rather well too.

ERIC SADOYAMA (re ct to me): The short answer, as far as my world is concerned is Yes, on both counts. Of course, magic weapons can last a long time; how else do they slip into the fabric of legend and become perpetually requested after by muscle-bound heavies? Magic weapons that for some reason have only lasted a short time will not be passed down in memory like this.

I think I should elaborate on the distinction I draw between "magic" magic weapons and "holy" magic weapons. The former can be recharged fairly straightforwardly by anybody with enough magic power. The individual GM must decide whether to apply alignment restrictions on use. Personally I do employ these.

The latter are more difficult to recharge, as the power of the right deity (or exceptionally, a narrow band of deities) must be used. In addition, the deity once contacted will generally demand a short history of the weapon, such as some of the more major deeds it has been employed in, before consenting. This may be to positively identify which weapon it is amongst all the many that the deity has created or simply to decide whether the weapon is worthy of recharge.

Even the most fabled magic weapon is not infallible. It is a bit hard on a party of adventurers, though, when they have quested for months, only to find that the weapon they seek is now no more than a pile of pretty oxides.

ROBERT SAUNDERS (re definition of SAN in CoC): a very shrewd observation, and one that I for one would agree with. Having said that, though, then if one simply notes the name change, the game can go on with the mechanics unimpaired, and I'm not convinced of the need for a separated new stat SAN.

If we look at AD&D, then SAN is at least in part INT/WIS-based, as can be deduced from the table of Psionic Blast vs Non-Psionic. This is also implicit in CoC rules which say something along the lines of "the person will go insane because he has realized the full import of what he has seen."

Moreover, if we restrict SAN to the act of losing one's mind, and STAB to one's tendency to freak out in some other way, then neither of them will cover losing one's insides as a result of a singularly nauseating experience, which I suppose would be CON-based (and which would equally impair the performance of an investigator). Yes, I'd definitely prefer to keep things simple here.

EDWARD P. WILSON (re skill and class-based advancement): I've used this for some time, on a rather wider scale. At the start of my rolegaming, I employed level increases as in D&D. Later on, I used %age-based skills a la RQ, within these levels. Now I'm gradually moving away from this and introducing levels for everything. I've had individual weapon and language levels for some time.

I believe this concept provides a relative assessment of a character's abilities that the eye can take in rather quicker than dozens of percentages. So long as a PC knows his skill level for anything, then the matrices with the %ages pertaining to how he performs in a particular situation can remain with the GM.

Skill Level provides a relative measure of the chance of a successful use of that skill at a given level of stress. Examples:

Sigbert the Bold has Riding (1). This means he can sit his horse as it ambles along the road to market. But he'll probably lose control of his mount and fall off as a legion of undead on nightmares bursts from the trees to chase him.

Pious Paul has Latin (4). Reading Caesar in his fireside chair is a piece of cake. He'll also have a good chance of deciphering the inscription on the tomb door to effect egress as the zombies close in.

### A&E 103

ME: Whoops, Easter has come a little early this year.

LEE (with your editor's hat on, re filler after Matt Stevens' zine): whoever told you about BARBARIAN, KINGDOM & EMPIRE, etc. wasn't me. You have a wire crossed, O Great One. [Sorry. It was some Briton who'd scrawled initials vaguely like yours at the bottom of a short note.--LG]

JONATHAN D. WOOLLEY (re Secretaries): I hope my discussion in A&E 105 was to your liking.//(re FateRole): My initial impressions appear in MMB 6 (in 103); no doubt I will have more to add when I've used it a bit more.//As to your other queries on my system, I trust you have received my letter.

ADRIAN BOLT: Welcome and thanks. I daresay that the Giant Arthropod debate will continue, not least because if I do not write anything else on the subject, Simon will hit me. AS for this, spot the widget on giant ant-lions later on.

ROBERT SAUNDERS: Games Day Fringe, eh? Yes, I could go for that; just tell me what I have to do.

HARRY ROBERTSON: Enjoyed the VA writeup. How about "The Sack of Clapham Common" as an alternative title? Well, maybe not....

LEWIS STEAD (re Onionskin Scenarios): How about "Attack of the Giant Onionskins from the Dark Planet"?

JOSEPH TELLER (re ct to SAUNDERS): Absolutely right! Let the villains reap what they have sown. If a dishonest and deceitful character is to be played with any success, he'll have to try hard to cover his tracks and/or eliminate any irritating loose ends. Future installments of my campaign report will show the PC party doing a great deal of injudicious sowing, and believe me, just recently they have been in for a truly awesome quota of spectacular and bloody harvests.

### A&E 104

ADRIAN BOLT re grading %age skills: Essentially, I agree, but I would never make a master botanist roll to identify a daisy; I'd just say, "Rupert, they're daisies." See my ct to Edward Wilson above for more thoughts on this.

SIMON: Yup.

LEE: re ct to me: I think you have fallen foul of an infernal English punster.

ROBERT SAUNDERS (also HARRY): Wow! Thanks, guys, I can't wait.

JOHN BAMBACH: John, you're a star. Many, many thanks. Incidentally, I recently unearthed a few facts on Potocki the man. Apparently he was an eccentric adventurer and keen balloonist. When he wrote the Saragossa Manuscript, apparently nobody in Poland would publish it, and it eventually found press in Paris, French translation after he died. He committed suicide, apparently because he was too astounded and amazed by what he had written to go on living.



ALISON BROOKS & DAVE FLIN: Four-Eyed Maritime Ethiopians? Sounds like a new Illuminati card?//Re boring dwarves: I have a dwarven PC called Groyne in Simon's campaign, who was pretty dour and uninteresting. There were several reasons why.

First, he was a long way from his homeland, and he didn't particularly like mixing with the humans where he was, because most of them thought that he was a gnome. Eventually he had enough of this and packed his bags and went back to the mountains, where he set up a highly profitable sulphur mine with his two cousins and immediately became a far jollier and more outgoing soul.

Second, he really didn't understand magic and undead sorts of things, and so he was really scared of both of these phenomena. Needless to say, in his adventuring days, almost every adversary encountered was either highly magical or highly undead, and so Groyne seldom had a chance to shine, and got a reputation as someone who tended to lean on the others in the party a bit too much.

JOHN G. ROBILLARD: I hope my further expansion on ideas Secretarial in 105 was to your liking. I'm currently running the life of Edward Lessingham as a non-Cthulhu scenario using CoC rules, just to prove to my investigators that there is more to life than the Great Old Ones. They haven't really got a clue what it's all about yet, and the cross references between this world and Zimiamvia are giving them a particularly tough time: e.g. the newspaper report claiming that a lynx was sighted in the Lake District.

QUENTIN LONG re Glen Larson, etc.: reluctant though I am to admit it, the outline you gave for the Automan idea really appealed to me. In fact, I think it was pretty neat (especially the character of "Cursor"). Having said that, I do not wish to imply for one second that I think the TV series will be any good. I mean, one touch from GL, and it's the TV rotting disease for you, chum, but still....

## BOOK REVIEWS

Little, Big (Methuen, 1.95 pounds) by John Crowley

To review this book deservedly would, I fear, require a piece of similar magnitude to the 538 pages of the tome itself, classy and unclassifiable as it is. Simply put, however, it is about a set of Tarot cards, and the tale (or rather "The Tale") that lies within them, and relates the fortunes of several generations of the Drinkwater family who reside upstate in a big country house called Edgewood, and their city cousins the Mouses (Mice?) of The Bronx, as well as occasional other odd relatives, such as the mage Ariel Hawksquill.

To say any more would be to say less than nothing at all, and at the same time risk letting slip any one of the million upon millions of magical (often literally) moments which comprise the action. Please read this book. (Just say you did it for Nick.) What else can I say? Ah, yes! If I could take two books along to that proverbial desert island we are all frequently washed up on, I'd take this along with Eddison's A Fish Dinner in Memison. End of objective review.

## The Absolute at Large

"And do you know Leibniz? Leibniz teaches that physical matter is composed of psychical atoms, monads, whose nature is divine. What do you think of that?"

"I don't know," said G. H. Bondy. "I don't understand it."

"Nor do I. It's fearfully abstruse. But let us assume for the sake of argument that God is contained in all forms of physical matter, that He is as it were imprisoned in it. And when you smash this matter up completely, He flies out of it as though from a box...You have only to burn one single atom up completely, and immediately the whole cellar is filled with the Absolute. It's simply appalling how quickly it spreads."

--so converse the hapless inventor Rudy Marek and the opportunistic magnate G. H. Bondy near the start of Karel Capek's sharp satire, *The Absolute at Large* (my edition Hyperion Press, 1974).

Marek has invented a device he calls a Karburator (really a nuclear reactor), which upon splitting the atoms of its fuel releases the religious energy, the Absolute, formerly inextricably bound to the matter, to float freely around the world, spreading peace, goodwill and miracles.

Capek uses this device as the foundations of a scathing satire, whereby Big Business for the first time has access to an unlimited and exceedingly cheap source of energy as provided by the Karburator. The industrialists ought to be able to create the ultimate consumer society, unloading vast numbers of cheap goods on the unwitting proles, but they do not. Why? The answer lies in the enlightening by-product of all this energy: the Absolute. The men in power become benevolent and caring towards their needy fellows, and as a result society collapses.

### Peregrinations on a Pantheistic Premise

Now I'd like to consider the central idea in Capek's book in more detail

The development of this idea so far as I am concerned, however, lies in the "What if..." statement. Forget the satire and modernize what's left, and we are left with the situation in which the discovery of nuclear fission, potentially one of the most dangerous times for a civilization, with its capacity for manufacturing terrible weapons of destruction and all, carries with it its own safety valve. The release of the all-permeating Absolute every time an atom is split absolutely (so to speak) precludes the possibility of anything nasty and dangerous resulting, and the energy obtained can be used for good and wonderful things for ever after.

Where does all this lead? People often have a problem devising a Science Fiction campaign that is widespread and rational but without a strong militaristic element (either because they dislike the concept per se or because they are simply looking for something a little bit different). And this is where the concept of the Absolute comes in. At a stroke, it provides the necessary oomph and technology to develop space exploration--and keeps it necessarily in a peaceful setting.

As a further outline, I'll give the briefest summary of my Science Fiction campaign (that actually hasn't been aired on the playing board for some years) to show how I utilized the idea in actual play. Around the star Parvus orbit five worlds: Maior, Secundor, Passor, Galior, and Little Zorro. Secundus is inhabited by a sentient race who, by the time we deal, have harnessed nuclear energy, releasing the Absolute. They have also colonized the other four worlds in the system by one means or another.

More important, this planetary system lies on the edge of a vast space graveyard, eons old and light years across, littered with million upon million of derelict spaceships and other cosmic bodies. The Secundans, with no wars of strife to gainfully occupy them, have dedicated themselves to systematically cataloging and salvaging everything within the graveyard. This is where the troubleshooting Secundans who work at "the Rim" find the excitement and spice of life.

I do not believe that the dangers of such work would be lessened by the comforting presence of the Absolute. For one thing, at the limits of its influence (where the people will be working, after all), the emanations will usually be very weak, often not present at all, allowing a whole new range of conflicts and emotions to manifest themselves among the workers. Many of the dangerous adversaries will be mechanical or electrical rather than biological anyway. And the reptilian astronaut, rendered insane by millenia of ill-programmed, cryoslumber is not going to be any less insane in the presence of emanations of the Absolute (a phenomenon which will also disturb the odd unstable Secundan).



Interactions of normal lifeforms with the Absolute are a lot simpler. I assume that the pantheistic presence holds true throughout the entire universe. Thus a sentient lifeform coming into contact with the Absolute anywhere will simply recognize it as the benevolent presence of his own God or pantheon of gods (in which case the emanation is taken to be of that god most attuned to the nature of the matter under fission). And all sentient beings will have come into contact with their own Absolute as a prerequisite of having attained the stars.

The real jokers in this pack are those nasties that have found their way into this particular Bermuda Triangle from a parallel universe. They are not ruled by the all-permeating forces of kindness and good, and can be deemed immune to it, enraged by it, or subject to any other effect due to it at the GM's discretion. Basically, a race of all-conquering galactic slimies will remain a race of all-conquering galactic slimies.

Finally, in the example above, I take the Absolute to be a "good" force, no matter what god from whichever world it is supposed to represent. There is nothing to stop the GM from attuning the Absolute more closely to the aims of a manifestly evil and warlike deity, if he so desires. In this case, I reckon that the universe would be a distinctly unsafe place to live. I think it would be harder to justify the situation in which the Absolute is responsible for good emanations in one part of the cosmos and evil ones in another bit, though.

#### LOVECRAFT FOOTNOTE

My library-use roll is going up in leaps and bounds. Here's another file on works Cthulhun. I've not seen it and so can only pass on the few lines I've unearthed.

#### THE CURSE OF THE CRIMSON ALTAR

Directed by Vernon Sewell, with Boris Karloff (his final screen role), Christopher Lee, and Barbara Steele. Photography by John Coquillon (whose credits include "Witchfinder General" and "Straw Dogs").

Allegedly based on Lovecraft's Dreams in the Witch House (which I have not read), it concerns a young man who travels to the isolated village of Greymarsh to look for his brother. Unfortunately, it's also the eve of a local celebration to commemorate the burning of a witch, and so he gets mixed up in all the horrors of this.

Well, that's it; anybody seen the film.

#### Campaign Report

SO FAR: Our heroes have met Skidthane, a wandering fighter. He takes them to a great subterranean working that he regularly frequents, to plunder the wealth it contains. In the working, they run into Yefta, a cleric. Apparently friendly, the first "prophecy" he makes comes true remarkably swiftly, and if the second should do so, it will bode even worse for Skidthane.

Following Yefta's directions, the party makes its way towards the tea-room. They come to a marshy area interspersed with smelly pools. A little farther on, they reach a door which is barricaded from the inside (i.e. the side they are on). They realize they must go through the door to get to the tea-room, but the prospect of taking down somebody else's barricade and dealing with what they were trying to keep out is not one they relish. They turn back.

Reaching the marshy area once more, they are surprised to find it full of frogs, and rapidly filling even more from an unseen source. The poor amphibians are obviously in great distress, so Lyra has a chat with them to see if she or any of the party can help.

It transpires that there has been a massive population explosion in the frogs' domain and that the frogs here have been driven out by a new strain of unusually large and aggressive frogs. With (for once) admirable perception, the party goes back to the barricaded door and removes it. On the other side is a long room, absolutely packed with frog skeletons.

Clearing a path through these, they come to a set of stairs which eventually leads to the tea room. Conversation with the proprietors (carried out via messages passed by dumb waiter) reveals that to leave the earthwork by any other way than the one they came in would take them elsewhere than the Black Chasm. This is, of course, not news to Skidthane, and they do not find out anything else of interest.

While relaxing over their meal, Gustavius reveals his theory that the small blue flask with fish motif they found is the key to getting back on Martha's trail [Wrong!--NJL]. He also thinks it might be able to transport them across the raging seas of Harragon contained within the great bronze bottle, where Gustavius also conversed with Salty Jack, the wily old whaling captain [Correct--NJL].

Returning the way they came, they reach the frogs once more, only to find many of them trampled or semi-devoured. Moreover, there is a great rent in the nearest wall enclosing the marsh, and wisps of silvery vapor are flowing into the area. Even as they watch, parts of the construction become less distinct and seemingly melt into the argent tendrils.

Scant seconds later, four non-corporeal beings appear in the gap and make their way in to the complex. (They are simply four ordinary ethereal people desperately trying to hunt down the mindless thing that made the hole before it does any more damage.) Our heroes make their normal reaction when confronted with non-corporeal people and attack first. They have little effect on the beings though; and fortunately for the party, these spirit themselves away to continue with their more urgent pursuit.

Another interesting room they find contains transparent pillars within which float people surrounded by bily green liquid. They can deduce nothing more about the nature of this place and so leave. Only a fairly pointless skirmish with some hapless beetles now separates the party from the way that leads to the lower of Yefta's ladders, where they duly arrive.

The trapdoor at the top of the ladder can be seen to be shut, and Estel senses that something is wrong. Uttering "Flame on!", he mindsurfs up the shaft containing the ladder at full speed and belts into the trapdoor, knocking it flying. He was right: the cauldron of boiling oil balanced on top of the trapdoor also does a somersault and, plummeting down the shaft, bursts in the midst of the others. They all get severely scalded except Lofty.

Meanwhile, at the top of the ladder, Estel confronts a slightly bemused Yefta and lays into him. Lofty hares up the ladder and joins the fray, while the others follow on up far more gingerly. Presently Estel and Lofty kill Yefta, only to see his body wither before their eyes to a dry husk, from which a small winged insect buzzes swiftly away. They conclude that another representative of the insidious Swarm has reared its ugly head, and carry on up the second ladder to ransack the late Yefta's apartment before leaving the earthwork.

The items they deem of value that they find are his astrology texts, an ornate dagger with a poison recess in the handle, a mace, and a small rod composed of two parts joined together by a screw-thread. Behind a false wall in the apartment, they also find a peculiar machine. They pause awhile to inspect this, only to hear an ominous buzzing approaching up the shaft.

A small squadron of insects swoops into the room and proves very difficult to hit. All the party gets stung except Estel, and the attackers buzz away once more. The extra shock has rendered Skidthane and Lyra unconscious, and it is left to Lofty and Estel and the scalded Gustavius to carry them out of that place.



They manage to leave the earthwork without further incident and find themselves back on the knife-edged ridge. The fresh air eventually revives the two casualties, and they press on slowly. Once more the terrible fog descends around them, and they hear the nearby skittering of unspeakable lifeforms. This time too they hear a tremendous rushing sound, like some gargantuan waterfall. Skidthane explains that this is indeed the case: there is a great subterranean river that, legend says, passes under the whole of the north of Zamor before cascading out of a great fissure in the side of the Black Chasm, not far from where they now stand.

Eventually the fog lifts, and they find themselves by the trail that winds the upper crevices of the Black Chasm up to the road. Almost at once, they notice Estel is behaving strangely. He has the two-part rod they recently acquired in his hand and is shivering violently. Seconds later he hares off at lightning pace up the trail and is gone. Fragments of deranged speech are carried back to the others on the swirling winds: "The Jousting Plain...the third part...hastened...."

There is little the others can do except to start their weary way back to the Coaching House, in need of a few days recuperation. The effect of the insect stings has not yet become apparent, but provides yet another source of worry for them. And as for the search for Martha, they have come across no new leads at all.

TO BE CONTINUED

### GIANT ANT-LIONS

I'm sure people have enough monsters of their own without needing the likes of me to make up any more. Nevertheless, in the gamut of giant arthropods we have come to know and love, the humble ant-lion has, to the best of my knowledge, been sadly neglected. For this reason alone, I now hope to redress this somewhat.

The larvae of these savage and spectacular beasts are most often encountered in deserts, perhaps also in drier and dustier regions of acid scrub. They are hard, flattened beasts with powerful mandibles, which in some races may be used to inject a poison. Their legs are also powerful and permit movement beneath the sand at great speed; as a larva approaches, it may appear as a fast-moving wave of sand.

The larva's most unusual feature is its large number of tough, filamentous setae which radiate out in all directions from the thorax and abdomen. These are used to pick up vibrations of approaching prey. A giant ant-lion larva may reach up to fifteen long and be about six feet wide.

The larvae have both an active and a passive form of attack. In the former, they simply charge towards the source of vibration, keeping just under the sand surface, and attempt to seize it in their mandibles. In a densely populated area, many larvae may converge on the same target from different directions and may well end up attacking each other as well.

The second form of attack is more subtle. The larvae construct conical pits in the sand and settle at the bottom, their mandibles arranged at the center of the cone. When their sensors detect approaching prey, they scoop up small rocks or pre-formed balls of hardened sand in their mandibles and hurl these very accurately at the target. This is to try to get the target to blunder to the edge of the cone, where it will quickly slip down to the center of the cone on the shifting sand walls and....CHOMP! Often both forms of attack may be combined, particularly if it looks to the ant-lion as if the target is going to escape the cone.

Smaller ant-lion larvae pits may function successfully as sort of living land-mines or gin traps on roads. The cone constructed by a larva one or two feet long may not be immediately obvious. Stepping in it would instantly result in the removal of one's foot, somewhere above the ankle.

continued in one page--at the end of FIGHTERS, MAGES, AND SAGES

another zine from the dreaded Glenwood Lane

FIGHTERS, MAGES AND SAGES...#2

by Sean McLachlan, Glenwood La., Katonah, NY 10536

Training costs in AD&D - section 2

Spell Books: L2-3 200; L4 300; L5 500; L6 700; L7 900; L8 1200; L9 1500

FOSTER (102) re OFFBEAT WEAPONS: You can also use tables as mantlets in a siege. Nail one to a wooden roof, put sides with arrow slits on it, and you'll have an instant mini-fort.//I like the channel changer idea. Do elves watch a lot of TV?

Offbeat Weapons Expansion I (This is just to prove I'm more violent than you are.)

GARLIC: If eaten, this deadly weapon can be used as poison against anything within breath range; save vs gas or die. It also guarantees instant ~~immunity~~ protection vs vampires and all creatures with a sense of smell.

WET TOWELS: Good for suffocating enemies; usable as garrotes or whips by the lower classes.

WET SOAP: A deadly trap on a bathroom floor; an effective missile weapon.

DUNGEON MASTERS GUIDE: This arcane weapon has many magical powers: it inflicts horrible damage if used as a club; it's invulnerable to piercing attacks, and it can make rules disappear within its pages. No one has ever fully read it, and its contents are likely to cause Confusion.

Interesting Fact of the Month: A&E #200 is coming in April, 1992. Lee, do I have to wait until then to get more bacover art?

A HOMEMADE TRAP: 1) Take a 5'x5' piece of cloth and put 500 thumbtacks through it. 2) Put it behind a doorway with a tripwire in front of it. This will warn you if someone attacks your house at night. (It's a bit obvious in the daytime.) Note: it is not advisable to leave these things lying around the house without telling the other occupants.

How to improve A&E (uh-oh): 1) More bacover art; 2) No more white pages; they're the messiest ones. This might make A&E cost more, but so what? It's the most worthwhile zine I've read besides PEGASUS (and I'm not even sure that's still published).

Time to go again, until next month....

[illegible]

MONTMORILLONITE MAN-O-WAR-BIRD continued--by Nick Larter

Adult ant-lions are of more conventional appearance, looking rather like large and extremely voracious giant dragonflies (but distinguished from these, apart from the slim chance they would share the same habitat, by the ant-lion's far longer antennae). They are, of course, quick and accomplished fliers, and thus every bit as much to be feared as their subterranean children.

TAILPIECE

Well, here ends probably my most mixed MMB yet . Hopefully, nextish will have something to say on dwarves in legend and romance, and the arts supplement will be going oriental. Thanks as ever to Lee for the typing. This time I'll finish on a quote.

"When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro." --Raoul Duke



# ST. AUGIN'S BOOK OF DAYS

(formerly Peregrinations..." and "Worlds Sage of Sparrowsfield"

perpetrated by Scot Fritz of 6 Griffin Ave., Danbury CT 06810; (203) 792-7698

Hail! The overflow from #100 is clogging everything up, eh? PBZ #3 coming soon. But first...COMMENTS ON #102

FOSTER: While a character may have used INT in the past, he is now being controlled by a player who has his own brain and means to use it whether the rules specify he can or not. NI tells the player the PC's experiences and leaves the application up to the player.//Please give the address for Tree of Life Worlds.

BAUER: Recently expressed my willingness to do Text/Graphic adventure games for the Macintosh in PASCAL for APPLE. Would like to correspond with you, if you like, concerning this.

HEIN: Very happy for both of you. If things fall through, I'm in the yellow pages.

More comments on 102 and 103 nextish. Now, on to...

## The DESMESNE Character Generation System (c) 1983 by Scot Fritz

DESMESNE is an FRP rule system I designed for Sparrowsfield. It is Tolkienesque in many ways, and it helps to keep those concepts in mind, while creating a character.

You may choose to play any of seven races:

Elves Trolls Dwarves Pixies Sprites Halflings Off-landers

Elves are 52-72" high and thin to regular build. They are highly magical, with good agility and perception. They are like Tolkien elves. There are Half-Elves.

Trolls are 66-90" high and usually regular to stocky build. They are predominantly farmers and herdsman. They are poor at manipulating things with their hands but have strong backs and stable minds.

Dwarves have already been described in past issues. They are 30-60" high and heavy build. They are as strong as Trolls.

Pixies and Sprites were also described in past issues. They are 6-18" high and weigh a few ounces to 1.5 lbs. They are highly magical; some can fly.

Halflings evolved from lapinoids (rabbits). They are 26-46" high and are usually stocky. They are very good with their hands and very perceptive. They are modeled after Hobbits.

Off-Landers are descendants of the survivors of a Luxury cruise-class vessel which crash-landed in Sparrowsfield near the end of the Second Age (shortly before the Elves came down from Valinor). They have lost most of their technology. They are 56-80" high and can be thin, regular or stout. They are by far the most knowledgeable about the Land, as most other races were unattracted in traveling and were far too busy fighting off the ogres, or what have you.

So now you must choose your character's race, sex, height, weight and preferred hand. Next we will roll Personality Influences. Roll D100 as many times as you want (although we suggest two times). Skill types include: PC (Physical Conditioning), PS (Psionic Strength), NI (Native Int), MD (Manual DEX), MA (Magical Amplitude) and AGI (Agility).

|                |                                             |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 01 Sharp Sight | +10% on Sight and Missile skills            |
| 02 Far Sight   | +10% on Far range Missile skills            |
| 03 Good Sight  | +5% on Sight and Missile skills             |
| 04 Bad Sight   | -5% on Sight and Missile skills             |
| 05 Awful Sight | -10% on Sight and Missile skills            |
| 06 Deaf        | Roll D100 to determine severity [no 07--LG] |



|    |                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 08 | 2X Natural Healing Rate              |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 09 | $\frac{1}{2}$ Natural Healing Rate   |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 10 | Impotent                             | Cannot perform in most (sexual) situations                                                                                                                                               |
| 11 | Speech Impediment/Stutters           | -20% on Speech skills                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 12 | Lame                                 | -20% on AGI Skills and half Speed                                                                                                                                                        |
| 13 | Asthma                               | Half Fatigue; unpredictable attacks of varying intensities                                                                                                                               |
| 14 | Insomnia                             | -5% to all skills; listlessness and lethargy caused by inability to sleep                                                                                                                |
| 15 | Hypochondria                         | -5% on PS and PC skills; preoccupied with illnesses                                                                                                                                      |
| 16 | Bisexual                             | Not preferring one sex to the other                                                                                                                                                      |
| 17 | Alcoholic                            | -5% on NI and AGI skills; impulsive and irritable over frequent craving for spirits [no 18-LG]                                                                                           |
| 19 | Alcohol tolerant                     | not impaired by large amounts of spirits                                                                                                                                                 |
| 20 | High Pain Threshold                  | Two saves vs Unconsciousness from Pain                                                                                                                                                   |
| 21 | Depression                           | Infrequent feelings of hopelessness/negativity<br>impaired concentration; may be careless, irritable, passive, and unconcerned for safety.                                               |
| 22 | Excellent Judge of Character         | GM will answer two Y/N questions about NPC/PC met.<br>Save vs Lies equal to Discretion save.                                                                                             |
| 23 | No Sense of Value                    | -20% to Barter; Pay D200 x actual cost of item                                                                                                                                           |
| 25 | Were-creature [no 24--LG]            | Roll D12: 1 Bear, 2-3 Wolf, 4 Rat, 5 Snake, 6 Jackal, 7 Lion, 8-9 Tiger, 10 Weasel, 11 Cheetah, 12 Ape                                                                                   |
| 26 | Childhood Illness                    | Roll D8.<br>1 -10% on PC skills 5 -10% on MD skills<br>2 -20% on PS skills 6 +20% on Healing Know Skills<br>3 -10% on NI skills 7 -20% on AGI skills<br>4 -20% on MA skills 8 Roll twice |
| 27 | Robust Childhood:                    | Roll D8 as above and reverse sign                                                                                                                                                        |
| 28 | Childhood Friend (D10)               |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|    | 1 Thief                              | +20% on all related skills                                                                                                                                                               |
|    | 2 Priest                             | 2 Acquired Skills from Cleric table and +15% acceptance                                                                                                                                  |
|    | 3 Fighter                            | +10% on any two weapons                                                                                                                                                                  |
|    | 4 Minstrel                           | +25% on one weapon                                                                                                                                                                       |
|    | 5 Juggler                            | +10% on Juggling/Acrobat skills                                                                                                                                                          |
|    | 6 Healer                             | +25% and +10% on two healing skills                                                                                                                                                      |
|    | 7 Mystic                             | one Psychic skill                                                                                                                                                                        |
|    | 8 Hunter                             | +20% Track; 1.5 x price of animal furs                                                                                                                                                   |
|    | 9 Archer                             | +10% on two missile weapons                                                                                                                                                              |
|    | 0 Sage                               | +15% Read/Write; +20% on all Lores                                                                                                                                                       |
| 29 | Has Exotic item                      |                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 30 | Patronage of Society or Guild member | +15% acceptance                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 31 | Attractive to (D8)                   | 1 Ogres, 2 Elves, 3 Faerie, 4 Goblins, 5 Guarans (Iguana Men), 6 Dwarves, 7 Animals, 8 Xithlanths (Leopard Men).                                                                         |
| 32 | Repulsive to (D8)                    | as above                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 33 | Good Singing Voice                   | +15% to be accepted as a Bard                                                                                                                                                            |
| 34 | Extended Family                      | +20% on all Lores                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 35 | Infravision                          | 10'                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 36 | Infravision                          | 30'                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 37 | Infravision                          | 60'                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 38 | Lived in mixed culture               | D4 extra languages at Competent [no 39--LG]                                                                                                                                              |
| 40 | Immune to 0-level Poisons            | (Food poisoning, insect bites)                                                                                                                                                           |
| 41 | Immune to 1-level Poisons            | (Primitive poison, animal bites)                                                                                                                                                         |







THE DARK AGES PAGES #13(?)

(c) 1984 by Martin Wixted, 108 West St., Danbury, CT 06810; retyped by Lee Gold

# COMMENTS UPON ISSUE NUMBER ONE HUNDRED FOUR (104)

ALISON BROOKS/DAVID FLIN (re Poll): Well, there's one vote for Ireland! (Yes!) Mine would be a toss up between the Greek and Norse.//Nice cts upon good game writeups. What did you think of mine in #104?//The "Token Female" Class would be better off in a publication entitled, "Real Men, or How to Keep Your Woman as a Slave."//Got any Monstrous Races from Celtic myth?

ADRIAN BOLT: Re grading %age systems, try this: When a skill is at least 20%, it automatically succeeds in routine use. (You don't need to roll for success, and you don't get any opportunity to advance in it either. The skill can increase only when it is tested. (I chose 20% for my game because a character with absolutely no training in a skill has a raw talent of 1-20%.)

DANA CARSON: As it was my refrigerator, I think I can speak for it. It seemed to suffer no real damage, but its motor has been known to kick out at odd times for up to an hour. Perhaps a side effect.//Re yr ct that time should be added to swings that embed in flesh/armor instead of bouncing off the shield: I agree in theory. In practice, it would be fruitless. Why not also add if the character ain't feeling well that day, or if the character hit the opponent's backside instead of his front, etc? It is an intelligent beef, but the system is difficult enough without adding unnecessary clutter. At least, that is my opinion. (Go ahead. Now you'll come up with a simple solution, won't you? \*Sigh\*)

RONALD MARK PEHR: Please address all cts/?s about ERIN to me. Thanks.//In ERIN, complexity does not affect weapon use. I found that concept unnecessarily... complex.//Defense speed can be the same as Attack speed to be successful. All Defense speeds are now only 1 second, so you will rarely have a problem.// Basic % per se does not exist in ERIN.//Dodging vs Defending: If you have a high Dodge skill you would want to use that instead of weapon parrying. And your weapon might break from a hard blow, so that's another reason to use Dodge. The idea is to give the character options. As many options as they would have in real life. That is why the Grapple skill includes swinging from chandeliers, kicking someone with a boot, throwing tables, etc. Give the characters more choices than hacking away until the enemy drops. [Sounds more like "Brawling" to me than "Grappling."--LG]

PETER da SILVA: An A&E rules system? How does get RQ!, D&D, YRS and LoA followers to agree on a single system? Might as well try for true world peace. Good luck, I won't hold you back.

DAVID JACOBSON: I would prefer you find a less offensive word than Smegma.

WILSON H. HEYDT: I think if YOU check, you will find that John Sapienza, Jr. makes no comment about "Henderson and Turney's" Difficult Dice idea but that he came up with the idea. Check Feb, 1982!

PAUL WATERS: The Irish failing a battle?! Really, sir! I never!

## A RESPONSE TO REAL TIME REMARKS BY PETER A CLARKE

You say that in your experience with real time systems, you always go back to rounds. I concur. I have readopted the Round (10 seconds long).

You say that a knife fighter will wait until an opening presents itself to attempt to attack. Unless you have experience fighting with a dagger facing an opponent with a broadsword, our disagreement is moot. It is a logical argument, but one which seems to be defending a particular method of fighting, not the ability of the fighter to attack quickly.

continued in two pages at the end of NOTES FROM A BAD DM



NOTES FROM A BAD DM

Brian Lane, 1550 S. Santa Fe Ave. #11, Vista, CA 92083

### In Defense of Gary Gygax

I am a player of the various D&D games (OD&D, AD&D, VD&D, etc.), as most of you have guessed. Gary Gygax has been the subject of much criticism (some very pointed and nasty) recently. Some people feel all erroneous thought and inflexibility are due to Gary Gygax, especially pertaining to roleplaying games.

In a recent reprint of a letter from Gary in this fanzine, he was quite reasonable about variant rules and co-authorship with Dave Arnesen. This was Gary before he was responsible for multimillion dollar projects, before he had three business majors telling him how to run a sales campaign, before he had a traumatic falling out with one of his best friends over creativity and business policy. Gary also has several thousand detractors of his major source of income, very vocal detractors. Gary isn't anything but human; he has normal reactions to having his job, business and authority continuously attacked. If he has become defensive of his work, it should have been expected.

The area of heaviest attack is D&D's "unrealism." People have forgotten that Gary is a wargamer. There are two basic types of wargaming: simulation and non-simulation. Gary made D&D a non-simulation game to give it a feel of the popular literature. He didn't try to create a simulation of combat and natural laws in a fantasy universe. D&D isn't a simulation of anything; it isn't meant to be.

D&D was based on wargaming ideas and experience. In wargames, the pieces tend to do only one set of things. A country gets more powerful by defeating other countries. (Experience reflects this.) This is Gary's style, his method of design, not a fiendish plot to limit creativity and design.

As for standardization, Gary may want world class tournaments with large cash prizes to encourage professional D&D players (HORRORS!). That might be his argument for standardization of the rules. Many would-be game designers may dream of being Guest of Honor at such a function. Should we fault Gary for doing what he thinks will cause such a dream to come true for him?

Remember that Gary is trying for the feeling of adventuring in a storybook land as a worst case--and of adventuring in a literary artwork at best. Authors have used monsters that pop out of the woodwork to keep up the tempo of a story. The infamous Dwarf in a locked room who attacks anyone entering is a good example of the same thing applied to D&D.

Gary even made a true Magic Castle module based on Through the Looking Glass as a lark. It horrified and disgusted the typical module buyer. This module was about the only one made or approved by Gary that didn't make literary sense. Note I said "literary sense"; he doesn't bother trying to be realistic in every encounter or NPC, just interesting and middle of the road.

Gary has added to and revised much of the system he helped create. He took many of the suggestions sent TSR seriously and incorporated them into the AD&D books. His major failing is criticizing people for changing his game to nearly unrecognizable forms and designing a roleplaying game from a wargamer's viewpoint.

If most of what I've said is true, why criticize Gary for doing something human? Further, why is most of the criticism so sarcastic? This fanzine's writers are usually the most courteous and kind I've seen. Yet when Gary Gygax is mentioned, positive comment and criticism goes out the window, and out come the



flensing knives. It almost seems to be a hobby among A&Eers to write hate-mail about Gary. I find it disconcerting that a group of such intelligent and tolerant individuals should stoop to such treatment of anyone.

All right, I'm through. No, I don't think D&D is perfect, but I use it and like it enough to run a small campaign with it. I also like RQ, as I don't like the idea that killing things is the major way to raise skills. I also play Traveller and Champions, through right now I'm not as active as I would like to be in playing and DMing any of the foregoing.

#### COMMENTS ON #101

LEE: I liked the filk song. I've come to dislike game mechanics interfering with the suspension of disbelief. It expresses that so well.

PETER DA SILVA: Did you get your campaign idea from the Lord Darcy series? I think it would be great fun to run and play in.

JACOBSON & LONG: Could both of you not print hate mail in A&E.

#### COMMENT ON #103

PHILLIP ADAMS: Very funny story. I'd like to see it as a continuing story.

For those interested, my description follows:

Age 23. Height 68"; weight 164 lbs.

Hair: Brown, wavy. Eyes: green, often bloodshot from hours of roleplaying.

Occupation: electronics technician.

Duration of suspicious activity: five years playing Dungeons & Dragons, recently purchased other fantasy role-playing systems: RuneQuest, Adventures in Fantasy. Known to drive 50 miles for exceptional gaming session. Rumored to be developing Traveller/D&D Variant. Known associate of Traveller players. Watch very carefully. May be dangerous. May be armed with open can of Orange Crush.

That is all.

THE DARK AGES PAGES continued by Martin Wixted

You say a veteran warrior would have a better chance to hit and would also hit more often. Why, that is what happens in ERIN! The higher the Attack %, the faster the fighter can swing.

The outline of the system as presented in A&E does not include special rules for fighting a spear with a sword. I gave the bones of the rule, not the detail.

Thank you for your analysis of the rules, though. Despite my tone, I do appreciate the time you took to analyze and comment.

#### AN APOLOGY

I apologize if I am sounding angry. It is directed at no one in A&E. A week ago, the love of my life was in a motorcycle accident on the highway, breaking the following: one wrist, one elbow. My "Reason for Living" also managed to sprain one ankle (very severely) and to take off all the flesh from one knee down to the kneecap. Now home, I am currently cook, housekeeper, cleaner, bandage changer, etc...So that is the reason for my mood. I'll try not to bite anyone's head off.

#### PLANET OF THE APES

For some time now I have been considering putting together a POTA game/culture pack (whatever). I'm wondering if there is any interest at all for it. Comments? Would you consider accepting one for LoA, Lee? It would be an extensive Culture Pack, probably twice the size of the ones included in the boxed LoA. [You'd need (and probably find it impossible to get) studio permission with that title. That matters a lot more than the size.--LG]



THE OTHER TRUE WAY -- being a zine intended for #104 or thereabouts  
writ by quentin g long 845 laverne way los altos california 94022

#### VOID WHERE PROHIBITED BY NATURAL LAW

How about Stealth with Invisible Power Effects? That way you can be as stealthy as you like except that since the Stealth is invisible, people won't realize that you're being stealthy. Unless, of course, they have the means of seeing through the invisibility, in which case they won't notice you....

#### FILK & ROLL

I commonly find myself listening to AM radio in my car. I try to pay little attention to the words, but the tunes are a different matter: seems that the technical expertise involved with all the sound processing these days is becoming better than the (lack of) musicianship found in the vast majority of today's popular songs. At any rate, here's something inspired by the Genesis tune "That's All":

Searching the past, here's what we have found;  
Civilizations burnt to the ground.  
Always the same; it's just a shame, that's all.

Orbiting stars give all of our light,  
Soon they are due to hide from our sight;  
(and) Here is the name you'll then exclaim: Nightfall!

Any relation to a certain Isaac Asimov story is, of course, completely coincidental....The Human League's song, "Fascination," inspired this'un:

I used to get drunk on the hour,  
Got high three times a day (oh yeah, boy...).  
Then I found what had twice the power  
To blow me clean away...

(chorus) A pusher did not sell it to me;  
It did not break the law.  
My mind expanded, well and truly  
Astounding! -- Fantastic! --  
Keep reading Science Fiction  
Torchships burning, scith so strong  
Keep reading Science Fiction  
Fuzzies learning, heed this song...

Anyone who feels the urge is welcome to continue this song.

BOOK REVIEWS" SPELLSINGER and THE HOUR OF THE GATE, both writ by Alan Dean Foster.

It has been said, not without justification, that Foster's main characters are all college students (just as Chris Claremont's are all 40 year old English majors). Jonathan Thomas Meriweather, the main character of these two novels, is a law student with dreams of becoming a rock guitarist, who gets automagically transported into Another World Entirely, wherein he discovers he's got heavy-duty magical powers when playing the local equivalent of a guitar - thus the title Spellsinger. As is standard for fantasy, he meets up with a variety of unusual folks and joins a Quest, and there is ultimately a happy ending.

There were several spots in both books when I (and I imagine any other filker worthy of the name) sighed over Jon-Tom's inability to come up with appropriate spellsongs, and I'm still not sure if I believe that a Steve Miller song could save the world. But on the whole, I enjoyed the books. Recommended to those who like Foster's other books.

The patrons of Mama Rosa's Spaceport Bar & Grill were understandably somewhat nonplussed when Ferdinand Feghoot (who does indeed look like his pictures) monopolized one of the pool tables, utterly demolishing all comers.

"Od's blood!" rose the cry, and "Where did he learn to stuff with the stick?"

Feghoot noted one the latter exclamations and replied thusly: "I learnt from the justly famous Jonathan King, pool shark extraordinaire."

"You see," said the great man, putting down his cue, "only a few short years after perfecting the cue-ball spin which bears his name, he got into a traffic accident which damaged certain nerves and left him without the iron control he had formerly enjoyed. But Jonathan was a man of stern stuff indeed. It was a matter of months of intensive re-training before his vast powers returned to him--most of them, that is., You see, his eponymous spin technique required a particularly delicate touch with the cue, and at length he feared he might never re-master it."

"'And wouldn't that be great, if me what invented it couldn't do it!'" he exclaimed in despair, after one particularly humiliating public failure.

"Fortunately, I overheard his anguished cry and was able to help him. In gratitude, Jonathan King tutored me in this noble art."

"But how did you save King's career?" asked an inquisitive spectator.

"Why, I advised him to find a speech therapist skilled at pool or billiards and have that gentleman assist him in his training," replied Feghoot.

"And?" continued the inquisitive one.

Feghoot looked surprised. "Isn't it clear? Who but a speech therapist could best teach you the King's English?"

## BAYFILK II

This were a convention for filksingers, as if you couldn't guess. Lots of noted (among filkers, at least) people: Diana (GoH) Gallagher, Leslie (Wobbly Trekker) Fish, Julia Ecklar, Frank (bizarro) Hayes, Juanita Coulson (one of the highest-volume voices in captivity - didn't fry any microphones this con), Cindy (the Drive Song) McQuillin, Chris (Sentient Chili) Weber, Clint Bigglestone (I didn't know he filked), and a cast of dozens. Maybe 100 voices in all.

Noteworthy events: the edible Midnight Supper and the Filk Dance - choreographed to "Lord of the Dance" (what else?) by Susan Goodman. Not to mention filking until past dawn Sunday (which is responsible for the Breakfast filk....).

Good songs: anything by Fish (Pride of Chanur sticks out in particular), ditto for Gallegher (A Reconsideration of Anatomical Docking Maneuvers in a Zero-Gravity Environment), Rosie Dawn Day of the Dead, I Hate Little Fire Lizards, numerous Elfquest filks, and even my songs were well received.

## BREAKFAST

LYRICS: Quentin Long, but see note below

TUNE: "I Hate Little Fire Lizards" by J. Ecklar

I like little fuzzy pancakes, which the syrup doesn't drip off.  
I like phosphorescent oatmeal, when the lights are off.  
I like fusion-boiled square eggs, for the afterburn is great.  
Yes, I like little fuzzy pancakes; they're the last thing my dog ate.

I like pumpernickel danish, 'cause the pumper hides the mold.  
I like steamy stewed prune malteds, 'cause I hate to eat them cold.  
I like isopropyl orange juice; it tightens my loose screws.  
Yes, I like pumpernickel danish - for my car, it's all I use.

I like transuranic toast, because it melts the weight right down.  
I like cold and lumpy coffee, for it spins my spleen around.  
I like resublimated bacon; it's all yellow, plaid and blue.  
Oh, I like transuranic rye toast, and my friends all like it too!



Auctorial Note: This filksong came into existence between 7AM and noon of March 5, 1984 at Bayfilk II. A breakfast table was shared by Quentin Long with conspirators David Berry, Bruce Martz, Don Simpson and Kennita Watson, and innocent (none of his ideas were used) bysitter (nobody was standing) Rick Weiss to boot.

Somebody for some Ghodforsaken reason mentioned "little fuzzy pancakes"; someone else mentioned stewed prunes as a milkshake flavor. And as all six persons involved were in an even more abnormal state than usual, what with having just filked the Moon down and the Sun up, the weirdness level increased exponentially from there. Eventually the preceding song evolved. Who says Eris don't exist?

#### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Some of you may be aware of the Drive Song (real title: Fuel to Feed the Drive). It was discovered that this song will scan, to varying degrees of quality, to many different tunes. And any songs it scans to will also scan to each other.

A non-inclusive list (with parenthetical additions of songs using the tune in question): Ash Grove (When I was a Young Man); Awake, Awake; Banned from Argo; The British Grenadier; The Burden of the Crown; The Battle Hymn of the Republic; The Bonnie Ship, the Diamond (A Toast for Unknown Heroes); the Coke commercial ("I'd like to teach the world to sing"); Clementine; Darkness, The Engineer's Hymn, Everyman, The False Knight on the Road, Female Drummer, Fire in the Sky, Fuel to Feed the Drive (what did you expect? That it wouldn't scan to its original tune?); the Gilligan's Island theme; God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen; God Lives on Terra; Goodbye, Yellow Brick Road; Greensleeves; The House of the Rising Sun; It Came upon a Midnight Clear; The Light-Ship; Little Sir Hugh; London, Love Potion #9; Marrowbones; Mass Driver Engineer; Mack the Knife; Mercury--Our First steps; Minus Ten and Counting; No High Ground (verse only); One Last Battle; Ode to Joy; O Susannah; Phoenix; The Phantom Lover of the Star Drive; Pioneer's Song; Pinball Wizard; The Queen of Air and Darkness; Ramblin' Wreck from Georgia Tech (The MIT Engineers' Song); Rowan Tree; Royal Forrester; Saucy Sailor; Seven Hundred Elves; Sir James the Rose; Snoopy for President; Spotted Cow; Thomas the Rhymer; The Treadmill Song; the Victory; The Wabash Cannonball; and Waltzing Matilda. 54 tunes and Ghod only knows how many I haven't listed.

If you don't recognize a title, try the Westerfilk Collection I & II or the pro-space anthology (Minus Ten and Counting), available from Off-Centaur Publications, Box 424, El Cerrito, CA 94530. If that doesn't work, buy some Steeleye Span albums. If that doesn't work, buttonhole a filker.

#### COMMENTS ON #103

LEE: Remarkable - I'd not known that Aerial Pillows had spread from their natural habitat (Kushyon's Flyte House)....[We've used them for years.--LG]

SAPIENZA: Bletch. Your definitions of sf/fantasy are the least appealing I've ever seen. Shallow characters in SF are a symptom of the vast number of hacks at work in the field, not of anything inherent in the genre; and to base a definition on that is gorge-riasing.

REDDEN: Please to learn difference between "too" (meaning "excessively") and "to" (meaning "towards" among other things).

HEYDT: Agreement on G&S, but how could you omit the fact that the Duke of Plaza-Toro, Ltd. had reorganized himself as a Limited Company as a result of his debts? And how, in an APA dedicated to fantasy (among other sorts) role-playing, could you ignore the relatively magic-heavy "The Sorceror" as a plot source.

GILHAM: What d'you mean about Champions skills being too expensive? If you want all your skills brought up to infallibility (30 or less on 3D6, with the excess to allow for negative mods to the die roll), sure it's a mite expensive; so what? With normal (i.e. possessing a statistically significant chance of failure skill levels, the cost isn't that bad.)

DUNHAM: re story: thank you

NICOLAI: Hey--welcome! Come in, stay awhile....

TELLER: Re Protectors of Power: Rather heavily Marvel-influenced, eh wot? Accident-spawned supertypes are not necessarily handicapped even in Marvel. For every Daredevil (radiation accident: blindness) you name, I'll name two others. Spiderman (radiation accident involving spider: nil) and Sandman (radiation accident: nil). I suggest accidentals have: a) say, 15% chance of handicap (and accompanying salary boost), b) can choose a handicap if desired.

I assume "internal device" is something like prosthetics/bionics?//The "physical manifestations" were incredibly Marvel. Even so, the PM for Teleport ought to be blue fur.//Trivially small number of power points, particularly if a single die roll can lock you out of various powers. (Yeah, I realize this is a quibble, but then I've got three levels of Unluck myself, and thus prefer avoiding die-rolls in creating characters whenever possible.) And how were the point costs determined anyway? Any system that makes an eidetic (photographic) memory more expensive than telekinesis or being bulletproof has some problems.

Your ID/ED/MGC division is pointless (at least, I can't see why you did it) and false to reality-as-seen-in-comics. For example: what is Doc Strange's Shield of the Seraphim if not a magic-based Projected Force Field (something you seem to think is impossible).

FOSTER: Dear boy, a human being is never unarmed. If there are no rocks to brain the enemy with from a safe distance, nor sticks to throw or beat him over the head with, nor patches of loose dirt to toss in his eyes, etc., there is at least saliva (try spitting into someone's mouth; grotesque but highly effective...not to mention spitting in the eyes) and body parts. Us humans is MEAN!

ELLWOOD: I have an idea for a region of Ylam. My region used to be Cal Tech and environs. (If that is already taken, make it MIT or another technical-oriented college area.) The Techies, having high concentration of both brains and opportunities to exploit them, have been running things effectively and rationally. One consequence is that the legal system is based on protecting citizens from other people, as compared to the present US notion of protecting people from themselves.

There is only one right: the Right to Freedom. Any Techie has the right to do anything he likes, as long as the action's consequences do not interfere with any other Techie's Right of Freedom. Therefore the only laws restricting Techie behavior are those against murder, theft, fraud, rape, and similar actions. Pornography and drug addiction are not illegal, to mention two activities which only harm oneself, if at all. (Sure drug addicts often steal to support their habit, but that's already covered by anti-theft laws, and if a guy can feed his habit without resorting to illegal acts, what's the problem?) Slavery is illegal only if it's involuntary on the part of the slave. And so on. The Techie rulers would, to quote an ancient Techie proverb, "never let their consciences get in the way of doing The Right Thing."

MASTERS: Re character class: If the GM disallows it (and if he's got any sort of class system whatsoever, you damn well know he will), that boatload of foreigners you postulate won't ever exist in the first place.//Re Gadgeteering: Since one of that skill's listed functions is to alter the setting(s) of a Gadget Pool, your refusal to let it alter a non-gadgetry Gadget Pool (which is, by the by, a permissible construct) is an interesting aberration.//Re absorption: Show me an absorber who can keep his power a secret, and I'll show you an absorber who can get zapped as often as he likes.

PR ADAMS: Oh my. I think that if I ever create a T.R.A.S.H. comic, Sputter will simply have to be included....

SHAW: Dear sir, kindly clean up your typer or else send in your stuff to have Lee type it up nice and net. Please? I've been the semi-legible stencil route myself. Having been there, I don't like even seeing it any more.



UNION: Re DEX/CON/skill/other cost twiddles: Bletch! What, pray tell, is the problem you perceive with the present cost structure? Ain't nothin' us blokes have detected out Los Altos way.//Re "unstructured combat": Well, if all you're got is SPD 4 & 5 types,.....6 is fairly common out here, with an occasional (fairly rare but statistically significant) 7 or maybe 8, and even one 12.

CORRIGENDA #102: LEE: My comment to Pehr was in the grammatical mode of one of those aliens from the Retief stories: e.g. "I intolurate; I am not endure!" and "You are given seven standard seconds for total abandonment of vicinity! One, four, twelve, several....." So....

REPRINTED COMMENT ON #99:

RM PEHR: "Biodaughter"? Aghast, intolurate, abomination!....

#### COMMENTS #102

ANYONE WHO SAID SO: Thankee for egoboo of being glad that my "vanishment" has ended. No vast mystery; just sometimes I don't have much to say....

FOSTER: Re Offbeat Weapons: an uppercut to the nose, driving cartilage and bone into the brain for an instant kill, I am given to understand, would be a great maneuver for a Rolled-Up Magazine; and A&E (being the massive lot of paper it is) would be admirably suited for such.

UNION: Re quote on inflation: the price of Energy doesn't have to increase, you know. If Congress only got off its collective duff and pumped funding into the Solar Power Satellite program (presently non-existent, as far as I know), we could get some REAL cheap energy (or at least less pollution than is generated by fossil fuel plants), which throws Thurow's argument out the window.

GILHAM: Interesting that you should mention ad-libbing FRP.....I'm involved in a newly started campaign which will use NO RULES SYSTEM WHATSOEVER! A PC's writeup is simply a summary of his real-world capabilities. Setting is 1930s pulp era, and since my character is a sort of low-powered superhero (as per Doc Savage, the Shadow, and so on), I'm using "Marvel Universe" format....

HEINSOO: Re "Something completely different": Oh dear. Oh my dear. You dirty little man.

CORNELIUS: "Fen" is the plural of "fan," just as "men" is the plural of "man." Capeesh? And was ist das "jammy" (as in "very jammy trap rolls")? You are right; nobody plays C&S. Considering that the rulebook has higher word-count than any two Dune novels together, this is not surprising.

PEHR: Ferdinand Feghoot is alive and well and occasionally found in Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine.

GOLDBERG: Roleplayer (a game system I have plugged in ages and issues past) combines levels and skills, and quite well too.

BAUER: You ought to have at least mentioned GODEL, ESCHER, BACH; though not, perhaps, strictly relevant to the particular topic, it's at least partially appropriate.

ROBERTSON: What was so unbelievable about Star Trek? Outside of the infamous whoosh through vacuum, that is, which was added solely for dramatic effect. Please to ignore third season, in which the show was deteriorating vigorously.

HEIN: The way to handle those true/false zombies is to say, "I am lying" and watch their brains fall out. Or if statements were required from two people, A says, "MY friend is about to lie," and B says, "My friend just told the truth." This can be generalized to N people, if necessary.

KEYES: Re 3R system: Oog! Not half bad....

PLAMONDON: Re magic: Ooh, we likes it, my precious....

continued in seven pages at the end of DRAGONEWTS' DREAM

Mark Galeotti, 5 St. John's Rd., Hampton Wick, Kingston, Surrey KT1 4AN, Britain

Hello, Good Morning, and Welcome to my 10th zine. Wow, I'm really starting to feel a veteran. However, I've just realized that I haven't totally completed my initiation to the Cult of the Zine. OK, I've outlined a magic system, I have attacked EGG, and I've managed to write a scathing comment based on a total misunderstanding of what someone else wrote, but the Fourth Task? No, I have been remiss, masters. I have...I have...I have yet to Introduce Myself.

Very well, then: Male...18...will be reading History at Cambridge in October...Currently political volunteer (read gopher) at Westminster)...Rolegaming since '76....Prefer Aftermath, SO and RQ...Poor...Very poor actually.

Right, that's been got over. Now can I try for RuneWriter status (giving full POW defense against comments by Quentin Long?!) (POW + CHA)/2 x 5. Right....Come on, you beauties....Sod it. I never wanted to be one anyway.

### Some Thoughts on Archery

#### 1. Its Deadliness

An early European traveller in America, in the latter part of the 18th century, wrote the following eyewitness account of the effectiveness of Apache long composite bows:

"A mounted soldier was dispatched by his captain with letters to the captain of another garrison. His cloak, tightly folded lengthwise, lay before him on the saddle, and fell down part way over his left leg. Covering the cloak and the same leg hung his shield, made of three-ply, very thick oxhide, which hung down a little over the horse's belly...

"The soldier rode past a mountain where some Apaches lay in ambush and was struck by one of their arrows, which passed through the shield, through the many folds of the folded cloak, through the leg of the soldier, finally through the leather cover, and penetrated almost a quarter of an ell deep into the body of the horse." [An ell varied; a quarter ell was, say, anywhere between 18-28 cm, 7-11"]

Let's assume this was a situation in RQ. How much damage did that arrow do? A medium shield means 12 pts. Call the folded cloak padded leather (2 pts); 4 to knock the leg out (assume he's an average man) with 6 more to penetrate it; 2 more for the saddle; and 1-2 for the horse. That means that in RQ terms, that single arrow did a total 27-28 points of damage. That's a lot for an arrow that does 1D8+1. A special hit? Even an Impale only does 18 pts maximum. As for a critical, the 10 pts needed to skewer the leg is beyond the capability of an arrow.

Clearly RQ (and many other games, D&D in particular) underrate (consciously, perhaps) the deadliness of the bow. But what is the solution? Simply upping damages may lead to combat being too missile-oriented.

I suggest making archery more deadly if an arrow hits, but far less accurate unless the archer is highly skilled. After all, the deadliness of the bow on the medieval battlefield was not as a long-range sniper's weapon but as a relatively simple device which, when used in numbers, could kill with an arrow storm.

Power for accuracy would be a suitable pay off. It would also make bows less used in combat (rather than hunting) by individuals, unless they were really committed. At present it is too easy for characters to become budding Robin Hoods as mere sidelines to their main areas of expertise. AFTERMATH and YRS are worth looking at for ideas of handling archery.



## 2. Arrow Magic

Of course, another way to deal with my example is to assume that the archers were using magic: a RealWorld equivalent of Speedart, for example. After all, many cultures felt that archery was linked with magic. (And why not? To a culture used to spears or stones, the death-dealing properties of a bow may have seemed other-worldly.) This can be tied quite easily to FRP.

The NW Californian Hupa Indians, for examples, used stone-tipped arrows, with some stones regarded as especially deadly or even magical. Flint from a special quarry on Mad River, for example, was thought extremely lethal, often hitting in the body and "breaking off in a wound, making it inflamed." This semi-magic flint was never used on hunting arrows, since it was "too powerful."

Similarly, feathers from certain hawks were supposed to enhance an arrow's range and/or accuracy, while painting them in blood (preferably from a dead enemy) would ensure that in battle they would "drink blood" by sympathetic magic), i.e. they would hit a foe's heart. While the RealWorld effects are debatable, similar "poor man's magic," powered by superstition does seem to fit into the world of FRP.

## 3. The Source of Magic

Let's look at this idea and some of its ramifications. If superstition is to have a role in a fantasy system's magic structure, what guidelines should be adopted? Superstition Magic (to distinguish it from conventional magic used in most FRPs) comes in all sorts of forms. Take a look at Lee's excellent series on herbs for some of the properties of plants? What about the cave-painting rituals or Roman tablet-curses or legends about various places of presumed power?

All such "petty magic" should be kept to a low power level. Even more important is the need to prevent abuse of such charms or spells. Unless we want to see everyone loaded down with arrows tipped with Mad River flint (painted in blood and hawk-feather fletched, of course), with backpacks full of herbs and an MA in cave-painting, there must be some rules restricting the use of petty magic.

NO CHARACTER CAN USE THE SUPERSTITIONS OF AN ALIEN CULTURE.

Since these petty magics are largely powered by belief, only someone steeped in the superstitions can use them. This may change. A Romanized Briton living in Italy would gradually lose his beliefs in British superstitions but take on Roman ones. Similarly, anyone especially alienated from his home culture will be either less able or totally unable to believe in its petty magics and consequently get less or no benefit from them.

THERE SHALL BE SOME LIMIT ON THE USE OF SUPERSTITION MAGIC.

This is needed to limit the abuse of this magic by the players. One option could be a roll vs a Piety rating (or vs Credulity for cynics), with failure leaving the character unable to use such magic for the rest of the day or week or whatever period you deem appropriate. Alternatively, one can rule that petty magics are granted by spirits or godlings (kami, genii, or whatever), and to fail the roll symbolizes falling out of favor with the deity in question. Another approach would be to have a running point total of petty magic: too many and the spirits get tired of you and won't play ball.

SUPERSTITION MAGIC IS STRICTLY GOVERNED BY GM'S FIAT

Let's face it, petty magic of this sort would hardly be an exact science. Rituals may have gotten garbled over time; godlings may be vicarious or long gone. All these factors would make using such magic very dependent on chance. This conveniently gives the GM ample opportunity to influence play. Players who make their characters that bit too minimaxing (after all, the PC doesn't know of any points totals, formulae or rolls) may find their magic that bit less effective; players in trouble might receive a bit of a boost.

To take this idea further, what about protective unit standards mentioned several times in A&E? (Standards vested in magical power to rally and protect their units.) These could be handled as vessels for the devotion and comradeship felt in the unit. This energy would be stored and released by the physical embodiment of the unit's esprit de corps in much the same way worship "powers" deities. This would be superstition magic in so far as it depended on the feelings of those around it for power.

I mentioned that "worship 'powers' deities." This is not a new idea, but I like the concept that the power of a deity (and therefore of a deity's servants) depends on the worship directed towards it. The chief god of a large religion (The Red Moon, Iuppiter, Mitra, et al) would have far more power than some senile tribal spirit. However, the larger deity would also have many more calls on his power, so the power of a god or goddess should only partly be a product of the simple size of following. The devotion of the followers should also be a factor. An assassin-god with a thousand fanatic worshippers would, I think, be more powerful than a deity with three thousand nominal worshippers who are members of the culture merely out of tradition or for social show.

Indeed, why not extend this to cover all magic? A mage's power could depend partly on his inner qualities (POW or perhaps Egoism--the worship of self) and partly on the beliefs of the surrounding society. The very fear a Witch inspires in a village gives her the power to make those fears come true. More generally, a belief in sorcery creates a pool of power for a sorcerer to draw upon. One interesting effect would be that a mage's powers could dwindle or change if he moved for any length of time to an area where views on magic differed. A Finnish Spell Singer would be forced to rely on his own resources if he set up shop in Melanesia.

Finally, I'd like to throw out an idea in a story in ARES #15 which had the following rationale for the supernatural (in the Things That Go Bump in the Night sense). It is essentially all an energy field that builds up whenever anyone gives in to superstition: touching wood, crossing fingers, or whatever. Eventually the field is charged enough that it vents some of its energy into our world, where man's superstitions and fears shape the energy into various evil forms. Once again, it is our beliefs and superstitions that shape the energies around us.

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I am currently preparing an SF campaign, which involves my clearing through and working out some of my ideas about future society and technology. To this end, in this and future DDs, I will be presenting some for comment. Anyone care to help?

#### Spaceneuws' Dream 1

Few SFRPGs handle technological increase satisfactorily. They are far too pedestrian in their projections of the future. In addition, they only consider technological advancement along one, human track (presumably for reasons of space). While it's OK to have humans developing from, say, spears to rifles to lasers to blasters, why would an aquatic species evolve its culture and technology in the same way? Intelligent fish would use spears, then weapons like blue-green lasers, rockets and advanced fin-to-fin weapons. I can't see a fish lobbing a grenade: it would "fly" about 5m at the most, then send out a concussion wave sure to belly-up the thrower; a rocket-propelled, dart grenade would be another matter.

To this end, I have begun developing a number of TechTracks based on various mind-sets: HUMAN, BIO, PHASE, SWIMMER, and others less fully mapped out.

HUMAN: standard primate mentality. Based on curiosity, three-dimensions, emphasizing a 2D plane. Both linear and capable of non-linear jumps.



BIO: involved with biological rather than mechanical processes; sees everything as a whole with a pattern. Often evolves into a hive mind. Grows rather than builds, relying on gradual evolution rather than on quantum jumps. Finds it hard to see things as separate; does not develop guns as readily as sprays, which fire a projectile which stays in contact as an extension of the weapon.

These are just two examples to give some idea of the way TTs work.

Developments from one TT can be "stolen" by another if the two are in contact, but most inventions turn up in each track, just at different Tech Levels. BIOs develop psychostimulin drugs at fairly low TLs; HUMANS at high ones. Since cost decreases with every TL over the minimum TL to develop an item, this allows for trade between equal TL (but different TT) races; since though they share many technologies, each produces some more efficiently. Comments?

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And now it's about time for another instalment in my story. Come on, though, let's have some comments: shall I continue it or not? Is there anybody Out There?

### ILLUSIONS

The story so far: Tiberius, a bored and naive young Imperial Knowledge priest at a troubled border town has been sent to try and find the source of magic Truestone, following a tall Wastelander over the border to the village of Snowline. Meanwhile the local military governor has sent an agent called Lir on much the same purpose. The Truestone is being used to finance trouble-stirring in the province. This is not Empire-threatening but is embarrassing; already some senators are using it to call for martial law. Lir traces the Truestone (rather bloodily) to Snowline.

### Chapter Three: SNOWLINE

Snowline was a poor excuse for a village. Really a rather dingy barren hamlet, its only claim to anything like fame was its role as a watering hole along the route of the HulKoal caravan between the Free Port of Trevek and Imperial Icewalls. Every couple of weeks, the caravan would make of Snowline a bustling, hustling settlement where Wastelanders would come to sell furs or their services, and Goat Tribesmen would barter fresh goatmeat for arrowheads and knives. The rest of the time? Snowline would close itself up, away from the chill winds and relapse into a kind of urban hibernation until the caravan next rolled into sight.

Cold, wet and disconsolate, Tiberius Liberalis rode into Snowline. His brocaded cloak was sopping wet, the crest on the unfamiliar helmet was wilting piteously, and every tired step his horse took jarred his aching muscles. Still, he had gotten there at last. He headed for the closest thing to an inn he could find ("The Panting Whore." Charming.) and painfully dismounted, the scabbard of that silly sword which had been pressed on him slapping against a sore thigh with every move he made.

Pushing open the door, he shuffled in, conscious of the unusual spectacle he made. The Snowliners, though, seemed beyond surprise. Sitting in small groups around the large, cheerless room, hunched over tankards or around the straggling fire, they barely looked up at his entrance.

The innkeep was a typical native, Tiberius thought, weathered and pitted by time, bleached by the elements--a crumbling monument commemorating a simple way of life soon to be replaced by Imperial civilization. That was quite a good turn of phrase, he thought; he would have to make a point of including it when he wrote a monograph on this expedition. "Expedition" made it sound far more glamorous than it really was.

The innkeep finished stoking a rusty brazier and turned to him. "Aye?"

"Good day to you. I'll have a glass of wine, if you please."

"Wyne?" The innkeep frowned, sucking at a bristly upper lip.

"White, I think; perhaps a young--"

"We've got stout, and we've got grog."

"Well--"

"We've got gin and some good ava."

"Um."

"An' we've got kvass--but we ain't got no wyne."

"I suppose, ...I suppose I'll try some gin then, thank you." At least he'd heard of that one.

He picked up the grimy, dusty goblet, trying to hold it with just the tips of his fingers and ventured once more into the uncharted seas of conversation with the local. "By the way, I'm looking for a certain Wastelander, a tall bearded fellow who carries a sword. he must have arrived or passed here a day or so before me."

"Nay, no such feller ha' passed through this tahn--and there ain't no such a man here, nah."

Ah yes, he knew what to do now; he'd read it in a detective scroll. He put two gleaming silver sesterces onto the tacky counter.

"Ah'm a tellin' yow, there ain't so such gent in Snowline."

"Oh, I see." He made a tentative move towards retrieving the coins, but a stubby hand swept them into the folds of the innkeep's apron.

"Well, at least I hope you can offer me a room where I can rest and clean up," Tiberius said, somewhat petulantly.

+++

Well, it was a room in so far as it had four walls, a floor and most of a ceiling--but a place to rest and clean up? Overcome by weariness and dejection, Tiberius leant against a peeling wall, for a moment wishing he could just sit down and cry. A bloating cockroach scuttled across the floor, and he vented all his frustration in stamping it to a pulp. Judging from the state of the floorboards, there had been a lot of frustrated people in Snowline. Outside it began to rain, and rivulets of water trickled down discolored walls onto the floor.

+++

A muffled rap on the door jolted Tiberius out of his reverie. He opened the door a crack. The innkeep.

"Ya wur lookin' fur a certain gent." He was distinctly furtive, shifting from foot to foot, darting glances down the corridor. This was more like it! Tiberius picked up his cloak and passed the local a golden coin.

He was shown out by a back door and to a small hut on the outskirts of Snowline. The innkeeper motioned for him to enter, and he bustled in, anxious to conclude his business as quickly as possible.

He didn't even see the cudgel coming.

+++

Tiberius groggily struggled back to consciousness, bound and trussed, lying flat on the chill ground. He moaned and a booted foot rolled him over onto his back. He squinted up at a pair of burly figures outlined by the light of a lantern.

"So, you're awake now, are you?" grunted the taller of the two. "Gorge, make sure we're not disturbed."

The other nodded and slipped out of the door to stand watch outside the hut. The speaker bent down by Tiberius' head, skinning knife in his hand, sword hanging at his waist.



"Well, boy, you wanted to see me, didn't you? Aren't you happy now?"

Tiberius had no opportunity to answer because the Wastelander suddenly bent down, thrusting the knife at the youth's neck until the sharp, uneven blade was resting against his windpipe. The chill edge drove every other thought from the young priest's mind, and he lay there, frozen in a rictus of terror.

"You don't know me, and I certainly don't know you, but you've been following me from Icewalls, and I want to know why."

The knife twitched, and instantly, without any conscious volition, the words came spilling out of Tiberius: of the pickpocket in Icewalls, of his mission, of his assumptions and his conversation with the innkeep. When the flow petered out, Tiberius simply lay there, feeling drained and hollow, passively waiting for what fate would bring. He was a scholar, a councillor, a priest; what would he be doing bound in a dingy hut in some freezing village beyond the Border?

His captor stood, leering down at him. "Rude of me, not to introduce myself that is. The name's Atchar. Atchar Kinless. Know why they call me that, boy?"

Tiberius mutely shook his head. Suddenly infuriated, Atchar thrust an ugly, unshaven throat at his captive. "Because that's what I am! My son, dead outside. Towering Ice--oh, sorry, Civis Frigida--an Impy dart in his belly; my wife and daughter lost somewhere on the Bisons' March, probably slaves or dead by now; my house....Do you know what my house is now? The office of an Impy tax-collector!"

Atchar straightened, looking down at the helpless youth. His outburst seemed to have purged him of that fiery, rabid anger, and he was now full of malice and scorn towards Tiberius. "Any wonder that when someone offers me the chance to hurt the Impies I jump at it? Anyway, I'm about to leave for a meeting at Trevek--perhaps I should bring you with me." He fingered his knife, and in an instant that unthinking, fanatical blaze of hate was back in his eyes.

"Or at least your head."

Suddenly the heavy oaken doors slammed open with a crash which jolted them both out of their private little world of hate and fear. Atchar's henchman staggered in, knife falling as hands twitched vainly at the quarrel in his throat. He fell, still dying, on top of the bound priest. Over his body, a tall lean figure stepped quickly into the room, shifting its stubby crossbow to its left hand. Atchar bellowed with rage and rushed forward, but a hand stabbed out into his stomach, and he crumpled.

As the youth lay inert on the ground, Lir slung his crossbow and ran practiced fingers through the paralyzed Wastelander's clothes, discarding various knives, darts and knuckledusters before producing a short, stained runestick. He turned towards the lantern, peering at the spidery carved runes--and Atchar suddenly leapt to his feet, snatching up a punch-knife from his discarded ironmongery. Even as he drew back his fist, though, Lir's left hand drove into his belly. As he doubled over, Lir's right hand sliced down onto the burly Atchar's exposed neck--a blade of flesh and bone.

A loud crack and Atchar jerked once, then toppled to the ground.

Lir turned back, seemingly unconcerned, and picked up the runestick off the floor once more. "A pity," he said, more to himself than to Tiberius. "I shouldn't have had to kill him. He must have been tougher than I thought to recover so soon. Still, no matter." Once again, he began reading the runestick.

Tiberius was horrified. Who was this man who could kill without effort and by reflex, yet seem unaffected by it? He wore Imperial clothes (fashionable ones at that), but he didn't look Imperial. What would he do to him?

Having read the runestick, Lir tucked it away in a pouch and hefted his arbalest, as if he were about to step over Tiberius and leave.

"You can't leave me here!"

"No?" Lir looked down at him, faintly amused.

"Oh, well....No, you can't! You must be an Imperial officer, a silentarius or one of the agentes, so you can't just leave me here."

"I may well be operating on behalf of the Empire, but I've no obligation to nursemaid you. You came of your own accord; you wanted to be a hero. But you" he looked as if this was the ultimate indictment, "are an amateur." His eyes tracked over Tiberius' recumbent form, then flicked away as if the priest were too insignificant to be worthy of notice.

A sudden flame of anger burnt away Tiberius' panic. Who was this man to dismiss him so contemptuously? Was a skill at killing to be prized more highly than his learning? Besides, he had suffered to get this far--and not just to return to a frontier slum? "Amateur I may be," he snapped, "but does that runestick talk about a meeting? And does it say where the meeting will be?"

The other looked at him with a shade more attention. "No," he said, "it just says 'the usual inn.'"

"Well, I can tell you just where the meeting will be. You can't find out where the meeting will be without my telling you, and I'll only tell you if you let me free...and let me come with you."

He finally seemed to have made an impression on Lir; one eyebrow rose appraisingly. Tiberius felt somehow detached, as if his body were acting independently. Help, "I want to go home. his mind thought; I could have been killed! But his body glared up at the Imperial killer, demanding to be in on the affair--murderous affair--he had gotten involved in. It was a kind of outrage against a turn of events which could leave him trussed up on a cold floor far from home. It was bloody silly.

"Very well, come if you will. But before you get any particular notions of your importance, let me assure you that if I wanted that information I could extract it. Fairly swiftly."

He smiled thinly, slipping a new bolt into his bow.

"And one other point. Get in my way, and I remove you."

Great.

So it goes. See you around. Ave atque Vale. --Mark

THE OTHER TRUE WAY--continued by Quentin Long

DA SILVA: So you think computers are already capable of thought?

"To...formulate in the mind, reason about or reflect on; ponder; visualize; imagine; exercise the power of reason." That, sir is (part of) the definition of "to think" in the American Heritage Dictionary. The "power of reason: clause is a particularly telling point; ain't no computer in existence capable of it.

Oh, there are things like Shrdlu and the so-called "expert systems" which certainly give the appearance of thought within their own trivially limited domains, but toss one of those "thinking" machines a problem that's even marginally outside its particular limits, and it won't know whereof you're speaking. I won't accept a MYCINoid expert system as an intelligent entity until it can say, "I'm tired of pathology (or whatever it was originally designed to be an expert on); let's play chess!" (or some other such).

And big deal about Astral Projectors leaving behind the body; like I keep pointing out, that hunk of meat is absolutely inert and thus makes damned little (i.e. none at all) different to the power! Mumble frotz! (A semi-similar thingie: what if you had an energy blast that happened to produce a 180 lb boulder with every use?)



HEINIOUS TALES (or "Oh God, I Hate My Zine Title!", or "The Colgar Chronicles" No 21.) by the desperate Jenny Hein of 4/104 Sixth Ave, St. Peters, 5069, South Australia, Ph: 424469. For area codes see P. da Silva - he rings often enough!

Yes, I'm sick of my zine title. I long for a catchy name. I can't use The Colgar Chronicles because Gwynne Colgar retired from active service as a PC. I'm only a Hein until the 17th Nov, 1984 when I'll become a Medlow. (The engagement was announced to Dennis in January but never actually got printed in A&E.) I've moved from Norwood so Tales of the Northern Woods is irrelevant. My kingdom for a new zine title! (Not that I've got one mind you!) Suggestions welcomed.

#### STRAY COMMENT FROM 103

A. BROOKS: (re me) Hrumph! Someone other than Braddon and Neil has cottoned onto the fact that Gwynne is not as nice as I made out. Actually, she never had a chance to feel sorry or guilty about breaking Linden's engagement to Emith. She would never had dreamed of doing it if she had known about it. Then when she knew, Linden was so horrible to her, she didn't feel inclined to. Besides, Linden always struck her as only wanting Emith for his position and power. She hated Gwynne because a scummy little half-elf had taken Emith from her. She could never understand what Emith saw in Gwynne either. In the end, Linden turned evil because of her desire for revenge on Gwynne and became an Alvian (the bad guys)?? How did you like the Sam write-up? She at least has no pretensions about being anything but rotten to the core. The human interest has always been the best thing about Neil's world. It's full of it.//I'm enjoying your write-up too.

#### COMMENTS 104

S. GILHAM: There have been lots of theoretical discussions in A&E lately and I've avoided them ~~through laziness~~ to let the ideas run around in my head. Now I feel like entering them. You just happen to provide the first comment hook. (re party cohesion) In heroic fiction you tend to get a single mighty hero, sometimes aided by a few non-descript companions, valiantly battling against all odds. RPGs try to emulate the genre, but let's face it, if you played the hero all the time it would get frustrating (having everything work out) or dull, and no one wants to play a nondescript companion when someone else has got the hero. It's much easier and more fun if the hero is off somewhere else and the companions are out trying to be heros. (The normal RPG campaign.) Unfortunately, you need a party for that as single nondescript characters tend to get bumped off pretty darned quick. I also can't think of a single system where a solitary character is self-sufficient.

There are lots of reasons for party unity, good and bad. (See my writeup lastish for some pretty wierd ones.) Dawson is quite correct in saying that the characters themselves must provide the reasons. Any party made up in the tavern of the Green Dragon Inn because they feel like going on a dungeon bash, is not going to last long. PCs will wander away when their reason for staying is no longer valid (e.g. They have fulfilled a personal quest.) but there must have been a reason for them being in the group in the first place (if only that you're less likely to be croaked in a crowd) and for the others to have accepted him. Deliberately destroying party unity for the sake of it is stupid and does nothing for your credibility as a player. Interestingly enough, party unity tends to disintegrate as player unity does, if only that they've stopped trying. This may sound terribly contrived, but it works. If you want an example, there came a time in the Sam story when I felt she was likely to leave the group. I wanted to keep the character and asked Neil to give an excuse for her to stay. The bounty hunter that turned up meant she had to leave the city anyway and she left in



the company of the others, party unity intact and in character. If the explanation was convoluted, wait for the film.

D. CARSON: Welcome!//What's the difference between Health and CON?// How do you write an accurate combat system? You programme a computer with every conceivable opening move, making allowances for reaction speed of the character, weapon and style of combat. Then every possible move from each of those including time taken to complete it and any other relevant factors. Then you sit the players down at terminals and they will instruct the computer what moves to make. Of course, the actual moves should be changable at every, say second, though that will be a little unrealistic, maybe split second, to account for changes made when the player realises what moves his opponant is making. The prefect system should take into account instinctive moves. Me facicious? Certainly. But truthful also. You might as well get it all over and done with a single roll like D&D. Any realistic system would be too complicated to be workable. Braddon and Tracey also had a hand in this comment - it was a late night topic recently, coincidentally.//Thanks for the egoboo on the skill system. 'Smithery' was Chris'. I deny all responsibility for that one.

S. CORNELIUS: Ta for the congrats on the Adelaide takeover.//We also get Blakes 7/Dr. Who/ Hitchhikers and I love them.//I think I'll be swiping some of your adventurers' skills to use in my system.//Women characters make up approx 1/3 of Neil's active NPCs (the only world I play in regularly). Two out of three regular players are female, but this is unusual. PRPers in Adelaide run at approx 1/10 female, probably beaause they usually come via wargames, which don't appeal to the majority of females.(me included). //We also get the Goons.//I see adventurers as being jacks of all trades in a particular field. That is they won't be good at everything and unless they're terribly heroic figures (unlikely) they'll still have to have companions. I wanted something more than 'I'm a Cleric. I turn undead and cast spells and fight a bit.' and I think an expanded skill system will provide more varied and realistic abilities and specialties. The Guilds are the main teachers which is why people tend to specialize in a specific area of expertise (eg plants, animals, charms.) There is no status of adventurer. Most 'adventurers' will be out doing the more dangerous, but rather ordinary tasks of the Guild, like collecting information, ingredients for potions, making maps, guarding caravans, etc. I'm planing on doing a separate character sheet for each guild with the different Guild skills on the back and room for more. There's a big overlap from Guild to Guild but not much possiblility of learning from several at once. I tried to get more skills being prerequisites for others or giving skills in another one, but Chris wouldn't let me. (re social background) Oh good grief, aaarg! See ct to Waters below.

P. WATERS: Hee, hee! Guess who plays an Oriental were-fox! Unfortunately she used to be human and has no real idea what they're like. (See write-up, it's Sam.) She definately doesn't run around with other foxes or even were-foxes.//(re me) Oh, ghods. My culture? Err, I haven't worked it out yet. Guilds are related to the state in roughly the same way the church was in Medaeval times. That is, they owe loyalty to it but operate more or less independantly from it. At least that's the idea so far. I haven't done much DMing for ages and my current world is half-baked to say the least. The background tables show where I think most adventurers will come from. See ct to Cornelius above. Strictly speaking a lot of the 'guildsmen' are actually townsmen. It was a lot easier to lump them under guildsmen for the system's sake. I guess it would be like the difference between a farmer and an agricultural student in many cases. I was up until 3.30pm last night trying to get rid of the FRPers, so if this is incoherent, sorry. You'll probably tell me it won't work (Neil does) but I don't care!



### SAM'S STORY Part 3. (The Dark Tower)

Braddon is mumbling threats of recontributing to A&E under the unlikely title of The Wizard of Aus. He's also threatening to write up Damon's version of these happy events. Be warned. His version is likely to be highly biased and anything he writes that puts Sam in a bad light is likely to be ~~perfectly true~~ a malicious lie.

The main characters thisish (for those who've just joined it) - Sam(antha)(Jenny Hein) - a nasty piece of baggage, but great leggs. Damon Hennessey (Braddon Giles) - Your hero and mine. Guard/Detective. Kralnor (NPC, Neil Fraser) - Urukhai Orc, grand master of chess, F/M Servius (Barry Lenny) - Mitran Cleric, believes all he's told but nice. Kralnor's curtain wall creates a travelling room and can be shut from the inside to put it in a kind of limbo plane where you can't get in. The senario is taken from Judges Guild and Paul Jacqays The Dark Tower.

It's funny. Mitra's Fist was the village where Mitra did his first miracle - sr some such silly thing. And yet none of the Mitrans can remember it. I never was really impressed with the Mitran religion. All those confessions to your local Cleric. No thanks. I did a few confessions to Servius to have the pleasure of watching his face burn but he put a stop to that. So I told Kifyen some good ones and she had all the fun. Crazy girl that She used to tell the most amazing stories and then confessed to the sin of lying.

But forgetting Mitra's Fist was odd. There must have been one hell of a curse on it to do that. Trouble is, now I come to think of it, I can't remember all that much myself. Just the odd events that stick out in my mind. The curse it still there I guess.

The whole town was run by Set's church, as we found out later. There was a token Mitran priest - a doddering old fool who didn't have a clue what was going on with 4 acolytes who made sure he didn't find out.

The clue to the Ring's whereabouts, or the Ring itself, was in the Dark Tower. We knew you hav to get into it via the White Tower so the next morning we snuck into the Temple. I found a trapdoor in the floor and realized the roof was trapped. I climbed up onto Kralnor's shoulders to take a look at it. I swear I hadn't even touched the bloody thing and it all came down like a ton of bricks. (It was a ton of bricks. N.F.) I fell and Kralnor tried to catch me but fell too and we both landed in a heap on the floor.

When I came to Damon was bending over me with a concerned look on his face. Lovely man. First persin who'd ever cared about my health in my life. I was falling for him eben then.

We crawled down the drapdoor to be met by Holomir Goldenheart, a Mitran paladin who'd been fighting this lot for centuries aided only by about a hundred Kobbits, a couple of lamasu and a few other oddballs. The whole underground bit was part of the White Tower, that joined onto an underground complex of Set's church, that joined onto the Dark Tower I think that's how it worked at any rate.

We rested there and made sorties into the bad guy's area. There were some really odd things in their complex. Stuff that really seemed out of place in a joint run by the followers of Set. Like Sam, another Sam. An 11' tall stone giant Sam with a red fez, curly-toed shoes and snazzy clothes. He said he had to collect all our belts and if he did he'd get to be a real giant. He carried a large broom and threatened to sweep us into a hole in the floor if we didn't behave. We gave him our belts and he put them in a sack and gave us others. I got a wide leather one with a huge bronze buckle. It didn't match my black chiffon so I offered to swap with Kralnor (ma.ing sure it wasn't magic first), who'd got this tacky silvery thing. His was magical so I stowed it away for safekeeping in case it did something nasty to me.

We also met up with Verus in the Tower. Oh, there were others too like Grimstone the snooty elf and Murky the Dragonel, but they were



killed in the Tower and we never really got to know them too well. Verus was different. He joined us and travelled with us to the end of the quest and helped me through a difficult time later on.

We found Verus chained us in a room Servius said was the crypt of a Mitran patriarch or bishop or something. Poor Verus was quite mad - schitzo. He went crazy at one point and tried to kill us. Holomir fixed him up somehow. Halfway up the Dark Tower he was killed by skeletons and Berik reincarnated him as a kind of dogman-ware. He was crazy in a different kind of way then. All weres are. I can say that cause I've been one myself.

It was during one of the sorties that Servius lost his eye and then had it mysteriously replaced by someone. He was refused reentrance to the White Tower after that and we all knew there was something odd going on but the Mitrans were all pretty close-mouthed and went off into a huddle. They weren't going to let any of us heathens in on what was going on, which pissed me off no end. So when Kralnor offered to play poker with me I agreed.

We went off into his curtain wall and I didn't realize until later that he's closed it. (She probably did but was enjoying herself too much). N.F.) We outdid each other cheating - I'm a pretty good cardsharp but I reckon he was playing with marked cards. Bit unfair. I taught him Turanian checkers and creamed him. Knowing Kralnor and how good he is at chess I wouldn't mind betting he would have got the hang of it pretty damn quick.

I remember thinking something was wrong at one point and realized that Kralnor was up to something. Then it was a matter of casting spells and seeing who got through first. Kralnor did, though he cheated again cause he'd slipped me a mickey in his booze we were drinking. He magicked me so I was frozen fast and carried me to the bed, tied me down securely so I couldn't move or cast spells and went outside the wall. Damon came back and for a few seconds I thought it was actually him. When I realised it wasn't Kralnor was there grinning like a damned Cheshire cat. Damn his illusions! He raped me, froze me again, put me outside the wall with a bag of coins in my blouse, broke the spell and took off in his wall.

I swore then I'd kill him. Rape I could take. It had been a mistake to play poker with Kralnor and I'd paid for it. I'd been raped before. But no one calls me a whore and gets away with it.

I guess something like that is like falling off a horse. You have to get straight back on again or you lose your nerve. I went off and found Damon and seduced him. He was resisting me so I had to do a few spells but it helped take the bad taste away. I guess in a way I was as bad as Kralnor then, but I had to do it.

Kralnor had given me some Nymph spell books on spec. I was going to eventually sell him the golem book and some other stuff for them. I went off and spent 20 hours straight copying out the ones I didn't know by then he was back, so I walked into the curtain wall, dropped the books and the money in a heap on the floor with a note saying "I do not accept payment. I wish to be released from the bargain. My property is my own." and walked out. The latter was because Kralnor had sort of claimed the book as his own. He went back a note saying "O.K. Your loss." That was fine. I was now free of any guarantees of good behaviour or helping him get the Ring and that was the way I wanted it. I crashed and slept the clock round.

After I woke up I spent some time with the Kobbits. Simple, uncomplicated lot. All they worry about is cooking and beer. Good philosophy that. Kralnor sent one of them to me with a note. I remember it word for word. "Just don't do anything to thwart me or my aims. Make damn sure you don't let anyone know what I'm going to do. If you do... Incidentally, watch your cut. Your grip is a little weak; obvious. By the way, you're welcome for a chess game anytime. You have potential.



The checkers was pretty good. Any chance of advanced lessons?" I sent it back to him in ashes for an answer.

I don't think he realized what he'd done, or why I was angry at him. For an Uruk, he'd been generous. That was the trouble. Quite often he didn't really act like a uruk and I sometimes forgot he was.

We eventually found the entrance to the Dark Tower right down the bottom of the complex and fought our way to the top of it, rather the worse for wear. We would never have made it except for massive healing.

If I'd have had any sense I would never have gone. I could have stayed nice and safe in the White Tower. But I'd never been on this kind of thing before - all my experience has been in cities, creeping into houses and stuff. I must admit, this was rather lucrative. I got a fair bit in palmed gems that the others never saw plus my share in the loot. Then there was the wand I stole off Damon and made him forget he ever had (a favourite trick of mine). But if I'd had just the fair share it wouldn't have been worth it moneywise.

At the top of the Tower we killed some nasty critter I don't rightly remember and did something or other to find ourselves in a big circular room being attacked by two horrible monsters that Servius said were sons of Set.

Things were looking hairy so Berik turned Verus into a dragon, a real dragon, I thought that was pretty neat and tried the same thing on myself with Damon's wand (it changed thing's shape). Not so neat. I ended up a giant lizard. Still more lethal than I'd been. We also got Dai-sho. Servius tossed a short sword into the air and shouted the name and Dai-sho caught it. He was lethal that guy. Jumped on top of the lizards thing, stood for a few seconds concentrating and slammed the sword into the thing. Must have hit a vital spot cause it did masses of damage to it. We eventually killed the sons of bs but it was a long hard fight. It cost us more in blood than we could afford.

Me, I was stuck as a lizard too. I didn't have the hands to hold the wand so I couldn't work it. Damon came over and picked it up. When I'd stolen it from him I'd tried to make sure the others didn't know he had it, he certainly had never used it while with them, but they must have known and told him it was his. Of course, he couldn't remember ever having it but there was no reason for him to doubt them. Now he had me in the perfect position to find out. He stood there with the wand in his hands, asked if it was his and tried to read my mind.

O.K. So it wasn't reasonable, but I saw red. At various times Damon, Servius, Berik and ghod knows who else had tried to read my mind to see if I was telling the truth or not. Most of the time I wasn't but that still wasn't the point. My body had been used and abused for so long it didn't matter anymore what happened to it, but my mind was my own, all mine. Noone had ever touched it. I could think what I liked and noone could ever stop me. These bastards thought they could use my thoughts whenever they liked and I was as determined they wouldn't. I'd cottoned on pretty quick to their game and devised a way against them. Whenever someone asked a pointed question I used to think the most filthy thoughts I could. That told them what I thought or it and I could tell who was reading by the blushes.

So when Damon read my mind I started my usual trick. He was expecting it and wasn't impressed and pointed out that it was the only way to communicate with me. I still wasn't impressed myself, but could see his point and strictly controlled my surface thoughts while answering him. He said again, "Did you take the wand from me?" and I replied, "No!"

He went to the others. I was frightened that he was going to leave me that way and tried to stop him. Short stumpy legs aren't made for grabbing people gently and I missed. He talked to the others and eventually came back to transform me. I wasn't impressed. It was back to being me and them again. Later on Damon gave me back the wand. I was stunned at the time. Him & his honest nature. He really knew it was his







OH GOD, I'M SO DEPRESSED. No III (C) N.A.Fraser, 1984.

Neil A. Fraser, 4/104 Sixth Ave, St. Peters, South Australia, 5069.  
(08) 424469. This zine is a Wombat Free Press Production, sponsored by United Diprotodan Production Pty Ltd in association with Thylacolea (Assassins-For-Hire) & Co (so watch it!) Can I get her to do it 3 times in a row???? The zine is typed by Miss J. Hein (awww. Come on. Puh-lee eeze!!!)(Oh alright, but only if you're a good boy and eat your vegies. And don't forget to wash behind tour ears. J.H.)

You may notice that the aforementioned Miss J. Hein is also now at the above address. What have I let myself in for? (7 months of great co. J.H.)

Well, since so far I haven't heard any negative comments on my story (not least because there's been no time for responses) I'll go on with another one. I won't explain Serenting before the story. I'd like to think it explains him quite well. Briefly put, he is the most powerful non-deity at loose in Falanarn (at least to my knowledge!) The Black Hand is the most powerful artifact loose (or equal first powerful). If people want to know more about him, ask, and I'll tell (besides if you ask, I'll know you're alive out there). (And I'll know more about what we're up against. J.H.) Ah yes, "Citadel" is the capital/headquarters of Serenting's northern campaign.

#### UNDER CITIDEL

The chamber was large; 20 paces square and 4 fathoms from floor to doming ceiling, cut from the living stone. It was bare and austere, its only decoration the pentacle with the open points engraved into the floor, its grooves filled with silver; its only furniture the brass stand shaped like a monstrous clawed hand holding open the large close-writ tome. The chamber was lit by nine bloated white candles circling the pentacle that spat and guttered.

The door was of a silvery metal, set with black metal studs. An iron bar closed it from the inside.

Against one wall were lying five naked elves, three male, two female, each bound hand and foot. One of the males moaned quietly and continuously, one of the women recited endless prayers to Ilúvatar, the Valar and to all the Maiar she could think of. The other three were silent in their fear.

The only other inhabitant of the room was a man; a tall, thin elf of extraordinary beauty and presence. He was dressed in a long plain dark robe. He was reading the book, his lips moving silently. Suddenly he glanced at the captives and smiled, very faintly. He turned back to the book. Then, as if satisfied with his noiseless recitation, he nodded gently to himself.

He moved to the eastern point of the pentacle, then threw up his hands in the air, and commenced a chant, in a deep, sonorous and compelling melodious voice. The moaning male elf started weeping quietly at the Black Speech flowing so fluently from the perfect lips. The chant ended, and the elfen mage shouted a name thrice "Graginathdigöl! Graginathdigöl! Graginathdigöl!"

For a moment silence was supreme, then a red mist flickered into view in the pentacle's centre. The nine candles flared up, flame tips lapping at the ceiling, then doused themselves. With an irritable gesture from the elf they reignited. The red mist solidified and expanded with horrifying suddenness. The candles, burning normally again sketchily illuminated the hulking devil. Briefly its wings stretched and its eyes glowed yellow. Its black talons opened and closed convulsively.

"My Lord Serenting." stated the Pit Fiend, only respect in its iron-harsh voice. It glanced briefly at the five elves, and its lip raised from its jagged white fangs.

"They are yours" said Serenting casually. "I would talk with you."

The devil stepped ponderously from the star and prodded one body with a clawed foot. The elf fainted, mercifully.

"Five!" declared Gaginathdigöl. "Thou wert ever generous, good my lord!"

It began its play and its feeding.

The mage turned back to the book, flicking over pages at regular intervals. His lip curled in scorn at the horrible noises from behind him.

He turned back eventually to find the Pit Fiend observing him.

"I am Gaginathdigöl, and I have a pact with thee, my Lord Serenting, with thee and with the Ebony Hand!"

"I am Serenting and I am the Ebony Hand and I have a pact with you, Gaginathdigöl, o Pit Fiend! I am speaking to you!"

The devil nodded gravely, then squatted down on its clawed heels, resting its huge hands on its massive knees. Its monstrous head was now level with that of the standing elf.

Serenting thrust forward his right hand and held it palm forward to the devil. It was not a natural hand. It was as shiny as silk and as smooth and it was ebon-black. No nails ended the three long fingers or the thumb. Each digit had one joint more than a normal hand. A nimbus of black fire shimmered out from the Hand's palm. The Fiend shrank back, blocking its face with its hands, cringing from a heat even it, who lived in Hell-fire found destructive.

"Thou art the Black Hand indeed my Lord! In Asmodeus' name stop! or my body be endangered! I listen, o I listen!" It was not ashamed that it whimpered. Even the Devil King it had sworn by spoke respectfully to this Black Elf.

The Hand clenched to a fist and the flame vanished. "I am sorry" said the mage. He did not sound in the least remorseful. "I was thinking of something else for a time, and forgot myself."

The devil relaxed a trifle, but looked still warily and fearfully at the elf.

"Speak on, my master, Gaginathdigöl listens."

"Well. You know the conditions of our pact. I have not however overworked you, or tired you with pestiferous demands. Is this not so?"

The devil nodded. "Indeed, my Lord. My service to thee has been light, easy and well rewarded. I have not and will not hesitate to undertake tasks for thee."

The elf smiled. It was a beautiful smile, but not a pleasant one. "It is good you are willing to aid me. I require simple, yet very humiliating service of you. Very humiliating indeed" he added considerably.

Gaginathdigöl flinched. Its mouth opened wide, showing its fearsome teeth and its back mouth. A spiked club flickered briefly into existence in its paw, then vanished again. It sighed, and the candles guttered.

"Very well. My service has been long, but my few tasks short, I cannot object." "Indeed" murmured the elf. "All is fair. I will humiliate myself, if not full willingly, then without rancour. But shall we say, a century off the terms in exchange." It spoke with cunning in its heart.

The elf's voice was calm. "No!" he said. "Do not ask again or I shall obliterate you" His tone was wholly conversational. His right Hand flicked out and brushed against the leather membrane of the devil's wing.

In its agony as the membrane dripped away, it rolled about the floor scouring it with its claws and cracking the wall as it dashed itself against it. The candles deftly lifted themselves in the air at a motion from Serenting as the maimed Fiend floundered about. Its bellows reverberated and rebounded from the walls in growing crescendos until the elf with another gesture cast a pall of silence over all. Long minutes later the Fiend wriggled across the floor to the impassive elf



and slobberingly kissed the floor at his feet. Tears of black blood ran down its cheeks.

"I meant it not, my greatest master. I am thy slave. I will do anything!" It wailed, its grovelling coming hard to its voice, and harder to its ungainly body.

"Good," said Serenting. His voice showed no satisfaction, only annoyance perhaps at the unnecessary delay.

"Explain to me, my lord what my task is" the devil mumbled from its position spreadeagled on the ground. The great gap in its left wing showed raw orange drooling ichor at the edges.

"I am concerned about a certain Olog-dak. He along with his mistress also a Troll-lord are tempted to be independant from me. They command many trolls, giants, wights, orcs and other powerful and mage-wise, and I have other matters occupying me. I am purporting to gift my pact with you to them. Naturally this will be only a form. You are to serve as their slave. Watch them. Learn their weaknesses. Report to me, but serve them absolutely, save that you serve me also. I will have their service. The first two syllables of the Olog-dak's True Name is "Kiva-bar". That should help somewhat. Do you understand?"

The devil nodded, whimpering. "I will do aught that thou commandest, my master."

The elf nodded also. "Go you to Mastagika. She will inform you in full of my desires. Think not to cozen her; she is as skilled as I in dealing with recalcitrant slaves." His lips curled upwards.

"My wing?" asked the devil fearfully, shrinking back.

"It will regrow" said the elf uncaringly. "But the pain I will leave you as a reminder!"

The fiend nodded, and boiled away to red smoke, then to naught, much more swiftly than it had appeared.

"Now, the next matter" said the elf softly, and turned again to the book.

He ignored the four hooded, robed figures who entered, bearing a well bound elven maid. She was gagged. By the fire still glowing in her lambent purple eyes it was as well. Words of no good will would surely have spillid from her lips otherwise.

Serenting glanced at her and pursed his lips slightly. He nodded slightly to one of the robed figures. That one took out a mottled green-black stave from its voluminous sleeve; a stave that lengthened impossibly as it was drawn forth, and with it stroked the elven woman's wrists and ankles. An involuntary whimper was heard through the gag, but the defiance in her eyes burned steadily. One of the robed figures re-entered. Under its arm was the small limp form of a female snagga, a slave goblin. It was dumped on the floor, then the ropes securing the elf's limbs were removed. One of the robed figures stirred the elf's arm with its foot. It flopped uselessly. "Go" said Serenting. The four figures left, still silent. Serenting walked over to the snagga as the door bar floated again into place. He ripped off the crude sacking tunic that was her only cover and tossed it aside. He turned to the elven maiden and stared quietly at her. The defiance faded somewhat from her, and a touch of fear animated her. He smiled gently and she shuddered, her useless limbs quivering as if palsied. He gestured slightly and the torn remnants of the rich clothes she wore frayed and powered to dust. He evinced no interest in her exceedingly lovely body, though humiliation stirred in her gaze, almost drowning out both defiance and fear.

"Elfriel" he said. "This is not necessary. You could acquiese willingly. I do not want to break you." He sounded sincere. There was certainly more feeling in his voice than when he had spoken to the devil, but his eyes were still cold. Her gag was still in place, so she could not speak, but she glared unwaveringly at him.

He shrugged. "So be it!"

He turned to the pentacle, and spoke but one word. "Jalinyra!" The end of the word trailed off in a note that smelled of altar of roses, overlaying fleshy corruption.

A shimmer of silver wavered in the pentacle's centre. A monstrous figure was half seen, as though through a curtain of reflective blue threads, then a female devil flicked into clear sight.

"I was awaiting thy call, o Master." Her voice was seductive, and bell-like in tone, but the bell sounded flawed. She was naked and silver-orange, with blue nipples and genitals, and wide, white feathered wings. Her tail lashed from side to side, regular as a pendulum. She oozed towards him, artificial breath causing her prominent bosom to heave. Her hand snaked around his waist and she kissed him hard and deep upon the mouth.

He sighed, his tone unmistakably of boredom. The devilless sprang back, barbed horns untwining from her forehead. A forked tongue flickered between her lips. Abruptly she calmed herself, before she said anything foolish. She forced a rueful laugh.

"Noone but thou could resist me, master. I even roused a eunuch once."

He waved the Hand at her. She shuddered and drew back. From within his robes he took a huge luminous black gem, and carressed it with the Hand. A silver fire lit within the centre. Frowning faintly, Serenting stepped forward to Elfiriel and placed it carefully upon her body, between her breasts. Through her gag, she gave a terrified whimper, like that of a small lost animal, then her body heaved once and was limp. Serenting looked carefully at the heart of the gem. Far, far away he saw a tiny heart beating frantically and fearfully. A satisfied smile curled his lips. He held the gem delicately, as a woman would her child.

"Take it!" Serenting commanded Jalinyra, pointing at Elfiriel's shell. The devil smiled lasciviously. She seated herself delicately beside the shallowly breathing body, and began to expertly manipulate its genital and breasts. When the situation was prepared to her liking Jalinyra rapidly turned to sparkling smoke and flowed into the elf's flaccid mouth.

A short time later, Elfiriel's eyes opened and focused. She tried to sit, but her arms wouldn't move.

"Master!" the elf's sweet voice said, protestingly. She sounded petulant.

Serenting lightly touched her wrists and ankles with the Ebony Hand and turned away to further study the gem.

Jalinyra/Elfiriel sat up, and stretched sensuously. Then she grimaced, showing a touch of devilic anger at something she found. "Fucking thing's a virgin" she said in strong tones of scorn.

The mage turned sharply to her. "And you will remain that way unless it is absolutely necessary or totally unavoidable!"

"Awww!" the woman said, sounding fretful - again like a child. She moved next to him and rubbed her lovely body slowly against his.

He touched her very gently under the left breast with the tip of the first finger of the Hand. She wailed in distress and collapsed to the floor, holding both hands over the spot. Tears ran down her suddenly pale cheeks.

"Stand up" he said. Dutifully she arose, as if pulled by strings. "Listen to me very carefully. I shall say this only once. You have the Princess Elfiriel's body so you may convert her relatives and dependants subtly, not to go on a protracted orgy. You must appear to be Elfiriel, and you must act like her, until she herself is ready to do my will in these things. Elfiriel is not a wanton whore like you. She is dignified, intelligent and restrained. Emulate her: it will do you good! Remember the pain next time you are tempted to disobey me. Better yet, speak to the pit fiend Gaginatdigöl; it too thought to defy me."



The possessed elf nodded humbly. A tiny black blemish, shaped like a slender black hand had appeared where he had touched her. He pointed to it. "I leave that on you to remind you not to undress. It will be dangerous to you should one not committed to me see it. It will be dangerous since I have locked your mind, your heart and your Name to that body. Should it be hurt or killed, that too shall be your fate. Therefore guard it well!"

Jalinyra nodded again.

"And take some clothes. As I said, Elfiriel is no wanton unlike you!"

The elfen body abruptly wore a tight clinging, low cut velvet gown trimmed with fur.

Serenting said nothing, and merely stared at her. Jalinyra trembled, and fell to her knees. "No master! I meant it not!" Fine quality and demure green and brown clothes replaced the velvet. A bejewelled silver hair net held back her black tresses, and green slippers adorned her feet.

"Very much better," said Serenting. "Go to the third tower. I will speak to you there at more length as to your first duty as Elfiriel."

The elf genuflected deeply and winked from sight.

Now," said Serenting to himself. "The beginning of the humiliation to break a spirit."

He slipped the black gem into a pocket and replaced it with a dull coffee coloured oval stone. He placed this stone less carefully upon the female goblin's chest, between her twin dugs. The stone throbbed dully once and the orc's body showed an emptiness faintly more pronounced than before. The Hand plucked the stone from its resting place and held it for a moment.

"Goodbye!" whispered Serenting, and crushed the stone to a splintery powder. A faint protesting whimper faded out of hearing. "The kindest words ever spoken to you, I imagine" said the mage. He shrugged and let the debris sift from his grasp. He took again the luminous black gem and put it reverently down where the other stone had recently stolen the snaga's meagre soul.

The ugly little body twitched. The black clawed hands curled. The deepset black eyes opened and flicked about in bewilderment. Serenting swiftly bent and retrieved the gem which disappeared into an interior pocket.

He took a pair of steps backward and made a gesture that half completed a spell. He waited anxiously for the orc's reaction. A long shuddering wail burst from between the blackened teeth of the snaga. The clawlike hands on the long arms plucked at the uncomely hunched body. She stood up, teetering unsteadily on short bowed legs, then unconsciously steadied herself on her knuckles.

"What have you done to me?" The Sindarin was badly mauled by the broken and rotting teeth and the clumsy tongue.

"I have temporarily given you another body: do not worry: this one's remote ancestor was an elf - once!"

"I am an orc!" Elfiriel shrieked in horror.

"Where is your boasted tolerance and elven pity and understanding now?" asked Serenting sharply. "This form is only temporarily yours. If you work hard you will become yourself again. What of born orcs? They must forever live in a form like yours Elfiriel! They never can escape! But you can."

The swarthy figure blinked uncertainly in the flickering candle glow. The flat nose twitched. Then she screamed incoherently and flung herself at the mage.

He completed the spell he had started. The small goblin tumbled to the floor unconscious. Serenting stepped back fastidiously to avoid having the grubby body touch his robes. The bar on the door lifted to his mental command.

After a few minutes pause, a vast hulking figure stepped in

surprisingly quietly considering his bulk and the full plated mail he wore. His facial features were all Uruk-hai, but his build was that of a troll.

"Is that it, Master?" he said pointing at the snaga. His voice was deep but cultured, however slurred the silibants were by his huge fangs.

"Yes, Grimmork. That is the former Princess Elfiriel. Be sure to always address her thus. Let her be treated by all as she were a female snaga, save that any who maims her or kills her shall suffer a more terrible fate than anything I have yet conceived. She is a lynchpin of my plan for the mid-North, and she must break."

"She will Serenting!" the giant uruk said, quiet confidence in his voice. "When have your plans ever failed."

Serenting smiled sadly. "Never yet, old friend." He clapped the orc on the shoulder and nodded. "She must break soon! I rely on you Grimmork."

"I shall succeed for you, my friend and lord," the uruk said with simple conviction. He effortlessly picked up the scrawny female goblin by an arm and carried her out.

Serenting stretched, fatigue suddenly showing on his face. He carefully closed the heavy book and massaged his real hand with the magic one.

"Mastagika" he called quietly.

There was a sudden 'whoosh' of displaced air, and the great lamia, his chiefest of lieutenants appeared before him. Her luminous eyes showed concern and she moved to support his suddenly sagging frame. He slumped in her arms for a while, then laboriously drew himself upright.

"You push yourself too hard, Seren my love." Her voice was rich and melodious. Her large and shapely hand caressed his brow. She bent to kiss his lips. Her centaur-like frame shuddered as she passed energy to her friend and lord.

"Enough, Taji, enough!" the elf gasped. "Your power is so different to mine. I can hardly absorb it." He laughed a little, emotion entering his voice as he looked upon the perfect features of his second-in-command.

"If my body were one that responded to sex" he said. "You. You would be my only paramour."

"After you have won" the lamia said "Perhaps you could remake your body and..."

The mage whistled, then laughed again. "By the secret One. The power the children of such a union would have!"

The lamia caught up the elf's weak body in her arms, and began to carry it effortlessly from the chamber. Serenting relaxed in her capable arms and leaned his head wearily against her bare shoulder.

"How went the fiend?" he asked tiredly and curiously.

"Grovelled its pitiful spirit out." Mastagika laughed, sounding like a gentle carillon. "You put the Fear into it, rightly enough!"

"I must speak to Jalinyra."

"You shall rest" said Mastagika severely. "I'll speak to the hell-spawned slut! I know of your desires in this matter my dear."

"If she had guessed how weary I was..." His voice trailed away, as he was lulled by the rocking motion of the lamia's gait and the strange sound of her front paws padding and her rear nooves clacking on the stone.

"Thankyou." The Black elf paused. "After you finish speaking to that moron come to my chambers. I must stimulate my mind with intelligent conversation and a good friend's company. The two devils were so utterly lacking in brains. I look forward to Elfiriel's conversion and subsequent conversations."

Mastagika smiled and kissed the elf's forehead. "I will be along, my dear Seren. I too look forward to her new faith, but less for her



speech than more base reasons I fear." He joined her laughter, but his died away prematurely even as the lamia carried him tenderly to his bed-chamber. "And now" he said. "Now I must turn my mind once again to Damon Hennessey."

NB From Jenny. In case you're wondering. This story is contemporary to the campaign as it currently stands. IE, approx two years game time after the writeup I'm currently doing. But the story stands on its own anyway, and just to satisfy Neil's egomaniac desire to be publicly praised, I think his stories are great. (Satisfied now Neil?)

But back to Neil....(This after all is his zine!)

Has anyone out there read "Magician" by Raymond Feist, set in the past of the Midkemia world (as expounded in the Midkemia Press products (Black Tower, Carse, Heart of the Sunken Lands, et al))?. (I'll build up to why I asked the question gradually). I quite like the products; I have a bit of a quibble about (if this sounds disjointed, Jenny and Dennis are waffling on in the background. Aaarrgh!)(don't let him fool you, he's always disjointed. J.H.) the names. They don't seem to match all together. Anglo-saxon type ones mixed with Carse, Jonril, Zorasis, Xothan, Pigot, etc. Anyhow. I read the book. I didn't mind it; I've read worse (and better!). I've also read the review in "Different Worlds 32" by David Dunham. For now, I'll have to assume that you've read "Magician". Dunham says of the parallel world that invades Midkemia in the book "...the Tsurani (of the Tsuranuanni Empire) are modeled on the Japanese." I read "Magician". Within 3 or so pages of the introduction of the Tsurani into the story, I'd said "Ah-ha! Feist is borrowing (or the Midkemian creators are borrowing) from Tekumel (aka "Empire of the Petal Throne") of Prof. M.A.R. Barker." Now there's nothing wrong with borrowing: nearly the whole of my Tharamalor is borrowed, but how did Dunham miss the similarities? Tekumel can't be that little known can it? And how can Feist put his Tsuranuanni into print without anywhere acknowledging Barker, who created a stupendous and absolutely original world in Tekumel. Sure, Feist changed the names, the map, substituted a world empire for the Tsuranuanni, instead of being one of a number of empires, and changed the creation story for Tekumel. Virtually nothing else. Just off the top of my head I can come up with the following "similarities" Feist has to Barker. A metal-less world. No riding beasts. Allied insectoid warriors. A dynamic, militaristic, huge empire. A cloistered emperor. Various clans forming fluid "parties" for one cause or another. Ten gods (greater) and ten lesser. Armour and weapons made out of treated animal hide, all rather baroque of design and the former brilliantly coloured. A tonal language (not Japanese as Dunham says, but Barker's common language of the Spaceways, a mix of Tamil-Arabic-Mayan(!!!)).

What the hell else is needed? Anyhow, the question is did anyone else notice this, or am I paranoid? Does anyone else care? (Who said no?)

Ah hell. This must be it.

Wombat fact. Wombats invented a game. It is played with a stick in each paw. With the sticks one must hit a small round cornered cube of compressed soil compacted with eucalyptus gum. This rounded cube is a wom. The game is called (wait for it...) On second thoughts, guess!

And it's goodbye from me, and it's goodbye from him (pointing to bookshelf and books by, for and about wombats). Goodbye.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH: Leprechaun trying to think of something useful to do: "I can go on a scouting mission for you." Damon: "But you can't go in there, it's pitch black." "That's alright, I can't see anyway!" (George Galloway (a newie! Or rather, a returned oldie) and Braddon Giles.) Next month, a rabid hobbit.

Denise Gerneth 2510 Little Creek Drive  
Richardson, TX 75080 (214) 231 5203

# A C H T U N G !

Alles Touristen and Non-Technischen  
Lookens Peepers!!

White Pegasus.. a new EPPO APA with a  
Texas 100 flavo(u)r. White Pegasus #1  
will be awaiting your input with a tenta-  
tive deadline of about three months afr  
this sees print. First issue has only 5  
contributors now-- I refuse to think  
that we'll have to do without 10 or so.  
I'm trying to support the first issue  
so that noncontributors will try a  
sample copy and be attracted to the zine.

Das machine-control ist nicht fur  
Gerfingernoken und Littenrabben.  
Oderwiso is easy Schnappen der Sprin-  
nenwerk, Ploymfuse, und Poanoncorken  
mit Spritzensparken. Das machine is  
fingne LV Experten only is nicht fur  
Geverken by das Lunkkopfen. Das Ruthernecken  
Sichtseenen keenen das Cottenpicken  
Bands in das Pocketses. So Relaxen und  
Watchen das Blinkenliant.

WHITE PEGASUS #1 - AVAILALE in May or  
June time frame - NO CONTRIBUTOR'S COST  
\$1.25 + .75 postage (first class a/ USA)  
Alternatively, send \$1.25 and a SASE -  
use a kraft envelope of 9X12 or 9X7  
dimensions (so I can fold over the issue  
or mail it flat. Expected length 24-30  
doublesided pages.) ISASE= Self-Addressed  
Stamped Envelope!!

Noticed near grouping of IBM/XT Pro PCs:

--Warning!!--

\* This machine subject to breakdown  
only during periods of critical need \*

Prices are low for the first few issues  
in order to encourage contributors. In  
the event that it succeeds, it can be  
solvent if we have a large readership/  
contributorship. The zine will be photocopy  
until my offset printer falls from the  
Heavens (i.e., for foreseeable future.)  
This is the first Texas AP (I don't  
consider ACRYSS to be one, although David  
Walle is a UT/A student), so check it out.

A special circuit in this machine called  
a Crisis Detector senses the operator's  
emotional state in terms of how  
desperate he or she is to use the computer.  
The Crisis Detector then creates a  
malfunction proportional to the desperation  
of the operator. Threatening the machine  
with violence only aggravated this situation.  
Likewise, attempts to use the other machines  
may cause them to malfunction similarly  
(they belong to the d same union.) Keep  
cool and say nice things. Pretend to never  
need a computer again. Nothing else seems  
to work.

Acceptable subject matter: anything. I  
suppose. Preferred subjects: Fantasy  
role-playing, all types of gaming, fiction  
and poetry, personal computer programs  
and tidbits (although don't make it into  
a forum for software reviews! I mean tell  
about your habit, what you are doing, etc.)  
and all relevant material to us fantasy  
and science fiction freaks. Articles of  
general interest to the educated person  
could be interesting, but keep in mind the  
purposes of EPPO APAs and consider that  
most of us are reasonably well educated  
and selective about what we read (fiction  
and poetry can be any type, though, as  
long as it is not unintelligibly experi-  
mental. Doesn't have to be straight SF  
and LOTR.)

Sort of dorky, but thought there were  
several hackers about and wanted them to  
get a kick out of one or the oter of these.  
I have noticed that most if not all of the  
people I have met in professional software  
development seem to be fantasy/science  
fiction fans. (Some are even Sci-Fi, but  
not too many.) Is this a trend of the  
intelligentsia? (I'm a senior software  
engineer with E-Systems here in Dallas.  
The Garland division, not the one where  
Lenel Peter worked...that was Greenville,  
a village south of here and not very  
cosmopolitan, as will be seen...) Anyone  
who is about to graduate from college or  
is in the position of making a career move  
seems to want to be a programmer. It sure  
isn't the selective society it once was.  
Getting a PC is a new fad, like hula  
hoops but far more freeing and educational.

Longing off of the tangent now. Hope a few  
of you are interested. Soon we will have  
another person, a no journalism major,  
to help me with production. See you to  
APAs and be...

...it of council. It  
...ne so is ev



PEGASUS...last of the winged horses  
(c) 1984 by Robert Loutzenhiser

The run I am going to try to describe herein is over four years old. Because of its (to us) tragic ending), the story has never been told nor the scenario rerun. And yet, maybe because of the conflicts and tragedies, it is the finest example of roleplaying I have ever been a part of. The players and I identified with the characters greatly, and the ending affected us greatly. For awhile I tried to forget about this one, but now I feel that forgetting was a mistake. So now I will try to write what happened to the Forward Interior Communciations Gaming Group on that long voyage in the Indian Ocean.

Game Master: Robert Loutzenhiser  
System: Chivalry & Sorcery  
Setting: Fantasy, Iron Age, Dunsian-type cultures, semi-closed universe, pagan religions, low level power, medium magic presence.

#### The Cast

John Stauss: The Birdman, 5th level Power Word mage. No background or family. Used Nivenized spells. Affiliated with the Bagalmeyer Institute of Magical Research. Has many friends with the Treeson Elves.

Ron Sawyer: Flecia, Priestess to Our Lady of the Silver Moon, and native to another world. 3rd level Healer. Holder of the ancient knowledge.

(Forgotten): Bert. Commoner stock. Usually in debt. A wanderer with no ties. 3rd level fighter.

(Forgotten): Ustson. 3rd level fighter and 2nd level Bard. Bastard son of Lord Huston. Has not been legally recognized.

Bill Molnar: Bonstein, ninth son of Lord Breyminal. A wanderer since of age. Must return home yearly to receive a small allowance. 3rd level man-at-arms and 2nd level thief. [Also the narrator.--LG]

Perhaps if I told you a little about myself, you would better understand the adventure I am about to write down.

My life can be divided into two parts: before and after. My memories of an earlier life seem like the dreams and vague fantasies of a younger, innocent man. Born of wealthy parents, my earlier life was one of idyllic pleasures and the riches of learning that only the wealthy can afford. As I grew to age, though I found the future becoming dimmer. As the ninth son of a Duke, my prospects for inheriting his lands were very slim indeed.

So when I came of age, I set out in my youthful innocence to obtain my own land and riches. Swift was the fall of my Pegasus and bitter the aftertaste. After my disillusionment, I continued my wanderings, half hopeful that I would someday fulfill my dreams of a castle and lands.

Now some of my dreams are fulfilled. I have my castle--a small manor in the north of Treeson; my land--a few acres which my family and I tend; and my riches--my wife and children, good friends and honor. Becoming a farmer was easier than I thought it would be. The hard work helps one to...forget.

The Elves have been extremely helpful and have allowed me to sell my produce with their trade goods down the river. I still receive invitations from the Dwarves to their yearly celebrations even though I don't go. They seem very understanding about my fear of caves and dungeons. And an Elven healer has come up with a potion which reduces my nightmares and flashbacks. All in all, my life has been...good, and I am content.

Well, almost content, for one thing still bothers me like an itch unscratched. If I write it down for others to study, to ponder and to remember, maybe...maybe what happened to us will warn future generations. And before the protective spell we reset starts to decay again, they will go down into that foul entrance of Hell and reseal the entrance where He waits.

The best place to start would be on Roc-eye, where I met the Magician. I was drinking at the Inn of the Blue Moon. The place was a very popular spot for traders and ship captains to meet and talk, and I was there looking for a job as a swords-

man. That afternoon, the common room was crowded with phowens and humans, with one or two of the other races here and there. Talk of prices, weather, and politics contested in the air with smoke and the smells of cooking pig and unwashed bodies.

I was sitting by myself at a far corner table ordering my third ale of the day when he entered the room.

silence

small blue birds and gray cloth

His piercing black eyes swept the room. The grey cloak was shrugged back on his grey-clothed shoulders. The birds fluttered about his body. The silence continued as he spotted the empty chair opposite me, gave me a quick look over, then made his way across the room towards me.

"Two ales for me and my friend," he said, as he slid gracefully onto the chair. He took a deep drink of the potent black brew, looked around the silent room, and frowned. Our nearest neighbors quickly found something else to stare at.

Smiling at me, he said, "You'd think they'd never seen a bird before."

"It is not often that one sees a flock of birds following a man about. Elves, yes; men, no."

He smiled again and drank. Usually your first reaction to someone is either dislike, neutral or a vague liking. But this...Birdman caused in me an intense feeling of liking. Perhaps his feeling toward me was something of the same, for soon we were discussing weather and politics like old friends.

In the course of our discussion, we got round to travels. I told of my wanderings and of my decision to come to Roc-eye to work on ships as a Master-at-arms for awhile. As it turned out, my friend had just arrived from the mainland. Demsi of the Double Star to be exact. And he mentioned having a ways yet to go.

After that, silence descended on our table as we both considered the reasons for our existence and the liquid level of our tankards.

Suddenly, I knew! I knew where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do. I looked at the stranger across the table, and my mouth uttered words that I had not said since I was little.

"Take me with you."

My heart pounded, and around me the world grew dark and seemed to draw back. He continued to look into his ale as if looking for the answer to a question. Then he looked at me, right through me into my very soul! The moment seemed suspended in eternity as we looked at each other, understood each other!

"You gentlemen need a refill?" The voice of the wench snapped us back to reality. For a moment, I shook my head to clear away the lingering darkness, and the wench took this as my answer and left.

The birdman got up from the table and made ready to go. The birds rose from their perches and began to flutter around his head.

"Where do I see you next?"

"I leave on the Sea Fern, dock eleven, the day after tomorrow."

He turned and left.

What had begun as a simple tavern encounter was fast becoming one of the most unusual friendships I would ever have. But for now it was to me just another adventure, and since I did not know where it would take me, I decided to do what any other sane man would do. Get rip-roaring blown out.

Leaving the tavern, I hurried through the small town that had grown up around the Castle of the King of Islands, down to the gray wall. And soon I was aboard the ferry which would take me across the ancient Caldron to the Isle of Needle where the fun really was.



When the area was first settled by the half-elven phowens some 500 years ago, their king decided that this circular island chain would make a good port, while being easily defended. He built his castle on the largest island; on the six smaller islands, he built towns for trade and ship building/repair. Needle was too small to support a town and too barren for any other purpose, so the king decreed that on Needle no law existed. Needless to say, Needle soon became a very popular party site.

I have always enjoyed the ride across the Caldron. Nowhere else in the world will you see so many different ships from the far flung empires and nations of the world. Well over three hundred vessels were anchored in the Caldron, some from as far off as ancient Se'ku. Tonight there were even a couple of green-sailed Cum traders from the coast of the Pastel City, a two year sail around the Goblin-infested Horn of Deverpation. Behind me rose the twin mountains of Roc-Eye; between them, like a white gem, glistened the ancient capitol of the phowen nation.

Looking forward, I saw the tiny rock spire that was the Needle, and beyond it the wild surf crashed into the rock reef surrounding the Caldron and its islands like a wall. Within the hour I stood on the tiny ferry dock and, after checking my sword, I was headed for the Murdered Witch.

The Murdered Witch is run by an old dwarf of the name of Les. Ten years ago he had gone on a one night blowout and massacred over twelve high-born phowens with his favorite mace. The only thing Les had to say about it was, "It some good stuff was." Due to the King's decree, he was safe on Needle; as long as never left, the law could not touch him. Sooner or later though, some bloodthirsty relative was going to make it through his defenses and his reputation of being unkillable.

The Witch was crowded when I entered the front door. Passing by the rooms crammed with gamblers and whores of all races and sexes, I went through the heavy doors into the quiet of the back bar. I crossed the room and sat in a wall booth. Actually, all the tables were by the walls. When Les first opened the Witch, no one would sit out in the open, so he had taken out the tables in the middle of the room and put in a square bar with a raised dance floor for the girls and guys. Made the place kind of unique. Now it seems like everyone is doing it.

Across the room, Les had seen me come in and, raising his hand in salute, the giant dwarf stumped his way towards me. Sliding into the bench opposite me, he bellowed at one of the girls. Winking at me, he said, "I something special for you tonight got." My eyebrows went up; this should be interesting. A human girl came up, carefully carrying a red bottle and placed it before me. I gasped when I read the script. "Twenty-year-old Ilekaftur from Nien-ia. This is a treasure beyond compare."

"Aye. I from a Trendue trader it got. He it was bad magic thought." And after pouring three fingers into two glasses, he honored me with the first taste. I will not try to describe the taste of that incomparable wine. It is sufficient to say that for five minutes I was lost in the glory of that magically-produced liquid.

Sighing, Les corked the bottle and motioned for the girl to remove it. A bottle of brandy was brought up, and serious drinking began.

"I will be leaving in two days," I told him.

He nodded. "Where?"

"I do not know. I will be going with a man dressed in gray, with a flock of blue birds."

"Of him heard I have. Of him I know not. You on what boat leave?"

"The Sea Fern. Dock eleven."

At that moment, there was a shout from the door. A raging young man stood there, waving his sword at a phowen trader standing at the bar. Shouting one last time for good measure, the man ran towards him with sword at ready. The phowen raised his glass and tossed his drink into the man's eyes, then pulled out his sword and thrust it into the gasping man's heart. He turned and ordered another drink.

"Hey!" Les shouted. "You it killed. You it care take!" The phowen nodded. I snickered. "Your manish is slipping."

"My humanish better than yours always been. You it know."

That was the last intelligent thing either of us said.

I was awakened by a pounding on the door. "All right! I am awake." I removed my arm carefully from under the blonde head of the girl beside me, then froze as I felt a hand on my shoulder. What? I turned my head to look at the fair green body of a sea elf. Two? Damn, I had forgotten again!

Shaking my head I got up, washed, put on my clothes, and then stumbled down the dim stairs to the back bar. Les and breakfast were waiting for me, so it must have been morning. There was silence while I drank my coffee and ate half my eggs, then a "clunk" like only 200 silver in a leather bag can make. I looked up. It was 200 silver in a leather bag. I looked at Les.

"That for saving two girls is," he stated flatly. "You a good fighter are. I a new bouncer need."

I felt dumfounded. I sure wish I could remember. I missed a lot of what happened on these blowouts! "What else happened last night?"

Les stared at me a minute, then leaned back and laughed. The sound echoed in the empty room. "Your ship in two hours leaves."

I swore off drinking forever, again.

The sound of the door opening cut off Les's laugh. Into the room came the sea elf with my baggage which had been on Roc-Eye two days ago. She put the bags down beside the bar, then came and stood beside our booth, behind me. I turned from watching her, stared across the table at Les, and said, "Huh?"

"You from Darskall the slaver the first night her bought."

"B-b-but. Where did I get that kind of money!"

You from two rich merchants took it."

"Gambling," I hoped.

"Stole."

"I decided to try a different tack. "Huh?"

Les was obviously enjoying this. "You her yesterday married."

I swallowed my tongue, choked on it for a few seconds, spit it out and let it hang out, out of the way. After a few minutes of heavy breathing, I decided I was calm enough to allow my tongue back into my mouth. Very carefully I allowed my mind to approach the THOUGHT. "Married?!"

Les put a dose of hysteria preventer before me, and I quickly swallowed the liquid fire. I had always been nice to life, so why was it turning on me now?

Then I saw my loophole, and life started becoming sweet again. "Any marriage on the Needle would not be legal," I stated.

Les cracked up. "You to Home Island went. You on legality insisted."

I was doomed. I looked at the girl; she was crying. Damn. I stood up and comforted her. At least I hadn't married a barroom floozy.

"Your time short is."

I nodded. "On my way, Les." Already in my mind, I was accepting the fact. The priests say that the Gods move in mysterious ways. Later I would realize they had been right this time.

I gave her the silver and my signet ring. "I should not need these. I will send for you on my return. Les, will you take care of her till I come back," I asked without turning.

"Yes. You go must."

I nodded, kissed her, shouldered my bags and followed Les out.

continued in two pages--at the end of WILD WEST WIZARDRY



Well, an age and a half has passed since I last wrote to A&E, back in ish 23 or maybe 22? I am only writing now to deal with BRIAN LANE's unauthorized use of my name in connection with the explanation of the Elvish bite in issue 104. While Brian and I have discussed the matter of the AD&D Elf having a D10 bite, we do differ, I think, on the mechanics by which this is maintained. I must take exception to his argument of the sharklike mouth. Such a mouth in an Elf's head would in no way be able to deliver a D10 bite.

The mouth of an Elf is much more like that of an egg-eating snake, which can expand to three times the diameter of the head itself. Instead of a single lower jaw, the elf has a jaw consisting of six hinged sections (eight sections in the upper jaw), which telescope out and to the sides in action. Each section is armed with a razor keen, serrated bony ridge which does the job of teeth.

The telescoping of the jaws is an incredibly fast action. This is why very few non-Elves are aware of it. Even eye witnesses are almost never sure of how Elves deliver such ghastly wounds. The jaws flash forward and out, snap shut with a scissoring effect, and refold in the twinkling of an eye. When the hinged jaws refold, whatever was sheared off by the bite is forced backwards and down into the throat, which is remarkably elastic. In this manner, it is quite possible an Elf could bite off a man's head.

The Elvish use of weapons (inferior as they are to the bite) came about as a reaction to the use of armor. An Elf daren't risk breaking his/her jaw on a piece of metal, after all; it has to last a long lifetime.

In the related race of orcs, the jaws have fused into a pair of corrugated grinding surfaces quite suited to their diet of roots and seeds--and generally only capable of grinding bites (worth D6 to 2D4). On the other hand, Fairies (another Elf relation) do almost no damage when they bite with their tiny, hollow, extensible fangs. The damage comes from the great speed with which a Fairy can drain bloom from the victim. This and their habit of stealing babies (for their own loathsome practices, no doubt) make Fairies unwelcome neighbors to most folk.

Now for the fun part: FIGHTING WITH FURNITURE. This is a list of miscellaneous items to be used for bar fights and emergencies, when an adventurer's weapons may not be close at hand. (H) indicates a hurled object; (T) indicates Thrusting or point impact use; (2) indicates 2-handed use; \* indicates clumsiness.

| <u>Item</u>           | <u>Damage</u> | <u>Item</u>              | <u>Damage</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Fist                  | D2            | Large Rock/Brick (H)     | D4            |
| Kick                  | D3            | Large Rock/Brick         | D4+1          |
| Heavy/Hard Boot       | D4            | Boulder/Bowling Ball (H) | D6            |
| Cestus/Gauntlet       | D3            | Boulder/Bowling Ball     | 2D4           |
| Beer Bottle (H)       | D2            | Light Footstool (H)      | D4            |
| Beer Bottle           | D3            | Light Footstool          | D4+1          |
| Wine Bottle (T)       | D3            | Heavy Footstool (H,2)    | 2D3-1         |
| Wine Bottle           | D4            | Heavy Footstool          | 2D3           |
| Heavy/Full Bottle (T) | 2D3-1         | Light Chair/Stool (H)    | D6            |
| Heavy/Full Bottle     | D6            | Light Chair/Stool        | D6+1          |
| Broken Bottle         | D3+1          | Chair                    | 2D4           |
| Cup/Glass (H)         | D2            | Heavy Chair (2)          | D8+1          |
| Cup/Glass             | D3            | Small Bench (2)          | D8+1          |
| Flagon (H)            | D3            | Table Leg                | D6            |
| Flagon                | D4            | Heavy Table Leg          | 2D4           |



| <u>Item</u>              | <u>Damage</u> | <u>Item</u>            | <u>Damage</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Plate/Bowl (H)           | D2            | Iron Rod/Poker         | D6            |
| Plate/Bowl               | D4            | Cooking Spit (T)       | D6            |
| Vase/Urn (H)             | D3            | Large Cooking Spit (T) | D8            |
| Vase/Urn                 | D4            | Serving Fork (†)       | D3            |
| Large/Heavy Vase/Urn (H) | D4            | Serving Spoon/Ladle    | D2            |
| Large/Heavy Vase/Urn     | D6            | Spade (T, 2)           | D8            |
| Huge Urn (H, 2)          | D6            | Spade                  | D6            |
| Huge Urn (2)             | D8            | Shovel (2)             | D6            |
| Bucket/Pail              | D3            | Pitchfork (2)          | 2D4+1         |
| Light/Empty Cask (H)     | D2            | Pitchfork (H)          | 2D3           |
| Light/Empty Cask         | D3            | Boathook (2)           | D6+1          |
| Heavy/Full Cask (H, 2)   | D4            | Hoe (2)                | 2D3           |
| Heavy/Full Cask (2)      | D6            | 8" Skillet (H)         | D4+1          |
| Chamber Pot              | D4            | 8" Skillet             | D6            |
| Chamber Pot (H)          | D3            | 12" Skillet            | D6+1          |
| Statuette                | D4+1          | 14" Skillet (2)        | 2D4           |
| Heavy Statuette (2)      | D6            | Light Chain *          | D3+1          |
| Meat Cleaver (H)         | D6            | Medium Chain *         | D4+1          |
| Meat Cleaver             | D8            | Heavy Chain *          | 2D3           |

Don't forget incidental damage from hot grease or falling on broken glass, etc. Also remember the blinding and/or irritating effects of a vessel's contents, such as salt, pepper, vinegar, alcohol, human waste, etc. And don't forget the fragility of some items.

Next zine: East vs West: who plays best?

PEGASUS--continued by Robert Loutzenhiser

Sullenly I boarded the boat, a blank spot still in my mind. Then as the boat was pulling away, against the background of the wavelets and Les's roaring laugh, I heard a high sweet voice thrill through the air. "Named Lewanalynn I." Rising sun over sea; something inside me said, how appropriate.

[illegible]



It has been rather a long time since I last wrote in these hallowed pages, and A&L has been so crowded lately. Some years ago I designed a couple of non-humanoid intelligent species in great detail. As time passed they took on a whimsical life of their own and developed further. After several incarnations, they may be of interest.

#### GENERAL BACKGROUND

I currently run a fantasy campaign in the world, or if you prefer, worlds of SIMETRA. This follows the old formula of being the 'planet of exile' of the SF campaign. It is, needless to say, under a tight technological embargo and serves as the final destination for a diversity of dissidents and other malcontents. The SF campaign itself is intermittently run by mail or more usually with the exchange of strange sheets of paper in pubs. It is distinguished by its small scale; one multiple star system, and that there is no faster than light drive. The gamesystem, for those who are interested, is moderately variant Runequest in both campaigns, with my own horribly complicated ship to ship combat.

Most of the animals and plants are common to both campaigns, and may be divided into 3 separate evolutionary groups. Although similar, sharing some simple sugars for example, this gives rise to discrete food webs.

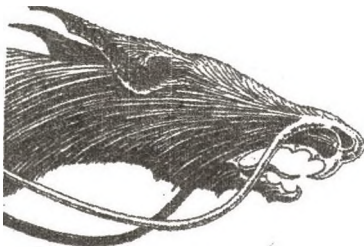
One group would be familiar to us. A-life, as it is called, is comprised of more or less every type of organism now found on earth. This includes Humankind, as well as a number of artificial agricultural forms.

B-life is very much analogous, though based on a different genetic material. As a rule, preferred temperatures are up 10 to 15 °C and consequent metabolic rates are 2 to 3 times that of comparable A-organisms. Higher levels of radiation may be tolerated but plants especially, are very sensitive to frost. The intelligent representatives of this group are En, which together with many B-animals, have a reptilian look to them. En have turned up on more than one cover of ALARUMS & EXCURSIONS.

C-life is rather different. Each species has 2 phases that must alternate. Ci-life is non-carbon based, hardy but never sophisticated. Cii-life has a more conventional composition. Preferred temperatures are 10 to 20 °C cooler and metabolism generally more sluggish than that of comparable A-organisms. Intelligence is represented in this group by Saer. (As a note on pronunciation, vowels are always sounded separately, thus; 'sah er' or 'sah yer'.)

There are also a number of other types that do not fit into this classification, such as the Elves and Dragons in the fantasy campaign, and the Biomechs and Cyborgs of the SF campaign.

#### THE SAER



To understand Saer properly one must know a little more about the C-group as a whole. When our own DNA replicates, each single strand produces, if you like, a negative copy of itself. However the double helix contains 2 such strands, one of each type. Thus, unless there is an error, each product is identical to the original. This is not so for C-genetic material, which does not have a double structure. Each type can only produce a negative copy of itself, and that is encoded in a totally different chemical! The 2 materials, type-i and type-ii, must alternate, indeed they are so different that they usually occur in separate organisms. Most C-species have 2 forms that are utterly dissimilar. i-forms are generally simple, immobile and very often plantlike. ii-forms can be anything from minute spores to Saer which are fully as complex as humans. Saer and some related C-animals also have the ability to pass on learned skills and experience to the next generation but one. They can be quite selective about this. Sex is utterly unknown throughout the entire group.

The Saer i-form is merely a mass of unintelligent glasslike material, that must be fed and cared for by the Saer themselves. Saer are somewhat variable in size and there are several sub-types, echelons rather than races. Typical mass is in the order of 70 kg, with a corresponding length of about 2 metres. Physical shape is much more uniform. The body is cylindrical, reinforced with an extremely flexible structure, rather unlike our own backbone. The head is conical and eyeless. A pair of whiplike and slightly club tipped antennae arise from the tip. There is also a pair of pointed, equally mobile ears, and a narrow doglike jaw complete with several rows of needlelike teeth. The 3 pairs of more or less identical limbs each terminate with 3 mutually opposable digits. Unlike the body, these contain more rigid, articulated skeletal material. By using all 6 as legs, they could outrun any human athlete. There is also a fine silky tail. Saer have a resilient but supple black skin. Most are covered with fine black hair, though on some it is dark crimson or silvery white. Blood is also extremely dark. Body temperature is maintained around 25 °C.

Saer resemble nothing so much as hexapedal weasels. They are superbly adapted for caves. Typical posture is crouching within an enclosed space on all 6 limbs, preferably with the body aligned with, and in close contact with other Saer. The swaying of antennae is the only movement. They may also rear up onto 4 limbs and use the front pair as arms.

For the broad mass of Saer, the mean of each game characteristic is about the same as for humanity. Variation is rather greater however, as each individual has effectively been designed by its forbears. There are several other echelons as well, with correspondingly higher or lower game characteristics.

Hearing is acute and highly directional. (I have a sensitivity diagram somewhere. It is quite broad and stretches to over 80 kHz.) The sense of smell is keen. There is also a rather mysterious perception of mass and sensitivity to electrical and magnetic fields. Saer have no eyes, though they can feel heat and light, especially on the antennae. They have excellent spatial perception.



A sense of community is probably the strongest of all Saer emotions and the individual is of little consequence. Rather than sexuality, collective territoriality underlies a great deal of behaviour. There is no need for personal space however. Property is held in common. Each individual has a specific role in Saer society, with suitable skills and aptitudes bestowed by its designers. This includes a capacity to learn and develop. Mental diversity is greater even than differences of physical size. Not all are specialists, in many, emphasis is laid on flexibility. Individually, Saer are painfully conscious of their own flaws, selfless, intensely loyal to the group, yet phlegmatic. They are humorless (or possibly Saer humour is too obscure to be recognised) and merciless but not cruel. They are generally not aggressive but some are utterly fearless and careless of their own survival. Populations of Saer are extremely conservative, prudent and also persistent. They are undaunted by vast projects spanning tens of thousands of generations. Although groups, as well as individuals, can adhere to high and incomprehensible principles, Saer have always seemed deceitful and cunning to both Humanity and En. They are secretive and xenophobic. Despite an overall impression of calculated efficiency, Saer like to be cuddled, preferably of course by other Saer.

Societies are often large, usually there is only one coherent group in any world. Each colony maintains a pool of expertise and race memories encoded within the genes of the i-forms. From these, fully grown Saer are hatched with any desired combination of skills. There are even 'randoms', as the leadership recognises that it cannot foresee all the group's requirements. Individual lifespan is variable; foragers may last only a few years, whereas highly protected intellectuals can live for thousands of years.

Saer are voracious carnivores. They practice an efficient agriculture or ecological management which is planned and executed to the smallest detail. Large populations exist beneath the surfaces of many worlds, ramifying within concentrations of iron ( $26\text{Fe}$ ). Many nickel-iron asteroids are also inhabited.

Unlike in our western civilization in which technology is expanding and few things seem mystifying, (this must be an illusion, probably the average adult knows relatively less than ever before) in my SF campaign I try to foster a feeling of the unknown. The atmosphere has, I hope, more in common with Gene Wolfe's BOOK OF THE NEW SUN or even A. E. Van Vogt's EMPIRE OF THE MOON / JURN stories than a lot of SF or space opera. This is even more true for the fantasy campaign. The Saer are doubly mysterious; no one knows what they are capable of. I have worked to induce a healthy sense of paranoia about them, and I think I have succeeded. Saer can move worlds with their palpable mass drivers. Under certain (unknown) conditions they can summon an all devouring black flame out of apparent nothingness. At its height, Saer technology appears to violate 'Rirhn', the Human/En understanding of the universe. Yet they have no equivalent of their own and must charter Human or En ships, or launch themselves unprotected across space. They live in cold worlds far from the heat and light of the central stars.

All the intelligent species preserve contradictory records of their origins and histories. Some of the race memories of the Saer are more ancient and more fantastic than any of the others. Of these, little has been divulged to Humanity and the En.

On some distant world dwelt animals that lived in packs beneath mountains of ice and black iron. These, like many of their neighbours, could remember fragments of previous lives as well as their own experience. Some built on this and became Sylvine; the Beast that is Mine. Others remained flexible and began to reason. Development became rapid, new techniques and tools were designed to supplant the products of a thousand generations of trial and error. Early Saer became larger and emolled outwards as the packs grew and merged. With typical ruthlessness they wiped out all competitors, especially their more primitive relatives. They then began to contrive higher echelons to lead them. Even at this stage there was a suggestion that they were not alone in the world. There are vague and terrible memories of an older race, the Saer equivalent of our Elves that haunt the wilds.

All at once the Saer fled, though the reasons are lost. Perhaps it was to escape natural disaster or ecological mismanagement. Perhaps it was alien war. They took with them 112 mountains and a diversity of plants and animals. After what could have been the final flight, all hope or something more profound, the Saer found... nothing. About them there was not even air. There were 2 very distinct concentrations of mass. Machines that could detect light confirmed that one was covered in a yellow glow of bright bodies, whilst the other contained a mere thousand and was rather closer. Although there was precious little for their mass drivers to grip, the fleet of mountains moved towards the nearer cluster. Most of them made it.

They found a straggling cluster of 1,140 stars, almost devoid of heavier elements and useful planets. However, the outermost partner of a huge white dwarf system had 2 attendants and one of these could be made habitable. Saemedria (Simetra) they called it and took it as their own. It became a pleasant world, but poor in the iron that Saer so greatly prize.

Later there was a second wave of colonisation, following a massive spawning of lower echelons. Already there was polarization within the species; conservative/mystical groups (which are the nearest human concepts) remained in Saemedria, whilst the more adventurous colonised the inner system.

About 500,000 Daltan years before there were actual Daltan years, conflict began between the 2 factions. The 'adventurers' prevailed and gathered such asteroidal iron as had been discovered towards the central stars. This was the beginning of the Ukwansisaer belt.

Then there was the First Sacrilege (it is unclear which gods or principles were offended). The asteroidal Saer had already scoured the entire cluster for elusive heavier elements. They proposed synthesis and despatched parts of Ukwansisaer to Ragaenuislui (the star that was to become Delta Prime). The 'adventurer' Ukwansisaerians had become supreme technologists, they wove strange timefields about Ragaenuislui. As the rules that it lived by changed, the star sprang off the main sequence and went its unique way with suicidal ferocity. The result was a tremendous liberation of energy, an expanding cloud of useful debris and a collapsed remnant rich in  $26\text{Fe}$  and other things. Mass drivers herded the envelope and began to condense new worlds. This yielded more usable energy.

In the midst of this the 'mystics' of Saemedria attacked. The war was violent and destructive. Drive fields grappled and Saemedria's moon was broken up and hurled at its primary. The psychic battle was even greater. All consuming Fyre burnt up millions. Faced with destruction, the 'mystics' put up a shield against reality and fled with their entire world. Saemedria became the ultimate fortress, but also the ultimate prison. Things seeped from the Saer unconscious and Saemedria remains a very strange place.



Even then the war was not over. A wave of 'neo-mysticism' swept over the Saer, finding strength from the race-guilt that now possessed them. As the feeling waned, the Ukwansisaerians found themselves facing the potentially far greater might of Ragaenuisui. They were still technologists however, and retained control of the timefields; the Second Sacrilege was to reactivate them at a distance. The stellar remnant rapidly cooled to red heat and simply evaporated the new worlds and all their inhabitants. After that, the timefields were dismantled, condensation was restarted and the tremendous task of moving everything to the multiple star system was begun.

The golden age of Ukwansisaer began when the collapsed remnant was established in its orbit about a binary component of the multiple system. The period (a Deltañ year) is about 10% greater than our own year. During the golden age, worlds were synthesised, cooled and colonised. The divergent sciences of the Saer were married. Expeditions were sent to the galaxy. It was a time of great building, partly based upon the psychic link with Deltañ iron. It was also a time of profound research and the beginning of many grandiose projects.

In the 1,993,448 th year of the golden age, Delta Prime went out of Saer control. The reasons are still unknown. It was of little physical consequence; a few radiation belts had to be rearranged. The Saer acted rapidly, assembling most of their highest echelons into a vast composite mind. It should have been sufficient to reestablish mental control. It was not, and the backlash destroyed Saer leadership. The few survivors were discredited.

Ukwansisaer began to break up as nothing remained to keep the Saer together. One part remained associated with Delta Prime, 3 parts moved to form the 3 asteroid belts and 5 parts started to disperse. Those that stayed established a protective zone in which no FTL drive could work and began to rebuild their civilization.

A few years later, other intelligent species became apparent. Perhaps they escaped from Saemedria. Perhaps their ships were precipitated from hyperspace by the zone. It was decided to let them live but to observe them closely. To Saer, Humans and En were almost indistinguishable; they bred prodigiously and overran the surfaces of many worlds in a few swift centuries. Saer learned to trade, and helped the surface dwellers to terraform some useless planets and moons. Ephemeral civilizations flowed beneath their scrutiny. They were fascinated by En bioengineering and Human thinking machines. INTSEN, an organisation of the 3 species, was formed to limit some kinds of war.

Meanwhile the Saer had developed new high echelons. Gradually they recovered. They could, probably, regain control of Delta Prime, but would experiment for a little longer. Expeditions filtered back from the galaxy bringing ill tidings.

The Simetran Saer still live. In a sense they exist inside their own imaginations, within layers of nested reality. Not everything they imagined was deliberate, as they dreamt up things from their ancient past and rats to dwell in their fortress walls. Some of these things had their own minds; Elves dreamt of Man, or possibly it was the other way round. The structure branched and began to get out of hand. Make no mistake, the core worlds within Simetra were realised as fully Saer and remained so. It is simply that there is now enough room for alternatives. The shield remains slightly permeable, though the inhabitants are still secure and still firmly imprisoned. From outside, the planet is heavily cratered and partly covered in ice.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### COMMENTS

A&E 100

I found this issue not greatly different than any other. Nevertheless it was a milestone. Thank you Lee Gold, without whom none of this would have been possible. Reprinting the Gygax letter was a particularly good idea.

A&E 101

WILSON H. HEYDT re Humans are TOUGH I disagree, in your examples any self respecting animal, caught in the same situation, would have given up, or at least have faced a predator (or whatever) that knew how to deal with it. You seem to have found the lucky few who survived, and rather pointlessly killed their assailants. And for each one, how many men have been savaged by dogs half their size or killed by wild boar? To simulate this in game terms, give the big animal more HP, better armament and so on. Then run it so that it hesitates at a critical moment if faced with unusual resistance. I do agree though, that an unarmed Human should not be underestimated.

Your printing is, by the way, amongst the most legible I have seen.

LAURENCE J. P. GILLESPIE Thank you very much for your article about Dwarves. It is exactly the sort of thing I look for in A&E.

A&E 102

ROUND UP THE USUAL SUSPECTS This was, in my opinion, a refreshing series of articles on subjects outside mainstream (even in A&E) FRP.

A&E 103

NICK LARTER re Cover of A&E 100 Er... Actually the 'Giant Arthropod' was synthesized in a vat.

re Firevendors Very coherent thoughts. Making flammable substances using sophisticated biological techniques is very easy to justify. When the oil runs out, somebody invents a microorganism that eats wood (say) and produces a little octane as well as the usual waste. The whole thing is completely artificial of course. Some time later, when all traces of technical civilization has turned to dust, there are these bacteria, still chomping away. Now nurture them in some special way, and out comes the infamous D&D ~~magical~~ 'oil'. Actually I like the other way of making the stuff difficult to get hold of; a state monopoly.

STEVIE GILHAM Why did you use '.' rather than 'x' for multiply? (I had got about 300 k as well.)

HARRY ROBERTSON re Real Ale Standard In a certain SF campaign, each player was given a 'banana republic' to design. Many states had already adopted the usual hydrogen/deuterium standard. One however, used the real ale standard, whereby 2 'pints' (an archaic fluid measure) of 'real ale' (meeting certain minimum government specifications) = 1 Eriken g. d. v. (green drink voucher). I suspect this was no coincidence. As I recall, 25 gdv = 1 Eriken crown and 1/25 th gdv = 1 Eriken groat, a coin used to insult people. This led to elaborate plans to undermine Eriken's rather hard currency. There is also a state based on Marx Brothers' films.

DAVID F. NALL re Undead Interesting. Undead possessing only the ability to terrify have their place. Such things have very little power over the living. Unfortunately they make very 'brittle' opponents. This seems to be a characteristic of the entire genre. Quite awesome beings can be rapidly despatched if the correct formula for their dissolution is known. There are certainly mythical and literary origins for this, for example both the zombie and vampire. I certainly do not like your idea of natural undead. Deprive them of their inherent wrongness, and you deprive them even of the power to terrify. Something truly immortal, from outside time, is just about acceptable, but please do not call it 'undead'.

J. JOHNSON Counterspells, as you describe them, are certainly a good idea. In C&S there are 'Words of Guard', which is not quite the same thing. I really see no reason why a counterspell should not be intrinsically easier than the spell which it negates.

As an aside, I dislike the whole idea of area effect magic chewing up fighting formations. I like fighting formations, and this would lead inevitably to a revolution in battle style, and probably arms and armour. One way to get around this is counter-magick, arranged such that mages can quite easily neutralise each other. Another is for the battle standard to protect the troops under it. A third method is to make offensive magic less effective against coherent groups. (I use -5% per 10 individuals.) This last method could easily be justified in terms of mutual support of the psyche, or similar.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

#### GIANT ARTHROPODS

I like them, and do my utmost to justify them. Unfortunately an animal must not only work, it must be able to compete as well. This could be why most real life arthropods are quite small. Most of the technical problems encountered by giant versions, have already been discussed. Here are a couple of very short examples.

On Simetra there is a group of animals known, amongst other things, as Antler Wasps. Their special virtue is that they make their nests out of poly(e)thene. This material is prized as much as ivory by the men of Simetra. Unfortunately it is dishonourable in the extreme to use battlemagic against mere animals, and the hunters run grave risks. Although these creatures have a rather odd life cycle (C-life again), they behave very much as earthly wasps in most respects.

Typical mass is a little over 30 kg. The problems of rationalising an arthropod of this size, are as nothing to those of a flying giant arthropod. They do not live in any special environment, yet they must possess an extremely rapid metabolism. To this end the Antler Wasp is supercharged. Thoracic pressure fluctuates rapidly in flight, and the flight muscles are geared, not simply coupled, to the wings. If you see a silent giant wasp, it is probably a forestry robot from the SF campaign; the living ones sound like small 2-strokes. They do not have to meet noise emission standards.

There are also some ferocious estuarine predators. For these, the arthropod nature is relatively unimportant, in most ways they resemble sharks. They have traces of external plating, and attack with slashing sub-chelae (like mantis forelegs) rather than with the mouth. Also, like some sharks, they are drawn to silhouettes near the water surface.

#### PLANET DESIGN

All the formulae seem to have already been published, but where does one start? I find it useful to get a rough idea, then define the surface conditions. This means surface gravity and composition (density). Some known examples:-

| name                        | surface gravity m s <sup>-2</sup> | density kg m <sup>-3</sup> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| MERCURY                     | 3.76                              | 5,420                      |
| VENUS                       | 8.77                              | 5,250                      |
| EARTH                       | 9.81                              | 5,510                      |
| EARTH'S MOON                | 1.62                              | 3,340                      |
| MARS                        | 3.80                              | 3,960                      |
| JUPITER                     | 24.9                              | 1,330                      |
| SATURN                      | 10.4                              | 680                        |
| URANUS (NEPTUNE is similar) | 10.4                              | 1,600                      |

From surface gravity (g) and density (ρ), calculate planetary radius (r) (and surface area if you like), mass (m) and escape velocity (v).

$$r = g / (8.897 \times 10^{-11} \times \pi \times \rho) \quad m = 4/3 \times \pi \times r^3 \times \rho \quad v = \sqrt{2 \times g \times r}$$

Escape velocity determines how a planet holds on to its atmosphere, but temperature, solar radiation and possibly the presence of a moon could affect this. Using this method, you build up a planet as you want, rather than as the dice fall.

#### TREASURE TRAP

I am fortunate to live within 15 minutes drive of Peckforton Castle. I can put A&E readers up, though I usually stay at the castle. It is fun but very expensive (now £5 a time), though probably value for money. Its faults are; price, variable numbers of irvings and delays. The new booking system should be better, but my only experience of that was cancelled. Other combat/reenactment societies ALWAYS demand a waiver. There are rumours of 2 new sites, and at least 1 fortnight long 'adventure' is scheduled. I recommend Treasure Trap.



# CHRONICLES OF ZONKA

Photostated by BARRY GOLD

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## THE DUEL

**SUMMARY:** Zonka is a Dwarf Innkeeper played by James Robert in BOB MOORE's world, Tefara. The Chronicles are taken from Zonka's diary and represent Zonka's point of view. Wayside, Zonka's mountainside inn, conceals a powerful machine which can teleport and/or fire missiles to any place on Tefara's surface. Zonka and his cleric friend, Chester, have taken an oath never to abuse the machine's powers. Zonka has secured servants, slaves, from the Dukes of Alexandria, to run the inn. At this point in the story Zonka's goal is to establish Wayside as the "finest inn" on Tefara.

I had a fine inn, servants to run it, an excellent Hobbit cook, and a grand arena. And I had dreams of establishing Wayside's reputation throughout Tefara. All that was needed was the right circumstances, then I would act. My chance came about as the result of Smitt the Foolish invading Gold Piece Bay. The word spread quickly. "Gold Piece Bay has been attacked. Lord Becket and the Healer, Ichabod have been assassinated. The Dwarf Lord Talen's triplets have been kidnapped. Chaos has won the day!"

Now there are rumors, and there are rumors. Clearly, something drastic had happened. Perhaps Ichabod had been killed. I could even believe someone would be sick enough to kidnapp Lord Talen's triplets. But Becket killed? I doubted it. Lord Becket is a force not to be taken lightly. I could believe a party had infiltrated Becket's defenses. What I had trouble believing was anyone was stupid enough to think they could get away with it. In Gold Piece Bay you don't rape the women, you don't harm the kindren. Those who do are dealt harsh, swift punishment.

Chester and I teleported to Gold Piece Bay. There San Plowfoot told us what had happened: two parties had sneaked into the city during a religious holiday. One party killed Ichabod and stole the Staff of Two Vipers. The other kidnapped Talen's three children. When Becket found out what had happened he set out after the children. Together Becket, Legus and the mighty Dwarf Lord Talen rescued the children. It took six minutes. Six minutes! Alas, one of the kidnappers slew the youngest triplet during the rescue: the child was beheaded. This dastardly coward, this killer of babies, was none other than Smitt, the Foolish.

Meanwhile, Ichabod lay murdered in his bed, and his killers escaped intact with the healing staff. Indeed, by the next morning, the Staff of Two Vipers went on sale at the Tefara Magic Guild. The asking price was EIGHT MILLION gold pieces.

By the time Chester and I arrived in Gold Piece Bay, Becket had raised those who had been slain in the raid. In the process, he affixed the Dwarf child's head once more upon the child's shoulders. The high elf Benard, Legus' Father-in-Law, was presiding at Smitt's trial in the market place when we arrived. Benard heard all the evidence, and then asked Smitt if he had anything to say in his own defense. "No," Smitt replied. "Only that no court of law should have say over me. My fate should be decided by actions, not by old men."

When Smitt had done with his insults, Benard, the Wise, stood and gave his decision: "This has not been an easy trial. Many parties require a just verdict. Lord Talen has been shamed. Those responsible invaded the sanctity of his home to steal his children. My judgment must allow Talen the means of regaining his honor. Lord Becket has long decreed the innocent shall not live in fear within his domain. A fair judgment should be consistent with that edict. As for the defendant: he knows no honor, obeys no law, fears no punishment. Indeed he demands his fate be determined by the sword, not by his betters. Can anyone enforce the law for one who believes not in Law? Can any punishment instill respect where there is not even fear? What punishment is suitable for the act of beheading a child? My judgment must give the defendant cause to consider his actions in the future.

"I think I have a solution which will satisfy all parties concerned. Smitt shall, as he demands, have his fate determined by combat. A duel shall be fought between the Father of the slain child and the accused. The terms of this dual are these. If Smitt wins, he and his men will be set free: no one is to harm them. If Talen wins, then Smitt's head shall be sealed upon a silver platter, and this living head shall be placed on permanent display in the Gold Piece Bay Cathedral. Such punishment should give even Chaotics pause to consider the consequences of acts of violence against



the innocent. The duel shall take place immediately. This is my decision."

The crowd cheered when they heard Benard's decree. Talen is considered by all Dwarves to be Tefara's mightiest warrior. Talen once slew a Black Dragon. Talen single handedly rescued the Nixie Princess from the Dungeon of No Return. Smitt would get exactly what he deserved. Placing Smitt's head on public display would make the Chaotics think twice before acting so stupid in the future.

Now it has been estimated by a mathematician of world class that Smitt's chances in the, now famous, duel were about one in eight hundred. A fat lot mathematicians know! Smitt managed to arrange things so he would have at least a chance to win. Smitt, as the one who was being challenged, selected weapons and battle conditions. He chose to fight in the nude in a 20'x20' arena bordered on all four sides by non-magical weapons. Thus Talen was forced to remove his mythril armor, armor forged by Lord Grim's Master Smith. Smitt stripped to only his loincloth while Talen removed his mythril armor. The two stood facing each other in the market place arena. "No, no, you must remove everything!" Smitt shouted, "everything." A bitter argument ensued about Smitt's insistence "in the nude" also meant removing items of jewelry, as well as armor and garments. The Thief won the argument, and Talen was forced to give his two magical rings to his wife for safe keeping. Not that it mattered. Talen was fighting for his children's honor. Smitt had no honor.

Still, the number of wagers was incredible. "I'll take Lord Talen and give a hundred to one," said one. "Put me down for two-thousand," replied another. And so it went. The seconds were actually forced to delay the start of the duel until all the betting could be recorded.

The two naked gladiators stood, empty-handed, in the arena amid an arsenal of assorted weapons. At Benard's signal, the duel began. Smitt drew first blood. Smitt was faster than his opponent, and was the first to secure a weapon. His spear caught Talen in the thigh before the Mighty Dwarf even got to a weapon. Talen bellowed in rage and picked up a heavy axe. Soon Talen cornered Smitt, and, with hatred in his eyes, the Veteran closed for the kill. To the audience's surprise, Smitt didn't run. Instead, he gambled everything on one desperate toss of a two-handed sword. This succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. The great sword hit Talen in his left temple. In but an instant Talen lay dead in the middle of the arena. Blood and gore poured from what was once the top of the Great Warrior's head. The crowd was stunned. The wrong side had won. Talen had fallen, fallen in the duel fought to defend his honor. Those who had bet on the thief knew better than to gloat, but Smitt had no such compulsion. He stood over his slain opponent and raised a defiant fist in the air. Then, to complete the humiliation, Smitt, in full view of the entire assembly, urinated on his slain opponent. Many in the crowd became furious. I for one, wanted to tear his eyes out, I was so mad. But Becket forbid any harm to the Thief. "The conditions of combat were clearly stated: no harm is to come to Smitt. He has won, though to what purpose, as a favor of what God, I know not." Then Becket spoke directly to the thief: "LEAVE MY SIGHT, THIEF. BUT KNOW THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS BE KNOWN AS A KILLER OF CHILDREN, KNOW THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS BE KNOWN AS AN ENEMY OF DWARVES. KNOW THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS BE AN ENEMY OF LORD BECKET. GO, Smitt. ENTER NOT MY SIGHT AGAIN."

Smitt's men cheered, and raised him on their shoulders, and marched away. All the while the Thief laughed, mumbling something to his Gods about "three consecutive twenties, three consecutive twenties". Even today Dwarves curse his name, this killer of babies. Smitt got away without so much as being scratched.

Or did he?

The story of the duel has a sequel. On Smitt's very next adventure, he, and all his band, were killed. Some say Nixies charmed them. Some say a short warrior dressed in black, mythril armor (and with visor down) slew the entire band in a fit of rage. Some say Lord Becket killed them, every one. Are any of these rumors true? I don't know: I only know there is not a single case on record of anyone killing an innocent in Becket's domain and living to tell about it.

Now, Ichabod had gone heavily into debt when he originally secured the Staff of Two Vipers. Without benefit of the income the Staff provided, he appeared to be condemned to a long, hard life of extreme poverty. What Ichabod didn't know was that a Dwarf named Zonka saw this whole shameful episode in a positive light. To be sure, I wept when I found out the child had been killed: I cursed Smitt when he urinated on my fallen hero. I was mad at the Gods, and sore, for allowing the Killer of Babies to escape. However, business is business: I had an inn to run. The time was ripe -- if ever I wanted to make Wayside famous. First I went to Ichabod with my plans, then I asked Benard's approval. Both Benard and Ichabod agreed. There were three others whose help I would need, yet I dared not speak directly to a one of them. Becket wouldn't speak to me. Merlin, supposedly, was locked up somewhere in a cave, and the Wizard Hitchcock had threatened to kill me if ever he saw me again.



The young are bold: I went ahead and announced the Olympics without consulting any of Hitchcock, or Merlin, or Becket. Using the teleport machine, signs were posted throughout Tefara:

KNOW YE' ALL DWARVES, MEN, ELVES, ENOMS, MONSTERS AND OTHER BEASTS BY THOSE PRESENTS: IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT AT THE RISING OF THE SECOND FULL MOON FROM THE POSTING OF THIS NOTICE A GREAT OLYMPICS SHALL BE HELD FOR ALL OF TEFARA'S CITIZENS, THAT THIS OLYMPICS SHALL DECIDE BY MEANS OF A SINGLE ELIMINATION COMBAT TOURNAMENT THE BEST WARRIOR OF TEFARA, THAT THE GRAND PRIZE IS A MAGIC SWORD USABLE BY ALL, THAT ENTRY INTO SAID EVENT IS 500 GOLD PIECES, AND A SECONDARY GRAND EVENT, AN OPEN MELEE FIGHT TO DETERMINE THE BEST OF TEN OF ALL ENTRANTS NOT YET ATTAINED OF THE FIFTH LEVEL SHALL ALSO BE CONDUCTED, AND THAT THESE OLYMPICS SHALL BE OPEN TO ALL, REGARDLESS OF TYPE OR CONVICTION, AND THAT THESE EVENTS SHALL BE JUDGED BY THE THREE GREAT LORDS, THE AGED WIZARD MERLIN, THE WISE HIGH ELF BENARD, AND THE MOST POWERFUL WIZARD HITCHCOCK, AND THAT THE LOCATION OF THESE GRAND TOURNAMENTS WILL BE THE FINE INN WAYSIDE, LOCATED THREE DAY'S WALK NORTH OF GOLD PIECE BAY, LOCATED SOUTH OF THE FAR-REACHING DESERT OF THE GIANT WORMS, FOUND IN THE MOUNTAIN EAST OF 10'S PASS, DUE NORTH OF THE DRUID BRIDGE WHICH CROSSES THE RIVER OF FOUL SMELLING WATERS, AND ALSO LOCATED NORTHWEST OF THE DOMAIN OF THE DREADED LANCE DRAGON, AND THAT THERE SHALL BE TARN RACES OPEN TO TARNS OF EVERY COLOUR AND HUE, AND GAMBLING SHALL OPENLY TAKE PLACE PRECEEDING EACH AND EVERY CONTEST, WHEREAS ALL PROFITS FROM ENTRIES TO THESE MAGNIFICENT GAMES AS WELL AS ALL PROFITS FROM THE RESULTING GAMBLING SHALL BE USED AS RANSOM FOR THE TWO-VIPER STAFF OF THE HEALER ICHABOD, WHO SHALL RAISE EACH AND EVERY COMBATANT KILLED IN OPEN MELEE AS WELL AS EVERY CONTESTANT SLAIN IN THE GRAND ELIMINATION TOURNAMENT, AND THAT THE GRAND OPENING OF THESE FESTIVE OCCASIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED BY LORD BECKET'S HONOR GUARD, WHO SHALL REMAIN NEUTRAL THROUGHOUT THE CONTESTS AND WHO WILL ASSURE THE SAFETY OF ALL WHILE THEY ATTEND THESE GRAND OLYMPICS.

(SIGNED) ZONKA, INNKEEPER, WAYSIDE INN.

Provided one of Merlin, Hitchcock, or Becket didn't kill me, for involving them without asking, the Olympics were sure to attract crowds. Wayside was on its way to becoming famous. The Olympics were sure to put my little inn on the map.

Why did I choose those four to officiate? Well, I sure wasn't powerful enough to run the games myself, and someone powerful had to be in charge. Else, with such an assembly of Lawfuls, Chaotics, religious sects, etc. as I hoped would attend the Games, things would have gotten out of hand. A week passed without incident. Becket sent no ambassador to complain. Hitchcock didn't turn me into a Toad. No one heard a word from Merlin.

Running an Olympics is hard work. Ever try to arrange meals for thousands? How about placing an order for eight hundred tents, or enough tables and silverware to feed five thousand? After several days of worrying about the countless details, I gave up on food arrangements and contacted the Dukes' of Alexandria to supply the inn with food and extra cooks for the Olympics. I knew the Dukes would charge me twice what they should, but the details of arranging to feed the expected crowds were too much for me to handle. Still, I was busy. There were Olympic medals to get forged, silver buckles with Olympic Seals to be ordered for the Open Melee winners, a special "top-heavy" shield I wanted silvered. The shield had always been awkward. An appropriate crest was engraved on the shield, a fallen eagle with a broken wing. Surely, someone in the Games would blunder badly, and, when they did, I planned to give the shield as a 'special' prize.

I was very, very busy. Perhaps that's why when I first met Twilling Bird I didn't see what he really was. How different things might have turned out had I been able to devote my full attention to his first appearance at Wayside.

... to be continued ...

ALISON BROOKS: So Dwarves are "stereotyped", thus "dour, taciturn, stubborn, greedy for gold and magic items." Thanks for the information! Then roll 1D3 to determine if: (a) I've been playing Zonka all wrong, or (b) Your playing group just can't handle Dwarves, or (c) You perhaps mis-spoke.

ADRIAN BOLT (and JOHN SAPIENZA, Jr.): I have a Franklin Ace 1000. The word processor I use is Sierra ON-LINE, INC's SCREENWRITER II. I also use Sierra's spelling checker the Dic-tio-nary. My printer is an EPSON MX-80 with GRAFTRAX<sup>PLUS</sup>, the interface is a BRAPPLER+. So far I have found only three bugs in the word processor.

1. I am unable to directly dump text to disk files even though the manual gives 2 ways to do so.
2. The system command to toggle caps/small-letters doesn't always respond correctly, depending on the prior command.
3. There is a subtle "off-by-one" error which, about one time in 256, prints an unexpected blank line.

SCREENWRITER II does allow imbedded printer commands. These are typed via control sequences, which I find tedious. My solution to the difficulty of remembering special printer control sequences, and the problem of keeping justification straight when control commands are present, is two-fold:

1. Use the SCREENWRITER II "replace command" (RE. SYMBOL, ASCII-code for replacement symbol) for all printer commands, and DOCUMENT such "replacements".
2. Use a common DOCUMENTED header for each file. Thus, printer commands are always available (for copying) at the head of each file.

For example, the header for this zine is printer below, followed by a line or two of the CHRONICLES. Throughout the listing, "control characters" are printed following the carrot symbol ("^"). The symbol ("E") denotes the "ESC" key. On the APPLE screen, the "ESC" appears as the APPLE trademark. On the FRANKLIN, "ESC" appears as a BELL. On either machine, control characters appear on the high-res page as underlined letters. Control characters, like "ESC" or (Ctrl-A), can only be typed in SCREENWRITER II by preceeding each control character with (CTRL-X). This extra "(CTRL-X)" is not necessary, when copying such characters. Should any readers want a copy of a sample header file, send me a blank disk & inclose a prestamped folder with return address. Note: SCREENWRITER II has a "get buffer", which is used to copy text (with or without destroying the original). Using the "get buffer" to copy complicated printer control characters is more accurate than looking up the special codes each time. A sample header file follows:

80N

```
.RK      ^[S^@TH^IT is trademark symbol, i.e. superscript
.RK      ^[S^Ann^IT : subscript- modify nn for actual subscript
.RK      ^[E : turn on emphasized print, doesn't work with condensed fonts
.RK      ^[F : turn off emphasized print
.RK      ^[G : turn on double strike mode
.RK      ^[H : turn off double strike mode
.TH1     top margin
.BM 60   bottom margin
.LM 08   left margin
.RM 68   right margin for normal fonts
.RM 129  right margin for condensed mode, i.e. ^C
.BF ^B   Boldface toggle token
.RE 9,   blank, used to implant spaces
.RE ^A,52 (CTRL-X)^ESC, then (CTRL-X)(CTRL-A) turns ON italics, ie. ^[A
.RE ^B,53 (CTRL-X)^ESC, then (CTRL-X)(CTRL-A) turns OFF italics, ie. ^[B
.RE ^C,15 condensed print, does not require "ESC" to activate
.RE ^D,14 double size (1 line only), does not require "ESC" to activate
.NM      no page numbers (.NM = on)
.UJ ^U   Underline toggle
.UO      underline letters only
.LJ      Left justification
^D#####CHRONICLES OF ZONKA
^CF
```

Photostated by BARRY GOLD ^[T^E

```
^C^IS^A
.JU
^IF ^C
.CE
(c) Copyright James Robert, 112 W. Douglass, Houghton, MI. 49931#
#
.CE
^DTIME DUEL#####
#
#
```



## PBZ -- WAVE OF THE FUTURE?

With the appearance of more and more prozines fanzines have declined in general popularity. The idea of the PBZ could give the APA a whole new lease of life, as it is ideally suited to the medium. Even better is the Play-By-Modem as it is faster, but not everyone owns a computer, e.g. me.

Pitfalls a PBZ can fall into will only be found by bitter experience, as will the solutions. Some problems I can already see with the Gerneth-Fritz PBZ (apart from needing a name!) are:

- 1) OVERCROWDING A lot of people decided to play. This means that each player gets very little GM attention or Scot does a 16 page zine each issue.
- 2) IDENTITY People are playing themselves, which means a) some people own arsenals, others do not. I imagine<sup>TM</sup> Scot has upgraded (I almost said "upgunned") any hostiles from his originals. b) people can be highly upset by themselves getting killed, maimed or raped. This sort of game should have a very low casualty rate (e.g. zero). c) playing yourself is not a roleplaying challenge.
- 3) INFORMATION All information is public. Private letters may be needed for some things.
- 4) SLOW TURNAROUND TIME This started in issue 86! Players should discuss such trivialities as party order etc. by phone or letter. Alternatively someone (Ron Pehr?) said that the Golden Rule of PBMs is: "Don't let the characters meet, as the conversations then go on for several turns, and the game grinds to a halt.". Run each character's adventures independantly.

This should not be interpreted as a put-down of the First PBZ, which simply has the disadvantage of being the first of its kind.

## HIGH TECHNOLOGY

Yesterday I brought my zine-writing firmly into the 19th century ...I bought a typewriter. Everyone else who is still using the chisel and mallet system should realize that these new-fangled techniques do actually save time. Of course you will never find me forking out for one of those new fangled abacuses when I have 12 perfectly good fingers.

## COMMENTS 100

LEE GOLD I agree about using "sci-fi" to mean the Hollywood version of SF. One advantage is that mundanes recognize the term and, as they have never seen the Real Thing, it means the same to them. // Some-one else who realizes StarFleet Battles is an RPG. "Prepare to die, Federation lapdog!" Our resident Klingon-player closely examined the Federation Constitution given in the StarFleet Technical Manual and came to the conclusion that it is a very good basis for a police state. Basically the Federation Council (composed of representatives of the six major planets only) can do as it pleases. For instance the Constitution guarantees every citizen the rights of free speech, justice, religion etc. The Federation Council can revoke the citizenship of any individual or group at will. I may print the full analysis sometime as it may be of interest to those designing futuristic societies.

JOHN BAMBACH TROLLCRUSHER is under new management. Try "John Drake, 15, Highlands Way, Stamford, Lincs., England" or "R. O. McLean, 24, Barsby Drive, Loughbore, Leics., England". They have produced about 5 issues so far, including 2 Issue 27s! You also



need DEMONIC DESIGNS ed. Rich Fox, Flat 226, Block 35, Griffin Close, South Bristol Rd, Birmingham, England. 15p & postage. 4 issues so far. Then there is Paul Mason's creation which changes title each issue. The last one was called Ian Marsh's adventure Gaming Ideas Novice Edition (I.M.A.G.I.N.E. PH)! 15p & 15p p&p from Paul Mason, 24 Moor St, Earlsdon, Coventry, CV5 6EQ, England. Try sending a letter to one fanzine and ask them to print it. That would be cheaper than writing to each of them. Either of the above would be a good choice.

ROE ELLWOOD I tried your PBZ on three friends. One ignored it and carried on working. Another grabbed a camera and started snapping. The third saw those "impractical locking fangs" and went through. You have a second-year dental student/fanzine editor called Rich Fox and a trolley of dental equipment at the bottom of your hole. You have also been awarded the Jeremy Revell Cup for Bastard GMing '83. Congratulations! // Unless there is some peculiarity of flat disk worlds I do not know about (very likely), the reason river-stealing is difficult is that rivers usually take the best route down naturally. Some rivers in flat alluvial plains regularly silt up and flow along another course. It might be possible to divert these reasonably easily.

RAEBNC: GOLD (LoA: Spell Weaving; Chaotic City of Nyosa); GYCAH (Letter) HALSEY (Imagination™ Magic System); STUKEY (New Champions Powers); GILHAM (Technomagic); SAPIENZA (Arachnidae); GOLD (Herbs); ROLLINSON (Nostal); GILHAM (Tiphareth); WOOLLEY & SEVEN (Fate-Role); FRITZ (PBZ); PHILLIES (Story); DEL GRANDE (OS vs UNIVERSE); BROOKS & FLIN (Siege of Dol Amroth); LOUTZENHISER (Shock); WIXTED (Imagine all The Gamers); SHAPERO (Silithii); CLARKE (Medieval Law); MACINTOSH (flowers); GRIFFIN (VaRQ Character Creation); SCHWALL (Fringeworthy); K. SHAPERO (Teklenan)

## COMMENTS 101

ADELAIDE TAKEOVER I am sorry, but this seemed to be scraping the bottom of the barrel. Actually this is a diatribe against all takeovers. The purpose of an APA is not to just fill up pages, it is to communicate, and takeovers interfere with this. Personally I would prefer to see A&E 150 celebrated by no takeovers.

JENNY HEIN You started by playing Basic AD&D? This raises the number of variations of That Damned Game to 15!

RAEBNC 101: GOLD (Random Alien Lifeform Generation); HEIN & MURRAY (Skill System, HP-less System, Runyip, Backgrounds, Shadowgame); SAPIENZA (Elements of Roleplaying, Suicide Lawsuit); HEYDT (Humans are Tough); PHILLIES: TURNER (1 Page Rule System); DUNHAM (Some Flora and Fauna); GILLESPIE (Dwarves); WARING (How Not to Hunt a Vampire); GILHAM (RuneWizardry)

## COMMENTS 103

This issue took 6 days to get here, and that was by Surface Mail!

DRAGONLORDS is folding with No. 22. Notice this happens just as I do a review of it. This is not a coincidence. O.K., Nalle, send the ransom in unmarked used notes or I will review ABYSS. Seriously I intend to use these powers only for good, so say goodbye to TSD.

JOHN SAPIENZA Sometime ago you did an article on magazines retaining copyright on their contents after 1st publication. Here is IMAGINE's opinions on the subject from Paul Cockburn, Asst. Editor: "Copyright is a difficult area. We do much prefer to purchase outright taking over the copyright, with the usual proviso that if we reprint or republish the work, you, as author, will be both credited and remunerated. If you wish to retain the copyright you will find our payments reduced by 25%."



DAVID UNION      Could you please explain in more detail why you changed the cost of DEX, CON and Skill Levels in CHAMPIONS?

WVATY/VVYQZAXQZ/VVYVXQZ/RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE

"Haff you got a light?" asked the old man, with a thick Eastern European accent.

"Do not move!" commanded Count Alucard and thought: "It was a good idea to wait outside the pub and grab someone leaving, but this one appears ...strange. Better get rid of him and pick another dinner."

The man did not move.

"So you dare lay hands on the august personage of ....PULSAR!!"

....."...it's not for me, you understand, it's for my daughter."

"Certainly, any particular dedication?

"Ah good, you want another round?"

Desperately the Count swirled his cape around himself, and the twin bolts tore through a cloud of mist to devastate the road surface beyond. The mist drifted away up the road.

"Come back and fight as if you were a man!" shouted Pulsar as he sprinted up the street.

"I'm sorry, sir, customers are not allowed in the kitchen. You really look most unwell. The room you want is over there, sir, labelled "GENTS"."

"(puff) Thanks to you (pant) very much (groan)." gasped the Count as he staggered across and locked himself in a cubicle to recover.

"Yes, he went in there." The door crashed open. The Count groaned: "In this state I don't stand a fireball's chance in heaven against him."

"Come out and fight like a bat!" yelled Pulsar.

"No! No! Leave me alone!" screamed the Count. The cubicle door glowed and then vanished.

"Okay. I am giving in. Put the cuffs on me," begged the vampire.

"But I'm a supervillain," said Pulsar, "and I don't take prisoners!"

"Oh," gasped the Count, and the first blasts hit him. "Wait! Could we not talk this over firstling?" There was no answer but fire. Darkness fell.....



....."...but we're too late. He's dead."

The Count sat up. The policeman glared at the doctor and pulled out a notebook.

"Could you describe the man that attacked you, sir?"

"I must be goings," said the Count, crawling out.

"Wait! I must examine you again," exclaimed the doctor.

"Much sorrow. Cannot wait for that either," replied the vampire, as he ran out the door.

"...and here is the victim now. What do you think of these so-called superheroes viciously attacking senior citizens?" asked a reporter, thrusting a microphone into his face.

"It is a disgrace!" declared the Count, and fled down the slowly lightening street.

"We never had this trouble back in the Old Country!"

JOHN SAPIENZA again WHITE DWARF gives the copyright back to the contributor after first publication, even if the smallprint on the editorial page seems to indicate otherwise. They do also pay for contributions, but prefer not to advertise the fact because the payments are often late. A very strange philosophy.

I talked with Ian Livingstone on Friday, and he said Julian May does not have a legal leg to stand on. (He is editor of WHITE DWARF, by the way.) What do our resident barristers think of this? (This means you, JTS!) Does copyright on a book protect against magazine adaptations? Against putting it in a game? (Remember TSR and ents/hobbits/balrogs) Against doing a game specifically on that subject? To confuse matters the copyright law is probably different in Britain and America. I suspect most authors just treat magazine articles as free advertising and do not expect any money for it. // While we were talking a reporter came along. I have now been heard speaking about FRP on BBC West Midlands radio .... for 15.8 seconds.

COMMENTS 103 (again)

STEVE GILHAM I was surprised at your comment that CHAMPIONS discourages skills while SW encourages them. While designing my character Tomcat for Dave Waring's SW game at StabCon I compared the cost of the power Wallwalking with the skill Climbing. Climbing starts at 55% and increases at 5% per Hero Point, while Wallwalking costs 5 HeP for SI2 15, and allows faster movement. // I prefer the CHAMP method of costing disadvantages as it makes the cost of a power approach 0 asymptotically, rather than the subtractive SW system. // As for CH characters totting around 10+ dice attacks, characters have higher defences and more "HPs" in CH than in SW. I do not have DW 30 do have DW 23 so I will compare CH and SW X-Men. For instance CH Storm has 12 D6 ED and PD 8, HD 16, while SW Storm has 9 D6 ED and K 3, E 13, R 5. Her CH STUN is 30 and SW HP are 15. Colossus has 14 D6 punch, PD 20, ED 24, and STUN 65 in CH, and 1 D3 + 6D6 punch, K 18, E 8, R 8, and HP 15. // As you may have guessed I prefer CH to SW, even though I am an RQ junkie. Actually both systems (in fact all systems) have their advantages and disadvantages, and their oddities.

RAEBEC 103: GOLD (Sciathos, Psi Skills); REDDIE (TRAV Character Gen.); ROBERT (Rimon Simon); TELLER (Superhero cliches); LARTER (Firevendors); PESCHEL (HEROES); GALEOTTI (Technomagic); PHILLIES; PIXLEY (Giant Amazons); DUNHAM (A Storeyteller's Tale, Designing Scenarios); BROOKS & FLIN (LOTH PBN); ELLWOOD (Ylam); GALEOTTI (Review: G07, SlaveStar, Fear, Occam the Indestructible); CERNETH (Miran); WOLCOTT (Cthulhu Companion); NALLE (Undead); UNION (CH alterations, DQ exp); LONG (CH Comments, Andromeda); FRITZ (Sparrowfeldian Faeries); ADAMS (CH Story & Munchkins); HEYDT (Gondoliers); FRASER (Story) EOZ88



OPERATION: CHAOS a personalzine by Niall C. Shapero

For what it's worth, the mad Russian is in the process of becoming a member of the landed gentry. Or, to put it another way, I'm in the process of becoming land rich and dirt poor. On the other hand, you could just say that I'm buying a house in west LA. That's the reason for the lack of address above. As of today (29 March 1984) the loan committee has yet to approve the loan, so it's anyone's guess where the Shapero household will be in three months time.

If anyone REALLY wants to get in touch with me, they can send a letter to the following address:

Niall C. Shapero  
Jet Propulsion Laboratory  
Building 511 Room 203  
4800 Oak Grove Drive  
Pasadena, Ca. 91103

The building and room address really is necessary -- without it lab mail will like as not spend three or four weeks bouncing any letter all around the lab before they return it to the post awful as "unable to deliver as addressed -- insufficient address".

Anyhoo, by A&E #107 or thereabouts we should (hopefully) be settled in new digs. In the meantime, Lee will be handling some of the work on discount sales of OTHER SUNS to A&E readers -- she told me (unless I misunderstood her) that transfers of A&E account money will be allowed to pay for the ruddy thing.

COMMENTS: A&E 103

LEE: In your comment to UNION you said, "For myself, I find that OTHER SUNS is overly encumbered with rules." There is a reason that OS has as many rules as it does. And it has to do with the general quality of referees.

Now, with the best referees, no rules are really necessary. And when I'm running OS, I tend to disregard many (though by no means all) of the rules laid down in the published game. I would expect that any other really good referee would do likewise (once he became familiar with the rules). But most referees just plain aren't that good.

And, unfortunately, unless there are rules in the published game for players to point to for almost every situation, a lot of referees will start acting like little tin gods. It happens often enough even where the rules ARE complete and well defined. I just thought that I'd try to defuse that bomb early.

LoA, by contrast, does not define the skills well enough for a set of novice players to run consistent games under different referees. Since no definitions are really given for the effect of any skills (other than the combat skills) the players must rely upon experience in other skill system games. What effect on play does a horsemanship skill have? What does it mean to

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succeed in a climbing roll (did my character climb all the way to the top of the 300' tall cliff, or must I make my roll for each 30' advance?) I'll be the first to admit that OTHER SUNS fails to completely define all of the skills listed in the game (though an attempt has been made to define each skill). But LoA doesn't even really TRY. And for this reason, I think that you're cheating the gaming public -- you (or your publisher, FGU) is selling a FRAMEWORK for a rules set, claiming that it is instead a complete rules set.

Thank you, by the by, for your comment re the background of OS ("[it] is wonderfully interesting"). Unfortunately, due to space and time considerations more material could not have been included. At least, not without doing a better layout job in the worldbuilding chapter (CHAPTER 12) in book 2.

Why shouldn't TK be allowed to do direct damage in LoA? I would think that if I can lift my full encumbrance, the same amount of force applied (say) to the heart muscle of my opponent should jolly well do SOME damage. Now my character might need a significant level of medical knowledge to know how to APPLY the force, and he might need some form of clairvoyance/awareness to target the attack -- but I do think that SOME damage ought to be possible. Though for game balance reasons, I can understand making it somewhat difficult to achieve -- I see no inherent logical reason why it should be impossible. And here the willing suspension of disbelief is possible for me ONLY if the reason behind the rule makes some kind of sense.

JOHN REDDEN: As long as nothing goes wrong during the landing, a Boeing 747 is quite capable of landing itself. Of course no pilot in his right mind is going to trust the computer not to foul up ("to err is human, to really screw up requires a computer").//A magic system for TRAV? Sheesh! (I suppose I shouldn't point the finger -- I've been working on a magic system for OS for the better part of a year now...)

WILSON HEYDT: If Poul objects, I might change the title. But he's presumably seen it (I used it in an APA that his wife was getting for a while) and I've not gotten a letter bomb yet. In the meantime, glad you liked the aliens.

MARK GALEOTTI: I'm glad you liked the aliens in A&E-100. All the aliens in OS are presented in the same level of detail as were the Silithii in A&E-100; the minor races will be expanded to the same level of detail for a later supplement (as yet untitled). OS already seems to be doing well -- the first sales statement arrived from FGU a few weeks back, and it seems to be selling at the 500-600 copy/month level.

MARK GOLDBERG: Only up through 1980 firearms were covered because that was all I (and my helpful assistants) had information on at the time. There will be more equipment in the PBI (poor bloody infantry) supplement (which either I or Jason Ray ought to get started on "real soon now" -- Are you listening,



OPERATION: CHAOS a personalzine by Niall C. Shapero

Jason? JASON?)//Playing OS is really quite easy -- but for referees, a computer (or at least a programmable hand calculator) REALLY comes in handy. I've got an S-100 based Z-80 monster system (2 Qume B42s, 2 Shugart 801Rs, 256 kbytes of RAM) and a standard 192k 2 drive Zenith Z-100 lowprofile system (with a color monitor) for all of my grunge work on the game -- though it's the Z-80 system that does bloody near all of the work.

VINCE FOSTER: The Chaosium is hardly the "good guys". The only reason (as far as I can see) that their reputation isn't worse than TSR's is that they aren't as big and haven't had as much time as TSR to screw up. But give them time. They have already irritated me, John Williams (PRIVATEERS AND GENTLEMEN), and Rudy Kraft (who was doing RINGWORLD for them until recently). Once is happenstance, twice is coincidence, and three times is enemy action. Sooner or later, there going to be forced into apologizing to a lot of people, cleaning up their act, and possibly eating a bit of crow, or they are going to go under (they are NOT big enough to do all their upcoming projects with strictly in-house people). Heck, they don't have enough people to handle follow on work on what they've already got out in the market.//My zine was typeset using a program called "Fancy Font" on an Epson MX-100 printer, then offset. And after it was all done, the bills paid, and the zine collated into A&E-100, I found a typo. There ain't no justice.

LEWIS STEAD: The "Onion Skin" scenario approach is hardly original with Call of Cthulhu. Most of the better referees of my acquaintance were using that approach in D&D seven or eight YEARS ago.

PHIL MASTERS (re ct David Flin): AMEN!

JOHN SAPIENZA: OS material will be appearing regularly in MUTATIONS (an APA run out of San Diego with a short enough turn around that I can count on getting into EVERY issue). OS material will only appear sporadically in A&E -- due to the cost and effort required (plus the planning) to get any significant submission ready and into the zine. Part of the problem (and it is a big one) is that I can't trust Lee to do a decent job on the mimeo, so I have to run my zine off myself (yes, I know, if you want anything done right, do it yourself). MUTATIONS, on the other hand, is another xerox zine (like The Wild Hunt) and reproduction quality is never a problem. Now if Lee had a source of cheap xerox...//I'm sort of sorry TLOC went into BAFIA myself -- maybe after the move to new digs I'll get off my duff and start it up again. (Yes, I know, "When the King returns, When the Third Egg hatches, and When Bjo has time...")

WAYNE: Mea Culpa. So sue me.

COMMENTS: A&E 104

LEE: The problem with Asimov's triads was that there seemed to be no real reason for them to have developed the way they did

-- and in the end, despite considerable difference in physical structure and (presumably) cultural background, they were still mid-1900s New York humans. Not very alien at all. Now I'll admit that it's not likely that anyone will come up with really ALIEN aliens and still have them even remotely understandable, but at least they can think a LITTLE bit differently from mid-twentieth century Americans. Even the Altani are managed better than that (though they tend to come across as a bit too much like the western image of feudal Japanese for many people's tastes). I haven't read Butler's SURVIVOR. What, other than the chameleon like fur, made the Butler's aliens unique in your opinion? (And what makes them different from Schmitz' Crest cats in the matter of chameleon fur?)/(re yr ct to GALEOTTI): It isn't all that hard to involve the players -- if you're a good referee, and the players are willing. Deanna Ray almost lost one of her OS characters (Thelvidyn, the Tillas ambassador) when an NPC died in order to help save Thelvidyn from himself. At the time, it seemed as though Deanna would have gladly lost Thelvidyn rather than have Thelvidyn have to go through the pain of losing a new friend. Of course, Deanna has been roleplaying for a long time, and is pretty good at it.

QUENTIN: The real problem with increasing the value of the various disadvantages in CHAMPIONS is that it simply postpones the inevitable problem: in a purely combat oriented campaign, with few points of experience doled out relative to the amount of points required to significantly alter the capabilities of a character, characters will start with as many points in crocks as is practical and with offensive/defensive capabilities adjusted accordingly. If you give an additional 200 points to the PCs (and presumably to the villains as well) what one will tend to see in this situation is not greater breadth of skills and abilities, but more dice added to the energy bolts at lower END cost, higher DEX, and much higher SPD.

ADRIAN BOLT: First: "all in the appropriate units" was used in the the derivation of the formula on page 37 of Book 2. I was using shorthand, in effect. It all works out, so it can be regarded as equivalent to "precise units in MKS for this mess can be worked out as an exercise by the truly dedicated reader who wants to check my math -- but don't bother, because we're really going to use the results, not the intermediate equation".

Where are Human dates given as CE? I thought I'd used A.A. fairly exclusively. If not, the reason for CE is simple -- I'm Jewish, and don't care to use A.D. (which stands for Anno Domini -- in the year of our lord -- and I don't believe in the religion that says that Christ is the son of God). So if I used it, I used it as CE (Common Era) for that reason. I assumed some intelligence on the part of the readers, after all.

RE Portable generator: Yup. So what?

Because if blunt instruments subtracted damage from total



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END, they could do hit point damage from reducing a location below 0 END and simultaneously do additional hit point damage from reducing total END below 0 -- thereby making blunt instruments far more deadly than the designers desired.

If a fumble can't occur -- reroll the fumble until a possible fumble DOES come up (or just forget about the fumble table altogether -- and make up your own for each different weapon).

As indicated in the rules, the various constants are included so that a Human character with species average stats will have no bonuses or penalties.

Missile weapons are not trained by type -- they are trained by individual skill. It's just that the individual skills of a given type all have the same training costs. Most of the scientific skills have the same training costs, but you didn't think that they were trained as a class did you?

Molecular Biology and Genetics are not quite the same -- they have different limiting skills. Both sciences can be used to solve the same problems, its just that the approaches to the solutions are slightly different. Accordingly, there are two different skills.

Tax law is the only skill with an INT requirement, because George Cole, my ever lovin' Attorney friend designed the legal skills that way -- and I saw no reason to disagree with him.

The species specific weapons were added at the request of the publisher (FGU). I was told that they would be added to the weapons tables in the final product (at least on the BM shield) but somewhere along the way from submission to final production FGU dropped them on the floor. So this one is not my fault at all. And yes, I agree that they should have been in the master tables. ARE YOU LISTENING OUT THERE SOMEWHERE, SCOTT?

RdD6 means "roll 1D6 -- if the roll is anything but a 6, the RdD6 value is 0, and if the roll is 6, the RdD6 value is a 1".

ND10 means "roll a number of D10s -- player selects what integer value N is to be -- and the resultant sum is the number of AU (in this case) that the ship has traveled in Jump space.

Glad you liked the game. Combat, weaponry, and armor took up a grand total of 13 pages -- precisely 10% of the total page count of 130 pages. By comparison, Chapter 7 (Making a Living) was 5 pages long, and Chapter 9 (Intelligent Species) was 19 pages long. The brief history of the Hegemony and description of the Commonality of Man (and the major corporations) was, I'll admit, only 3 pages long. And the equipment chapter (Chapter 11) was 5 1/2 pages long. This doesn't count the starships (really part of the equipment category) which accounted for 15 1/2 pages -- more than the total on combat, weaponry, and armor.

OPERATION: CHAOS a personalzine by Niall C. Shapero

If you're interested in more background material, there will be an article (by yours truly) in the Dragon (issue 86 or 87 or thereabouts) on one aspect of the future history of the OS environment. And in THE ALDERSON YARDS SHIPBOOK, in addition to 20+ ship descriptions and deck plans, there is a more detailed history of the Alderson Yards and the Empire that gave birth to them.

VINCENT FOSTER: I don't suppose you'd happen to know a crazy Seattle area SF Artist by the name of Steve Gallacci, would you? He's another Ythri fan.

DANA CARSON: Obviously, the similarity between the Silithii and the Kzinti would have to be removed before they would be published by F&U (it really would be nice to not irritate Larry). The minor races will be fleshed out to the same level of detail as the majors (Altani, Bjora, etc) and will then be included in some as yet untitled supplement.

SIMON CORNELIUS: Actually, F&U is doing quite well. And they pay their writers much better than Chaosium or TSR. F&U looks upon itself as a publishing firm, not a games design house. And that makes a lot of difference. A publisher isn't interested in just selling one book -- if he expects to get anywhere, that is. The more different books he can sell and the more authors that are willing to submit good books (or games) to him, the more money he can make -- because there are crazies out there who will buy bloody near anything. And if it's good -- so much the better. The prices on F&U's games, by the by, are not all that high -- OTHER SUNS came out at \$16 US, which is not bad at a time when the typical new game costs around \$20 US. And V&V and LoA from F&U are around \$12 in boxed set (and V&V sells around 2000 copies each month).

DANIEL JAMES: I don't like the way the tables were laid out in Chapter 12 either -- but that wasn't my fault. And the tables did have to be there -- not everyone, after all, is going to be willing to sit and numbercrunch for a day and a half to generate a new starsystem. The OS starsystem generation scheme is painful enough as it is for the mathematically handicapped. Why make it worse?//Stellar luminosity, mean orbital radius (and hence illuminance), and planetary escape velocity tell you what the half-life of any given gaseous component will be -- that's all. And if hydrogen is retained, what you get is not a terrestrial type world, but a gas giant. If xenon CAN'T be retained, then bloody near nothing can be retained, and what you end up with is an airless rock. The presence or absence of moons seems to be pretty much irrelevant -- at least based on Dole.

HEYDT: I'll be commenting at length on your Traveller starship system later -- you might also look at the OTHER SUNS ship construction system for another alternative approach to the same sort of problem. Analyzing and commenting on your system will require more time and space than remains in this zine, so it must, sadly, await a future issue.



## SCALE-UP OF COMBAT SYSTEMS

(c) Rob Ellwood, 1065 Marigold Pl., N. Vancouver, B.C., CANADA V7R 2E5  
retyped by Lee, who didn't have anything better to do.

At times, DMs with an active group of PCs find that they have to run a battle with fifty or more participants on each side. Since such a battle would involve a prohibitive amount of time under most combat systems, a scaled up version of the system is desirable. Such a modification should be:

1. Fairly fast
2. Simple enough to be used on a once-only basis without experience
3. Statistically identical to the basic system in terms of expected outcome
4. Able to allow inclusion of PCs under the basic system without difficulty
5. Flexible as to size of force involved

In this essay, I am going to show how I generated such a system under The Fantasy Trip's rules systems. My immediate need was for a system capable of being used for battles involved a 140 man force with six mages and a PC. In my opinion, the system generated for this purpose was a complete success. Note that the inclusion of magic will usually require that the mages be run on an individual basis.

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A simple scale-up of the basic combat system is not necessarily the best way to go. One can use a commercially available rules set, like WRG 6. Unfortunately WRG 6 violates the first four points above and, to some extent, the fifth. If you use D&D, look into Sword and Sorcery, which was derived from the one-on-one combat system. Under most other systems, the best option is to make up your own.

In a battle, you want a manageable number of units on the board. Decide on how many units you can reasonably control: this gives you your unit size. I had squads of 10 men each, for 14 units; the battle took most of an afternoon. For ease of use, have all the men in each unit be identical under the combat system: the same equipment and point totals (for TFT)/levels (for D&D)/Skill %ages above start values (for RQ!). Make up about half a dozen typical warriors ranging from recruits to veterans when you set up the units, and have all fighters within a unit be unique. Each squad can be unique, but there should be no individuality within a squad. PCs are attached to units but are not part of them. You will roll for the bit of each melee which directly involves PCs, magicians, pet manticores, and other unique beings.

Physical components: for terrain, I pushed together four 4'x4' tables, then drew the town map in chalk. A floor will do in a pinch. I used cardboard strips instead of the customary figurines. Important individuals were represented with dice. For scale, each man effectively took up a 3'x3' area, equal to 1 cm. This made each 10 man squad 1 cm x 10 cm (=4" and equated to 30') when fighting abreast. 1 cm pieces were torn off the cardboard strips as casualties occurred. Main roads were 30' wide and back alleys 15' (unrealistic, 20' and 10' would be closer).

Mapboard events: for this scale, each movement point under TFT worked out to 1 cm on the map, with a maximum move of 10 cm. This was a convenient length, so I kept it. When units touched other units, they stuck; the warriors just bashed away at each other until one side routed ("Run away!"), retreated ("Run as far as the inn and we'll make a stand"), or both sides wanted to leave. Arbitrary rules of thumb for running with pursuers: if the pursuers are the same speed, the slowest 25% get chopped; if faster, the slowest 50%; if cavalry chasing infantry, 80%. (If you don't want to be arbitrary, stop reading this; just use WRG 6.)



Combat procedure: my basic method was to figure out how many HP damage Unit A would inflict on the average on Unit B, then kick in a Luck factor. Damage was a function of the number of men in A, the probability of a typical A fighter hitting a typical B fighter, and the average damage an A did on a B. Whatever method you use to figure this out has to be quick. To speed things up, I made up some tables.

Table I: Average Number of Blows Striking Home. Across the top I put the possible numbers of men in a unit (1-10). At the left, I had a Dexterity column (= hit chance under TFT). I filled in all 120 entries. Example: DX 8 hits 25% of the time. Thus 6 men at DX 8 =  $6 \times .25 = 1.5$ ; on the average, six men at DX 8 will land 1.5 blows.

Table III: Luck Values. Roll 2D6 for each unit each round of melee. I chose a set of numbers of a fairly arbitrary basis. On a roll of 2, the unit does double normal damage; on a 3, 1.5 times normal; 4-5 is 1.2; 6-8 is 1; 9-10 is 0.8; 11 is 2/3; and 12 is 0.5. Most attacks do average damage but sometimes you luck out. Freely modify these values as desired.

The last question to answer is what is the effect of the hits. If each unit attacked the other on a one-man-wide front, the answer would be obvious: after you step through one man's worth of HP he dies, and the next man in line steps up. If each blow always did enough damage to kill a man, the answer would again be easy. As it is, we can expect the first death only after several times the average HP have been done in damage.

DEATHS = (MEN IN UNIT) x the square of (TOTAL UNIT HP DAMAGE/TOTAL UNIT HP)  
fitted the TFT combat system for groups of 10 men tolerably well. Note that the  
total HP of all the men in the unit stays constant even after some of the men are  
dead.

[illegible]



# THE MURDERED MASTER MAGE

by George Phillies, 1225 Island Dr. #204, Ann Arbor, MI 48105; (313) 995-4126

## Fire in the Morning--Part Eight

There was a laugh. It was Michaelson, a perhaps-likeable rogue who occasionally worked for the TPC. Pam cursed under her breath. She could feel her internal screens protect her will, but the Nuzeem could affect her memories, at least enough to draw illusions from them. It was a very low-power trick, not enough to hurt her, not enough power to affect the control unit in her lap, but enough to confuse her.

The Michaelson-ghost laughed again. (You see), came his thoughts, (I and my friends can deduce your fate. With your mind, your talents, you will never love, never marry, never have children. Your family line will end with you. You're a freak, a monster. You are doomed. We can give you peace instead. All you have to do is open your mind to us. Open your mind to the peace and solace of the grove. Open! Open!)

(We have your memories.) This was another voice, very different from the others. Was she at last hearing the Nuzeem? She had no further sources of strength to draw on. Either she was strong enough to hold them off, or she was not.

(We'll tell your mother on you. We'll tell all: you're abnormal, weird, an alien monster.) She could feel her mother's thoughts, burning with shame and embarrassment at her freak daughter. Her career was in ruins, her family name was besmirched. What could she do? What could she ever do?

No, Pam told herself. No! If the Nuzeem actually had her memories, they had far more potent ways to threaten her. They were getting through to her just on the level needed to excite nightmares. They were getting through to her, but the threats were all from her own imagination.

Very deliberately, she separated herself from her unconscious mind. Her screens burned. The fire, she thought, the fire outshines the sun. She rolled on her side, aware of nothing except her shallow breathing and the Nuzeem battering at her screens.

She was lying on the floor, still clutching the override controls. Her head throbbed. Dazed, she forced herself to sit. She was so stiff. Her shields? They were locked as tight as they could be, though there didn't seem to be any pressure on them. What had happened, she asked. Fainting was not good form. How much longer did she have to hang on against the Nuzeem? Her throat was bone dry.

She stared at the tactical display. The missiles had reached their destinations. And not recently either. From the clock, she must have spent the better part of a day collapsed on her back. She could remember being trapped in an endless column of flame, which burned without touching her. Then there came darkness. That must have been the end of the Nuzeem. At the time, the dark had seemed to be an adequate excuse to take a nap. She didn't seem to be hurt, though she must have come very close.

With a forced, conscious effort, she edged her screens down enough that she could work beyond them. The screens kept wanting to go back to maximum density. It was an interesting side effect, which she knew would go away with time.

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Later, her hands and Cameron's memories piloted them back towards Naseby. Mumford watched over her like a solicitous mother hen.

"Pam," he said, "you won again, old girl. If your parents hadn't made you so honest, you could be just as successful in more profitable work."

"You call this success?" she asked. "I lived through it, barely, but plenty of people didn't. I ran up another list of TPC people with private grudges against me. All I proved is that you can't break a good screen with brute force, crudely applied."

"But the force! They rolled over the ship's screens."

"No skill of application. They had about two methods for breaking screens and didn't change when they failed. I could crack my own screens if I could handle a tiny fraction of the power they did. Well, most of Naseby is alive, you concocted an innocuous cover story for us, and Cameron's compulsion mesh won't let go of him until he returns to Choculac and confesses. I've told him who he's going to confess to. I don't think she'll be too pleased with him either, though I'll be blamed for anything the TPC doesn't want responsibility on." She stretched and yawned.

"You...you just roll over everything in your way. Nothing even slows you down,..." said Mumford.

"Me? I've been lucky. Very lucky. If I'd run into--some of the things I ran into a few years ago, before I started keeping my head down--in a different order, I'd have been stepped on. Actually I was stepped on, more than once. I'm not all that powerful or all that good, no matter what I did to you the last time we met. I've just managed to be good enough, when I had to be. Of course, a sixteen-year-old with a more than adequate ego can believe that absolutely nothing can really stop her, even after it happens. I finally decided to let the TPC earn its pay. I just wanted to grow up.

"And now this. The Nuzeem here weren't wicked, just isolated, old and afraid. The Nuzeem image of the Others matched the Naseby Hierarchy's image of the Confederation, so I couldn't possibly prove that we are friendly. They already knew the answer. Even so, killing the Nuzeem will make me a lot of enemies., Maybe even more than if I had let the Nuzeem kill the people on Naseby. The Overgovernment sometimes gets very nasty with people they don't agree with, and they're a lot more dangerous than the Nuzeem were. And I know they have people who are better telepaths than I am."

"If things get too hot for you, Nemon's security forces can always replace a few dozen good men with one good woman," said Mumford. Pam's smile widened. Cameron was a fluke, not an uglier face for the Confederation. Wasn't he?

the end

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Ivan Towlson writes that Call of Cthulhu/Daredevils GMs might be interested in the "partworks" (sic) UNSOLVED and UNEXPLAINED. The former is 80p in the UK, \$1.95 Aus/US/Canada; the latter is 1.95 pounds/\$3.50. Back issues from Orbis Publishing, 20/22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT at cover price or in Australia from Gordoan & Gotch (Aus.) Ltd., 114 William St., PO Box 787G Melbourne, Vic 3001; no addresses were given for US/Canada. (Also New Scientist 1404 (5 April 1984) has a six page article on life around Stonehenge.)

And Martin Wixted writes that there will soon be a SF/Fantasy Con in Danbury, CT for which he'll be FRP Coordinator. He'll be in charge of the FRP dealers room and the games themselves, with Scot Fritz helping him out. Scot will be running two games Saturday, and Martin will be running a two-parter (Friday and Sunday).

HATCON II, June 15-7, 1984

(Its name is due to Danbury's once being the nation's hat manufacturing center.) It will be held at the Ramada Inn off I-84. Anyone who wishes to go should contact Martin or just mail \$30 (for all three days) or \$15 (for Saturday only) to Hatcon II, Kennedy Poyser, 108 Park Ave., Danbury, CT 06810; (203) 743-1872.

AN ANGLO-SCOTTISH CHRONICLE: about the 10th zine of approximately this title brought to you by none other than Peter A. Clarke of 3 Beddington Grove, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 8LB; typed by Lee, with my thanks

To start out with, a few comments on A&E 104

DANA CARSON: Actually, Latin would not have been used as a means of communication in post-Conquest England, except possibly between churchmen. Mostly, it was reserved for written documents and in the case of the English, only the most formal of those. It is very unlikely that a Norman knight would have communicated with his English steward using two interpreters (a French priest to translate from French to Latin and an English priest to translate from Latin to English). Within a very short period, the invaders must have picked up enough English to issue orders which would be understood. Whilst the English who had dealings with the conquerors probably also picked up a smattering of French.

Within a generation, most of the newcomers must have been bilingual (with the possible exception of some of the royal court), whilst many natives will have found it expedient to know at least some French. This can be seen in the way the two languages influenced one another. If only a few people had known both languages, there would not have been such extensive borrowing. So in my own view, England after 1066 supports Lee's comment that each group would have to know the language of the others - even if, within each group, the members used only one language.

BROOKS & FLIN: re your poll: I don't know if it counts as a mythos in itself, but I favor the world revealed in "Beowulf." On the edge of the land settled by man, monsters roam and gods have some influence; but the main concern of the population is with relations between different families and tribes. Many complexities are hinted at in spite of the simplicity of the main storyline. I also enjoy the gloss put on the poem by John Gardiner in his book Grendel.

PETER DA SILVA: I think there are two points in your discussion on an A&E rules system. First, the desire for a single system to cover all types of games; Second, that this system should become the main system used, at least by A&Eers.

The first aim is laudable, and some systems do attempt to cover all possibilities. Quite a number of SF games allow for weapons from the longbow to the odd laser and skills from trapping to time-warp mechanics. In theory it should be possible to treat magic like a form of psionics, and Bob's your uncle. Whether or not you like RQ, it could be extended to include higher tech weapons and skills.

However, there is at least one problem with trying to provide such a unified system. It is without character and can tend to blur real distinctions between periods. For example, in a game based on prehistoric societies, the skills will be fairly generalized, and most characters can attempt most things; individual stats will be important, particularly for those with little training or experience in a skill; finally skills can probably be increased through experience over a short period of time. But in modern period games, many relevant skills represent things for which formal training is necessary before the knowledge becomes at all useful, and only specialists will be able to make use of a particular skill.

Now such distinctions can be introduced into a general system, but this adds an element of complication which need not be present if a game is designed for one particular situation only. A generalized system has to allow for a wider range of possibilities, so it may end up being that much more complex.

Second, I have no desire to see a single system become dominant over all others. I probably wouldn't like it, and besides it would probably encourage One True Wayism amongst the majority who used it. I am happy to play in any system--for me, it is the skill of the DM which matters, not the mechanics). (This is of course only true when I play; as a DM, I am very concerned about mechanics.)

A&E 105 has just arrived, so I'll do a few comments on it as well.

MARK GOLDBERG: re ct to STEVE GILHAM on the relative scarcity of mages: You assume that literacy is necessary for a spell-crafter, but what about the village witch? If such people had powers which could be used beneficially, they might (but only might) have been accepted socially. If so, they could surely use their fertility magic to increase crop yields and their healing to curb disease. This would be fairly low level and traditional magic, passed from one person to a successor; perhaps it could not be easily improved or expanded. But even this small improvement might be enough to tip the balance, increasing population and producing a large surplus which could be used to develop an industrial base. Another result of the production of a surplus would be the ability to spend more effort on magical research--which could lead to a fusion of technology and magic, as Steve suggested.

Re ct to MARTIN WIXTED: The Irish towns were founded by Viking invaders, although monasteries like Armagh often had a very large population which might be considered as a town in itself. In England (not Britain, in this case) kings seem to have started minting gold coins soon after 650 AD, but these were so high value they were useless for daily transactions. Only later was gold coinage replaced by the silver penny (which was still quite high value). I don't think these coins would have reached Ireland in any quantity until the spread of the Norse and Danish kingdoms which straddled the Irish Sea, beginning in the middle to late 9th Century. I got the impression that Erin was set some time before that date. In any case, as I suspect Martin will say, the game is set in Erin, not Eire.

MATTHEW PORTER: re "Literacy and Cinematic Simulation": The cry of "That only happens in the movies" (or in books) can be raised to fit two situations. First, in the course of an adventure, when something happens ("You are hit by a large caliber bullet just above the heart. It is only a flesh wound."). Secondly, to describe the whole format of the game.

The first is simple enough to deal with. As DM, you either include such possibilities or you do not. The second deserves rather more consideration, since it affects the whole nature of the game. In essence, it is the difference between a storytelling game and one which seeks to simulate life in an imagined world. In stories, the characters are bound to the story-line; their backgrounds fit them for the particular story (the prince tries to regain his kingdom; the priest to defeat evildoers). The story is a single thread which the characters follow to its end; an apparent sidetrack is useful nevertheless somehow involved in the central theme. The same characters can take part in a number of stories, but these tend to be fairly independent of one another (e.g. the serials you mention in A&E 100).

Life is indeed not like that. There is no single thread of story-line to give structure to the various things which befall the characters. Most important, there is no guarantee of the characters' survival at any time. If attacked by a wolf pack whilst in the wilderness, this is most definitely a life and death situation. In a story, such a random encounter would be added to give interest to what otherwise might be a boring journey. The characters are only really at risk at the climax of the adventure (although the reader/player must suspend disbelief and assume the possibility of danger; otherwise the episode simply gets in the way).

How does this affect the set up of the game? Most people I know mix these two forms. A world is set up by the Dm, and the players generate characters within it (I am leaving aside open worlds here - I am afraid that I cannot see any justification for them), who in theory can go out and do anything. However, the Dm also creates a few adventures for them to get to know that world, after which they are more free to decide what they want to do. This certainly tends more towards "life" than "literature," and the Dm can suffer from it.

In SF games, the characters might leave the area designed by the GM and go off exploring places which have not even been designed yet, or they might choose to do something out of character with the world which has been set up. In a finely crafted culture taken mainly from Medieval Europe, the last thing the Dm wants is a character teaching Marxism to the peasants (assuming as I do that the Dm has as much of an interest in PC survival as the players).

The answer to these problems (if they are perceived as problems) is a "literature"-based game. Whereas "life" is free form, "literature" is much more structured. The DM will aim to keep the characters on a fairly strict track, although this must be done with some subtlety. Simply saying "You can't do that" is not good enough; there must be sound reasons. If you need to keep the PCs on a planet, perhaps a temporary quarantine could be enforced or financial limitations used to prevent them going too far astray. Another method is the fixed path adventure: the players are not aware of the fact, but whatever their characters do at decision points, the same series of encounters will occur.

However, such structuring has its own problems. If players are told to roll up backgrounds for their characters, they are likely to come up with an incongruous group who will certainly not fit in with the story-line decided upon. Even if the story is designed after the characters, it may have to be very convoluted to fit in all the possible PCs. For this reason, if the literary approach is being used, I suspect that it is necessary for the DM to do what authors have been doing for years: design the characters' background himself.

SACRILEGE! Everyone knows the player has absolute control over his characterHowever, everyone is familiar with the effects of rolling up a group of PCs on, say, the C&S system: a few townsmen, perhaps a knight, and a couple of serfs. Why would they be together? What possible fun could the player of the serf have, being ordered about by all and sundry (and why did he leave his farm). The poor knight will be mocked for his associates and spurned by his equals.

No, a structured game requires that the DM have some say in character creation. (Actually, I think that even in a free-form game, the PC's background should be the result of decisions rather than die rolls.) Furthermore, it is a great advantage if the players either do not know that the DM has put them into a structured story or--if they do know--that they do not take advantage of the fact (by taking unwarranted risks because they think that they have a form of "script immunity" or simply by waiting for things to be given to them on a plate).

I think that both extremes--the life and literature games--and all points in between are valid, and I have enjoyed playing in and/or running games which have covered quite a lot of the range. The point of this over-extended comment is to say that when setting up a campaign, some consideration should be given to the type of game that is wanted before simply telling the players to roll up a character.

A last point: if as DM you want to encourage PCs to act as a group and to discourage party disunity, then the story-line approach to PC backgrounds is probably essential. Start the PCs off as members of a merchant house or of the same religious sect, and they will have an incentive to act together. Start them off at opposite ends of the social scale, and they will have every incentive to split up.

ROBERT PLAMONDON: (Yes, I really am still doing cts on A&E 102!): Simon isn't the only person not to like Silverlock. I read it through and was also left pretty much unmoved by it,...and I'm not even English.//But on to more serious things. That's a neat set of ideas behind the magic system. It seems to cover most things. But does applying the "laws" of similarity and contagion also work to reduce mana cost, or are these needed simply to encourage the effects at all?

Magic in Sieges: if no countermagic is available, a series of Create Wall of Water (on a castle wall) and Freeze or Fireball could do considerable damage to the wall, at least weakening it for a final attack with a battering ram, if not collapsing it on its own. I think this is turning into a ct to ROBERT CLIFFORD.

The various structures added to a fortification in time of war would have been wooden, would they not? And so would be good targets for the dragon's attack, even if they were partly protected by hides or whatever. However, I certainly agree with your main point: most of the ideas which are conceived would have already been considered and allowed for. Some would not have been considered, like the flour/air bomb, but these are the very things which would not be part of the PC's ideas either. A big problem and certainly one for which there is no easy answer.

That's the end of my comments,. I was thinking of writing up my current ideas on a skill system, but I haven't been able to formulate them coherently. Basically, I had the idea of a limited number of skill groups into which any skill might be fitted (very much like LoA; in fact, the idea struck me only a few days before I saw the game). A skill would be defined by describing a task in detail and assigning it a difficulty value. From the example, the difficulty of other situations could be determined.

In normal circumstances, if a person's skill is at least the difficulty, he succeeds. Under pressure or when attempting something especially difficult, add a random value (the sum of one positive and one negative D10 for a range of -9 to +9, biased towards zero). The difference defines how good a success is or how bad a failure. When using Skill vs Skill, the defender would add his skill and a random, which would become the difficulty value the attacker had to overcome to succeed.

The main benefit of this system is to emphasize the two factors present when a task is attempted: the skill of the person and the difficulty of the task. Most games take account of the former, but the latter--if it is treated at all--is usually only tagged on at the end (and is usually forgotten in the heat of the action). Anyone who would like to make more of these ideas is welcome to try.

Finally, a footnote to my occupation list from Annecy, which was in 98 or 99: a few details on the "town" at Battle Abbey, around 1110 AD.

Battle Abbey was founded by William the Conqueror on the site of the Battle of Hastings, in gratitude for his victory. At the time of the battle, the area was uninhabited; 40 years later, there was a major abbey and a small but thriving town of 115 houses, divided into two administrative areas, each with a guildhall. The guilds' main function was peacekeeping: each member was a surety for the others. They were not occupational guilds but communal brewing and drinking centers.

The town had two centers: the abbey and the market which was deliberately established some distance away so the monks would not be disturbed by its noise. Close to the abbey walls was the district of Sandlake, where the majority of the Normans (there were about twenty in the town) and the abbey lay staff lived. Between the abbey and market ran the high street, which was the center of Middleborough. This is where most of the craftsmen and specialists lived and worked. West of the market lay a more rural settlement called Bremlegh, which numbered only two specialists amongst its twenty tenants--and of these two, one was a pigman.

Most of the burgesses were not craftsmen. These must have been laborers, mostly rural workers. Of the 30 or so specialists, five were herdsmen of various sorts (sheep, pigs, and cattle); one a gardener; and one a servant. The remainder had a wide variety of jobs or trades. There was a steward, a beadle, a clerk and two secretaries (no, not that kind of secretary, Nick!) who were presumably abbey officials and helpers; a priest is also named. Three cooks and three bakers presumably got most of their trade from helping at the abbey or perhaps from feeding some of the travelers who used the road to Hastings. A goldsmith, a blacksmith and "Aedric who cast the bells" suggest some metal working was done. No doubt the goldsmith's work was mainly for the Church. The rest were carpenters, cobblers (two each), a weaver, a tailor, a scourer, a sewer and (possibly) a thatcher.

Even the more specialized workers must have had an interest in farming work. Along with the rent of 7d for the house (remember, there used to be 12 pennies to the shilling and 20 shillings to the pound - a reminder to our younger readers), each burgess had to provide eight bushels of malt and also to provide someone to do a day's labor for the abbey. In return, they had the right to travel free of toll throughout the kingdom and to hold a three day fair in July.

The details are from a rental in "The Chronicle of Battle Abbey," translated by M. A. Lower in 1854 (I think - it might have been 1851).

That's all for now, folks.

HERESY & BLASPHEMY #3

by Ian L. Straus, 2208 So. Fifth St. #103, Austin, TX 78704; typed by Lee Gold

Re game system elements which contribute to roleplaying (originally raised in A&E 97): In A&E #103/LEAGUES UNLIT etc. #8, ALISON BROOKS implies an important point: the desired standard of roles to be played. So....

"Is a stereotype roleplaying? Are the cult limitations not inhibiting at times," asked Brooks. I prefer to use a less loaded term and to say that RQ cults provide archetypes which PCs are encouraged to emulate. That's what I did say in A&E #97. In common usage, stereotype refers to applying a generalization to a member of a group--and implies that the speaker is prejudiced. It's a great word to use for starting an argument, but irrelevant to the topic I raised. Archetype is a term from Jungian psychology; it deals with personality development via imitation of roles, which Jung believed spanned many or all cultures.

Yes, imitating archetypes is roleplaying. As roleplaying, it is far superior to the chaotic munchkinism which writers have objected to in recent A&Es. Remember, the standard of roleplaying which I proposed is pretty basic: players who play neither themselves, psychopaths nor Attila the Hun.

A more demanding standard is optional: that PCs should have unique personalities. I'd like to see your comments on how uniqueness can be judged by the GM, established as a practical standard for the players, and distinguished from randomness. Clearly, one criterion for a personality must be that one can describe an out of character action. I like to give extra attention and tailored events to exceptionally interesting characters and, until you commented, I didn't realize that is one of the role-encouraging techniques I am after.

"Are the cult limitations not inhibiting at times?" Sure enough! A player who would not otherwise meet my basic standard of roleplaying is inhibited from abandoning the chosen archetype. Note that additional individual characteristics can be added by the more advanced roleplayer. Such a player might plan a character who can't fit into an existing cult, but I suspect that's rare. It is possible to write up a new cult, a cult not detailed in Chaosium material, or a minor cult. The added work is a drawback of archetypes as a system component. Perhaps encouragement to do additional write-ups should be added to such a system rule.

But perhaps you meant that players will stick to the cults which give them the most latitude in adventuring and/or powergaming, and that although PCs will be personalized, there won't be much variety among them. That's possible. The technique satisfies my criterion but does not guarantee uniqueness. Please write up any techniques which tend to produce unique personalities (not unique powers).

Now I can see that I hit your sensitive point when I slighted superheroes games characters. Your ability to list comics characters indicates you are much more familiar with the genre than I am. I would appreciate your detailing the usual quality of roles and roleplaying in superheroes games. A&E zines plus my own observations have given me the impression that such games draw powergamers because starting characters are superhuman, but that bored players' inability to destroy others' PCs is partial compensation.

Re yr ct on fear of death: I doubt that minimal fear of death produces roleplaying, since munchkinism is associated with games in which resurrection is common., GALEOTTI's last page (Dragonewt's Dream 4) expresses an opposite opinion.

I would like to see the fear of death question tested by experiment. Have the same scenario played 40 times at a con: half with a Potion of Resurrection. If role-playing is evaluated good/bad, then we can extract a conclusion and confidence level. Without reference to tables, I'd say a 12% margin (56%-44% superiority) would give 95% confidence that there was some non-zero effect. Note that GMs' opinions and influence must be protected from contamination from knowledge of the experiment.

I note the Champions rule which rewards comic book-style oratory. Surely oratory in the spirit of the genre is roleplaying. Do non-superheroes systems discourage it or just fail to reward it? See GALEOTTI's ct to GOLD in The FNORD 7.

Re yr ct to TELLER: Sure enough, it is culture shock. Now that you've experienced it, think of how you can use that in an RPG when characters travel.

OTHER COMMENTS ON 103:

GERNETH: I've developed a few GM assistance programs. Nothing massively advanced.//As printed, your PP formula gives opposite effects to what you want. How about $((3 \text{ INT} + \text{CON})/4 - 10) * \text{LVL?}$ //I generally dislike klutz tables. Try to done down the kill your friend results.//Details in letter to you.

ELLWOOD: Re Ylam: sounds interesting. I may send you a nation. Can players have a history of the catastrophes, or will they discover new mountains and inland seas during play? Is trade possible?

GALEOTTI: (Dragonewt's Dream 4): Re anecdote: RAE. Useful.

ADAMS: Re strange Adventures: hahahaw GROAN. Chuckle.//What's your evaluation of roleplaying in superheroes games? Do unique combinations of powers contribute to unique personality?

LARTER: Re firevenders: Good background construction; good point. Incidentally, naptha was available in historical low technology times. Does anyone have an opinion as to why Molotov cocktails weren't invented until the Russo-Finnish war of 1939?

UNION: Your point about not penalizing roleplaying is good and deserves specific mention in instructions to GMs. I note that your "EP non-system" rewards roleplaying first, demonstrating that you practice your second and third points. Do you explain this to the players, or reward & punish covertly? How long have you been doing this, and what proportion of players respond?

[illegible]

Steve Jones writes (plaintively) to say I misquoted his Det Gold Filler in #101. My apologies.//He also says, "I will try to drag the local StarFleet Battles players into a game of LoA. I will run a (non-commercial) PBI I was planning, as it has the sort of religious system I was looking for.//What stops "mace" from being the weapon of choice as it is the only Easy weapon and does just as much tt damage as any other wapon of the same weight?" <Answer: cultural prejudices. Also the Gi may rule that other weapons are Easy for particular social classes: e.g. in Japan, katana is an easy weapon for Samurai.--LG>

DARK AGES PAGES #13(?)

by Martin Wixted (May 13, 1984); retyped by Lee Gold

COMMENTS

MARK GOLDBERG re Ireland's history: Please list your sources. Although in my study of Ireland's past, books give varying details, they average out to the following picture (most likely as accurate a history as anyone will ever get!):

circa 2100 BC	Stonehenge constructed (corrected radiocarbon date)
circa 2000 BC	Picts invade and take over
circa 600 BC	Celts (Gaelts) invade
circa 50 AD	Roman forays in ERIN
circa 350 AD	Earliest Gaelic writings
circa 432 AD	Patrick the monk continues the task begun several years earlier by St. Columba
circa 500-700 AD	Age of monks going abroad to christianize
circa 700 AD	Brehon Laws define ranks of kings, nobles, commoners
795 AD	Sporadic Viking raids begin; they end with the brigands setting in several walled towns of their own construction.
800 AD	The Book of Kells is written
1014 AD	The brigands are routed from Ireland
1169-1170 AD	The Normans and Danes invade and occupy parts of Ireland (and have yet to leave). Henry II declare TITANY King of Ireland.

By 432 Christianity had already been introduced, 363 years before the Vikings STARTED sporadic attacks. Ireland did not acquire towns less than 300 years after Catholicism invaded it nor produce its own coin system by 700 AD.

Our zine in 100 never said EGG's weapon speed factors were correct. We mentioned he had the idea of different speeds for different weapons. You state the obvious when you say: 1. As one trains and practices, one uses a weapon more **efficiently**. (In Erin, speed increases every 20%. You hit more often and also do more damage.) 2. You hit with better control to hit a vulnerable location or deflect an attack. (These are simulated by increased chances for a Critical and Parry and Riposte). What is your complaint?

DAVID UNION: I agree with yr cts on combat. That is why there are rules for feints and ripostes. On DQ: switch to Rq and you won't need to do all that rule tampering to make it come out right. (I know, I know; where's the fun in that?) //"Real Time" refers to real time within the game, not OUR reality. (Duh!)

ROBERT LOUTZENHISER (& CO): You are incorrect; Druids could read. They had a written language: Ogham. It was a type of Rune letters.//I liked your chart for determining Hit Points based on weight. One quibble: your chart doesn't seem to take into account the ease with which some vital organs can be reached on some animals.//Thanks for the Celtic Death Spirits. (Is this info reliable?)

You are on your way to mail your zine to Lee when you are stopped and told these little blurbs are evoking humor at the expense of others. You decide to:

- Give others cause to consider you a bigot by laughing at them.
- Agree not to baselessly deride people because of their color, creed, national origin, or sexual proclivities.
- Continue to include these usually cute humor pieces with an occasional eye out to being fair to people.

ALL: Yes, I have now been informed by Jenny Hein (thank you) as to the limits in A&E on fiction. LEE: I think this belongs on the ToC page: Fiction: 6 page limit; zines: 16 page limit.

to be continued next month when A&E has more room

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the origin of life. It is shown that the problem is one of the most important and most difficult in the history of science.

2. The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various theories of the origin of life. It is shown that the most plausible theory is that of spontaneous generation.

3. The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various experiments which have been conducted in order to test the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the results of these experiments are in favor of the theory.

4. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various objections which have been raised against the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that these objections are not valid.

5. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various applications of the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the theory has many important applications in the field of biology.

6. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various conclusions which can be drawn from the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the theory is a very important one in the history of science.

7. The seventh part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various references which have been made to the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the theory has been mentioned in many of the most important works in the history of science.

8. The eighth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various conclusions which can be drawn from the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the theory is a very important one in the history of science.

9. The ninth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various references which have been made to the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the theory has been mentioned in many of the most important works in the history of science.

10. The tenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various conclusions which can be drawn from the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the theory is a very important one in the history of science.

11. The eleventh part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various references which have been made to the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the theory has been mentioned in many of the most important works in the history of science.

12. The twelfth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various conclusions which can be drawn from the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the theory is a very important one in the history of science.

13. The thirteenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various references which have been made to the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the theory has been mentioned in many of the most important works in the history of science.

14. The fourteenth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the various conclusions which can be drawn from the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the theory is a very important one in the history of science.