

THE CRUSADERTM

Winter 2006 • Volume 2 Number 3

The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer

CONFESSIONS OF A GAME MASTER

by Steve Chenault

HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

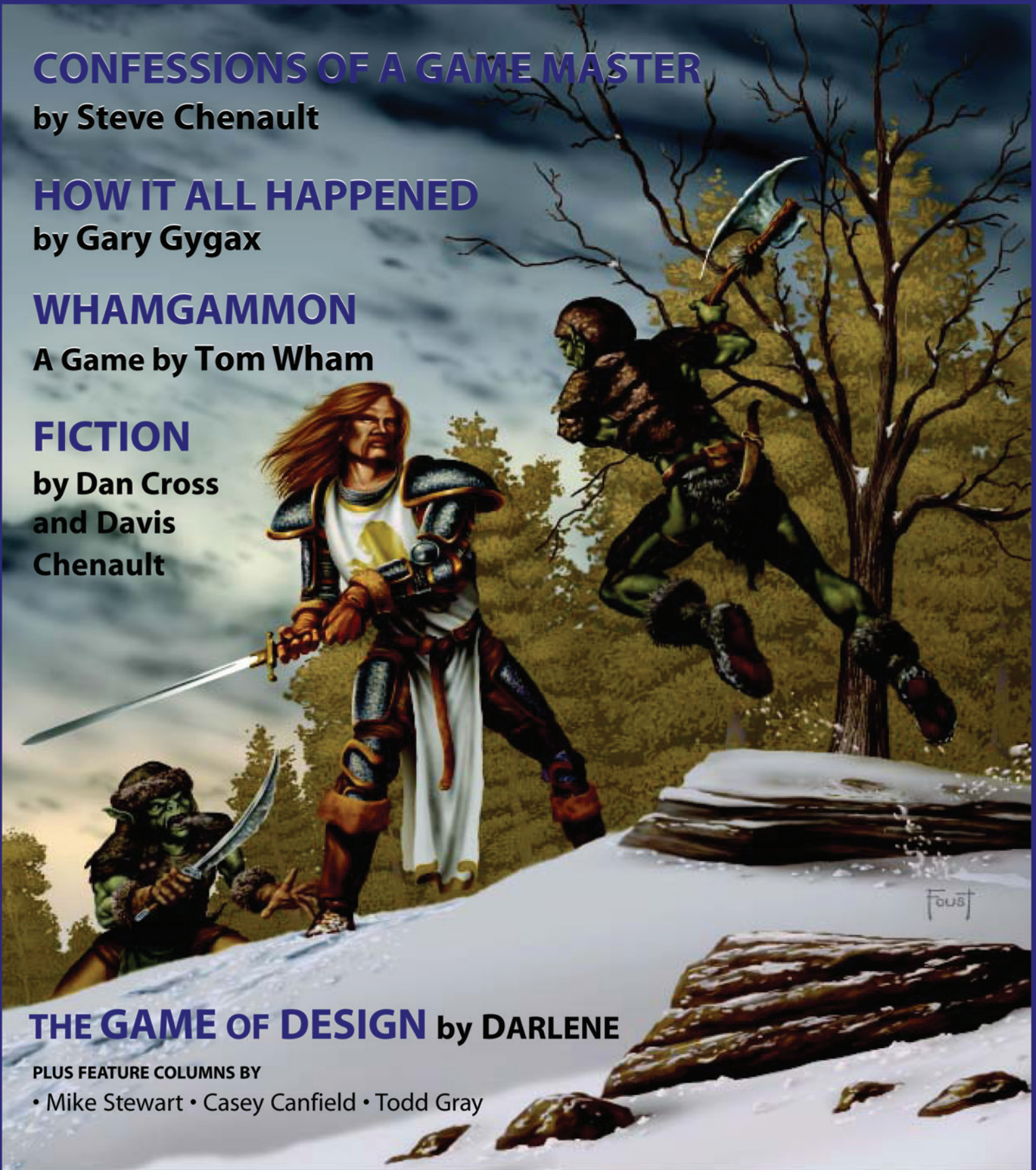
by Gary Gygax

WHAMGAMMON

A Game by Tom Wham

FICTION

by Dan Cross
and Davis
Chenault



THE GAME OF DESIGN by DARLENE

PLUS FEATURE COLUMNS BY

• Mike Stewart • Casey Canfield • Todd Gray

The Crusader is a journal dedicated to exploring the experience of fantasy and other Role Playing Games. Sold at better hobby shops, bookstores and by subscription.

Subscription rates for 12 months:

United States - \$45.00

Outside the US including Canada - \$69.00

Send checks payable to:

The Crusader (Attn: Subscriptions)
at the above address or visit us online at
www.trolllord.com/crusader.htm
Allow one month for change of address
to be processed.

EDITOR: TROLL LORD GAMES

VISION KEEPER: NICOLE LEIGH

PUBLICATION DESIGNER: DARLENE

COVER ARTIST: MITCH FOUST

WRITING CONTRIBUTORS:

GARY GYGAX, DAVIS CHENAULT,
STEPHEN CHENAULT, CASEY CANFIELD,
DAN CROSS, DARLENE, TOM WHAM,
MIKE STEWART, TODD GRAY

Letters of inquiry are welcomed
and should be sent to the address
or sent via e-mail to
thecrusader@trolllord.com

The publisher will not assume
responsibility for unsolicited
materials which will not be returned
unless accompanied by a return
envelope with appropriate postage.

The Crusader Journal, Castles & Crusades Players Handbook, Castles & Crusades Monsters and Treasures are trademarks of Chenault & Gray publishing, llc. *Legendary Adventure, Gygaxian Fantasy Worlds* are trademarks of Triggee Enterprises. We apologize in advance for any inadvertent use of names or products without mentioning trademark ownership. Please don't construe any omissions of this kind a challenge of ownership status.

Unless otherwise noted*, everything
within this publication is ©2006
Chenault & Gray Publishing, LLC.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

*The design of this publication is
©2006 DARLENE *ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.*

It is expressly forbidden to reprint
anything in whole or in part without
express written permission from
Chenault & Gray Publishing, LLC



IN THIS ISSUE: Volume 2 Number 3

HOW IT ALL HAPPENED by Gary Gygax

Live Action RPGing in 1947 1

ALEA IACTA EST by Stephen Chenault

*The Splatter Effect: Confessions
of a Game Master* 2

HAMMER & ANVIL by Casey Canfield

The CK's Bill of Rights & Responsibilities.... 4

FICTION by Dan Cross

The Theurgist's Lethe (Chapter 3) 8

SERENDIPITY by DARLENE

The Game of Design 10

GAME by Tom Wham

WHAMGAMMON 15

**TALES OF THE WORLDS OF THE RINGS
OF BRASS by Stephen Chenault**

The Lay of the Lothian Princes..... 20

AULD WYRMISH by Mike Stewart

Tarot Arcanum 22

THE ANGRY GAMER by Todd Gray

Another Wasted Opportunity 29

FICTION by Davis Chenault

Frankenburry The Crack Parade 31

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST, MITCH FOUST

Mitch Foust was born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee. His early artistic influences were TV shows like *Batman*, *Star Trek*, and the Hanna Barbera superhero cartoons. While attending Memphis State University, Mitch rendered Fantasy and comic images on T-shirts. In the early 1980s, Foust helped create Black Tie Studios whose first issue of *The Last Generation* was printed in 1984. During this time, Foust also found cover work for Adventure Comics, and later Malibu comics.

In the 1990s, Mitch Foust opened an airbrush shop called The Wild Hare. A few years later, he added screen printing capabilities to the shop and renamed it Animated Jack's. For many years, Mitch spent most of his time doing all the necessary things an owner of a small business must do to be successful. By 2001, Mitch decided to devote himself full time to his art and closed his shop.

Foust is now a freelance artist working out of his home and sells his art through ebay. He says, "I really enjoy ebay, and the people you have the chance to meet. I also enjoy the commission work. It is very satisfying to take another's creative thought and translate that thought into an image." To see more of Mitch's stunning work, please visit Mitch's Art Gallery at www.mitchfoust.com.



The Inspiration for the D&D Game, Its Creation, Gen Con's Founding, How TSR came into Being, and its Early Days...



LIVE ACTION RPGING IN 1947

by **Gary Gygax**



he stories we acted out were based on whatever radio program or movie we had listened to or had recently seen. Favorite themes were from such radio programs as *Sam Spade*, *Casey Crime Photographer*, and *Suspense* (brought to you by Autolite, good night).

Sadly for us, Jim stopped being the game master when he was well, so after the summer of 1947 the games were pretty well forgotten until many, many years later. Only well after I had written the D&D game did the connection between Jim's "realistic" games and role-playing games strike home. He had certainly tilled the "imaginary" soil for the game form to eventually sprout and bear fruit.

When Jim was taking the role of a Non-Player Character in the game, he always did what is now called "judge-fudge," of course. For example, as a bank teller he always managed to trigger an alarm, when playing a potential target his character had a bullet-proof vest on. As we were buy lads of none, it was easy to dupe us, as he did one time by avoiding death because the character had a metal plate in his head that stopped the bullet from harming him! Once, and once only, I managed to win out over the cruel Game Master.

The cellar at 921 Dodge Street where the Rashes lived was small. Not much room in it for playing, but we managed. A portion by the inside

steps that was only partially dug out was where we sat when "driving an auto" or "flying a plane," the instrument board and steering mechanism set before us, base standing on the floor. There was just enough room near the base of the stairs to set up the "saloon" for playing Wild West games. We were doing that when it struck me that I might have more than one "character" in the game. So I tried it, and it went something like this:

"Jim," I ventured, "my guy, Jack Slade, is upstairs watching us play poker." After all, most saloons seen in Westerns had a stairway in the bar room, a walk with a rail where someone usually crashed through and fell onto a table below in the fight scenes.

Jim accepted that, asking: "Who are you now then?"

"I'm...ah... *Blackie*, another of the cowboys working at the ranch, that's here in the saloon with Big John to have some fun."

That was sufficient. Jim then took the role of saloon owner and later as a professional gambler who sat in at our poker game. Soon we were nearly cleaned out of our hard-won wooden gold and silver pieces, so: "You're a cheatin' tinhorn!" I accused. With that Jim drew the model gun he had handy, was about to shoot my character. "Pow!" I cried gleefully. You're plugged before you can get off a shot!"

"What?!" he demanded. "You don't have a gun drawn."

"Blackie doesn't, but Jack Slade does.

You forgot that my main guy is up above watching," I said with a smirk.

Jim grumbled but finally agreed. John and I recovered our "money," but we weren't out of trouble. The tinhorn had a partner who began harassing us. He was clearly a gunslinger. No offer of a drink would do. He meant to kill us! As he looked at us with drawn hogleg, daring us to try to fill out hands before he shot us dead, another "shot" rang out. Once again our Game Master had forgotten that Jim Slade, my main character was still standing up above watching "Blackie" and "Big John."

For once Jim quit the game by leaving in disgust, rather than managing to get one of our characters tossed in jail or shot. At least the sad end of such playing fun was accompanied by a triumphant feeling that friend John shared with me!

Next month you'll read about fights with swords and axes and battles with toy soldiers.



© 2004 Gary Gygax.
All rights reserved.

WHEN CEASAR
STOOD UPON THE
BANKS OF THE
RUBICON LOOKING
SOUTH TO ROME
HE HESITATED.
BEFORE HIM STOOD
THE VAST, COMPLEX
MECHANISM OF THE
PAST, GLOWING
WITH A HOST OF
INTRICATELY
WOVEN STRATAGEMS.
WITH HIM, HE
HAD BUT ONE
LEGION, WEARY
FROM 8 YEARS OF
BRUTAL WAR WITH
THE GAULS. BUT
WHEN CALLED TO
SURRENDER
HIMSELF TO THE
SENATE AND
CERTAIN EXILE HE
DID NOT HESITATE.
HE CALLED HIS
LEGIONARIES TO
CROSS INTO ITALY,
TO CROSS THE
RUBICON. AND AS
HE DID SO HE
SAID ONLY THIS :
ALEA IACTA EST!



The Die Is Cast

ALEA IACTA EST

An Editorial by Stephen Chenault



THE SPLATTER EFFECT:

Mastering the Art of Game Mastering or The Confessions of a Game Master

*EDITORIAL NOTE: So, as I sat down to begin writing this issue's editorial and I read my own original title as referenced in Crusader Vol. 1, Number 2, **Mastering the Game: Exploring the Interaction Between Game Masters and Players**, I wondered at myself. And then I jerked up... not off, mind you... up! A spasm of boredom, so great that I could not contain it, forced me to vomit up my own soul! If the title of an article is meant to capture an audience, this title is bound to kill them. So, giving food to thought, I've renamed it **The Splatter Effect: Mastering the Art of Game Mastering**. I'm not certain what Splatter Effect has to do with anything, but I'm sure this quandary will resolve itself by the time I finish my two main points. Bear with me.*

--Steve



I have gamed since the mid-1970s. My brother Davis was a huge comic book fan and really into that scene, so when he heard about *Dungeons & Dragons* (D&D), he started pestering our mom about it. Well, it just so happened that one of my father's soldiers was shipping out on a hardship tour—though I don't think they called it a hardship tour back in those days—to Korea I believe. Knowing of Davis' desire to play D&D, this noble soldier, in possession of three or four little brown books (no box) offered them to my mom, as he wouldn't have any need for them. I happened to be in the parking lot when she stopped by the barracks to pick them up. I remember it well for some reason. Its become one of those snap shot memories for me. I don't know why. But that launched Davis and my older brother into the world of D&D. I joined later and I've played ever since.

In the early 1980s, I began running games in Heidelberg, Germany. I would get together with my pals and run endless hours of games... in between making out at the movies and listening to music at the park. This really started a lifetime's worth of game mastering. I ran games almost every week from 1980 until I joined the army in 1991. Sometimes, during my college years I ran three games a week. We played a lot. When I got out of the army I picked up where I left off and ran games until very recently.

About a year ago I yielded the chair to Chris and Davis, the latter of whom had just recently returned to the hobby after years of wandering in the west, living in tents and drinking slop off of bar mats!

Yielding the chair was good and bad. I hadn't played any characters past third level since 1979, when Davis was the master of the game. I was the consummate Game Master. I knew the players. I knew the game we played. I changed or altered rules so regularly that the books were almost useless. I knew the tricks of roping them in, firing them up, calming them down, pissing them off. We were really like an orchestra, and I was its conductor... Or so I thought.

At some point in the late 1990's, I knew my game was slowing. I was losing my "game" so to speak. It was harder to keep them interested. I could get it together for a few sessions, and then I would lose them again. It was frustrating. It was in conjunction with the growth of TLG, so I ascribed it to no sleep and little thought to getting ready for the game. Davis wanted to start running the new *Castles & Crusades* (C&C) game and Chris had some cool adventures he wanted to try out. I had originally learned to game from Davis. In the old days, he ran the game while I played. Reluctantly, I gave up the chair. I was tired and really didn't have the energy to sustain anything. That was obvious.

Chris ran the table for several months, first edition. Then as C&C took shape, Davis took over and ran the table for about a month. The two of them switched on and off for the better part of a year. Both started new games, with new characters. Eventually Chris converted his game to C&C (it really is that much easier). Davis ran us through *Assault on Blacktooth Ridge* and what is shaping up to be *Slag Heap* and the *Wicked Cauldron*. Chris threw us into epic settings in the far west of Erde (soon to be renamed: *Ahrde*) entangled on the islands of Mogrl Lords.

Both Chris and Davis are exceptional Castle Keepers, but they both have markedly different styles from each other and myself. Without going into particulars about how much treasure, role playing, etc...they each do, I'll quantify their styles by simply saying the following:

Davis is so impartial to the actions of the character that he is indifferent, the perfect adjudicator. If your first level character accidentally kills the demon lord of the snake pits, he does not utter anything, but tallies up your experience. If your 15th level rogue slips off of a 20 foot wall into a pit of spikes he doesn't react, but tells you to roll up a new character. Davis offers no sustenance in the desert. You live or die according to your own actions and the roll of the dice. It's a hard game of life and death.

Chris, on the other hand, wants you to feel the impact of the game. He wants you to be a part of the story, to cut the rug of history. As with any good writer, he develops and molds the storyline in tune with the development of the characters involved. When the character changes, there are subtle changes to the script and the story. He would not allow the demon to die, nor would he allow the rogue such an ignominious death. Chris offers you aid in the desert and guides you down the road. It's a complex game of interaction and reaction.

I could see a little of my own style mirrored in the ways they were running their games. I tended to create scenarios without end, letting the players unravel the story and adapt their solutions as endings to the finish the game. I wouldn't directly aid the characters, but on the other hand I would change the roll of a die, the effects of magic or spells, reaction of monsters or other happenstance to fit the arc of the story. Death comes easy in my games, but too, accomplishment is not at the discretion of chance. I thought I had found the perfect mix of interaction with chance and play to make the story unfold for any and all at the table.

But I had long since grown torpid in my chair, unreactive to the players and what they might be thinking or going through.

Once I gave up the chair, it didn't take me long to really warm to playing a character. I played a romanesque fighter in Chris' game. I blended with Chris' style and game quickly and was really enjoying it. We stepped into a simple canopy and before long it had grown into an epic in the making. He is generous with experience and treasure and we advanced to second and third level pretty quickly. I was really getting into it.

We switched to Davis' game soon thereafter where I played another fighter. The pace of this game was much different. Entering the environs of the Blacktooth Ridge, there was no immediate goal and we had to forge one for ourselves. We failed to get cohesion but did cross the Hrueson River and assault the ridge. Davis has a fearsome reputation as a Castle Keeper and we were very slow to attack the enemy we did find. But once we got cohesion as a party, the game picked up and we were having a blast.

We skirted back and forth between the two games. I was really into playing the characters and hadn't really thought about getting back behind the screens in a good long while when two events occurred. They happened almost in tandem, one in Chris' game, the other in Davis'; that made me look on my time in the chair very differently.

Chris found us frustrated one night. We were, as a group, very tired and the past couple of sessions had played witness to some great role playing and a bit of the mysteries of the storyline being revealed. These sessions were really cool, and revealed Chris' true gift in telling a story. But the role-playing was far from finished, and we were far from a cohesive group with any kind of plan. So on this particular night we were all a bit hungry for some combat. It was long in coming. Chris had to work through some themes to get us on the right track. He subconsciously took control of some of the characters, mine being one of them, and began moving them about the field. This rankled a bit with me and the other players and we objected. Chris was thrown into a quandary and he began looking for role playing patches to get us on track. This heightened



Stephen (LEFT) and Davis Chenault

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



CASEY CANFIELD HAS BEEN PLAYING AND GAME-MASTERING RPGS SINCE 1983. CASEY CURRENTLY PLOTS THE DEEDS OF NEFARIOUS CHARACTERS AND CREATURES FROM HIS LAIR JUST OUTSIDE OF POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK.

THE CK'S BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



THE CONSTITUTION OF the United States of America is built upon a framework of checks and balances. Each branch of government has certain powers that enable it to ensure that the other branches do not abuse or unlawfully extend their own powers.

The Founding Fathers knew that the dominance of one branch over the other two would precede a slide into tyranny over the people.

The dynamic between Castle Keepers and the players that participate in their games is, in some ways, similar to the system of checks and balances in the Constitution. Each participant, no matter what role he or she has, enjoys certain rights. Each participant also has very specific responsibilities.

In this installment of *Hammer and Anvil*, I will address this balance from the Castle Keeper's perspective. The Castle Keeper has the position of control of the table. The Castle Keeper must endeavor to use that control to facilitate the enjoyment of everyone seated around it. It is a daunting task. It is my hope that the following series of rights and responsibilities will serve as a guideline for both novice and experienced Castle Keepers alike.



THE CASTLE KEEPER HAS A RIGHT TO BE GIVEN THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT FROM THE PLAYERS.

Let's say a Castle Keeper spends a few hours creating a new monster. It is a variant of the skeleton, but this monster is much tougher. It has more hit dice, making it both harder to kill and harder to turn. It is fast, giving it multiple attacks and a bonus to initiative. Finally, it is intelligent, and acts accordingly in combat.

The Castle Keeper has taken pains to ensure that the creature, both in terms of power and the number encountered, will not be an insurmountable challenge for the party. The Castle Keeper is using creativity to keep things interesting; but even when characters think they know what a creature is, it pays to be careful. During the encounter with the tough skeletons, one of the players grows frustrated and angry. "This isn't right!" he says. "Skeletons can't take that much damage, or move that

quickly, and the cleric should have turned them long ago!"

"Ah," the Castle Keeper says, "but these are not ordinary skeletons."

In situations like this, it is best to avoid getting egg on one's face. The Castle Keeper can change anything and is entitled to do so. When in doubt, it is far better to assume the Castle Keeper is acting intentionally, and that the actions are all part of the challenge. Assuming the Castle Keeper is making a mistake, and worse, being vocal about it, is unwarranted and adversarial. Good players make their marks by overcoming obstacles, not by second-guessing the Castle Keeper.



THE CASTLE KEEPER HAS A RIGHT TO AN ATTENTIVE AND ENGAGED GROUP

In my experience, most Castle Keepers will spend more time preparing for a game session than actually playing the game. The Castle Keeper invests this time and effort as a personal outlet for creativity and for the enjoyment of preparing and running adventures for the group.

With that in mind, what does it say to a Castle Keeper when one or more players are inattentive during the game? What incentive does that Castle Keeper have to spend valu-

able time preparing for a game when one or more players consistently do things other than play it?

The Castle Keeper should be able to look around the table and see players that are participating in the game, even if that means they are quietly listening to what other players are saying or doing. Every Castle Keeper deserves this level of respect for the effort he or she puts toward providing a fun game for everyone.

WHAT DOES IT SAY TO A CASTLE KEEPER WHEN ONE OR MORE PLAYERS ARE INATTENTIVE...



THE CASTLE KEEPER HAS A RIGHT TO EXPERIMENT WITH THE GAME

When I sit down to begin developing a campaign, I seldom know, in advance, about every change or addition I would like to make to support the setting. It is difficult to know all of the ramifications of changing, adding or removing rules until several sessions, at minimum, are played.

None of this should dissuade a Castle Keeper from experimentation. Tweaking the rules and observing the results should be treated as a learning experience for the Castle Keeper. It is very difficult for a Castle Keeper to learn to shape the game to his or her own needs if the players are not willing to allow experimentation.

If the Castle Keeper wants to change a rule, and the change seems reasonable, there is no harm in seeing how it works out. If the Castle Keeper should become dissatisfied with the change, or if the players do not like the rule, there is always a possibility of changing the rule back to its original state. It is helpful to consider all rule changes, additions or subtractions as probationary.

This helps avoid unintended consequences, and gives everyone the expectation that the rules are malleable.

TWEAKING THE RULES & OBSERVING THE RESULTS SHOULD BE TREATED AS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE.



THE CASTLE KEEPER HAS A RIGHT TO MAKE JUDGMENT CALLS TO KEEP THE GAME MOVING.

Unusual situations, those for which there are no specific official rules, arise in games on a frequent basis. In these situations, a Castle Keeper makes a judgment call, asks for a few dice rolls perhaps, and then the game moves on.

However, many players think this is arbitrary and unfair, particularly if the outcome of the situation is unfavorable toward their characters.

This is a circumstance caused by the player's inherent distrust of the Castle Keeper. The reasons for this distrust can vary; the player might have lost a prized character before at the hands of a poor referee, or perhaps the player takes an adversarial attitude toward game masters in general, and feels they are "out to get him."

For example, in my games, certain tasks will always be impossible to accomplish, even for the most skilled characters. Walking a greased tightrope in high winds is an example. Moving silently on a floor covered completely in broken glass is impossible. Swimming upstream in white-water is an unreasonable plan and thus impossible in my games also. However, none of these things are established in the rules. It would also be an obnoxious chore to try to list all of these things in a house rule document before the campaign begins. Therefore, these sorts of situations are adjudicated by me, as they arise in the game. This just happens to be the easiest way to handle certain circumstances because it obviates the need for a glut of rules and verbiage to cover

THE PROBLEM ARISES WHEN PLAYERS HAVE DIFFICULTY TRUSTING THE CASTLE KEEPER TO BE FAIR.

CONTINUED PAGE 6



**THE RULES
LAWYER
STARTS
WITH THE
ASSUMPTION
THAT THE
TEXT OF THE
RULES IS A
HIGHER
AUTHORITY
THAN THE
CASTLE
KEEPER.**

every situation. The problem arises when players have difficulty trusting the Castle Keeper to be fair.

Sometimes players forget that certain activities can be impossible, even for powerful characters. They become so used to rolling dice – to having a chance of success at *everything* – that it becomes reflexive.

The Castle Keeper has the right to resolve situations in the manner he or she deems most suitable for the circumstances. This may or may

not include using dice. Reasonable players will either choose to accept the Castle Keeper's authority and judgment, or find a new game if they feel the Castle Keeper is acting in bad faith.

It is important to note that when differences arise, players should be able to approach the Castle Keeper with any questions or concerns that they might have. A good Castle Keeper will listen to these comments and work with the players to explain or resolve conflicts in a constructive manner.



THE CASTLE KEEPER HAS A RIGHT TO MARGINALIZE RULES LAWYERS AND SALES AGENTS

In the example given above of the "custom" skeletons, not only did that player fail to give the Castle Keeper the benefit of the doubt, but the player also engaged in "rules lawyering."

Unfortunately, this sort of behavior is the mediocre player's answer to many non-conventional challenges. Instead of adapting his or her tactics to overcome the challenge, a rules-lawyer tries to use the conventions in the rulebook as a bludgeon to avoid or weaken the challenge.

The rules-lawyer starts with the assumption that the text of the rules is a higher authority than the Castle Keeper. That erroneous first assumption is the crumbling foundation upon which the rules-lawyer stands. All Castle Keepers have the right to finish shattering that foundation in a decisive manner.

While Castles & Crusades is not a sport, the rules of good sportsmanship apply. The Castle Keeper is the referee. As I said in my last column, a baseball umpire would no more tolerate an argumentative player than a Castle Keeper should. Baseball players and managers are routinely ejected from games for arguing simple calls of balls and strikes. There are more constructive and polite ways to resolve questions or concerns after the game session is complete. Rules-lawyering, particularly during game play, is a waste of everyone's time, and should not be tolerated.

Only slightly less annoying are what I call sales agents. Sales agents are players who will try their best to get the Castle Keeper to provide them with some sort of unfair advantage by arranging "in-game" circumstances to their benefit. They use thin logic, attempted application of real-world principles, or tailor their character's history in an attempt to gain a tangible in-game bonus. For example, a sales agent may try to "sell" the Castle Keeper on the idea that Hornswaggle, a thief, should start play with a 1000 gold piece spyglass because he

used to swab decks on a pirate ship and stole one from the captain.

Sales agents will make a habit of milking situations for all they are worth. A popular tactic is to approach a non-player character in a position of authority with news of a great threat, and appeal to that authority for magical items or soldiers.

I call this the "free item" or "free henchmen" tactic. How many Castle Keepers have had to tell players that there are no soldiers available due to frequent raids on the town? This puts referees in a quandary. It forces them to invent reasons to say "no" to these requests in order to maintain the challenge of the adventure. Sales agents know this, and they use this knowledge to try to gain an advantage. Some players undoubtedly see this as fair play, but they are really missing the entire point of the game. If the point of the game is to run to the captain of the guard to ask for help whenever a problem arises, then what is the point of being an adventurer?

The Castle Keeper, however, has every right to assign consequences to this tactic. If the party wishes the local garrison to send help, they had better be prepared to pay those soldiers for hazardous duty, or to provide for the families of any soldiers that die. If they are loaned a magical item by a powerful non-player character, they must accept the consequences if that item is lost, stolen or destroyed. The Castle Keeper always has the right to apply reasonable consequences to actions, even if they are unfavorable to the players.

Above all, this is a game – a source of entertainment. Taking it too seriously is a mistake. Rules-lawyers (and sales agents, to some degree) are akin to annoying, overbearing parents at Little League games: they are so caught up in "winning" that they completely miss the point of playing.

CONTINUED





THE CASTLE KEEPER HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO BE FAIR

With authority comes the onus to use that authority in a just manner. Many referees forget that their job is not to *win*, but to provide a framework for a fun and challenging adventure. Referees often complain about rules-lawyering and players that do not give them the benefit of the doubt. However, these sorts of behaviors by players came about in direct response to poor referee behavior! The solution, therefore, must be to address that behavior, instead of covering it up with more rules or shifting the effective control of the game to rules-lawyers.

A poor Castle Keeper is one that has an adversarial relationship with the players, and

tailors events in the game accordingly. A poor Castle Keeper punishes characters for clever play that “spoils” a carefully crafted encounter.

A poor Castle Keeper consistently makes judgment calls that unfairly impact characters. A poor Castle Keeper derives enjoyment out of making encounters impossible for characters to avoid or defeat. Poor Castle Keepers require all fair and responsible Castle Keepers to work harder to gain the trust of their players.

The importance of the responsibility to be fair cannot be overstated.

**A POOR
CASTLE
KEEPER IS
ONE THAT
HAS AN
ADVERSARIAL
RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE
PLAYERS.**



THE CASTLE KEEPER HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO CHALLENGE THE PLAYERS

My games are based around a simple set of principles. First, rewards are proportionate to the risks taken. I will not place a powerful artifact in an orc den; in fact, players would be lucky to find any magic items there at all. However, a powerful naga’s lair would have a rich treasure, should the characters defeat her.

Second, benefits received are proportionate to the costs incurred. Someone undercutting the costs of researching a new spell can expect to obtain a weaker-than-normal version of the spell when the research is completed. However, a character that consistently uses superior materials and techniques, no matter the cost in time or gold, can (and should) expect excellent results.

Finally, the welfare of the character is the responsibility of the player. It is the Castle Keeper’s job to create a plausible and enter-

taining world, and the player’s job to make a trail through it. It is not the Castle Keeper’s responsibility to ensure that the player will never have to detour. In my games, hill giants exist, regardless of the level of the party. If the party should travel through their territory, hill giants can be encountered when the characters are too weak to effectively combat them. It is the responsibility of the players to understand and avoid threats that are too powerful for them to defeat.

In the end, a well-run campaign will leave the players feeling a strong sense of accomplishment and the Castle Keeper with a strong sense of pride for the players on a job well done.



**A WELL-RUN
CAMPAIGN
WILL LEAVE
THE PLAYERS
FEELING A
STRONG
SENSE OF
ACCOMPLISHMENT**

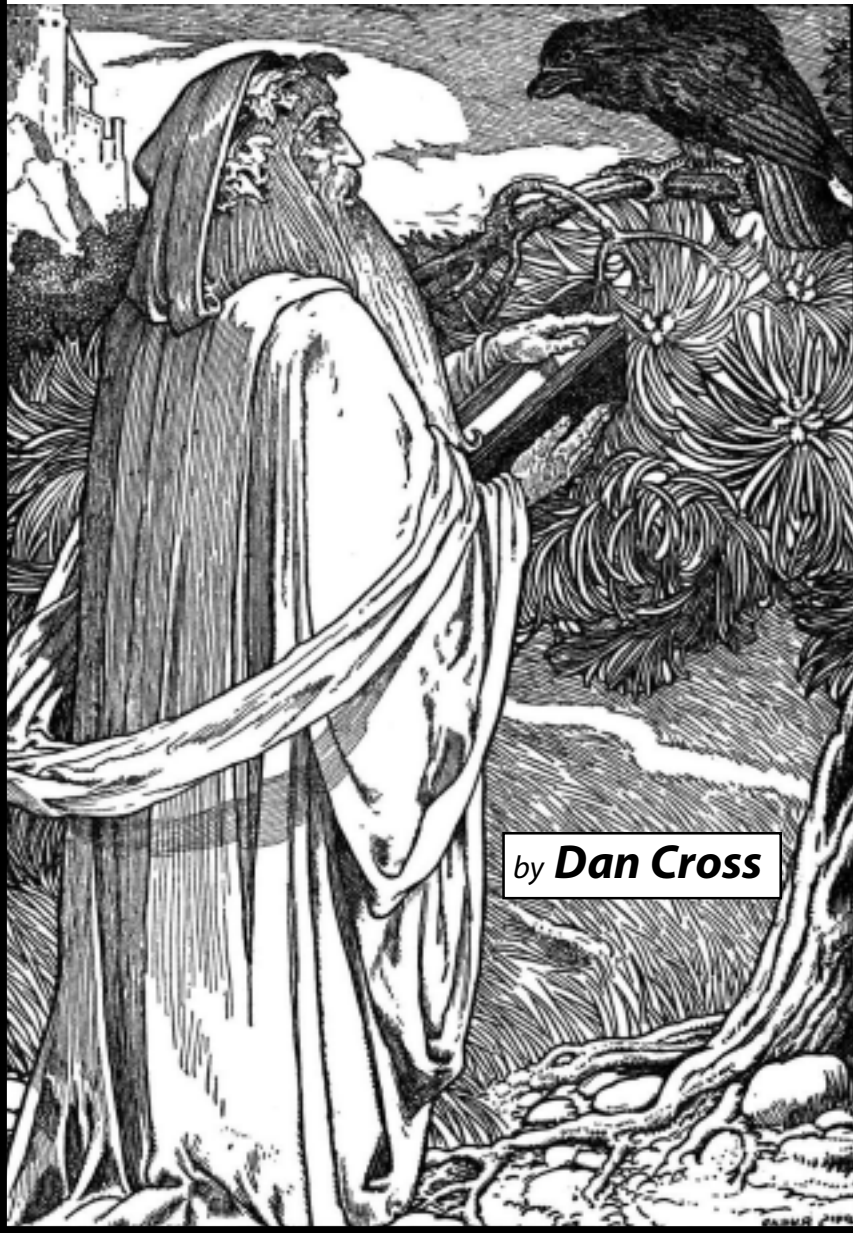


THE CASTLE KEEPER HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN THE PACKING OF THE GAME

When a group gathers to play, everyone in the group has a responsibility to be attentive and participate actively. However, from time to time, distractions can happen.

It is the Castle Keeper’s job to steer the group back on track and to keep the game focused. Time is a commodity, and a friendly reminder to use the game time efficiently can help sessions seem more productive, entertaining and rewarding.

THE Theurgist's Lethe



by **Dan Cross**

CHAPTER 3

HEWAS TRAPPED once again, every limb sore and his mind soaked in fever. Lethe stood wearily, his hands tied and a thick rope taut over his chest, holding him fast to the trunk of a twisted and dying tree. The Ulf slave master prepared his cavalcade of carts—cages on wheels—planning to move onward, to a citadel located on the outskirts of the kingdom, near the Marches of Monyar.

Exhausted and furious, Lethe yelled out, gaining the attention of his captor: "I have men following me, powerful men that would slaughter you. You'd better let me go!"

"Shut mouth, you. No men threaten me," said the Ulf slave master, turning to face his

prisoner, his body twisting at an odd angle. He fixed his malignant gaze on Lethe, daring him to speak.

Lethe said, "I'll fetch you no money on the slave market. I'm a marked man, too dangerous for you, born of status in this kingdom. Do you know what penalty it brings to sell a nobleman, and one marked for death?" He knew that his captor was more intelligent than the average goblinoid and wasn't fooled by the Ulf's broken speech. Perhaps, if convinced of the truth of his statements, it would reconsider his captivity.

"Don't talk!" said the Ulf. Several steps and he was standing over Lethe, one long snake-like finger pushed painfully into his throat. "One more noise and I make you swallow the lump here."

Lethe feared his windpipe would be crushed by this monster. Nothing more than a grunt escaped his lips.

Better now, you not talk. Talk again and I rip out your tongue," said the Ulf. Satisfied, the Ulf walked away to prepare the carts and horses for travel.

Lethe slumped; pain rocketed up his throat, pushing bile into his mouth.

Then a crystal voice spoke directly into his mind, a voice out of sight: "You would do well to heed my words."

Lethe twisted his head to see who spoke. It was an Ilf, one of the Fair Folk, and he was trussed to a wagon, looking upon Lethe with lavender eyes. While badly beaten, he had a look of steely resolve.

That's right. It's telepathy. But I'm not an extraordinary mind reader. Your surface thoughts are all a muddle. So you needn't worry about invasiveness."

"I've got little to hide, Ilf" said Lethe in a whisper.

"Coireall is my name," said the Ilf telepathically; although his lips moved, as if he were intoning the words quietly. "And you've much to hide, in fact. But you've revealed too much to Twdor, the Ulf. Your warning is ridiculous to him. If you are, in fact, a man sought after, then you have a price on your head; one greater than what you'd be worth as a slave. The only likely thing you've saved yourself from is being sold into the barbarian lands. But you now can be assured you'll find yourself in the Ulf citadel. Personally, I'd rather be slain."

Thanks, Coireall, I feel much better now. If you can think of anything else depressing, just drop me a mental note, assuming the Ulf—Twdor?—hasn't eaten my brain or sold my sev-

ered head to the priests of Vidar by then!"

The point isn't to depress you. The trollkin and the oaf have survived this long because of my advice. So you'd better keep your mind open to me, if you wish to live. I've arranged, by powerful suggestion, that you be placed in the same wagon with them."

"I don't care what you've done. I can take care of myself, I think. I've been dead once already. And I assure you it's not death that frightens me." Torture, thought Lethe, now that scares me.

"Aye," said Coireall, reading his thoughts. "And your insights are on the mark, I fear, if you have an extended stay at the Citadel. But now you've made me curious."

"Don't ask," said Lethe. "I don't know whom I am. I've been shielded from my true identity; presumably, for reasons of my own safety."

"Ah, but I am familiar with such a state. It's as if you'd drunk from the river Lethe. Too bad I no longer have my sample of those waters, for a sip from that vial would be enough to forget the tortures that you're likely to endure."

"What?"

"I said, if you had a sip..."

"From the river?" Lethe interrupted.

"Yes, the River of Oblivion, where the shades of the dead drink to forget their past lives on earth." Lethe recalled his conversation with Lydia at the shrine of the earth goddess, Jord: "I call you Lethe because it connotes one who's returned to this world from oblivion. You see, you suffer from the forgetfulness associated with death." That's what Lydia had said. Perhaps his nickname was more than symbolic?

"You say you possessed a vial containing this water?" he asked.

"I did," said the Ilf.

"How did you come upon such a thing?"

"A tributary of that infernal river runs through a cave I frequent because of its beautiful crystalline formations. Unfortunately, the cave is near the citadel of the Ulfs. At first, it was my lucrative secret. I'd sell small amounts to the Elder Wycce of the town of Liddleroke in exchange for potions or coin."

"Was the name of the elder Wycce Riona?" said Lethe.

"No, it was Morgwen. Alas, she's gone now," said the Ilf, shaking his head sadly.

"How?"

"She was murdered by a fanatic band of priests claiming to follow the god of nobles, Vidar. Poor woman was accused of being a witch. A common mistake, I suppose."

That's how they found me, thought Lethe. They interrogated Morgwen, a wycce like Riona, which led them to Riona at the Shrine of Jord.

Coireall heard his thoughts. "So, those are the men who're after you? I suspected as much. You're not having a happy time of it, are you?"

Lethe agreed. "You were at the Jord Shrine?"

Coireall projected his thoughts silently, glancing nervously at the Ulf. It appeared that the caravan was nearly ready to be on the move again.

"Yes, I was resurrected there, I think; probably by the High Priestess."

"You must have been an important man," said Coireall. "I suppose. I was told I'd be protected. I wish I knew why."

"You say you were made to forget your past. It'd not surprise me that Morgwen shared the magic water with Riona before she was slain. You've likely taken a draught from the waters of that infernal river."

"How nice," mumbled Lethe, glancing nervously at the Ulf feeding the horses.

"Okay Coireall, why'd you suggest I be placed with the Oaf and Trollkin?"

Coireall glanced toward the Ulf.

"You'll find out soon enough. Just try not to resist fate too much."

"I don't like the sound of that. And, by the way, I hate Trollkins," said Lethe.

The Ulf trundled over to Lethe, unbound him from the tree, tied his hands behind his back, and led him to the wagon at the end of the cavalcade. He was pushed into a cage where he stood next to a short gnomish creature with a plume of white hair and a lumbering and primitive looking oaf.

He heard no further thought from the Ilf. Presumably, he was beyond the

range of Coireall's telepathy. "You smell bad," said the oaf. His back was turned to Lethe.

"Yeah, and you're ugly. But I don't hold it against you," Lethe said.

"Human, my name is Tedge. Did Coireall explain our plan, or is it to be a surprise?" The trollkin's voice was high-pitched, and sounded like it was mixed with gravel.

"Coireall didn't have time to clue me in, runt." Somehow Lethe knew he hated trollkins, though he had no specific memories of them. He knew intuitively that they were generally rude, dirty, lying, thieving little creeps.

The trollkin winced at the word "runt," grabbed Lethe by the shirt, and managed to push him against the wooden bars. The little guy possessed surprising strength! The trollkin's shock of white hair stood straight on end, his eyes wide like saucers... little moons reflecting crazed desperation. "I'll baptize thee with fire if you get arrogant with me!"

Lethe laughed. This little tick of a creature was going to intimidate me? "I think not," he said and punted the creature in the stomach. The trollkin slid across the floor, crying out in surprise. "I'm sure you rule this roost, but I'm in no mood to bow down to you, or even to talk civilly."

"Uh oh," The oaf grunted.

The trollkin stood up without a word. His eyes became the color of preternatural fire, the air heated up at an alarming rate.

"Hey now, calm down, you threatened me, remember?" said Lethe, alarmed.

Too late for diplomacy, Lethe was struck in the face; his head snapped back in a puff of flame and smoke by a fiery magic bolt that flashed from the eyes of the angry trollkin. He fell, red hot pain searing his brain; his mind once again falling into darkness.

"Was that needed, Tedge?" The oaf said, his deep-set eyes dull but quizzical.

"I'm not sure," said the trollkin, looking down upon the crumpled body of Lethe, intrigued by how the smoke curling from his sprawled body. He called



Serendipity

by DARLENE

©2006 DARLENE All Rights Reserved

THE GAME OF DESIGN

is fractal to the game of life. The challenge of both is to complete one's tasks within the specified time using the tools and limitations one has been given and to do so splendidly.

THE GEN CON® XIV GAME CONVENTION



August 13-16th 1981

PROGRAM & SCHEDULE OF EVENTS- U.W. PARKSIDE

Gen Con® and the Gen Con® Compass logo are registered Service marks of TSR, Hobbies, Inc.



n the years I have been absent from the RPG world, I pretty much have done it all in terms of design—Corporate ID systems, logos, annual reports, ads, books, packaging, newsletters, catalogs, magazines, business cards, greeting cards, etc...

At the moment, I'm in the position of being an expert on graphics design and marketing for a big corporation. I've survived because I learned how to play and succeed at the "game of design."

As I write this, I realise how much the game of design has been a part of my life's journey—a journey which started in the late 1970s, when the process of producing a publication was laborious.

Back in the pre-computer / pre-desktop publishing world, all type was specified by a designer then sent to a typesetter. The typesetter had to be instructed on every aspect of how the text should appear: what font and size to use, how much space between lines, how wide to make the columns of text and how to arrange the paragraphs (centered, justified, or ragged).

The designer had to mathematically calculate how much page space the typeset text would fill and prepare a composition ("comp") for the layout artist to follow. If the designer was good, there was no guesswork and the layout artist's job was much simplified. Any miscalculations meant having the same text set twice and that was expensive.

Most typesetting in those days was done a phototypesetter. The phototypesetter used a strobe behind a rotating film strip (one size, one type style per film strip) to expose letters (typed "blind" with a video display of less than 36 characters at a time) onto light-sensitive paper. The exposed photo paper was developed in a chemical processing machine to produce galleys which always had to be proofread against the original text and corrected.

Then the typeset galleys were cut apart and run through a machine which waxed the back. Finally, the layout artist did the tedious paste-up process, placing each story, headline



or photograph (converted from continuous tone into dot screens) on the page as specified on the page dummy, (designer's comp). Every element had to be perfectly *straight* and spaced properly. By today's standards, this process is time-consuming and primitive.

Occasionally, there would be a need for a special type (usually for a heading) that wasn't available at the typesetters. Alphabet sheets of different fonts in different sizes, called Press Type, were sold for this purpose.

Today all this can be done easily and quickly with desktop publishing software and most inexpensively with a home computer.

As an artist deeply immersed in the medieval book arts, I taught myself calligraphy through the study of manuscripts, cut my own quills, gilded and illuminated manuscripts, taught Adult Education classes in calligraphy, and helped found the Wisconsin Calligraphers' Guild. Graphically, I worked as a layout artist for the local shopper/advertiser. TSR was one of my largest accounts with the most steady work coming from TSR Periodicals. The editors of *The Dragon* magazine relied on me to produce graphics for various publications.

At the time, the "game" only consisted of creating images to fill different sized spaces, producing pages as inexpensively as possible and delivering the work on time. Then came a chance to understand the design game better.

MY "CHANCE" MEETING

During a visit to Indiana University's School of Art, I was conversing with a friend. We were critiquing the Graduate Exhibition of one of the MFA candidates within the University's Design Program when a man interrupted our conversation. He wanted to know my thoughts regarding some of the other pieces in the show.

I happily told him what I felt were the weaknesses of the compositions in question and offered suggestions on how I thought they could be improved. When I finished, he asked by what authority I was able to speak. I smiled, pointed to my eyes and said politely, "My eyes are my authority!"

Perhaps I was a little cavalier but I've always been able to tell what was properly proportioned, spaced well, and what wasn't--most likely it's because of my familiarity with letters. Taken to basics, typography is simply the relationship between black and white shapes and the patterns they create.

Unexpectedly, the man urged me to go through the process of applying to Indiana University's Graduate Design Program. I reminded him that I *really* had no training in design. I just know what I like. Then I asked why he was so sure getting in wouldn't be a problem. "Because," he revealed, "I'm the Head of the Department!"

OPPOSITE TOP:

Cover Design and Art for Gen Con's Schedule of Events, 1981. Delivered as a complete unit with calligraphy and press-type titling known as Stonehenge.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM:

Graphic for 1980 "Days of the Dragon" Calendar, a true marriage of type & illustration.

BOTTOM LEFT:

Ad for "The Story of Jasmine," 1980. Words become a part of the art.

TOP RIGHT:

Graphic for 1980 "Days of the Dragon" Calendar. The shape and character of the letters match the style of the image.

BOTTOM CENTER:

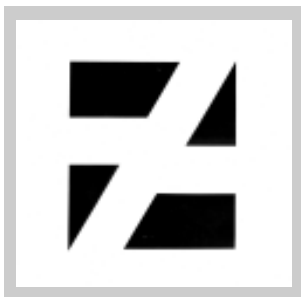
A Calligraphic Certificate I used to sell at Gen Con.

BOTTOM RIGHT:

The title page from my first manuscript book: "The Death of Rameer, The River Nymph," 1975. My early work shows an interest in graphics and my attempts to understand stylistic relationships.

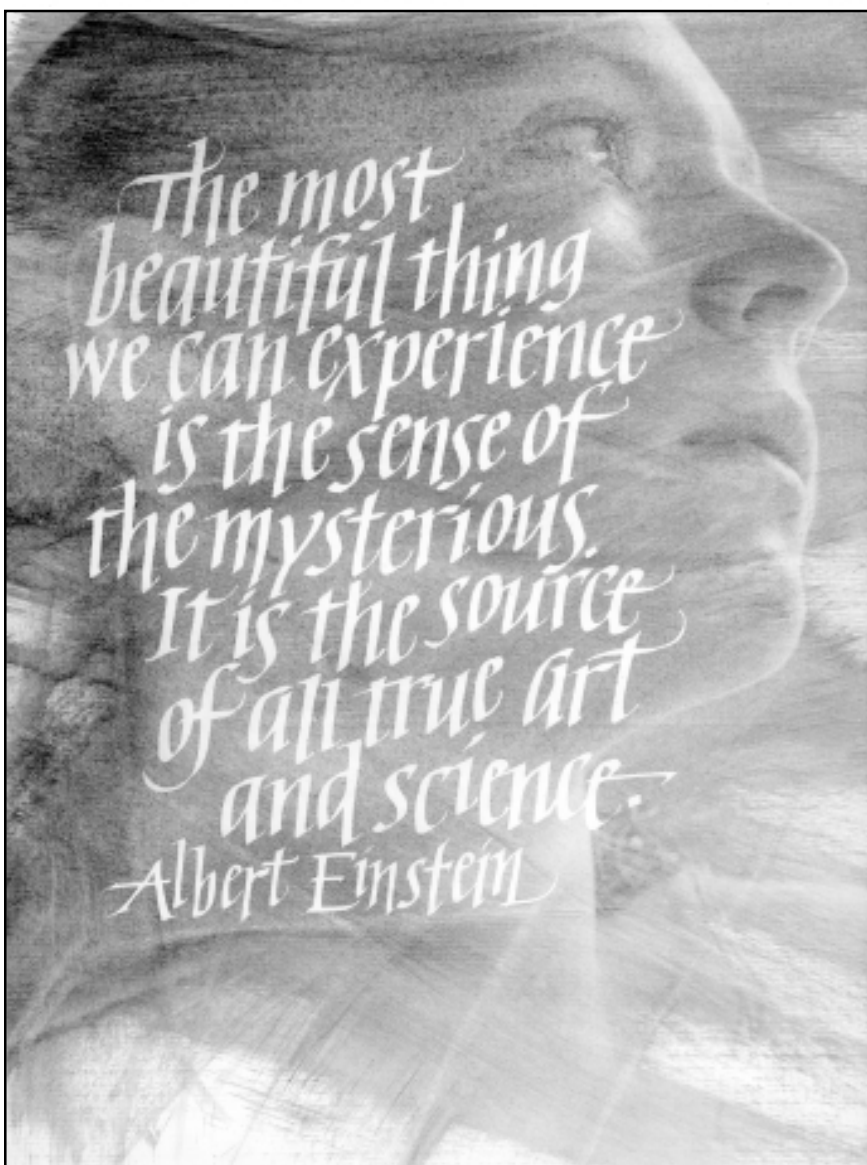
CONTINUED PAGE 12





THE GAME OF DESIGN
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

So if it wasn't for that "chance" meeting with Professor Tom Coleman, I would never have entertained the thought of leaving Lake Geneva. For whatever reason, a opportunity presented itself to learn things I wanted to learn and be in an environment which values the free exchange of ideas.



The examples on this spread were completed as a part of my university education:
TOP: F and A are suggested in a design which reads the same upside-down as right-side-up.
MIDDLE: Exploring the limits of legibility and abstraction through the juxtaposition of letter shapes and negative letter shapes, 1986.
ABOVE: Experiment combining calligraphy and photography. Photo emulsion was brushed onto paper with the image exposed through calligraphy done on acetate, 1985.

THE GRAND EXPERIMENT BEGINS

When I entered my first graduate seminar. Professor Coleman announced to the handful of individuals assembled that we were a part of "a grand experiment." That particular year, my classmates and I were accepted into the graduate program in graphic design because we had excelled in other disciplines.

We were certainly an unusual crop of graduate students. I was the calligrapher among a cartoonist, a textile artist, a lithographer/print maker, and a photographer. There was also an Iranian woman who simply wanted to be given a chance. Professor Coleman's own game involved how well each of us could apply our own disciplines to the process of graphic design and vice-versa.

I feel fortunate to have undergone the rigors of attending graduate school. Professor Coleman studied with the "who's who" of graphic design at Yale, including and especially Paul Rand. During his time, my teacher's teacher was a major force in editorial design, advertising and corporate graphics.

In 1985, I remember a great deal of excitement in the Graphics Department when Paul Rand's book, "A Designer's Art" first came out. The book is now a classic, a compilation of essays which explore the nature of design and art, of symbols, beauty and the role of the imagination.

"A Designer's Art" is important because it is the first publication to articulate the relationship between design and the play instinct. The greater the intellect, the greater is the need for play. The idea of the play instinct is also equated with creativity. Play frees the conscious mind so that a problem can be worked on intuitively. There are many ways in which the play principle serves as a basis for serious problem-solving. Thus, during the process of playing a game, one's unconscious is actually working on a solution to a particular problem.

Paul Rand further stated the psychological and intellectual factors implicit in game-playing are equally implicit in successful problem-solving. "Without the basic rules of disciplines," he wrote, "there is no motivation, test of skill, or ultimate reward—in short, no game."

He also shows how several games can be used in the design process—either as a part of the solution of a specific problem, or as tasks in and of themselves. These "games" help teach the designer to look at visual presentations in a new way. Similar to what directed play does for children, visual games help to discipline the mind to see beyond what is presented to get a new perception, an original way of relating to the same things.

Designers must be capable of *seeing* tired concepts in a new light and using originality to think their way around a problem. Their insights are more likely to help them find some outstanding solutions.

Paul Rand also stresses the importance of thinking beyond the literal. "The student learns to conceptualize, to associate, to make analogies, to see a sphere, for example, transformed into an orange, or a button into a letter, or a group of letters into a broad picture."

DESIGN IS PROBLEM SOLVING!

What is the single most important thing I learned during my time as a grad student? I learned to consider the process of design as one of problem-solving.

Part of the solution necessitates being able to restate the problem correctly—but in terms of ideas, symbols, and pictures. Re-framing the question prevents the designer from getting stuck in some preconceptions. Instead of asking, "how much text can I squeeze into two pages, it might be more meaningful to ask some different questions:

"What is the purpose of this publication?"

"Does everything within the publication serve this purpose?"

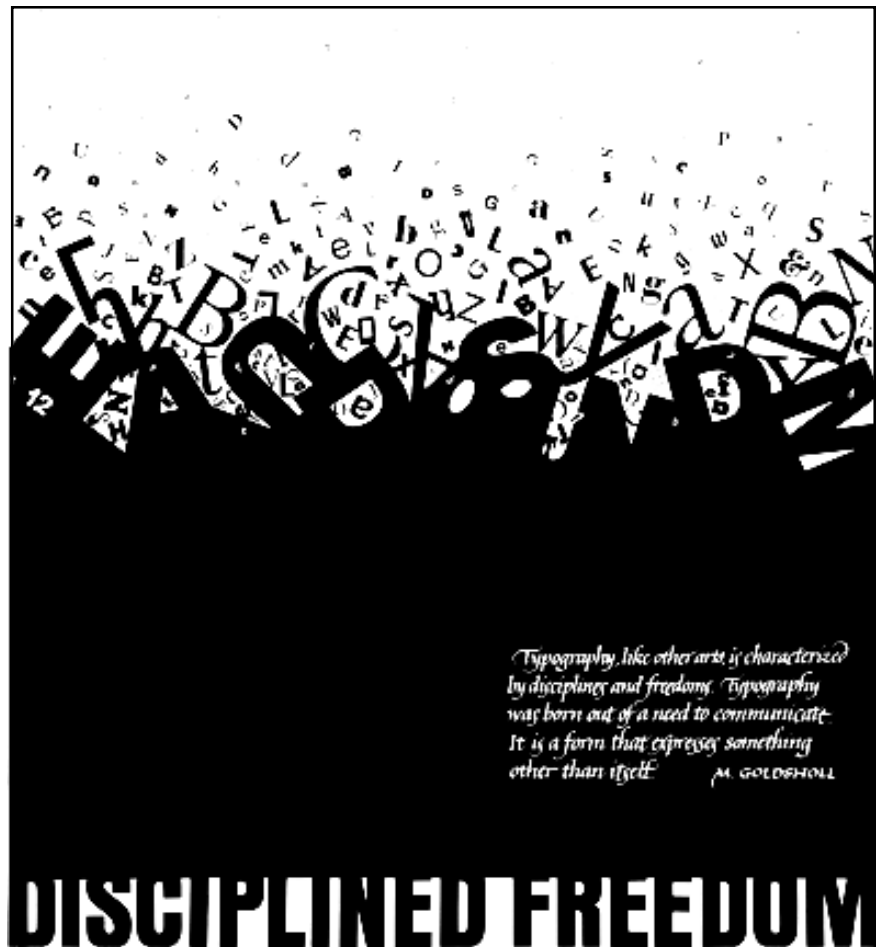
"What do I want to communicate?"

"What is the desired result?"

A good design is lead by honest answers to these questions. In all areas, the design and content must support the purpose of the publication. Even using the 2-page format should be scrutinized. It may become evident that a 2-page format would be the wrong solution for the stated problem. Perhaps the desired result may be achieved through a new and innovative solution! If you are tired of the banal and expected, consider something completely different.

Design is not about memorizing rules, it's about approaching the problem from other vantage points and coming up with solutions based upon seeing reality from all sides. The game becomes larger and brighter when new ideas are applied creatively.

Effective design restates the problem correctly and insightfully. That's the game. To play the game well means you've gotten it right. And getting it right means success. To ensure success, the designer must have complete command of interplay of the formal elements of design—space, line, shape, mass, proportion, harmony, rhythm, repetition, pattern, volume, weight, value, contrast, texture, color—and know how to manipulate each one to advantage. A great designer will also have a handle on the psychological language of symbols and will possess the ability to abstract.



BAD DESIGN = DEATH IN THE MARKETPLACE

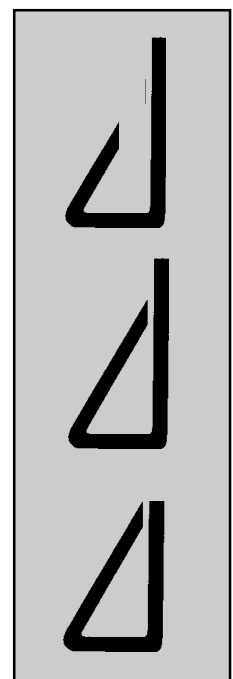
Doing one's marketing homework is an essential strategy for success. It's always better to be able to identify one's target market. Catering to the preferences of a particular demographic of buyers should increase the probability of sales. Otherwise, it's just luck and wishful thinking.

Design holds a key role in today's marketplace and understanding the role of design is mandatory if companies want to gain or maintain an edge. Ultimately, it will cost a company sales and customers if it remains unaware of the relationship between good design and the marketplace.

The effectiveness of design has always been difficult to measure. But a decade ago, the Design Council of the United Kingdom accepted the challenge of proving design's effectiveness. They did a 10-year analysis of the stock market performance of companies with strong design portfolios and found that those companies who produced designs which had won awards also performed 200% better than the average for the UK stock market. This data also revealed how companies with strong de-

ABOVE: Poster attempting to visually represent the concept of "Disciplined Freedom."

BELOW: Understanding the threshold. What is the point a "j" becomes a "d" becomes an "o"?



CONTINUED PAGE 26

me a runt. But, in any event, this may prevent the Ulf from collecting a bounty, as Corieall suggested." Tedge rolled Lethe over onto his back, and produced a small mirror from one of the many pockets sewed into his motley shirt, and thrust it near his victim's face.

"Corieall wanted illusion, not fire" scolded the oaf.

Tedge shrugged and regarded Lethe sternly. "Awaken" he intoned, a charge of magic lacing his words. Lethe awakened on command, his head spinning. His eyes focused and he found himself staring into an image of horror: his own face, in the mirror held in the out-thrust hand of the trollkin. A once handsome face now disfigured by fire. "What have you done?" he cried, lurching up, his face in agony, tears streaming down his charcoaled cheeks.

The oaf grunted in annoyance; a huge, ham-sized hand pushed Lethe back to the floor of the wagon. The air exploded from Lethe's lungs.

"What have we done? We've bought ourselves time, stupid. Now you're a bargaining chip. If you're so damned important, then I'll trade our release for the restoration of your ugly face." The Trollkin chuckled at his own cleverness.

"You devil, I'll have you roasted on a spit!"

"You'll have your teeth removed one by one if you don't desist with the senseless threats. Maybe once we're all freed I'll rescue you and restore your face. Sound nice?"

"You'd attack me, burn my face, sell your soul to escape and then rescue me? Are you completely loony," Lethe yelled.

"Really, it's not as bad as it felt," Tedge mumbled.

"What makes you think the Ulf would honor your deal?" said Lethe.

"I have my ways..."

The Ulf's menacing voice boomed out from the head of the wagon procession. "Who's screaming? Shut mouths or I'll have you beaten!"

"Don't call Tedge a loon. He doesn't like that sort of thing," warned the Oaf solemnly.

"Oh, sorry," said Lethe sarcastically.

He slumped to the floor, his face burning in agony, and tried to resist passing out again. "Let's hope the illusion holds out," whispered Tedge to the Oaf, who didn't understand. The Oaf looked shocked. "Illusion? What illusion?"

Lethe heard but could not reconcile the connotation of that word with the agonizing pain he was feeling. So he remained silent.

Tedge grinned, but stifled all show of emotion as the Ulf was coming near.

"What you done to man?" The Ulf stared down through the bars, squinting in the bright sunlight. "Looks like you burned his face."

"Aye, I did," said the Trollkin, the picture of insouciance. "Was his face important? This feeble one doesn't even appear worthy of your slave mines."

"Who're you to judge my slaves, gravelgobbler? You damaged my property!" The Ulf shook the cage in anger, speaking this time in the goblinoid language.

The Oaf stumbled, thumping his big head on the roof. "Ow!"

"Your anger betrays this man's importance," said Tedge, crouching down, bracing himself against the shaking of the wagon. He dropped the mirror he held, which slid over to where Lethe was sprawled upon the floor.

"You know nothing! For what you did, I pull arms outta' sockets," roared the Ulf, and flung open the cage door.

"Let us go and I'll..." began Tedge, his voice rising to a fearful pitch.

The oaf interposed himself between the Ulf and Tedge. The Ulf advanced into the cage and swiped the oaf aside with a devastating blow, crushing his nose, spattering blood.

"And you'll what?" The Ulf loomed over the small, frightened, bullet-headed sorcerer.

This is it, either he buys it or I'm dead, thought Tedge. "Let us go and I'll restore the man's face so you can collect your bounty." "You'll restore man's face and live, or you'll not and die now," said the Ulf.

The trollkin gulped, dismayed.

"Now, you stupid oaf, now!"

As if on cue, the oaf shook off his disorientation, snatched the distracted

slave master by his cord-like hair, bent his head back, wrapped one muscular arm around his throat, and cut off the air from his windpipe. The Ulf panicked, propelling himself and the oaf's body backward into the side of the cage, nearly tipping the wagon, but was held fast in the oaf's grasp.

The trollkin practically ran up the gorilla-like chest of the Ulf, looked straight into his eyes, and whispered arcane words, intonations of spellbinding beguilement.

"This is an excellent idea, Twdor, as you know," he suggested. "Your best chance of improving your lot at the Citadel? If you give us our lives in exchange for this man's restoration, then you retain your honor, a trait valued even by the Ulfs."

The oaf relaxed his strangle hold to allow the slave master to respond. Twdor, mesmerized, nodded in agreement. "Okay trollkin, then that's how it will be."

At that moment—and, thankfully, it had been no sooner—the illusion of disfigurement faded from the Lethe's countenance. The pain subsided, then vanished from his mind. He gasped, amazed and grabbed the mirror that had slid within his grasp. His pale but handsome face stared back at him at if never burned. A wave of relief and anger surfaced; the fire had been illusory! The pain had been real enough though, thought Lethe. So I'll avoid being derogatory toward the trollkin until I get the heck outta' here.

"Okay, go" said the Ulf, pointing toward the open cage door. "And don't come back!"

"You've made a wise decision," said Tedge, grinning. The Oaf smiled a grin full of broken teeth.

At that moment, another of the Ulfs approached the wagon. "All of the horses and provisions are ready. And the broken wagon wheels are repaired," he reported in the Ulf language.

Twdor the slave master exited the wagon behind the trollkin and the oaf. "Good, this man stays here in this cage, the others go free."

"What? Why are you setting these two free? We fought hard for them in

WHAMGAMMON

(OR BACKGAMMON GOES MAD!)

A strange new version of backgammon ©2006 Tom Wham

INTRODUCTION

In June 1978 (not so very long ago) Tramp published a beautifully rendered "Wormy" backgammon board in the Dragon Magazine. It took me a while, but I finally caught up with him... Tramp did a board... I'm doing new pieces and new rules. Of course, for best play, you should use my pieces and rules and play on his backgammon board!

General Course of Play

The game is played very much like regular backgammon. The first player to get all of his pieces off his home board is the winner. Unlike normal backgammon, there are no safe spaces. When your piece(es) lands in the same space as an opponent's piece(es), they do battle until one side controls the space and the other (or both) has been sent back to the bar.

Assembly

Before you can play, of course, you must glue the pieces down to cardboard (or to self-adhesive vinyl floor tile). I highly recommend that you glue the green pieces to the flip side of green crescent board, the red pieces to the flip side of red crescent board, and the fortifications just to any old cardboard you can find.

Cut out only the basic pieces and leave the alternates for later. Once you have tried the game, you can add the alternates if you wish.

Game Parts

To play, each player will need the 15 basic piece set, which includes 1 Summoner, 1 Colossus, 1 Dragon, 1 Giant, 1 Knight, 1 Ballista, 1 Bombadon, 2 Archers, 1 Engineer, 2 Soldiers, and 3 Serfs. You must provide a backgammon board, dice and you had better know the rules to backgammon (which are mostly used with some important changes).

Prepare for Play

Using the 15 basic pieces, each player, as in normal backgammon, places his pieces on the appropriate points. At this time, the pieces are placed face-down, so that your opponent does not know what they are.

IMPORTANT: The Summoner must be one of the two pieces closest to the opponent's home board (with 24 spaces to go). All other pieces may be placed as players desire.

Sequence of Play

High roll goes first, and play proceeds pretty much like regular backgammon, with some important exceptions. Before anyone does anything, turn all pieces face up. First player then takes his turn by rolling the dice and moving his pieces.

The Pieces

Each piece has two important numbers printed at the bottom of the tile. On the left is the Attack Value and on the right is the Defense Value.

The Attack Value is the bonus added to the result of the roll of two dice. **EXAMPLE#1:** a Dragon, with an attack value of 4 rolls 2 dice, and adds 4 to the resulting total, while a Serf, with an attack value of 1, rolls 2 dice and adds 1 to the result.

The Defense Value is the number that must be beaten in combat for a piece to be sent back to the bar. **EXAMPLE#2:** a Soldier, with an Attack Value of 2, rolls two threes and then adds 2 for a total of 8. He is in combat against a Serf with a Defense Value of 7. The Serf is sent back to the bar. The Serf rolled a 5 with 2 dice and added +1 for a total of 6, which does not exceed the defense value of the Soldier (8).

If a piece has no number (S = summon, or F = fortify) on the left, it rolls 2 dice in combat (if it has not used its ability in some other way on this turn). The asterisk * behind an Attack Value indicates a ranged weapon. Ranged weapons fire first and if they hit, their opponent does not get to strike back (unless, of course, the opponent was also a ranged unit). The Bombadon and the Ballista each have a + behind their number. This means that they may add one to their Attack Value when firing on Fortifications (built by the engineer). Summoning and Fortification will be explained later.



WIKIPEDIA BIOGRAPHY:

Tom Wham is a designer of board games. He also produced the artwork for his own games with simplistic but whimsical illustrations.

He's primarily known for the games he wrote for Dragon Magazine, which were printed on cardstock included in the centerfold of the magazine. The games usually featured comical storylines and interesting crude artwork.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

The number in parenthesis indicates the value of the piece and is only used in the optional, Choose-your-own army games. The Fortification counters, Tower, Keep, & Castle, are also only used in an optional version of the rules. (see Optional Rules).

Battle

This is an important change from normal backgammon. When your pieces land on those of your opponent, a battle occurs. The moving player is the attacker. The other player is the defender. Use your doubling cube to mark the site of the battle.

1. The defender lines his pieces up in a row on a convenient spot in the middle of the board. The attacker then pairs up his pieces one for one, against the defenders. Only if the attacker has more units than the defender, may he match more than one unit against a defending unit, and then only after each defending unit already has one attacker paired up with it.

2. If the defender has more units than the attacker, he may decide where to match up his extra units after the attacking player has assigned his attackers. Every piece in the space must fight.

3. Once the units have been paired up, each attacking unit strikes, rolling dice against its opposite. If the defending unit's Defense Number is beaten, turn the unit upside down (it still gets to strike back). After all attackers have rolled, the defending units may strike back, rolling their attack dice in the same way. After both sides have rolled attack dice, any units that were hit (their Defense Number exceeded) are placed on the bar.

4. Ranged units (Archers, Ballista, and Bombadon) get to strike first, even if they belong to the defending player. If the target of a ranged unit is hit, that piece is placed immediately on the bar and does not get to strike back. Ranged units paired against other ranged units fire at the same time (both get to shoot).

5. If a unit is paired against more than one enemy, the owning player may decide which target to strike at.

6. If more than one unit is paired up against a single enemy, the striking player may decide to roll once for more than one unit and add their bonuses to the result.

EXAMPLE #3: The attacking player has a Knight (3/9) and a Serf (1/7) versus an enemy Dragon (4/10). He could roll the Knight for 2 dice +3 and the Serf for 2 dice +1... Or roll them together as 2 dice + 4. Since Dragons are hard to kill, the defending player chooses to combine the Knight and the Serf for 2 dice

+ 4 and rolls a 7. Seven plus four equals eleven, exceeding the Dragon's Defense Number. The Dragon is turned upside down and will be sent to the bar. The Dragon strikes back at the Knight with 2 dice + 4 and rolls a 6. Six plus four is ten, exceeding the Defense number of the Knight, and it too, is sent to the bar.

7. If, after all units have struck and opposing units remain in the space, the attacker goes back to step #1 above, and the combat continues until only one player (or neither) controls the space.

The Summoner

In setup, the Summoner must be one of the 2 pieces placed farthest from home.

He is the most powerful piece in the game as he can summon 1 to 6 other pieces to his current location. This "summoning" ability requires the use at least two of the numbers rolled on the dice when it is your turn to move (unless you've rolled doubles, this means both dice.) Pick one of the numbers you have rolled to move your Summoner forward (he may not "summon" unless he moves). The number shown on the other die is the number of pieces you may summon from any other space on the board.

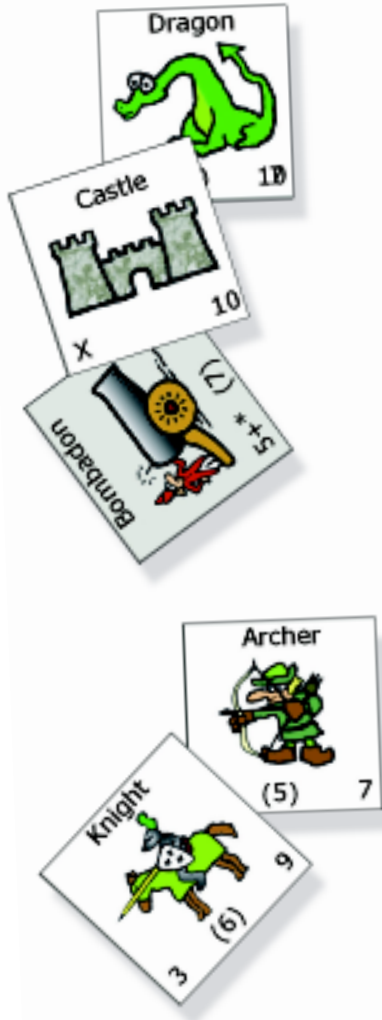
EXAMPLE#4: On the first turn you roll a 1 and a 3. You use the 1 to move your Summoner one space forward. You then "summon" forward the piece that started with the Summoner, and "summon" backward two of the pieces that were only 13 space from home and place the with your Summoner, thus giving you a stack of 4 pieces to face the 5 enemies that are lurking just ahead.

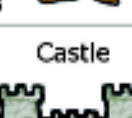
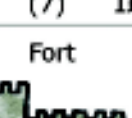
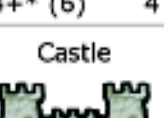
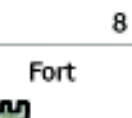
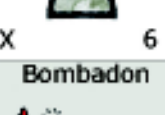
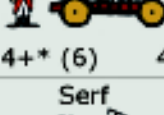
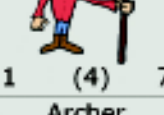
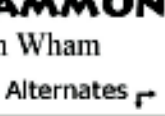
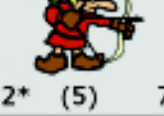
You may not "summon" pieces which are on the bar. You may only "summon" pieces that are in play. However, the Summoner could come off the bar, and if no other of your pieces remain on the bar, he could then "summon" with the other die roll.

If you "summon" pieces into the same space as the enemy, there must be a Battle. You do not have to "summon" when you move him, sometimes (especially when you roll two low numbers) it might be better to move him and not use his ability.

If a Summoner is used to "summon" other pieces to a battle, he must be paired up with an opponent, but does not get to roll an Attack Die on the first round of combat. On the second and subsequent rounds of a battle in a space, that Summoner may roll 1 Attack die (he gets no plus.)

You will find that the Summoner actually shortens the game, as he facilitates movement



Summoner  S (16) 7	Colossus  5 (9) 13	Dragon  4 (7) 10	Giant  3 (7) 11	Knight  3 (6) 9	Ballista  4+* (6) 4	Bombardon  5+* (7) 5	
Archer  2* (5) 7	Archer  2* (5) 7	Engineer  F (5) 8	Soldier  2 (5) 8	Soldier  2 (5) 8	Serf  1 (4) 7	Serf  1 (4) 7	
Serf  1 (4) 7	Basic Set WHAMGAMMON ©2006 Tom Wham Alternates ↗			Serf  1 (4) 7	Soldier  2 (5) 8	Archer  2* (5) 7	Knight  3 (6) 9
Giant  3 (7) 11	Dragon  4 (7) 10	Colossus  5 (9) 13	Engineer  F (5) 8	Ballista  4+* (6) 4	Bombardon  5+* (7) 5	Summoner  S (16) 7	
Castle  X 10	Fort  X 8	Tower  X 6	Tower  X 6	Castle  X 10	Fort  X 8	Tower  X 6	
Castle  X 10	Fort  X 8	Tower  X 6	Fort  X 8	Castle  X 10	Fort  X 8	Tower  X 6	
Summoner  S (16) 7	Colossus  5 (9) 13	Dragon  4 (7) 10	Giant  3 (7) 11	Knight  3 (6) 9	Ballista  4+* (6) 4	Bombardon  5+* (7) 5	
Archer  2* (5) 7	Archer  2* (5) 7	Engineer  F (5) 8	Soldier  2 (5) 8	Soldier  2 (5) 8	Serf  1 (4) 7	Serf  1 (4) 7	
Serf  1 (4) 7	Basic Set WHAMGAMMON ©2006 Tom Wham Alternates ↗			Serf  1 (4) 7	Soldier  2 (5) 8	Archer  2* (5) 7	Knight  3 (6) 9
Giant  (7) 3 11	Dragon  4 (7) 10	Colossus  5 (9) 13	Engineer  F (5) 8	Ballista  4+* (6) 4	Bombardon  5+* (7) 5	Summoner  S (16) 7	

FIND THE PATH OF RETURN... & REDISCOVER THE MAGIC!

AT THE
2ND ANNUAL



June 9-11, 2006

at The Cove in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin



*Frank Mentzer, Gary Gygax, Darlene and Rob Kuntz
at the First Annual LGGC in 2005.*

OUR GREATLY ESTEEMED GUESTS INCLUDE:

**GARY GYGAX, ERNIE GYGAX, JAMIE AND RENAE
CHAMBERS, DARLENE, ROB KUNTZ, FRANK MENTZER,
TOM WHAM AND JIM WARD AMONG OTHERS...**

SPACE IS LIMITED. RESERVE TODAY!

Contact Tami, Con Coordinator at 479-243-0350
tami@trolllord.com

the Marches! The sorcerer will bring a high price."

"Do not argue with my decisions," responded Twdor angrily, feeling confusion rise in his beguiled mind.

Tedge and the oaf took off into the surrounding woods at a full run.

The reporting ulf watched them run free with alarm. "You're pissing away our coinage, Twdor!"

"Question me again, Gothog, and I'll have you beheaded after terrible torture," said Twdor in Ulfish, skaking in anger. "I got a better deal. This man's worth more than those two by far. He's a wanted nobleman!"

"How do you know?"

"Because he admitted as much when we captured him."

"What does that have to do with the trollkin and ulf?"

"They got into a fight and the trollkin burned his face. I promised him release to restore his face."

"You bargained with a trollkin? Twdor, what's gotten into you?"

Twdor considered those words and knew something was at variance with his own nature. The sense of confusion set in deeper. "It was a good deal. I have my honor."

"Honor? That word is for ulfs between themselves, not between ulf and trollkin! You've been bespelled!"

Meanwhile, at the other end of the cavalcade, Coireall planned the next stage of their escape. Trust me just a little further, he thought, trying to project his words into the mind of Lethe. But the distance was too great. I will free you and bring you to the horizon of your forgetfulness, for I know where one may find the antidote, the waters from the Phlegethon, the River of the Unconsuming Fire. But, first, we must go to the heart of the Citadel (for that is where the river flows) and trust that Tedge and the oaf will follow. Never had Coireall relied so heavily on such disreputable racial stock. But these were troubled times.

Twdor the ulf slammed the door shut on Lethe's cage and turned away. Soon, the cavalcade was moving again, and Lethe sat down, his legs crossed, and stared into the fading sun of the afternoon.

Did Tedge and the oaf truly plan to rescue him, or did the trollkin use his sorceries only for their benefit, at the expense of Lethe? Did Coireall arrange to have him placed in their wagon *before* he heard Lethe admit he was an important man? If so, did

that mean he knew more of Lethe than what was admitted? That said, if Coireall is in league with the trollkin and oaf, why does he remain in chains as they head toward the citadel to face imprisonment and likely torture?

The answers did not come, but a wave of fatigue and hunger overtook him. I've been running for days, he thought. And the days and nights all blend together. Beaten and knocked unconscious more than a gladiator on a bad week. And how ironic that Lethe's only source of rest was in the caravan of monstrous slavers. At least, he had the opportunity of sleep before awakening once again, one day closer to his inevitable doom.



For thirty years, players have attempted to plunder the Keep of Gary's favorite Wizard...



INFAMOUS AMONG THE PLAYERS AT GARY'S TABLE AND ON THE CONVENTION FLOOR, CASTLE ZAGYG HAS BECOME LEGENDARY.

*As personal creations of Gary Gygax & Rob Kuntz,
CASTLE ZAGYG is designed for the
Castles & Crusades Role Playing System.*

*See if you can survive the many
adventures in the seemingly limitless
depths of the dungeons of*

Castle Zagyg



Available at Better Hobby Shops or online at:
www.trolllord.com



he House of Lothian stood powerful in the councils of the Elves. Princes of that house had long ruled vast lands along the slopes of the Rodope Mountains and branches of their kinship were found in all places of the world.

Tales of the Worlds of the Rings of Brass:

THE LAY OF THE LOTHIAN PRINCES

by Stephen Chenault

Indeed, Ithrund-Aet-Tu, Prince of the House of Lothian, was the architect of the elves' migration to the outer realms where they sat out the long bitter reign of the Horned

God. But the Curse of Daladon, half-elf son of Ithrund, cursed the elves for cowards and drove some to war for the great shame. His brother, Meltowg was one such. Meltowg wandered the world ever seeking redemption in battle and the swath of his passage was littered with the fallen dead. In time his rage turned to hatred for his own folk and he came to seek the Castle of Spires where stood the gates to the outer realms.

"Send the word Segdrick, for we must gather at the Ineng and see what strengths remains to us."

Segdrick leaned forward, resting on his saddle and patting his horse on the neck. "Ahhh, my Lord. I must confess this plate wears on my neck and pinches my arm when I bend it. My side is bleeding again too. I'm weary and could sorely use a rest. The waters at the feet of the Ineng Tree would do much to heal me. So for that reason alone I'll call our folk to gather there, for your quest disturbs me."

"Use whatever reason drives you Segdrick. I care not. Just gather the folk. I'll meet you there in a week's time. I have business with a witch before I go to the Avishean Ridge." Meltowg hit spurs to horse and drove his steed north into the Grey Pools that surrounded the vast fortress of Aufstrag.

Segdrick watched him go, scratching his stubbled chin. The thick plate of his Lord's armor glistened for a short while in the distance until it merged with that of his horse. Both man and beast passed over the damp mires and swamps with hardly a trace. Before his master vanished into the gloom, Segdrick caught a last glimpse of the great blade strapped upon his back. Noxmurus seemed greater in the shadowy swamp than ever it had before. Segdrick turned his steed and rode into the south. There he called to the fey to send word throughout all the country, from the Gausumland to the Barren Wood for the Vale

Knights to gather at the Ineng Tree upon the Blacktooth Ridge.

Meltowg passed over the gloom of Aufstrag's waste with tremendous speed. His mind was ever bent toward the wrath of war and what hurt he could deliver upon the enemy that lay in the north. His crusade, begun before the long lost Catalyst Wars that ended the proud reign of the Ethrumenians, garnered him much respite and hatred as well as envy. Few could withstand him, whether good or evil, so great was his countenance and so filled with rage.

But there were those who could.

The Fair Lady of Gilgum lived in the lands of Al Liosh long before the coming of the dark. Aa a fey, she was not bound by the covenants that held men and elf, dwarf or orc. She lived now in the heart of that fetid swamp that surrounded Aufstrag. North and east of the Great Gate and the Causeway she nested, weaving a mist to hide her home and her folk. There at the feet of the enemy, beneath his very nose, she dwelt, defying him and challenging him. Ever and anon some foul creature issued forth to hunt her for the bounty on her head was immense and Unklar wished to add her to his cooking pots.

In the space of a few hours, Meltowg covered the ground a lesser man would have taken days to travel. He came to the edge of the mist and at last halted to give his steed a rest and contemplate what he would ask of the Fair Lady of Gilgum. He sat there for a long while, bent in silence, but he knew that he was not alone. "I see you there in the dark."

"Indeed." The voice called to mind yellowed parchment, old and brittle. "I thought you might. And whose pleasure am I come upon."

"Mine own, Goblin. I am Prince Meltowg Lothian. And what do they call You?"

"Master. I am but an old Goblin, of little import. You would not know of me if I told you my name."

"I know your stink. You are one of the Eldritch Goblins. Your mother was a dwarf of old and you have a name that the Bull-Hound gave you in the Days before Days." Meltowg unlimbered his sword and swung his shield around.

"Aye dog, that he did." The Goblin, unseen in the dark, lifted his hands and calling a word aloud he summoned the dead to life. So quick were his sorceries manifested that Meltowg was beset in an instant.

A fountain of watery muck engulfed man and beast as the swamp erupted around them. The Prince was thrown from his horse, staggering forward under the weight of his armor before coming to rest on his feet. "Gods and Bones!" His curses went wild as he brought himself up before the wave of horror the Goblin unleashed upon him. Bones, some clad in flesh, others naked to the cold swamp poured from the mire. Cold iron in rotting hands, shields and helms, the wave of their numbers overwhelmed the Prince. But he fell upon them with the lust of rage that was ever with him. They clutched at him, hands from the deep, clawed fists pounding his shield, surrounding him stabbing at him and trying to pull him into the gulf of oblivion.

But Meltowg did not despair and Noxmurus carved great swaths of destruction through them and the ichor of their unliving flesh splattered the Prince's shield and washed into the damp of the swamp. He hurled himself into them time and again, bashing them with his shield or laying them in twain with his blade. At times he struggled to keep his footing, but always he managed to rally himself and drive the unrelenting foe back. At last the swamps subsided and calmed and only one of the undead stood before him. A huge brute with axe and shield, it glowered at him with unseeing eyes. "Gods take me."

The creature fell upon him in a brutish attack, swinging his axe hard down upon the Prince. Meltowg saw grim death before him and threw up his shield to ward off the blow while skewering the creature through its rotting guts. The axe blow rang against the shield and the iron clove through steel and bone. Meltowg staggered back from the blow and cast aside his shield. The blood from his lacerated flesh flowed into the swamp as the creature pressed its relentless attack. Blow after blow rained down upon the Prince, some he parried with his sword, others he dodged altogether. But they fell fast and furious and the Prince was hard set to fend them off.

He was saved by misadventure more than skill, for in his dodging he stumbled into the mist of the Fair Lady's making. He turned once and saw the beast's axe and he leapt back again and lost sight of the creature. He thrashed in the misty mire, cursing the creature and calling for it to come to him, but in the end he yielded to his exhaustion and slumped into the mire. "Curse this world and all those who dwell here." In the distance he could here the mocking calls of the Goblin but these too, were lost in time.

NOXMURUS, "Night of the Dead" (Weapon)

History: When Unklar came to the world of Aihrde*, the greater host of the elves fled that world to settle in the hidden realm of Shindolay. Only a few possessed so great a love for the lands of the All Father that they stayed behind. They hated Unklar and fought him at every turn. But defeat followed defeat and their powers proved too slight in the face of the Horned God. Their losses mounted, culminating in the battles for those lands that came to bare the name *The Shelves of the Mist*. Their rage frustrated, they turned on their kin, hating them and cursing those who fled the fate of the world for ever in their thoughts were visions of all the gathered strength of the elven hosts and the utter defeat of Unklar. And in time, these folk turned their vengeance on their own.

The Elf Prince Meltowg Lothian, brother to Daladon, was one of these elves. He forged the sword Noxmurus and bound within it the spirit of his rage and hate (see the *Lay of the Lothian Princes*). When he died in the Winter Dark Wars his brother, Daladon Lothian, took up the blade for a space of years. Since the Winter Dark Wars and Daladon's madness, the blade has been lost to history.

Within the blade lurks the corporal manifestation of Meltowg's madness, Bodach the Imp. This imp is possessed of all the rage of its creator and bares a deep abiding hatred for the High Elves of Aihrde. When held by any human or elf, except a high elf (or half-elf who is the offspring of a high elf), the sword becomes a living thing and will talk to its "master," trying to influence the wielder. Bodach's goals are always twofold; to kill servants of the enemy or the elves of Shindolay (high elves). It will attempt to drive its master to war on these creatures.

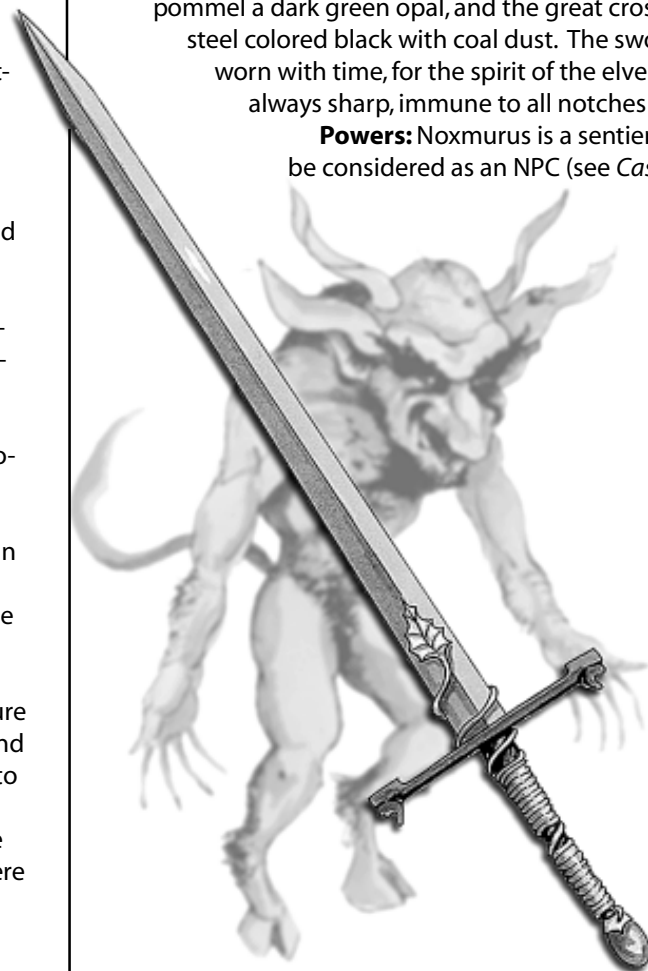
Description: A great two-handed claymore, the blade is deep green in color. Its grip is of black wire wrapped tightly around an iron base, the pommel a dark green opal, and the great cross-guard is made of steel colored black with coal dust. The sword does not become worn with time, for the spirit of the elves lies within it. It is always sharp, immune to all notches and scratches.

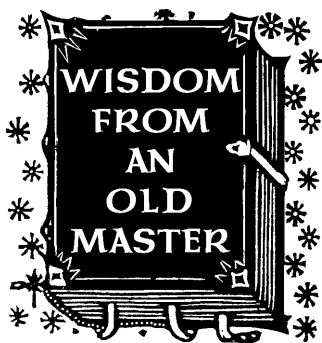
Powers: Noxmurus is a sentient artifact and should be considered as an NPC (see *Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure* pages 89-91). Bodach has all the power.

The +5 blade is unbreakable. When unsheathed, the sword allows the wielder to move silently as a 5th level rogue, and if in a forest environment, the bearer can become invisible at will to all beings less than 15 hit dice, and to all elves.

The sword has two enemies to which it always manifests: orcs and elves. Against orcs, the wielder always gains initiative. Against elf or fey, the blade has a malevolent effect. On a roll of natural 20, the elf or fey's spirit is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32





AULD WYRMISH

THE CRUSHING BLOW

TAROT ARCANUM

BY MIKE STEWART



IN 1978, MIKE STEWART BECAME INTERESTED IN ROLE PLAYING GAMES AND HAS NEVER LOOKED BACK. HE IS CURRENTLY A POST GRADUATE STUDENT OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS.

During the early years of fantasy role playing games, one item that emerged in the treasure piles of monsters and villains alike was that of the "Magic Deck" of cards. The deck would grant the drawer of any card a great boon or a traumatic bane, all determined by which card or cards the character drew. This was usually resolved by rolling dice or if the gamers were fortunate they would have an actual deck of "prop" cards to use to determine the results for their characters by actual draws. Alas, in my experience most of these artifacts were either too powerful in effects (both positive and negative) or required such obscure types of cards that unless one were skilled enough to create their own hand-made decks the players would have to resort to rolling dice. Which would work fine but I think the uniqueness of the magical decks lose something when it becomes merely an exercise in dice rolling. Mundane playing cards can be substituted for some of the decks, but their common usage in our society detracts from the ambiance of their use.

In order to bring the use of such magical items to Castles & Crusades I've created the Tarot Arcanum. Like magical decks of olde, they grant benefits (and penalties) to those who dare to draw their cards. But unlike those decks that have come before, I hope I've mitigated their effects to a point to where such a deck would be appropriate to use in low to mid-level campaigns without unbalancing the party. The use of the Tarot Deck cards grants a unique and fantastic feel without being a prop that would be difficult to find. Most bookstore chains such

as Barnes & Nobles and Hastings either carry or can order them, and the internet is replete with sites that offer a variety of designs at very affordable prices; for those who wish to use such in their games.

I hope you have as much fun using the Tarot Arcanum in your games as I had in developing this old school dweomecraft for your perusal!

This eldritch deck of cards is always found within a small gold or silver hinged case of exquisite workmanship. The top of the case will be festooned with tiny replicas of each of the cards noted below, and while the case itself radiates magic, it has no inherent properties other than the capability of securely storing the cards. The cards themselves are quite intricate and are emblazoned with their particular sigils upon plaques of thin wood or ceramic tiles.

Any character that obtains a Tarot Arcanum may draw as many cards as they wish from the deck, but such draws must be announced to the Castle Keeper before the results are determined by draw or die roll. Castle Keepers may use the table below for random generation of the cards by dice, though no more than one copy of each card exists within the deck. If a result is rolled twice then the second roll is ignored and the dice re-rolled. Castle Keepers who wish a bit more detail may purchase a standard Tarot deck from any bookstore to use as a Tarot Arcanum prop. In such a case, the Castle Keeper should remove the number cards for the four suits (1-10 for Wands, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles) and set them aside as they are not used.

The details of the cards and their effects are noted as follows:

THE CARDS

% Die Roll	Card Drawn
01	The Fool
02	The Magician
03-05	High Priestess
06-08	The Empress
09-11	The Emperor
12-14	The Hierophant
15-17	The Lovers
18-20	The Chariot
21-23	Strength
24-26	The Hermit
27-29	Page of Wands
30-32	Knight of Wands
33-35	Queen of Wands
36-38	King of Wands
39-41	Page of Cups
42-44	Knight of Cups
45-47	Queen of Cups
48-50	King of Cups
51-53	Page of Swords
54-56	Knight of Swords
57-59	Queen of Swords
60-62	King of Swords
63-65	Page of Pentacles
66-68	Knight of Pentacles
69-71	Queen of Pentacles
72-73	King of Pentacles
74-76	The Wheel of Fortune
77-79	Justice
80-82	The Hanged Man
83-85	Death
86-87	Temperance
88-89	The Devil
90-91	The Tower
92-93	The Star
94-95	The Moon
96-97	The Sun
98-99	Judgment
00	The World

Once the card is determined by the table above, the Castle Keeper should roll a 1d4, with a 1-2 meaning that the card is upright ("U") and a 3-4 meaning that the card is upside down or reversed ("R").

The explanation of each card and their facings are next described in detail.

THE MAJOR ARCANA

THE FOOL

Upright = May ignore the next card of bad effect drawn.

Reversed = The next card drawn will be considered "Reversed" regardless of its actual facing.

THE MAGICIAN

U = Gain 1 point of Intelligence and if a spellcaster gain a bonus 1st level spell to cast along with the level limit allowed permanently.

R = Drawer finds themselves hounded for a 10,000 gp debt of an obscure relative.

THE EMPEROR

U = The drawer will automatically succeed on their next three critical CHA checks/saving throws as determined by the player.

R = Drawer will automatically fail the next three critical CHA check/saving throws randomly determined by the Castle Keeper (it should be important ones)

THE HIEROPHANT

U = Drawer will be granted a resurrection or raise dead spell at no cost by the next church he encounters when he or she is in need and such a spell is able to be cast by the clergy.

R = No resurrection or Raise Dead spell will work on the drawer until a Remove Curse is cast upon them (Curse is as cast by a 12th level Cleric).

THE LOVERS

U = Drawer's Charisma increases by 1 point permanently, and the party member or hireling of the appropriate gender most attractive to the drawer will fall in love with the drawer (as if permanently Charmed) unless a Remove Curse spell is cast upon him or her (Curse is as if cast by a 12th level Cleric).

R = Drawer's Charisma decreases by 1 point permanently and the drawer either loses any significant other or hirelings and will suffer -4 CHA checks in the future unless a Remove Curse spell is cast upon him or her (Curse is as if cast by a 12th level Cleric).

THE CHARIOT

U = Drawer automatically makes the next roll that is vital for his or her survival (saving throw, attribute check or to hit-damage roll). Roll is the maximum needed to insure success and is at the discretion of the player.

R = Drawer fails his next roll vital to the success or survival of him or her as determined by the Castle Keeper.

STRENGTH

U = Drawer of this card gains +3 to all saving throws involving the mind or spirit for the next game year.

R = Drawer of this card suffers -3 to all saving throws involving the mind or spirit for the next game year.

THE HERMIT

U = The drawer of this card gains 1 level of experience in his or her Prime class; xp are gained at the total of 3,000 xp or the amount needed to bring them to the minimum xp total needed for the next higher level (whichever is greater).

R = The drawer of this card loses 1 level of experience in his or her Prime class; xp are lost at the total of 3,000 xp or the amount needed to bring them to the minimum xp total needed for the next lower level (whichever loss is greater).

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

U = Gains a permanent +1 to all attribute checks.

R = Suffers a permanent -1 penalty to all attribute checks.

JUSTICE

U = Drawer gains the ability to determine if they are told a falsehood once per day automatically for 1-12 (1d12) game months. Note that this will not reveal any other information other than a statement told to them is true or false.

R = Drawer is automatically detected when telling a lie once per day, the exact lie and situation to be determined by the Castle Keeper.

THE HANGED MAN

U = Drawer gains the ability to regenerate as a Troll for 1-12 (1d12) game months (3d4).

R = Drawer suffers an inability to heal, never healing more than 1 hp a week

due to natural healing and any healing magic used on the drawer only heals the minimum amount capable for the spell or item in question for 1-12 (1d12) game months.

DEATH

U = A cloaked figure of death incarnate will appear and attack the drawer. The figure will appear as a skeleton clad in black robes wielding a scythe, but the "death"'s attributes will be equal in all respects to the drawer and the scythe will hit and damage equal to the drawer's strongest weapon or as +2 to hit/damage and 1d12 damage rolled; whichever is greater. An impenetrable shield will separate the combatants from all others in the area and will bar any intervention in the melee until the combat is completed and one or the other dies.

R = Drawer will age at 1/3rd the normal rate with commensurate extension of lifespan.

TEMPERANCE

U = The drawer gains 1 point to each of his or her two lowest attributes, but loses 2 points from his or her single highest attribute.

R = The drawer loses 1 point from each of his or her two lowest attributes, but gains 2 points to his or her single highest attribute.

THE DEVIL

U = The drawer's alignment is reversed according to the below chart:

OLD Alignment	NEW Alignment
Lawful Good	Chaotic Evil
Lawful Neutral	Chaotic Good (1-3) or Evil (4-6) on 1d6
Lawful Evil	Chaotic Good
Neutral Good	Lawful (1-3) or Chaotic (4-6) Evil on a 1d6
Neutral	No change
Neutral Evil	Lawful (1-3) or Chaotic (4-6) Good on a 1d6
Chaotic Good	Lawful Evil
Chaotic Neutral	Lawful Good (1-3) or Evil (4-6) on 1d6
Chaotic Evil	Lawful Good

R = The Drawer gains 1 point of Intelligence and 1 point of Wisdom permanently and the next attempt to influence the drawer via a magic spell or item will automatically fail.

THE TOWER

U = Drawer can no longer advance in level until a Quest (Castle Keeper's discretion) is completed. However, the drawer gains +1 to all rolls for the duration of the quest.

R = Drawer loses 1 level of experience and all xps for that level permanently (Restored only by a Restoration spell cast by a 12th level Cleric or higher). Experience point totals return to The experience point total reduces to the minimum needed for the level below their prior level.

THE STAR

U = The drawer gains a limited wish to be used at the player's discretion.

R = The drawer takes a -3 to all WIS checks until he or she advances to the next level of experience

THE MOON

U = The drawer is afflicted with a random form of Lycanthropy as noted below:

1d12	Result
1-2	Were-Rat
3-4	Were-Boar
5-6	Were-Wolf
7-8	Were-Boar
9-10	Were-Tiger
11-12	Were-Bear

Though it can be eventually cured, it will remain with the drawer a minimum of 4 weeks. The drawer's alignment will change to that typical of the were-form until the Lycanthropy is cured.

R = The drawer's favorite magic item is lost, though the drawer can see its general location in dreams. Its location is left up to the Castle Keeper, but it should be in a location that's dangerous to travel to (dungeon, orc fort, etc.). If no magic item is owned, the effect will delay until the drawer obtains their first magic item.

THE SUN

U = The drawer gains enough experience points to place them exactly 20 xp shy of the next higher level in their class.

R = Apparently nothing, but the next night the drawer will be found trying to steal treasure or items from a party member. When confronted, the drawer

will claim they were asleep (which they were) but no one will believe them for a week.

JUDGMENT

U = The drawer will regress in age to that of the minimum age needed to qualify as "young adult" for their race. All attributes, powers and class levels/skills will remain the same.

R = The drawer is aged 20% of the years for their race's total lifespan.

THE WORLD

U = The drawer gains 1 point to each of his attributes that are denoted as his Primaries (for attribute checks and saving throws), though none may exceed 18.

R = The drawer loses 1 point to each of his attributes that are denoted as his Primaries (for attribute checks and saving throws), though none may be reduced below 3.

THE COURT CARDS

WANDS

PAGE OF WANDS

U = Drawer gains a +4 to all CHA checks involving persuasion for the next game month.

R = Drawer suffers a -4 to all CHA checks involving persuasion for the next game month.

KNIGHT OF WANDS

U = The Drawer of the card gains a Rod of Smiting with 20 charges.

R = The Drawer suffers a -4 to attack rolls for the next game month.

QUEEN OF WANDS

U = The Drawer gains a Ring of Spell Storing.

R = The Drawer suffers a -4 to all saving throws against Arcane magic.

KING OF WANDS

U = The Drawer gains a spellbook with three spells in it, each of one level higher than the drawer is capable of casting; if the drawer isn't a spellcaster then the spells will be of 1st level Wizard spells (randomly determined by the Castle Keeper).

R = The Drawer's spell book bursts into flames and is automatically destroyed. If the drawer isn't a spellcaster then the drawer loses 1 point of Intelligence permanently.

CUPS:

PAGE OF CUPS

U = The Drawer gains a Potion of Healing with 3 doses.

R = The drawer gains a Potion of Delusion of Healing, 3 doses.

KNIGHT OF CUPS

U = The Drawer gains a Potion of Super Heroism with 3 doses.

R = The drawer gains a Potion of Delusion of Super Heroism, 3 doses.

QUEEN OF CUPS

U = The Drawer gains a chalice of Holy Water. This Chalice will fill with Holy Water once per day on command, and such a command will drain 1 charge. The Chalice given will have 20 charges.

R = The Drawer radiates a 10 foot aura that spoils all holy water and healing potions (no save) within the area for one game month.

KING OF CUPS

U = The Drawer gains a Jug of Alchemy.

R = The drawer gains a Jug of Trolls, which appears as a Jug of Alchemy, but upon invocation 1 Troll will emerge for every 3 levels the invoker has in his primary class and attack.

Upon being slain, the dead troll will disappear but another will emerge from the jug to replace it. This will continue until the Command word is spoken again; which will cease summoning Trolls.

WORDS:

PAGE OF SWORDS

U = The Drawer will be given a +1 Short Sword.

R = The Drawer will be given a -1 Cursed Shortsword.

KNIGHT OF SWORDS

U = The Drawer will be given a +2 Broadsword.

R = The Drawer will be given a -2 Cursed Broadsword with an additional curse that whenever a Natural 20 is rolled, the sword hits its wielder for full damage.

QUEEN OF SWORDS

U = The Drawer is given a Scabbard of Mercy that will meld into the appropriate shape of whatever blade is sheathed within it. It further acts to negate any single blow that would reduce its bearer to 0 or less hit points, once per day.

R = The Drawer will be given a scabbard of cowardice. This scabbard will mold to fit any blade sheathed within it, but upon any melee the scabbard will refuse to let the sword out of the scabbard nor will it be able to be removed from the belt until the battle is over. Otherwise, blades can be drawn as normal.

KING OF SWORDS

U = The Drawer is given a sentient +3 Bastard Sword of a compatible alignment to the drawer, with a Will of 17. Its special purpose and any powers it might have should be determined by the Castle Keeper.

R = The Drawer gains a +3 Bastard Sword with both INT and WIS of 13. However, the sword is of the opposite alignment of the drawer (see table under card "The Devil" to determine sword's alignment). It will pretend to be amenable to the drawer at first, but will then do all it can during melee to insure the drawer's death. Consult the Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasures pg 89 to resolve Domination and Will contests. Any attempt to get rid of the sword without a Remove Curse spell (cast by a 12th level Cleric) will automatically require a Domination/Will check.

PENTACLES:

PAGE OF PENTACLES

U = The Drawer gains a hireling Rogue of ½ the drawer's level from the card who will be loyal and follow the drawer faithfully unless poorly treated. The Castle Keeper should design the NPC Rogue as needed.

R = Apparently nothing, but soon a relative of the drawer will appear and wish to travel with the drawer to learn of the adventuring life. However, at the first opportunity the relative will turn out to be a Rogue of opposite alignment to the drawer and will steal as much as he/she can from the drawer and other party members before fleeing. It is left to the Castle Keeper to decide if the Rogue is really a relative or simply impersonating one.

KNIGHT OF PENTACLES

U = The Drawer gains a Medium Warhorse (See *Monsters & Treasures* for details), complete with Studded Leather Barding. The horse will remain faithful to the drawer unless poorly treated.

R = The Drawer will apparently be given a Medium Warhorse that fits the description noted in the Upright Card. However, at an opportune moment (determined by the Castle Keeper) the horse will transform into a panther and attack the Drawer.

QUEEN OF PENTACLES

U = The Drawer is given a medallion with a pentacle upon it, which will be revealed under magic detection as a medallion of Invisibility.

R = The Drawer is given a medallion with a pentacle upon it, which will be revealed under magic detection as a medallion of Invisibility; but in truth is a medallion of delusion of invisibility. Any friends of the wearer who look upon him or her while the drawer uses the medallion will also be affected by the delusion. Only opponents or non-associates will be able to avoid the delusion effect. Treat any attempt to disbelieve as an illusion cast by a 7th level Illusionist.

KING OF PENTACLES

U = The Drawer is given a small wooden box with a pentacle engraved on the top. Within the box are a set of highly polished lockpicking Tools. They are enchanted to grant +2 to any Rogue who attempts to use them to lock or unlock any mechanical (non-magic) lock.

R = The Drawer is given a small wooden box with a pentacle engraved on the top. Within the box are a set of highly polished Lockpicking Tools. They are cursed to impose a -2 to any Rogue who attempts to use them to lock or unlock any mechanical (non-magic) lock.



BACK TO MY ROOTS

I had almost totally forgotten about RPG when Gary Gygax got into contact with me. He is perhaps the only person in the world who could have convinced me to create a couple of large color maps for a new game scenario and make me think it was my idea. I'll admit, it wasn't a hard sell. As well as for old time's sake, I did it for pleasure of the challenge—the game. I wanted to see how well I could digitally replicate the look of the Greyhawk maps I did so many years ago for TSR using today's technology. I haven't done map work in a long time so it was also fun.

Most curious is the timing of what transpired next. My family reunion in Wisconsin happened to be scheduled on the same weekend as a gaming convention in Milwaukee. I arranged to visit Gary on Sunday after the event was over.

We were sitting on Gary's porch when the Troll brothers, Steve and Davis Chenault dropped by on their way out from the convention. The color printouts of the maps were sprawled on Gary's table. That's how we met and when we clicked.

Thus, if it wasn't for Professor Coleman, I would never have left Lake Geneva and if it wasn't for Gary Gygax I would not have returned. I have become suspicious. Whose pawn am I? Why should I be visited by so many coincidences? Was I always meant to return at THIS particular space/time?

MY NEWEST DESIGN GAME

With a lavish budget and clients who recognise and respect the vital role of the designer, publication design is easy. However, a great deal more creativity is required to produce outstanding work when chaos reigns unchecked, budgetary limitations are extreme, and deadlines impossible.

Two months after our initial meeting, Steve called to ask my help with a new journal. The articles and columns within *The Crusader Journal* helped me to realise the enormous changes the RPG industry has undergone during my absence.

I "felt" my way through the first issue, going for the look of an historical/literary journal with the nostalgic

sign portfolios managed to ride out the recession better than the rest.

People usually become ill at ease when it comes to encountering chaos. They will tend to avoid or react negatively to things possessing little or no coherence. It is often not a conscious decision. People are simply attracted to unity (beauty) and repelled by disorder (ugliness).

Beauty, the quality that gives pleasure to the mind and senses, produces a positive reaction because it is reassuring. Ugliness, the absence of beauty, repulses. To the uninitiated, good design appears to be deceptively easy. I understand how tempting it is for the people in charge of small companies saddled with the constraints of a meager budget to leave the design of their publications to novices or others uninitiated into the fundamentals of visual communication. Finding someone who is versed in visual communication is essential to success.

GOOD DESIGN IS INVISIBLE

When a design is excellent, it will grab the reader without calling attention to itself. So rapt will the reader be into the meaning of the author's words, they'll not notice how easily the design lead their eyes to the end. They did not have to lose their concentration to locate where the article continued. They did not have to struggle against the mechanics of the flow. Happily, they did not have to contend with deciphering unusual, fancy and nearly illegible fonts.

Successful design will always make the text inviting, seductive and meaningful. Good page design is not clever. It does not call attention to itself. It subtly leads the eye and entices the interest of readers.

My university education taught me to "reframe the problem." So what is publication design but how best to arouse the curiosity of readers and hold their attention long enough to engage them? After the reader is hooked, the purpose of the page spread is to aid the understanding of the text and the mechanics of its flow.

That's the game of design. That's my game.



**Jasmine:
The Battle for the
Mid-Realm™**

COLLECTOR CARD GAME

In 1982, DARLENE created and published a fun, challenging, and award-winning card game which combines magic, intrigue, strategy and heroic battles.

- For 2 to 4 players
- 112 cards (with 40 full color paintings)
- Each copy is a limited collector's edition,
- Signed & numbered by its designer
- Can be considered fantasy's first role playing card game.



**OWN A PART OF
RPG HISTORY!**

**IT IS THE ORIGINAL ROLE
PLAYING CARD GAME!**

*Won Strategist's Club
Award in 1982 as
"Most Outstanding Game"*

**INDIVIDUAL UNITS FROM THE
ORIGINAL PRINT RUN AVAILABLE
FOR \$55 (ADD \$5.00 FOR S/H).
SUPPLIES ARE VERY LIMITED.**

Send checks payable to:

DARLENE
P. O. Box 877
Mt. Gilead, NC 27306

NOT AVAILABLE IN STORES.

of pieces around the board. In most games there is a short period of conflict, with a few battles, and then it's a race of Summoners, herding their companions off the board. In the end game, it is important to use him to summon others to him, as he allows the movement of up to seven pieces on one turn (nine with double sixes.)

The Engineer

In the basic game, the engineer is a unit that rolls only 1 Attack die (no plus). However, the Engineer provides a bonus of +1 to the Defense Number of all friendly units in his space. If the Engineer is sent to the bar during a round of battle, all friendly units continue to receive this bonus to the end of the battle.

If you are using the optional rule FORTIFICATIONS, the Engineer does NOT provide the +1 bonus to Defense as in the basic game. Instead, he builds Towers, Keeps, & Castles.

How to Win

The first player to get all his pieces home, just as in regular backgammon, is the winner.

OPTIONAL RULES

Fortifications (or Forts)

Only the engineer can build Fortifications. On any turn, you may use one or more of your movement dice to have your Engineer build a level of Fortification. The number on the die, does not matter, he uses the whole die. The first thing he builds is a Tower. If there is a Tower in the space, he may use a movement die roll to upgrade the Tower to a Keep, or a Keep to a Castle.

The Engineer does not move when he builds a level of Fortification (this is a good way to waste bad movement rolls.)

Only ONE Fortification may be in a space. If your pieces leave a space with a Fortification, it is removed from the board.

In a Battle, the Fortification is considered a defending unit (although it has no Attack Number), and the attacker must pair at least one unit against it. In addition, until the fort is destroyed (by an attacker's strike exceeding its Defense Number) all attacking strikes must be made against the Fortification. The defender, of course will be striking at the attacking units paired against them.

Note: even though forts are built one level at a time: Tower, Keep, then Castle, a single hit, destroys the whole thing in a battle. Once a fort has been destroyed the battle proceeds as normal.

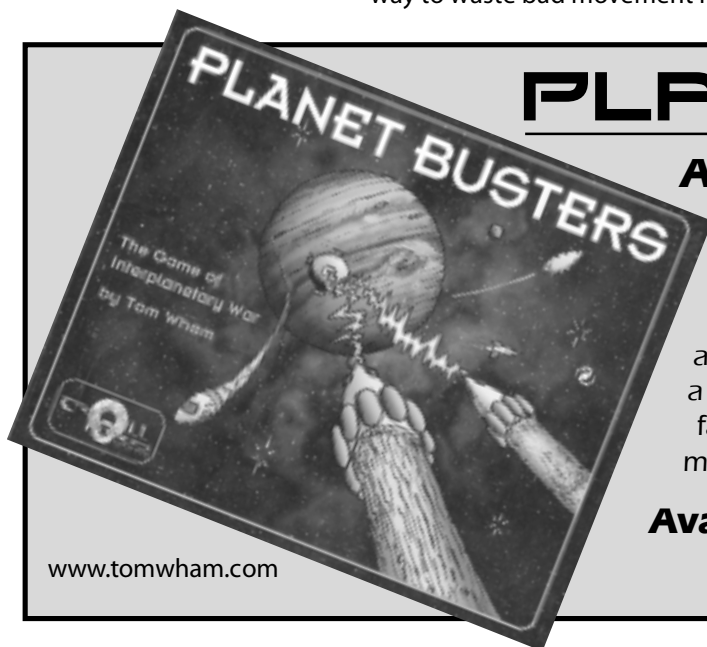
Choose-your-own Army

The number in parenthesis on each piece is its point value. The basic backgammon army consists of 95 points. Using that as a starting point, the players may secretly build their own armies, using the Basic and the Alternate pieces available. Each player's army may total no more than 100 points or any less than 95 points.

You may end up with less than 15 units in your army this way. If this is the case, you must place your units on the board in the standard backgammon groupings, but start with those stacks farthest from your home. Any missing pieces must be from the groups closest to your home. If you choose 2 Summoners, they both must start as the two pieces farthest from home.

Credits

GAME DESIGN & ART: TOM WHAM PLAYTESTING AND OTHER ASSISTANCE: MIKE & NAN BELL, BRIAN BLUME, E. GARY GYGAX, & DON PERRIN.



www.tomwham.com

PLANET BUSTERS

A GAME OF INTERPLANETARY WAR by Tom Wham and James H. Ward FOR 2-4 PLAYERS

It is the far distant future. The planets have been tamed and colonized by humans. However, a big war between a corrupt interplanetary government and various power factions has broken out. As faction leaders, players must marshal their forces to gain control of worlds & warships.

Available at Most Hobby Shops or on-line:
www.trolllord.com

our growing frustration and we reacted poorly. We didn't do Chris' game justice nor give him much room to move. He was forced to continue manipulating the circumstances in order to keep the arc. By the end of the evening it was a slaughter fest. Anything, including Davis new character, was fair game for us all, and we did not bother to role play in situations or try to figure things out, but rather we killed monsters on site and fled from one situation to another. I was much to blame for this, as I tried to role play my character regardless of the story arc. This caused more confusion. Chris tried to keep us on track by revealing the epic themes and other material, but it just caused confusion.

We ended the evening with much joking and cussing and promised that next week we would give everyone a break and pick up the assault on blacktooth ridge.

Davis' game suffered a similar fate. Our characters had left the ridge and become entangled in the problems south of the river. We

For 18 days of game time we wandered...



had no maps at the start of the game and were far from human habitation, deep in enemy territory. The player who played the ranger, Mac, wasn't there and Davis did not NPC his character. So we were in the trackless waste, pretty much on our own. We wandered and wandered. For 18 days of game time we wandered in the woods, meeting almost nothing, utterly lost and without purpose. Davis, true to form, let this unfold as if it were real life. And as in real life, we were pretty much done for and lost.

We all became a little frustrated and just as in the previous week, I noticed the players (me and Todd in particular) getting antsy and start to react to everything. When we did encounter something the ferocity of our pent up rage stunned even Davis as we all recklessly fought to get into the fight!

That is when I had my game mastering epiphany. It wasn't about Chris' style or Davis' style, or even my own. It wasn't about the way the games evolved or were evolving. All of us are past masters at this craft and our good games far outweigh our bad game. The epiphany concerned the players.

I found that I was thinking, for the first time, like a player. I had finally shed that arrogance of mastery that comes with riding people's emotions and plundering the wealth of my imagination to enwrap a group of gamers in a world of tremendous make-believe. I was now a singular entity trying to unravel someone else's world of make-believe. And I was bored. Twenty years of running games tumbled before my eyes and I thought that here is the answer to the riddle. To quote a history professor I once had "to truly understand them, you must step out of your own shoes—imagine a tall, mustachioed, white hair

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

DARLENE has prepared a FREE DOWNLOAD of **Desktop Publishing Tips from Design Studio D**, a newsletter for people who have no formal graphics training but find themselves in the position of producing newsletters, fliers and other printed materials.

PLEASE VISIT:

www.trolllord.com/darlene

THE GAME OF DESIGN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

touches reminiscent of the old TSR days. During the process of working on these issues, it occurred to me: I was a player at the beginning of RPG and appear again at the rising of this Phoenix. And I'm not the only one. Many of us seem to be collectively rising from the ashes and dusting ourselves off from what RGP has become.

So here I am. My path has taken me back to the roots where I started. I've come full circle but at a different rung in time. What a marvellous journey it has been!

During the writing of this article, I've made a key realization which I'd like to end with. For me, game of design is fractal to the game of life. The challenge of both is to complete the task at hand within the specified time frame using just the tools and limitations one has been given and to do so splendidly.



WHEN DARLENE IS NOT WORKING AT HER CORPORATE JOB AS AN EXPERT IN GRAPHICS DESIGN/MARKETING, SHE SPENDS HER TIME DOING DESIGN MAKEOVERS FOR TROLL LORD GAMES. IN ADDITION TO DESIGNING *THE CRUSADER JOURNAL*, DARLENE IS ALWAYS INVOLVED IN SOME TYPE OF BOOK PROJECT. SHE IS WORKING ON A GRAPHIC NOVEL WHICH COMBINES HER TALENTS IN TYPE DESIGN, ILLUSTRATION AND GRAPHICS.

The Angry Gamer

by Todd Gray

ANOTHER WASTED OPPORTUNITY



It's 8:30 pm and I just finished a long day at work. Now it's time to game! I rush to my truck and head home to my apartment. By now Steve and the others will be deep into the adventure. I'll just rush in, and in minutes I will be blissfully gaming.

What the %#*?! The game is just starting! Why are my friends just now breaking out their books and dice?

I made it home really fast with the hope of maybe walking in just in time for a battle or some really intense encounter.

What do I find instead? The Castle Keeper is recapping the last gaming session. You've got to be kidding me!

Apparently Mark had taken a nap and overslept. Why the heck had he chosen the night of our weekly game to take his little "siesta?" The way I see it, he can sleep when he's dead.

Chris and Sarah had spent all evening at Home Depot searching for things for their house. What, are we preparing for a gaming session of *Trading Spaces*?!!

Davis had to watch his daughter while his wife was in her night class. That's understandable to be sure, but time consuming to say the least. And why does her class have to be on game night anyway?

Steve takes the cake, though!! The man was watching John freakin' Stewart on *The Daily Show*. I swear you can watch that limp loser at just about any point around the clock. Of course, this is also the idiot who gets sucked in by *Dateline*!

Forty minutes and two smoke breaks later, the game begins. I swear that one of these days I will kill someone if we have to recap for more than thirty seconds. All we need to know is where we are and what we have to do to continue the adventure! We were all here before right? We all know where we left off the last week; why waste time telling us what we already know?

Now we have been at the table for about an hour and a half. We have not accomplished much except a little overland travel. The party is torn. We are in an area that we are unfamiliar with, and we cannot agree on what to do next. Some of us want to just continue on to

see what lies ahead, but some want to try to decide the significance of why we are there. Who freakin' cares!? This is not philosophy class! Let's get something going! We are on limited time!

We have come to a defile that tapers to a narrow opening, and opens wider on the other side. There is a large boulder sitting atop the other end of the defile that we find is an object with a mind of its own. If someone tries to enter through the narrow opening in the defile, the boulder rolls itself down into the path, and presumably smashes anyone in its path.

Do we continue on to face this new and challenging encounter? Oh, I think not! No, the encounter area has to be described five times from five different angles. It must be truly difficult to envision a defile akin to the shape of an hourglass with a large boulder on the other end. The road we were on came directly up to it, and there was no going around it without traveling back and going man miles around.

Being high level character's, you might guess that we took little time to dispatch this obstacle. Wrong answer, my friend! No, this set up a twenty minute discussion on how we should approach an area that we could only approach from going straight in, what we should do with our horses and what is on the other side.

After we finally set our elaborate plan in motion, the Cleric simply runs up and uses her turn ability, with a maximum roll, on the boulder. The situation is totally disarmed. All of that time for nothing. The cave that we find at the far end of the defile results in a small encounter in which we quickly dispatch the creatures within.

At this point the Castle Keeper says, with a smile on his face, that we are now getting into the meat of the adventure. The excitement is just about to begin. I am ready. I know Steve has been planning several nasty things all week for us to encounter. This is going to be sweet!

Then I hear, "We are going to go. I am tired and Chris has a deposition in the morning." It's Chris and Sarah, shorting us two players. But that leaves four of us, and we can still handle whatever comes upon us.



IN BETWEEN HIS ACADEMIC CAREER TODD GRAY WORKS AN AVERAGE OF THREE JOBS AND 80 HOURS A WEEK. PERPETUALLY IN MOTION, IF HE'S NOT MOVING, HE'S SLEEPING... OR ANNOYING STEVE WHO TOGETHER FORM THE LAST OF THE TRUE MEAT & POTATO MEN IN THE USA.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

That starts the freakin' avalanche. Mac announces he is leaving. His wife called to say his daughter woke up, which for some reason requires his attention, though it never has before. Mark has to go because he has to go out of town to do inventory at another store in the morning.

Davis has to go relieve his wife from watching his daughter, since she has to get up and study in the morning. Though one would assume that at this hour most kids are sound asleep.

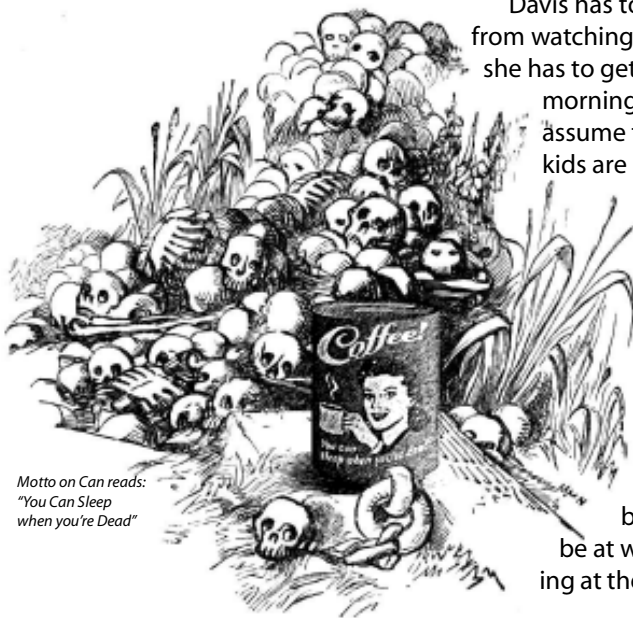
It is down to Steve and me. He opts to go and finish reading his book on Ole Wooden Teeth himself, George Washington. Oh, how I would love to bury an axe in his head right now! But I agree, because I too have to be at work early in the morning at the doctors' office.

What the hell are we thinking!!! What kind of domesticated, boring, slack-jawed idiots are we turning into?! Next, we will meet once every other week; then once a month; then we will talk on the phone about meeting and never do it!

What's next, the local bingo game?! Or, how-to clinics at the local home improvement center?! Or, how about joining the elk's lodge to sit around and drink while reminiscing about the good ole' days?

No, we will continue to game! I will not let them give up on this last vestige of freedom from the real world. The Dallas Cowboys have sucked for the last several years, and I have not given up on them. So my gaming group deserves something, besides a swift kick in the butt.

The game next week had better be more exciting or someone will be facing Arkansas Coffee Grounds (don't ask!!). It looks like its fantasy novels and solo scenarios until the next torture; I mean game session. If there is not more serious gaming next time, someone is donating a kidney!



Motto on Can reads:
"You Can Sleep
when you're Dead"

If ye be of valor, great fortitude & wondrous imagination, gather ye bravely and join to marshal arms with thy brethren. Assemble thy strengths, unsheathe thy weapons, heft thy shields and gird thyself as if for battle...

Castles & Crusades



SOCIETY

Welcome weary traveler, set down thy pack and take a place at our table. Rest from long adventures and gather with us to hear tales of gold and glory. Be not reluctant to join our ranks, our happy troop and add thy voice to our hallowed hall. Let us gather in time, a great armored host, undefeatable.

www.trolllord.com

ALEA IACTA EST CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

gentleman stepping out of his shoe—and put yourself, put your feet, into their shoes— imagine him stepping back into his shoes."

What frustrates the player? Its not the big things. The themes, the direction of the game, the whole host of concerns that you, as a good Castle Keeper have, that matters most. Though these matter, what matters more is what frustrates, what guides and what drives the player in the game. The small things matter: hitting in combat, finding your way, or healing your character. Having enough treasure to re-equip. These are things that keep them in the game and allow them to endure the unfolding canopy that is your game.

For me the greatest example of this can be found in the specialization ability of the fighter. It always confused me. Why would you allow your character to become dependent on one weapon? In my game, combat is so brutal and fast that if you dropped your weapon, its best to not worry about it, but pick up or pull out the nearest thing to you and batter away at your enemy. Life comes to the bold. I never thought much about the probability to hit or what that +1 might mean to the player. That is, not until I played a fighter who could have really used a +1 on any number of occasions. The frustrations a player can feel from not hitting repeatedly can build up to a crescendo and leave them so frustrated that they are doomed to doom the game. I came to understand that after a year of playing a character, (fighters to be exact), and now it is always in my mind ... particularly when I'm behind the screen.

Keeping the Castle is a skill much akin to the feudal lord. And as was true with the ideal of feudalism, is true in the game. The Castle Keeper must never forget what is most important to the characters, to the players themselves. Though they may love to unravel the great mysteries, solve the riddle, overcome traps and slay the demon lords, what they are most concerned with are having the basic tools to accomplish the job. This is not to say that you must give them what they want in order to keep them playing. On the contrary, doing that would only frustrate them into boredom. It is to say, that as a Castle Keeper, you must be aware of what your players' characters need to actually play the game.



FRANKENBURY

The Crack Parade

by **Davis Chenault**



here he sat, Odious Stensch, that snaggle-toothed old codger, cawing some incoherent command to the myopic mammalian misfits gathered around his table. He was attempting to explain how to enact the next step in their plan to wrest control over the Council of Gelders (that august body of ancient sniveling, whiny, buck toothed, conceited, self-centered, egomaniacal, monomaniacal, blood lapping ticks) but could not be understood as his words only bubbled out of his mouth between slurps of blood pie, blood pudding and blood soup.

His minions, fearing their master's wrath, never interrupted him, nor revealed ignorance of what he was saying. They nodded their bobble heads and eyed the bubbles escaping from Odious' mouth and floating up to the chandelier dangling from the ceiling. After the audience ended, they left the Great Hall to gather in the Not-so-Great Hall to discuss what to do next.

Almost all of them burst into laughter after leaving as they realize the cooks had slipped some soap into the blood soup again. "That cook, he's such a ham!" "Ahaha, did you see the bubble that landed on Odious' hair?" "Guffaw, guffaw, guffaw."

And so the meeting went and all the little evil doers forgot their primary mission and went of to lounge around their Victorian mansion and engage in all manner of charming and decadent activities like kissing and smoking and drinking and doing drugs and thinking vile thoughts and wishing mommy had not been so mean to them when they were kids.

So they were caught unawares when the monster arrived! Oops not yet.

Selena dropped down from the belfry, landed on the ground with a thump and changed into a human, or vampire. She was naked! "This never happens in the movies." She groaned. Selena's problem with Hollywood was its lack of attention to details and their representation of being a vampire only showed the more positive aspects of such a life style, never the drawbacks. She believed a more nuanced telling of the tales would engender some sympathy from the cattle she fed upon.

So there she stood, naked, cold, and shivering. She put on the clothes she was wearing earlier and that had fallen into the mud. Her sidekick was nowhere to be seen and was likely off chasing mosquitoes. But Selena had a mission and it was to kick butt. So she sat about setting about kicking butt.

In painfully slow movements she slid her pistol out of its holster and pulled back the slide and let it slam forward with a metallic clink and chambered her first round. She was ready for combat and began to walk over to Louige's House of Pasta.

Luscious, ever the vigilant wearthing, was no dupe and his keen sense of hearing picked up the familiar sound of clinking metal. "Arg wuff wuff," he yelped a warning. A chorus of howls broke the noise of the eatery and it suddenly seemed as if a pack of hound dogs had cornered their first squirrel of the season down at Louige's House of Pasta. "The dog chain, the dog chain!" Luscious yelped remembering his untamed youth.

So it was that Louige's neighbor was accosted by a lot of

werewolves, weredogs and wererabbits. For you see, Mark Cantankerous was just putting his dog on a chain to take him for a walk when Luscious heard the sound. They pounced on him like a pack of dogs on fried eggs. When they were finished all that was left was a chain with a dog attached to it urinating on a light post. The dog looked confused.

Happy at being the first to draw blood in the war that was brewing, the mosses jumped up and down for joy as they made their way back to their kennel chasing every squirrel and cat what got in their way.

Selena saw all this and was somewhat confused. The sheer number of mosses caused her to rethink her plan of attack and she decided on a hasty retreat back to the city dump to target shoot at raccoons instead.

Then the monster shambled out of the twilight of the night and the shadows cast by street lamps into an empty street and it thought to itself, "Where is everyone?" Foiled again, the monster shambled back into the dark of the night only to reappear later at a more opportune and dramatic moment.

And into this picture of horror unabated comes our hero, the human we can all relate with, Teddy MacNoodle. A man of dubious Irish heritage—he is handsome, yet plain; rugged, yet smartly dressed; sophisticated, yet with trailer park humility; strong, yet sympathetic and fat. Not real fat, but pudgy. Every morning he gets up and flexes in the mirror. To him, he is an awesome rendition of the male of the species. To the rest of us he is a drunkard with too few wits and no aspirations. He is the everyman and the hero of our tale. He discovers Selena at the city dump shooting raccoons. And it is love at first sight!





THE CASTLE KEEPER HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO BE PREPARED

**ALL OF THIS CAN
DRAMATICALLY
DECREASE THE
ENJOYMENT OF
THE GAME**

Unprepared Castle Keepers waste the time of the entire group. A Castle Keeper that feels as though he or she has not prepared adequately for the game session should either cancel the session, or offer the group the opportunity to enjoy another activity in its place. Castle Keepers that are unprepared run erratic games that are often disrupted by frantic referencing of rulebooks and old notes.

An unprepared Castle Keeper runs the risk of creating discontinuities in the campaign or adventure, through contradictory information

or by simply forgetting certain details. All of this can dramatically decrease the enjoyment of the game for the players and the Castle Keeper.

Adequate preparation means different things to different people. Some people are fine with a few notes and are excellent at improvisation, while others need to write everything out in advance. Castle Keepers should know their own limits and work within them to avoid wasting anyone's time.



THE CASTLE KEEPER HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE RULES AND ANY CHANGES THAT ARE MADE TO THOSE RULES

**GAME SESSIONS
RUN MORE
SMOOTHLY
IF THE
CASTLE KEEPER
DOES NOT HAVE
TO REFERENCE
THE RULES
FREQUENTLY**

More than any player, the Castle Keeper should be familiar with the workings of the *Castles & Crusades* rules (though this applies to any game system). Game sessions run more smoothly if the Castle Keeper does not have to reference the rules frequently. A Castle Keeper that demonstrates a strong knowledge of the rules and principles of the game, and applies them fairly, will earn the trust and respect of players. Additionally, it is often not enough to know what a rule states; understanding why that rule exists—by knowing its function in the game—is also important.

Castles & Crusades is a game that is well-suited for the creation of custom rules. While it is easy to introduce custom rules to the game, great care should be taken when doing so. It is imperative that Castle Keepers fully under-

stand the use and at least some of the ramifications of the custom rules that they create and distribute to their players. While it is difficult to foresee the impact of certain rules, a careful Castle Keeper will consider the potential effects of a rule on other parts of the game before introducing it.

Additionally, house rulings of this nature should be prepared and distributed to the group in advance of a game session, so that the players have an opportunity to adjust their play accordingly.

All successful games thrive on a sense of mutual respect and trust between the Castle Keeper and the group of players. It is my hope that the above list will provide greater perspective to improve your gaming experience.

Until next issue!



forever destroyed, thus cursing them to live out their days as shadows of their former selves, eventually becoming a Shadow (see *Castles & Crusades' Monsters & Treasure* pages 72-73).

When borne by any elf but a high elf (or half-elf who is the offspring of a high elf), the sword bestows the power of Glamour, allowing the wielder to make himself seem greater than he is. This acts similar to the Frightful Presence of Dragons (see *Castles & Crusades' Monsters & Treasure* page 21). The Glamour unsettles creatures within 120 feet if they have fewer than 12 HD. A potentially affected creature

that succeeds at a wisdom save (CL 20) remains immune to the Glamour for one day. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds.

Also, elves and half-elves wielding the blade may summon and command Bodach the Imp upon command. Bodach acts as a imp-familiar in all respects.

*Aihrde refers to the world of Erde as presented in the Codex of Erde available through Troll Lord Games or any of your fine local hobby stores.



AN ACTUAL READER TESTIMONIAL

Dear Editor

Great job on Crusader 2. I enjoyed all the columns, articles, fiction & art. But what I thought was particularly interesting was how three of the articles complemented each other and made the individual article better than when standing alone. I'm referring to Josh's column on hit points vs. wound system, Mike's column on armor damage rules and finally Steve's article on crossbow/longbow and how these weapons penetrate armor. After the first reading, I went back and re-read them all and was struck on how well they each related to the others.

Please sign me up for a life subscription! Thanks to everyone involved in the production of the journal.

Best regards, Rhuvein

PLACE AN AD IN THE CRUSADER

CONTACT NIKI

Marshal of the Crusade Stephen Chenault brings you "Iron and Blood: The Role of Battle and Combat in Castles & Crusades." Multi-classing for Castles & Crusades: Two views on multiclassing by Davis Chenault and Joseph Hepler. Historical Footnotes: Nicole Chenault addresses the role of the horse on the medieval battlefield (this one was supposed to be in issue 3, but wasn't finished) And comics from the unknown comic! Tom Wham!

JOIN THE FUN!



THE CRUSADER™
The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer

POST OFFICE BOX 251171 • LITTLE ROCK, AR 72225 Attn: Subscriptions

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

COUNTRY _____ E-MAIL _____

DAY PHONE _____ FAX _____



PRODUCT LISTING

CASTLES & CRUSADES®

FANTASY ROLE PLAYING
GAMING SYSTEM

All These Troll Lord Games' Products are Available

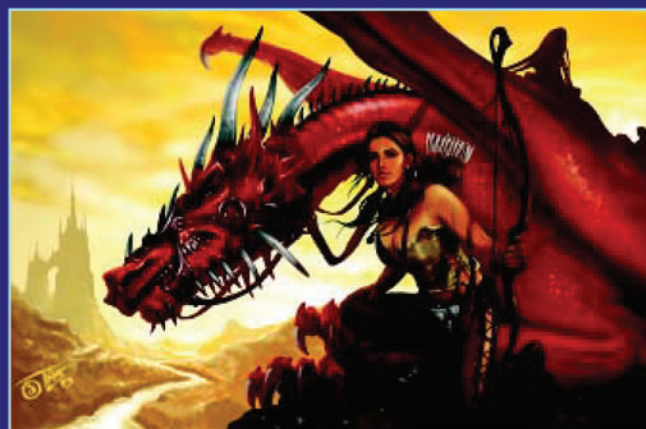
Product #	Title	Price	ISBN #
8000	Castles and Crusades Boxed Set	\$29.99	1-931275-83-1
80102	Castles & Crusades Players Handbook 2 nd pr	\$19.95	1-931275-19-x
80105	Castles & Crusades Deluxe	\$75.00	1-931275-45-9
8011	Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure	\$19.95	1-931275-61-0
8013	C&C Slip Sleeve (for CZ, CCPH, CCMT)	\$ 5.95	1-931275-09-2
8014	Castles & Crusades Character R. Sheets	\$ 9.95	1-931275-39-4
80SP	A0 The Rising Knight	PDF	
8020	A1 Assault on Blacktooth Ridge	\$ 8.95	1-931275-62-9
8021	A2 The Slag Heap	\$ 8.95	1-931275-78-5
8201	U1 Shadows of the Halfling Hall	\$ 8.95	1-931275-65-3
8203	U2 The Fingers of the Forsaken Hand	\$ 8.95	1-931275-30-0
8050	CZ1 Castle Zagyg Part I: Yggsburgh	\$39.95	1-931275-68-8
8060	CZA1 Castle Zagyg: Dark Chateau	\$12.95	1-931275-69-6

AVAILABLE AT BETTER HOBBY SHOPS OR
VISIT US ON-LINE AT:

www.trolllord.com

TROLL LORD GAMES

P.O.Box 251171
Little Rock, AR 72225
501-680-6597



Castles & Crusades Players Handbook, Castles & Crusades Monsters and Treasures are registered trademarks of Troll Lord Games, Inc.