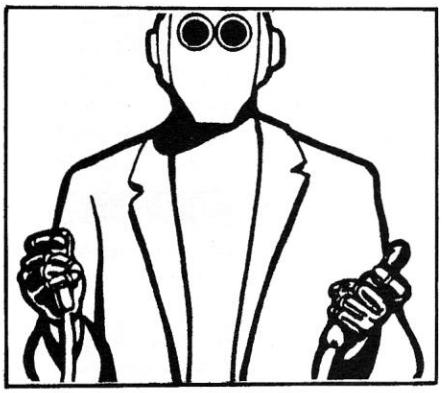
# DIFFERENT WORLDS

OCTOBER 1981
ISSUE 15
US $2.50
AUSTRALIA $3.95

## MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

Interstellar war and diplomatic intrigue . . .
Planet-destroying berserkers, space pirates,
merchant empires and dreaded black holes
all come together in our unique play-by-mail
game of star-spanning empires.
The idea for the player-character
Berserker was taken from the
novels by Fred Saberhagen, and
is used with his permission.
Flying Buffalo
play-by-mail since 1970
STARWEB
For the rules to StarWeb, send $1.00 to:
Flying Buffalo Inc.
P.O. Box 1467 • Dept. DW-2 • Scottsdale, AZ 85252
Ask for our free catalog of Science Fiction and Fantasy Games



# DIFFERENT WORLDS

ISSUE 15
OCTOBER 1981

## Features

4 **MORE CITIZENS**
*By Paul Montgomery Crabaugh*
Six new classes for Traveller.

6 **TOURNAMENT ROLE-PLAYING**
*By Ken Rolston*
A step-by-step description on how to referee a tournament run. Reading this will improve your refereeing and role-playing.

16 **THE CULT OF CALADRA AND AURELION**
*By Charles Huber*
Meet the volcano-worshipers of Glorantha.

24 **FAVORITES OF THE GODS**
*By David F. Nalle*
How to gain your god's help by sacrifices.

27 **A MODEST PROPOSAL**
*By David R. Dunham*
Some modifications for The Fantasy Trip.

28 **MAN BITES DOG**
*By Ken St. Andre*
What will role-playing be like in the future?

30 **MAKING LIFE HARD FOR MAGIC-USERS**
*By Lewis Pulsipher*
Balance the classes, read this article.

## Columns

3 **EDITORIAL**
32 **REVIEWS** Universe, Aftermath!, Sorag, Fiend Folio, and more.
40 **QUICK PLUGS** Short descriptions of new products.
42 **DIFFERENT VIEWS** The Letter Column.
43 **GAME CONS**
45 **RECRUITING BOARD**
47 **A LETTER FROM GIGI** *By Gigi D'Arn*

## Artists

**FRONT COVER** :Rick Becker.

**INTERIORS**: Scott Arquette P3,40, Rick Becker P24,25,26, Robert Charrette P9,30, Jerry Collins P6, Liz Danforth P23,32, Gene Day P16, David Dudley P8,27,42, Kevin C. Ellis P31, Bill Haggart P15, Ernest Hogan P28,29, Paul Jaquays P10, Alfred R. Klosterman P4, Steve Oliff P7, P42, Valerie Olson P13, Mike Troller P18,19, Robin Wood P20.

DIFFERENT WORLDS is published monthly by Chaosium Inc. **Contents copyright © 1981 by Chaosium Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden without prior written consent from the publisher.** Address all correspondences to DIFFERENT WORLDS, PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706. The number next to your name is the last issue in your subscription. For address changes include new address, old city, state, and zip code, and date effective. Advertising rates and trade inquiries available on request. Basic ad rate is $150 per page. DIFFERENT WORLDS and Chaosium Inc. assume no responsibilities for its advertisers. Submissions for publication are accepted and encouraged. Articles should be double spaced with one inch margin all around.

Artwork should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope for their return. All submissions become the property of Chaosium Inc., rights revert to author or artist upon publication or rejection. Remuneration for articles is 1 cent per word of published matter, and artwork is paid at a $20 per printed page rate (i.e., ¼ page gets paid $5). Color covers are paid $50.

**Tadashi Ehara editor. Yurek Chodak assistant editor. Lynn Willis, Steve Perrin, Greg Stafford, John T. Sapienza, Jr., Larry DiTillio associate editors. Charlie Krank, Rudy Kraft III, Gigi D'Arn, Anders Swenson contributing editors.**

**Union Printed in the U.S.A.**

# EDITORIAL

## IT'S FOR EVERYONE

When I go to conventions and watch the attendees I notice many types of people. They tend to dress casually and eat whenever they feel like it. They are outgoing and friendly. Some love to talk about adventures their character recently ran in.

I've seen young kids wide-eyed and participating with keen interest. Some like to talk a lot and some just like to watch and be part of the group. There are grade school kids, junior highers, and high schoolers, with a splattering of college kids. The ones in the twenties and the early thirties tend to be in it for the lifestyle (game store owners, designers, editors, distributors, etc.). The older ones tend to be very organized. They have special boxes they carry around with their characters and scenarios neatly arranged and filed.

Lawyers, doctors, computer programmers, and researchers are prevalent in this hobby. They tend to be gamers and well-prepared. Lawyers and computer programmers are more vocal than doctors and researchers, perhaps because there are more of them.

There are more females now. Five years ago maybe one or two per convention were real gamers, the rest girl friends of the male gamers. The ratio is much better now, perhaps one in five. Well, it could be better.

There are those who are there simply for the social aspect of gaming. They like to be around people and not really gamers. That's OK, they'll learn something in any case.

These are all tinkerers, people who like to fiddle with things, move things around, perhaps living in quiet desperation. Some look like they are looking for something, others look like they've found it.

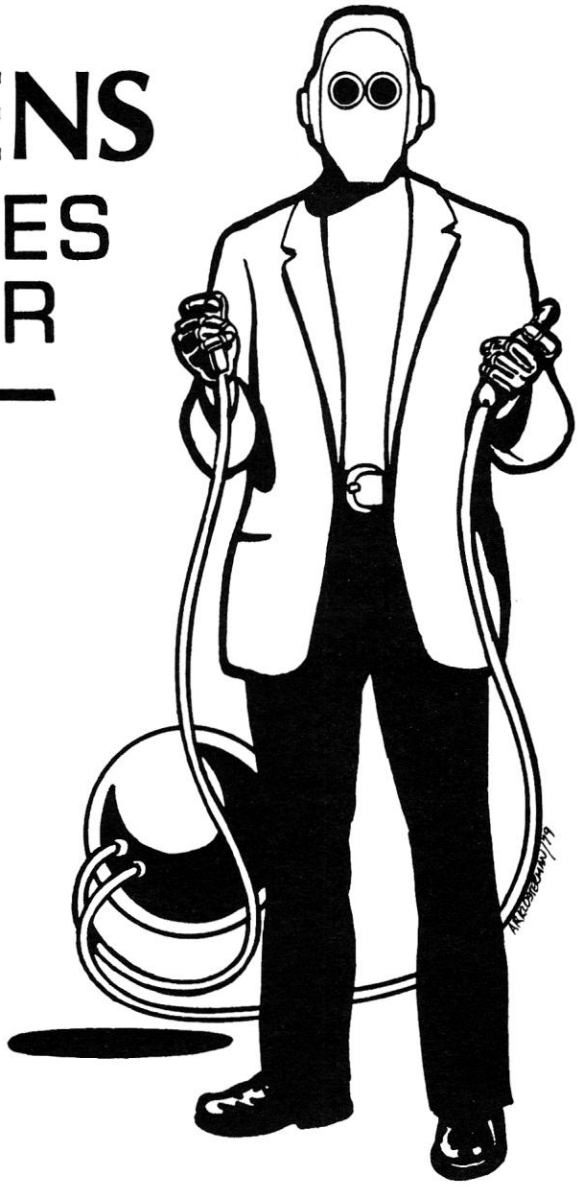
The sense of wonder is there and everything looks imaginative. Role-playing has a lot to offer for everyone. Don't fool yourself and think there are those that don't like to pretend, dream, fantasize.

Role-playing crosses many boundaries. Get as many people as you can involved. Just find out what they're interested in and start from there. Eventually we will all have something in common.

Happy gaming,

Tadashi Ehara

# MORE CITIZENS
## SIX NEW CLASSES FOR TRAVELLER



By Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

*Traveller* Supplement 4, ***Citizens of the Imperium***, presented a number of additional character types to spice up the game and provide a plausible variety of characters to encounter.

It also opened a can of worms. Unlike most role-playing games, where a small number of broadly defined and somewhat arbitrary character classes can define an entire population, ***Traveller*** admits the existence of an almost infinite variety of "character classes" – professions, really.

Here are six new classes, all presented in the same format as Supplement 4.

**CAVALRY** and **ARTILLERY** are slightly redundant: they are fast ways of generating the same sort of characters produced by those branches in *Mercenary*, Book 4. This can be useful if you are filling out a mercenary unit of that sort and require more specialists – you can spend all day generating a few *Mercenary* characters and never see a decent artillerist.

**TECHNICIANS** assist scientists and can be used to help crew a lab ship. Again, you could use actual scientists for your crew – but you'll get scientists with their own lab ships faster than you get complete crews. Unless you were holding a conference or something, you do not need such vast numbers of scientists; you only need a few scientists and a bunch of graduate students, bottle washers, and the like: Technicians.

**ENGINEERS** are people who design and build things. These can include works of architecture and such, but players will probably be more interested in their ability to design spacecraft.

**REPORTERS** work for major news networks, either video or written; they acquire data and present it in attention-getting form. Even when retired, they tend to do considerable freelance work. All reporters may be assumed to have the ability to present a known situation in terms that will explain its basics to someone who does not know it. This can be handy for messages and reports.

**CIVILIANS** is a catch-all for a vast number of professionals found in the civilian sector and lacking any real glamor: mechanics, clerks, typists, construction workers, taxi drivers and so forth.

Three additional skills have to be described:

**CIVIL ENGINEERING**: training in the design and construction of civilian engineering projects: buildings, bridges, transportation nets and so forth. Die Modifiers at the referee's discretion.

**NAVAL ARCHITECTURE** : training in the design and building of spaceships. Skill level 1 is required to create any design for a non-starship; skill level 2 is required for design of starships. Each level of skill above the minimum reduces cost of the final design by 5%.

**CONTACT** : the skill of a reporter in contacting people: arranging interviews, getting information, etc. Generally the skill is used as a DM on the Reaction Table when dealing with an official or public figure. It cannot be used for ordinary encounters; the person using the skill must have some newsworthy reason to make the contact, and must use the skill to obtain the information. *A reporter can't simply walk up to the subsector governor on the street, say "How's everything doing?," and expect to use the skill; he or she should instead approach the subsector governor (almost anywhere) and ask if he has any comment about the charges of corruption in his staff.* Persons unable to document their connection with a news agency in such circumstances receive a DM of -6 on the Reaction Table. It should be obvious that this skill must be handled very carefully.

## DIE MODIFIER TABLE

*CLASS*

| | CAV. | ARTIL. | TECH. | ENG. | REP. | CIV. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enlist | 6+ | 6+ | 5+ | 7+ | 6+ | auto |
| DM+1 | Dex 7+ | End 7+ | Int 8+ | Int 9+ | End 7+ | – |
| DM+2 | Edu 8+ | Int 7+ | Edu 9+ | Edu 9+ | Int 9+ | – |
| Survive | 6+ | 5+ | 4+ | 5+ | 6+ | 4+ |
| DM+2 | Edu 8+ | Edu 7+ | Int 9+ | Int 8+ | Edu 9+ | Soc 8+ |
| Position | 6+ | 7+ | – | – | – | – |
| DM+1 | Soc 8+ | Int 8+ | – | – | – | – |
| Promote | 8+ | 7+ | – | – | – | – |
| DM+1 | Int 8+ | Soc 8+ | – | – | – | – |
| Reenlist | 6+ | 5+ | 4+ | 4+ | 5+ | 3+ |
| Rank 1 | Lieut. | Lieutenant | – | – | – | – |
| Rank 2 | Capt. | Captain | – | – | – | – |
| Rank 3 | Major | Major | – | – | – | – |
| Rank 4 | Lt Col. | Colonel | – | – | – | – |
| Rank 5 | Col. | General | – | – | – | – |
| Rank 6 | Gen. | Marshall | – | – | – | – |

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT TABLE

*CLASS*

| Roll | CAV. | ARTIL. | TECH. | ENG. | REP. | CIV. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | +1Str | +1Str | +1Dex | +1Str | +1Str | +1Str |
| 2 | +1Str | +1Dex | +1End | +1Dex | +1Dex | +1Dex |
| 3 | +1End | +1End | +1Int | +1End | +1End | +1End |
| 4 | +1Edu | +1Edu | +1Edu | +1Int | Gambling | +1Int |
| 5 | +1End | Gamb. | Gamb. | +1Edu | Brawling | +1Edu |
| 6 | Gamb. | Blade Combat | | Mech. | Street | +1Soc |

## SERVICE SKILLS TABLE

*CLASS*

| Roll | CAV. | ARTIL. | TECH. | ENG. | REP. | CIV. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | AFV | Hvy Wpns | Mech | Mech | Gamb | Gamb |
| 2 | Hy Ws | Gun Ct | Elec | Elec | Braw | Mech |
| 3 | FA Gun | BI Com | Comp | Street | Street | Elec |
| 4 | Recon | Fw Ob | Veh | Comp | Veh | Air/Raft |
| 5 | A/R | AFV | Gun Ct | Engr | Carousing | Caro |
| 6 | Gun Ct | A/R | Medical | Veh | Elec | Survival |

## ADVANCED EDUCATION TABLE

*CLASS*

| Roll | CAV. | ARTIL. | TECH. | ENG. | REP. | CIV. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gun Ct | FA Gun | Comm | Civ Eng | Admin | Gun Ct |
| 2 | AFV | AFV | Veh | Gravitics | Veh | Braw |
| 3 | Mech | Comp | Mech | Liaison | Gun Ct | A/R |
| 4 | Fw Ob | Fw Ob | Elec | Demo | Caro | Liaison |
| 5 | Leader | FA Gun | Grav | Mech | Interro | Caro |
| 6 | Tactics | Hy Ws | J-O-T | Elec | Street | Mech |

## ADVANCED EDUCATION (requires Education 8+)

*CLASS*

| Roll | CAV. | ARTIL. | TECH. | ENG. | REP. | CIV. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | BI Ct | FA Gun | Comp | Nav Arch | Admin | Comp |
| 2 | Tactics | Tactics | Admin | Engr | Liaison | Medical |
| 3 | Admin | Comp | Med | Civ Eng | Comp | BI Ct |
| 4 | Comp | Leader | Liaison | Grav | Med | Instruct |
| 5 | Med | Admin | Engr | Admin | Interro | Admin |
| 6 | Leader | Demo | Sh Bt | Vac St | Contact | J-O-T |

## MATERIAL BENEFITS TABLE

*CLASS*

| Roll | CAV. | ARTIL. | TECH. | ENG. | REP. | CIV. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | LowPSG | Low | Mid | High | Low | Low |
| 2 | Mid | Mid | High | High | Mid | Mid |
| 3 | Gun | +1Edu | +1Int | Blade | Mid | High |
| 4 | Blade | +1Int | +1Edu | Trav | Gun | +1Edu |
| 5 | +1Edu | Gun | Gun | +1Edu | +1Edu | +1Int |
| 6 | +1Soc | Blade | Blade | +1Soc | +1Int | +1Soc |
| 7 | Trav | +1Soc | | | | |

## CASH TABLE

*CLASS*

| Roll | CAV. | ARTIL. | TECH. | ENG. | REP. | CIV. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2000 | 2000 | 5000 | 10000 | 500 | 1000 |
| 2 | 5000 | 5000 | 10000 | 20000 | 1000 | 5000 |
| 3 | 15000 | 5000 | 10000 | 30000 | 5000 | 10000 |
| 4 | 25000 | 10000 | 20000 | 40000 | 10000 | 20000 |
| 5 | 50000 | 10000 | 30000 | 50000 | 15000 | 40000 |
| 6 | 50000 | 20000 | 40000 | 60000 | 20000 | 50000 |
| 7 | 60000 | 30000 | 50000 | 70000 | 20000 | 60000 |

All services receive normal retirement benefits.

**SERVICE SKILLS**

Cavalry: AFV-1
Artillery: FA Gunnery-1
Artillery Captain: Forward Observer-1
Technician: Computer-1
Engineer: Civil Engineering-1
Reporter: Streetwise-1

**ABBREVIATIONS**

Lieut: Lieutenant
AFV: Armored fighting vehicle skill
Hvy Wpns, Hy Ws: Heavy weapons
Mech: Mechanical
Elec: Electrical
Street: Streetwise
Vehicle: choose a vehicle from *High Guard's* list
FA Gun: Field artillery gunnery
Civ Engr: Civil engineering
Demo: Demolitions
Interro: Interrogation
Nav Arch: Naval Architecture
Gun Ct: Gun combat
Braw: Brawling
Gamb: Gambling
A/R: Air/Raft
J-O-T: Jack of all trades
Recon: Reconaissance
Fw Ob: Forward observer
Comp: Computer
Grav: Gravitics
Med: Medical
Trav: Traveller
Vac St: Vacc suit
Sh Bt: Ship's boat

# BETTER GAMEMASTERING

# TOURNAMENT ROLE-PLAYING

**By Ken Rolston**

The gaming convention FRP tournament is ideally an opprtunity for fantasy gamers to encounter exciting new ideas and styles in gaming and to meet and interact with other experienced FRP gamers. However, I find that many sophisticated gamers avoid convention tournaments, citing disappointing past experiences.

Generally the complaints center on the hack-and-slash mentality often encountered in tournament play, the lack of a self-consistent setting and background for the adventures, the sparse and dubious motivations of the creatures and characters that are encountered (typically attacking blindly until slain), and the gilded-hole nature of the adventures – usually a linear sequence of encounters where one tries to avoid traps and slay guardians to obtain piles of treasure buried in improbable excavations.

Although such adventures can be fun, the experienced campaign player may find little to his taste in such tournaments. A good campaign player will find a tournament rewarding if it emphasizes the role-playing aspect – rather than the wargaming aspect of the game, and if it can suggest a detailed campaign background rather than a disjointed and dubious episode of dungeon delving. I designed "The New Fens of Ralios" as such a tournament for Gencon East and Gencon XIV in the summer of 1981, and I was very much encouraged by the results. This article intends to discuss the designing of FRP tournament games with a role-playing emphasis, using the scenario of "The New Fens of Ralios" tournament as an example to illustrate the features and process of designing such a tournament. For the purposes of discussion I will divide the treatment into the following general areas:

- ☐ careful selection of the style of play,
- ☐ maintaining the flavor of a campaign,
- ☐ developing characters,
- ☐ designing the scenarios and encounters, and
- ☐ judging a role-playing event.

## SELECTING THE STYLE OF PLAY

First you must select a rules system that is congenial to role-playing. All FRP systems include role-playing to some extent, but some systems, either by design or by coincidence, better lend themselves to encouraging role-playing.

Unhappily, *Dungeons and Dragons*, the most popular FRP system, has tended in the past to be connected with dungeon-style adventures, and there seems to be more of a preoccupation with what your character can do rather than what kind of a personality and background he has.

As a general rule, I find the systems that are most likely to produce combat results of instant and irrevocable death are the systems that most encourage role-playing. In such systems the players must rely on means other than combat to achieve their ends, unless they want to constantly expose their lovingly-developed characters to an untimely demise.

In *D&D*, healing and resurrection have come to be routine events, and seldom will a character run the risk of instant death; therefore, a player is more willing to casually expose his character to violence.

In *RuneQuest*, on the other hand, resurrection is indeed a miracle, and with the massive amounts of damage that can be sustained from critical hits and impalement, sudden and final death is a likely prospect for any character who engages frequently in combat.

Also, seldom in *D&D* will surrender or flight be anticipated as responses to a problem; these responses have great possibilities for dedicated role-players (parley, suing for peace, arranging ransoms, etc). In fact, I have found that the way to reduce the amount of time spent with *RQ's* fairly detailed combat system is to assume that players and opponents will often either break off and flee, or offer surrender for a ransom, whenever it seems that someone is likely to die. In general, as combat is seen as a less productive method of achieving goals, so other methods of problem solving (scouting, planning, negotiating, etc.,) are more readily employed.

There is more to selecting a system that encourages role-playing than a review of combat systems, but suffice it to say that I have found *RuneQuest* to my satisfaction over other game systems for role-playing events.

It is perhaps an appropriate comment that *RQ* tournament events seem to attract a small but more sophisticated audience, and hold fair promise for drawing players who can appreciate a role-playing tournament and excel in responding to its challenges.

Once a rules system is selected, assume that you will have players that have never played any FRP game before, or at least this particular system. I have found that, in general, those least familiar with the rules tend to be the most absorbed and dedicated role-players. If a player knows the rules, he will tend to play the game so as to perform acts that will fit within the rules, preferably to his advantage. This preoccupation with the rules will interfere with remaining in character. For example, a player may ask "How many dice do I roll against this creature? My weapon does extra damage vs. large creatures," rather than "How badly does the hulking brute seem to be hurt?" The player may become primarily concerned with making sure the Game Master gives him every advantage entitled him by the rules.

Ideally, players should be able to relax, secure in the ability of the GM to arrive at just and reasonable judgements. In this type of tournament, it is best if the GM is so confident of his knowledge of the rules that he accepts complete responsibility for the game mechanics, freeing the players to submerge themselves in their roles rather than to surface frequently for rule reference and rule discussion.

I believe, in fact, that it is good for a GM in a role-playing tournament to encourage bending the rules to include actions not envisioned by the rulemakers; in such cases, the rule reference must be the *Book of Common Sense*. A player wants to burn down a forest to smoke out an opponent: certainly your system won't cover such an occasion, but it is not such an unreasonable thing for a truly dedicated character to do. The GM should be as flexible as possible to accomodate the actions the players wish to perform, without undue concern for the method of fitting the actions into the rules.

It is also good to avoid standing upon ceremony. I relax strict movement and turn sequencing as much as possible until an actual combat occurs, and even then I may play fast and loose with the published system.

By using techniques that compress time, you can shift attention away from player skills that primarily demonstrate their clever use of the rules and toward those skills that develop the character. A particularly familiar example of this is the assiduous attention paid to searching for traps and secret doors in certain systems. I automatically begin describing the room by saying, "After you have searched the room and found no traps or secret doors . . ." The players understand that I am compressing a relatively uninteresting segment of the action in order to hurry to the crucial action.

There is another aspect of GM style that I would employ in a role-playing tournament, but not, perhaps, in a wargaming tournament. I never hesitate to tell a palyer any information or suggest that he perform any action that his character would know or do routinely as a function of his past experience. If an experienced adventurer kills an opponent, he will later search his body; I will tell the player what is on the body, whether the player mentions the search or not. On the other hand, the failure to make a search is a credible oversight in a green character; I would expect that character to chalk it up to experience if he later regretted his failure to search. This style can come dangerously close to the GM playing the character himself, which is certainly no great service to the player of the character; on the other hand, there is much to be said for not forcing the group of players to suffer the consequences of the uneven play of another player, particularly when the character itself is designed to be a reliable and important character. In general, no action should be omitted that a character surely would perform, whether the player specifies it or not. The GM can hand the player a note, or matter-of-factly announce the results of the action: "As Dural scans the path behind the party, he notices the swift approach of the ambushers."

Another useful feature of GM style is the use of visual aids. I recommend the use of miniatures when possible, or even more elaborate portraits and artwork when it can be managed. In particular, I feel it is impotant to provide maps for the players. One of the most time-consuming and pointless skills of FRP is mapping; the labored verbal descriptions of the areas and contents, the confused puzzling out of these descriptions by the player, and the inevitable crosschecking of the player's map with the GM's word – all this time is simply wasted. I will hear GM's archly assert that mapping is part of the game, but this opinion ignores the fact that the character ought to be able to view the scene from his point of view; wherever possible, the player should see the scene as his character would see it. The least the GM can do is provide maps, and certainly he should not pretend that not giving the map is a virtue – a testing of the player's true FRP skills.

## MAINTAINING THE FLAVOR OF THE CAMPAIGN

Basing your tournament scenarios in the campaign you are currently running or playing in is your best bet. This provides a wealth of information already developed, rather than creating anew the necessary details that may be implied in a short and simple background introduction to the scenario. This will help not only in the initial preparation of the scenario, but also in running the scenario and fielding the occasional searching or oddball question that a player may come up with.

For example, a group may unexpectedly develop a plan that will result in the capture and questioning of an opponent that you never imagined could be captured. Players will sense that the background is organized and detailed if you can readily supply the captured victim's answers, rather than fumble and improvise details that may clash unexpectedly with some already established feature of the scenario.

If you have based your scenario in a pre-existing campaign, it is a simple matter to provide a brief and concise summary of the relevant background details for your scenario; in any event, there should be a background sheet to give the players some information about the scenario setting.

Each player should get a copy of the background sheet, rather than sharing a single sheet for the players to read in turn, or read aloud by a single player or the GM for the whole party. The principle is to make knowledge of the setting as a readily accessible piece of information. This is easiest if each player can reference their own sheet readily, as though it were a part of his memory, rather than having the GM repeat some vague detail, or waiting for another player to finish referencing the sheet for himself.

The background sheet should be concise, but be suggestive of a detailed and integrated campaign. It is said that a novel is like an iceberg: only 10% of it is visible in the text. The rest of it is hidden, part of the author's research and preparation. Your background sheet should be like this iceberg – implying the density of detail by the consistency and fluency of its summary.

That the background sheet be concise is a necessary requirement in a tournament with limited time; the players came to play and interact, not to read your prose.

I have experimented with mailing detailed scenario packs, complete with the pre-rolled characters to be used in the event, and received enthusiastic and positive comments. Ideally this would permit a dedicated role-player to marinate his player-character in his imaginative juices for a while before play, and it gives players a better chance to use the limited tournament time to play rather than reading. It also increases the amount of detail you can put onto the background sheet.

One caution: do not blindly assume the players will have received and read their mailed background sheets. My practical experience, which is admittedly only a small sampling, suggests that perhaps 20% will never receive the package, for some reason, and 20% will lose it or fail to read it for some reason. In these cases, the well-prepared players will tend to dominate play, at least in the beginning, as the others try to catch up with what is going on. This technique is worth more experimentation, and I intend to continue to use it wherever tournaments can be pre-registered.

It is important that you carefully describe your scenario for the convention catalog. State clearly that your event will emphasize role-playing; in this way you may avoid getting players who don't like this sort of adventure, and get a better chance of attracting the specific audience you wish to attract.

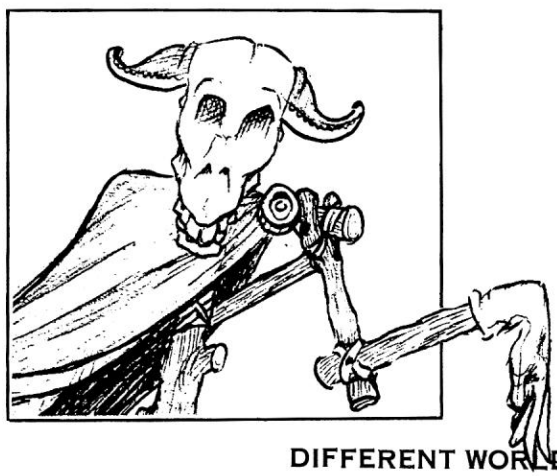
Concerning attracting the right kind of players, I must mention a technique I have only just noticed and must recommend for further testing. One event at Gencon XIV limited registration of players to those who sent a detailed character sketch in beforehand. The event description stated that the players with the best developed characters would be selected for the event. The problem with this is that the GMs have to do quite a bit of additional preparation; and there is a problem of selecting players who may decide later that they cannot participate in the event. I do not know how the experiment came about; I only mention the idea as worth consideration. This technique seems to me to have an excellent chance of producing a group of players that would be a GM's dream to run with; it remains to be seen if it is worth all the fuss.

Another way to give a sense of an ongoing campaign is by giving players a fair summary of the experiences the party members may have shared in earlier adventures (if the party is presumed to have worked together before), and a summary of skills and talents of party members that might be common knowledge to the party. It is likely that the party members would want spells and magic powers the other members have if they had ever shared a combat or encounter experience, and, in order to organize tactics, the leader specifically and the rest of the party generally should have some knowledge of the abilities of the other party members. Also, each member might have some particular loyalty or enmity toward another character that might affect play.

Adding details to the background of the characters makes it easier for the players to imagine themselves as part of a previously-acquainted group. Often in a scenario a player is told that he has adventured with the party for years, with the player himself having absolutely no idea of the specific abilities of the other characters. This is particularly vexing when a leader tries to organize a concerted action, and he is forced to ask each player to give a detailed account of his abilities, so that he can organize the group to best advantage.

Another thing I advise is to plan to place future tournaments in the same campaigns and backgrounds – if possible, using the same characters. Currently we have several characters who provide continuity as opponents from one scenario to the next, and our pre-rolled characters have been the same eight characters at varying stages of experience and maturity. It is particularly entertaining to see a player from last year's tournament returning the next year to play the same character he had before. This also eliminates developing new characters for every scenario, and it also gives the GM a chance to prepare a scenario with a very good idea of the capabilities of the characters.

The following is an example of the background sheet received by each player in the New Fens scenario. We also used this sheet to inform the players of any variant or unusual rules used in the event.



## GENERAL BACKGROUND – THE NEW FENS OF RALIOS

From the journal of Sir Marc of Wilner, traveller and scholar in the land of Ralios:

*The New Fens were formed when the canals of the Dangan Empire fell into ruin and waters spread over the lands. The Fens are 6220 square miles of water and mud between the Soft Hills in the south and a spur of the Rockwood Mountains in the north. About 60% of the area varies with the seasons between shallow water choked with emergent vegetation and tall grass savannah in the dry seasons. The plants are mostly swamp grasses with swamp gum and hard gum trees. The rest of the area is made up of permanent islands and clogged waterways in about equal amounts. The islands are covered with slag pine, grey oak or red hickory, depending on the dryness of the earth. The waterways range between 3 and 10 feet, depending on the season and waterway.*

The city of Seven Isles is located at the mouth of the Nochain River where it empties into the Homeward Ocean. This city grew up on the edge of a swampy wilderness which, in remote history, was drained by a more sophisticated culture. The Dangan Empire flourished where sluggish streams now meander through tall reeds and past scrub pines, along muddy banks overhung by twisted vines and bordered by dense brush. The only intelligent inhabitants of this vast swamp are the newtlings, the Water Forest Folk, and the broos. In additon to the ever-present hazards of travel in such inhospitable terrain, the flora and fauna also represent a constant threat to the well-being of a prospective traveller. This once productive land supported a society that flourished economically and culturally for many years – is it possible that it might once again support agriculture and commerce?

This is the hope of the Neo-Dangans. This group of wealthy and well situated families is descended from the original Dangans, and it is a cherished tradition among them that some day they will return to the sites of the great cities of their ancestors and build anew. Traditions aside, the real political power of the Neo-Dangans has always been considerable, and as quaint as their fantasy may have seemed to many, the pressures that the Neo-Dangans have been placing on the City Council to explore the Fens and study the resources of the area have been effective, and the adroit political maneuverings of the Neo-Dangans have built a powerful group bent on the exploration of the region.

The following is found posted on walls throughout the city:

*Heroes, Aspirants, Cultists, Adventurers!!!*
*Soldiers of Fortune!!!*

*Those who tremble at Peril and Chaos, Read No Further*
*Those who would Strike at the Unclean Broos, Rejoice!!!*

*A Bold Party is Richly Sponsored by a Wealthy and Concerned Citizen*
*True mettle and Valor should not go Untested –*
*Nor shall it go Unrewarded*

*Ask after Noman Ferzios at Geo's Easy Inn*

Several rich Neo-Dangans have contacted the temple of Lhankor Mhy in an attempt to discover the number and distribution of the broos population in the Fens. The Neo-Dangans believe that they can encourage the joint action of the Fens' newtlings and the city's people to drive out or wipe out the broos, with a subsequent division of the territory between the newtlings and the city. The city, in turn, would offer parts of the land (drained and reclaimed) to rich men and poor men alike who might serve in the broos campaign. The Neo-Dangans hope to create an opportunity for a foothold in the draining of the vast Fens, and to establish feudal-style lords and freemen on the drained land so that a political and economic base could be built up with a vested interest in the drained swampland. The Neo-Dangans hope to supplement the profits on their investments with the treasures of the broos and the abandoned Dangan cities, now flooded for centuries. With newtling help, they hope to locate the ancient cities and plunder the submerged vaults of ancient temples and mansions.

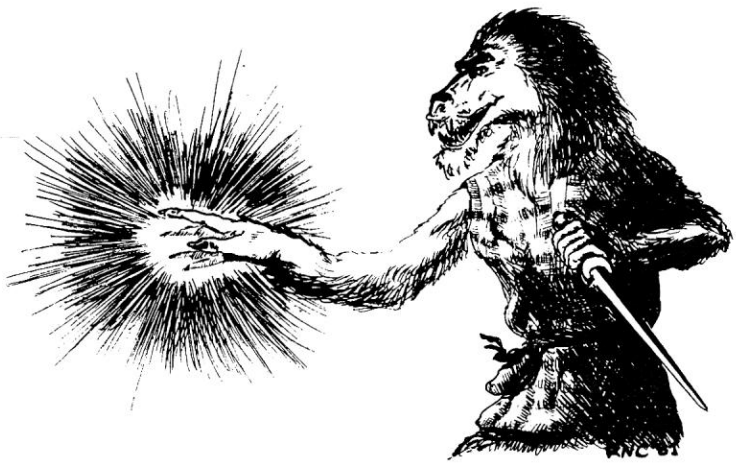
The first step is to obtain more information about the broos in the swamp. The following brief reference from a recent traveller and scholar's text will suggest the difficulties inherent in such research:

*"Nothing is known about the social structure of broos in the Fens. The gaining of the knowledge would be far too dangerous; nobody is particularly interested in it. and most people think that the broos have no social structure to speak of. There are about 5500 broos in the Fens. Most feel that there are about 6000 too many. Their weapons are spear, rock, and club. They build rafts and they will use any boats they can steal (or buy)."*

The scholars of Lhankor Mhy have had little success in obtaining the information that the Neo-Dangans have offered to pay so richly for. Since they greatly desire to profit by the need for such information, they have decided to sponsor an expedition into the Fens to try to fill some of the gaps in the current scholarship about the broos. The sages have no illusions about this being a vacation for aging scholars; they intend to send a varied capable group, well supplied with all the support materials of both mundane and marvelous nature as can be spared.

The mission is to seek any information at all that can be deduced or observed about the life and society of the broos, about their language and folkways, about their culture and their beliefs, anything that might conceivably be turned against the creatures, or at least information that might make the extermination or expulsion of the broos of the Fens any less perilous than it must be. In particular, it is hoped that the great broos-fighter and Storm Bull initiate, Mak Breves, can be contacted at his remote frontier base and enlisted in this dangerous undertaking; without his help, it is unlikely that such an inexperienced party could make much headway in collecting information about the broos.

Each of you has his reasons for joining this expedition, not the least being the small fortune in silver and services offered by the temple of Lhankor Mhy for a successful mission. Also, each of you presumably has some special virtue or talent that should prove useful in this endeavor; the Sages would never have selected you from the numerous adventurers who applied for this undertaking. Nonetheless, each of you have privately wondered if this were not perhaps the wrong job to take at the wrong time; only a fool is so careless with his life to know that it may come to an end suddenly and unpleasantly in a hostile and mysterious wilderness.



## NOTES

The information on the Personal Background Sheet may be verbally conveyed to other players, if it is in character, but do not let another player view your Personal Background Sheet.

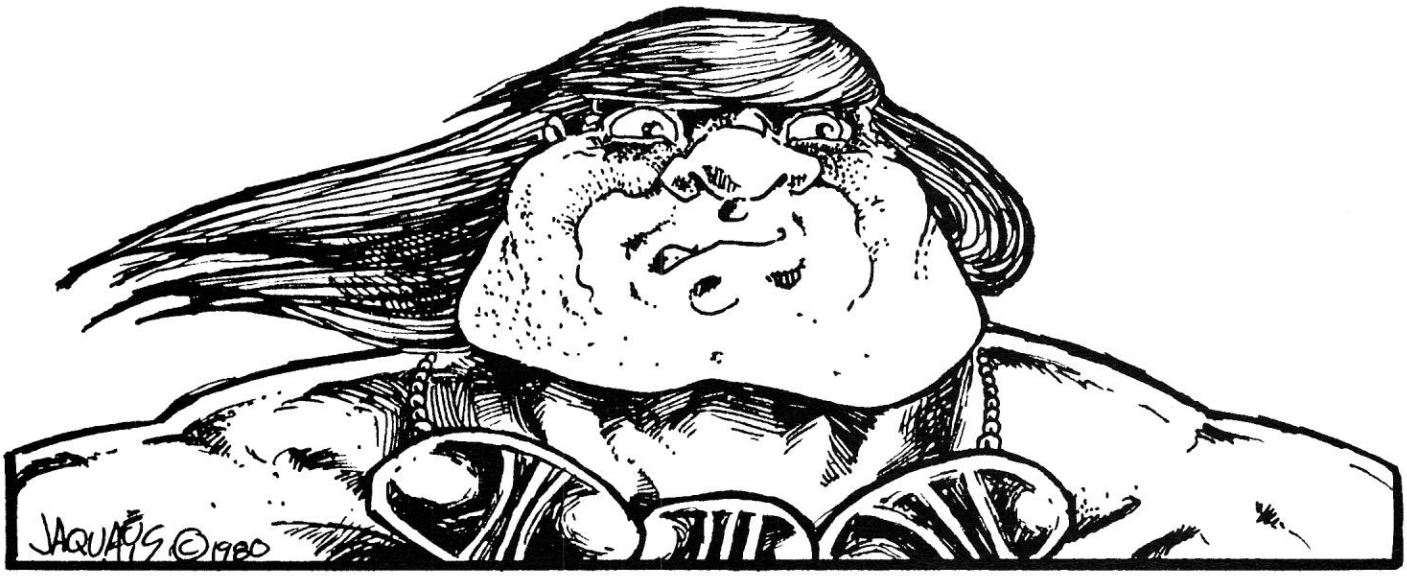
The following optional rules from *Second Edition RuneQuest* are used in this scenario:

a. Swenson encumbrance rule (p.101)
b. Knockback (p.100)
c. Slash (p.100)
d. Crush (p.100)

For combat in water (approx 4ft. deep or more):

a. One must succeed in a swimming ability roll,
b. Short swords, short spears, and daggers all have only a basic 5% to hit,
c. Other weapons and shields are useless or worse,
d. Training in water combat is currently only available from newtlings.

I would like to acknowledge my debt to Marc Willner, who developed the background of the Ralios campaign. This scenario could not have been created without his detailed and intelligent campaign notes.




## DEVELOPING CHARACTERS

Tournaments in general are most easily run if the players are provided with pre-rolled characters. In this way there is no question of what is an acceptable character, no unreasonable advantage given to any player because of assorted grossities, and the GM can gear his adventure more reasonably to the abilities his players have. This is standard practice for most tournaments, but usually the character sheet is little more than a list of the powers the character has to slay and enchant his way to the treasure of the dungeon.

I attach to the player's statistics sheet a prose summary of the character's personal background and basic personality. The Personal Background sheets are for the characters in the New Fens tournament. They were created with a sense of the obligations and affections created by past shared experiences. They contain simple descriptions of the basic motivations and behaviors of the individuals, and suggest personal goals that the player may develop as the basis of his characterization.

## BRUK STINSON

STORM BULL INITIATE AND NATIVE OF THE NEW FENS

Bruk was recruited by a Storm Bull cultist after he had slain six broos he found sleeping in the Fens. The youth came to the temple with the ears of his victims and a serious case of the wasting disease. The temple guardian had him cured and he was subsequently raised as a Storm Bull follower.

Now an initiate, he is well-respected for one so young and weak. He also has a slightly swelled head. He is particularly proud of being a Storm Bull initiate at his tender years, and he does't let people forget it.

The Storm Bull temple normally ignores pathetic anti-Chaos adventures like this but Bruk is shrewd enough to recognize that knowledge about the way the enemy lives is worth more than slaying the odd broo or two. He is also shrewd enough to restrain himself for the most part from stereotypic Storm Bull behavior, but he is not quite self-disciplined enough to completely conceal his contempt for other folk.

From hard experience, Bruk knows that most creatures native to the Fens can outmaneuver and outrun most human pursuers in the swamp. He also knows that any pursuit that divides the party or abandons the boats or rafts is extremely risky.

Bruk feels sure that the best bet for getting the information the party is seeking is to contact the famous Storm Bull warrior, Mak Breveson, who lives deep in the Fens. Bruk has never met Mak, but he is eager to meet this great hero, who Bruk feels will have a lot in common with him; he hopes to strike up a useful friendship and demonstrate his own potential as a future hero of the cult.

## GALAN TRE

GUIDE AND SCOUT

Galan Tre is a fairly experienced guide for traders in the Fens. He is well-travelled and knows the area well. He knows specifically where to find Mak Breves's outpost, a fairly well-known trading post run by a family that trades lodging and keep for Mak's protection (no casual proposition with Mak's reknowned appetite).

Galan is the third son of a well-known tribal chief of the Water Forest Folk, which aids him in dealing with the folk of other tribes in the Fens. He is a smooth talker.

While he is not particularly brave or fearless, he has trained and fought himself to a respectable level of combat skills; however he himself feels to be much better suited for stealth than combat, and he has carefully outfitted himself to avoid being thought of as a hacker. He is a master at stealth, normally moving silently and invisibly through the Fens.

He has encountered broos before, and actually has observed them often, preferring to hide rather than risk fleeing or attacking. He is anything but an expert on broos, but considering the general dearth of knowledge about broos in general, he is considered a relatively knowledgeable fellow on the topic. Galan was specifically contacted by the Lhankor Mhy temple for this mission, and some special offers of training and services have been promised for his help.

Galan has picked up a number of perhaps relevant recent rumors concerning the broo activities in the Fens. The broos seem to be ranging further afield than usual upriver from Seven Isles. There are stories of raids on newtling villages and Water Forest Folk deep in the swamp. Way upstream there's talk of ambushes on Mostali trading posts – very unusual. There are the typical ambushes on traders closer to Seven Isles – nothing new. They tend to lay for you in narrow spots and try to smash the boats with rocks.

Broo raiding parties are usually very small, disorganized, and unimposing, and the 20L bounty on broos horns is nothing to sniff at. (Toast them in a fire, of course, to avoid risk of disease.) Broos seem to get mostly the young and inexperienced adventurers, and not infrequently a careless trader or Water Forest man too greedy to hire guards or guides for his trade goods. Storm Bull types tend to run out and never come back. Watch out for the wilderness: it is a surer killer by far than the denizens of the swamp. Particularly do not let the broos wreck or steal your boat, or you are sunk. Walking is difficult. (Newtlings or Water Forest Folk might be able to swing some help for you in such a jam – if you can find them.)

## EISEN GREFFON

LHANKOR MHY INITIATE AND SCHOLAR

Eisen was apprenticed at an early age to the Grey Sages. He has spent most of his life in the temple, but several years ago he decided to become a free sage, and in his own methodical and deliberate way, he set about preparing himself with training and studies. Five years later (very patient and methodical), he is called upon by his leaders to join this particular party. He feels very unprepared as yet, but he will follow orders and do the best he can.

He is really inexperienced for adventuring, but no one better prepared is available. At least the temple head knows Eisen to be very cautious; he is slow and deliberate to a fault, so they think he will survive. The temple also consoles itself with the thought that they have arranged for an experienced escort.

Eisen was specifically directed to find Mak Breveson, the Storm Bull hero, who perhaps knows the ways of the broos in the Fens best from

frequent contact. Eisen is to get broos captives for questioning with the powerful combination of True Speech and Mind Read. He is specifically to get answers to the following questions:

*Where are other broos? (point at map)*
*How may? (point specifically to each spot on the map)*
*Who leads? (point at map)*
*Who leads all broos? (point to specific groups, then all area on map)*

To put it mildly, current scholarship in the language of the broos is in a rather primitive state. Given those limitations, Eisen is expected to try to extemporize any other questions that seem useful if there is any time left in the spells after the main questions are answered. In fact, the value of the phonetic transcription of the broos speech as Eisen Mind Reads the corresponding thoughts will be as a minor Rosetta stone; this project is of no little value in itself.

The temple head has specifically explained to Eisen that intelligent acknowledgement of failure and a cutting of losses is preferred to going for broke when lives are at stake: he is expected to come back, alive and wiser, rather than dead and a hero.

## FENEL MOREHALL

EISEN'S BODYGUARD AND LHANKOR MHY LAYMAN

Fenel is the fifth son of a poor farmer; his prospects were bleak, so he was apprenticed to Lhankor Mhy and trained as a map-maker, with a minor specialty as an expedition bodyguard for sages doing field work. He has been with Lhankor Mhy for two years, and has some experience in the Fens, unlike most of the temple staff. As a warrior he is hardly imposing, but such is the type of person apprenticed to Lhankor Mhy in this area – all the real tough guys find much more active service in other endeavors. Fenel is a loyal and devout worshipper, and he can be counted on to look out for the temple interests. In an emergency, he could use the True Speech and Mind Read spells (he knows the necessary pattern), but his ignorance of broos' speech makes him a poor second choice.

Fenel is specifically assigned to guard Eisen, and takes all commands directly from Eksen. Fenel is well-suited to his master; his extreme prudence, particularly in protecting Eisen Greffon, may be interpreted by some as cowardice, but unwillingness to engage in combat is only common sense for Fenel. He understands specifically that he is expendable in the protection of Eisen; Fenel accepts this resolutely, and expects that were he forced to sacrifice himself for his master, he would certainly receive his reward in heaven for his devoted service, and would expect a swift return to the eternal circle of life and death. Fenel's selection as a bodyguard, in light of his poor combat abilities, is a testament to his devotion and dependability. He is very intense in his faith, and he tends at times to spout comforting homilies when confronted with menace. Nonetheless, with all things considered, it is quite remarkable that Fenel is still alive.

Fenel is very specifically directed to avoid heroic stunts that risk human life – "he who fails and runs away may live to succeed another day."

## BRUDE NEWHOUSE

SARTAR EXILE AND FORMER MERCENARY AND OFFICER

Brude escaped the sacking of Boldhome and the collapse of Starbrow's ill-conceived rebellion, and is an experienced career soldier in the matter of losing battles and hopeless endeavors. He is a confirmed survivor type, especially after serving as a captain in Starbrow's haphazardly organized army of the Rebellion.

He is a student of inflicting the greatest possible damage for the minimum cost, followed by retreat, regrouping, and rethinking. He scales his tactical objectives carefully to this philosophy, and though he favors clever and unusual plans, he resolutely avoids risky ones. He is used to command and has been generally appreciated by his troops, whom he has brought out of many futile and desperate situations alive without the stain of dishonor or cowardice. He is too prudent to be 'brave,' but he is acknowledgedly fearless.

Brude is essentially in this expedition for the money; he is particularly interested in helping his cousin earn a stake to open his own business in Seven Isles. Brude is very close to Dural, his cousin and companion for many years, and may be unconsciously favoring him when deployment and risks are handed out. Brude is neither sentimetal nor nostalgic about Sartar, but he has a reasoned dislike of Lunar Empire ambitions.

Brude expects that his experience fits him well to command this expedition, fully understanding that the Lhankor Mhy should set the overall objectives, and that he should rely heavily on the advice of the adventurers who are more experienced in this terrain and culture. He is a big fan of the staff conference, and he prefers discussing objectives, alternatives, back-up plans, and regrouping contingencies at least briefly before taking any important action.

## DURAL NEWHOUSE

SARTAR EXILE AND EXPERIENCED MERCENARY

Dural is Brude's cousin on his mother's side. They were not close as youths, but Dural was 'drafted' into Brude's fighting unit during Starbrow's Rebellion.

Dural is a merchant by trade and experience; in the militia he saw little action, and afterward he returned to a peaceful life as an animal trainer and vet. However, when drafted into Brude's unit, Dural became an experienced soldier. Dural has a great deal of natural talent in combat, but he has had no systematic training in tactics and strategy, and he is quite content to follow Brude's directions in these matters. Dural feels he owes his life to Brude for his survival of the ill-fated Rebellion, and he is thankful to Brude for the wise selection of Seven Isles as a home in exile.

Dural is trying to get together enough money to stake a small training business and pay for the expensive Xenohealing 6 spell. He lost everything in the escape from Sartar, but he is fairly pragmatic about his loss of country and fortune. He isn't overly nostalgic or sentimental about Sartar, but he hates the Lunar empire and its representatives.

Dural has had a trained shadow cat for three years, and he has managed to teach the beast to respond to a list of about twenty commands. The beast is very loyal to him and unusually obedient – a testament to Dural's way with animals.

Here is a list of the twenty commands Black, the shadow cat recognizes:

attack, heel, point, hunt, track, fetch, sleep, stay, climb, follow, quiet, hide, good, bad, watch, play, dinner, stop, go (to a pointed spot), okay.

## MISHA ELDUKFO

SARTAR EXILE (DUCK RACE) AND EXPERIENCED MERCENARY

Misha fled with her family to Pavis after the Sack of Boldhome and the fall of Sartar. She is the daughter of a warehouse clerk who was bookish and a student of Old Duckish traditions. With her father and brother she joined the militia of Pavis; in the fall of Pavis her brother was killed, her father captured and never heard from again, and her mother simply disappeared. She escaped with the flood of refugees south on the River of Cradles. Her swimming ability earned her way as a boatman; when she arrived in the City of Seven Isles she joined the Humakt temple and lives in the duck ghetto of the city.

She has succeded in earning a living as a mercenary guarding trade missions into the Fens; in the process she has picked up a little newtling speech and valuable wilderness experience. Misha has also learned from the newtlings the skill of swimming and fighting in specially-designed reed-and-linen armor.

This is just another guard mission for her, with the exception of the unusual objective and potentially rich reward. Misha tends to be bright and pleasant when you know her well, but basic distrust of other races, the experience of prejudice, plus the unhappy fate of her family and her exile in a strange land, tend to make her taciturn and brooding. She is extremely sensitive about slurs; explicit, hinted, or implied, on duck culture, and she is very traditional and conservative in her cultural observances (example, Old Duckish, practically a dead language except among scholars and priests), she has studied quite a bit, and she is well known in the duck ghetto as a scholar, often acting as a lay preacher for Sartar duck refugees.

## SKYFISH MOSHLU

NATIVE OF THE FENS (NEWTLING RACE)

Skyfish is a son of a newtling village 'priest' (that is, an initiate in both the cult of the Great Newt and the River Cult). He left the village to learn River Cult skills at the temple in Seven Isles. He has a deal at the temple, where he works full time teaching swimming and guarding temple functionaries on their regular river trips; in return, he gets free training. One of the cult's Rune Priests is a newtling, who is fond of the youth and who pulls strings and helps him out with a little money from time to time.

Skyfish hates broos, as does his temple, which suffers attacks from broos on pilgrimages, and he generally detests the broos pollution of the waters of the Fens. Personally, Skyfish would like to see the expansion of newtling territory at broo expense, but he is aware of the politics of the Neo-Dangans, and he shares the temple's desire to keep informed of any plans to drain the Fens.

He is also suspicious of the Red Mud Sharks, or the Lunar backers, which has been vocally promoting an alliance of Seven Isles with the Lunar Empire, in the interests of promoting the expansion of Seven Isles into the areas once settled by the Dangan Empire. In short, the

Lunar-supporting faction in Seven Isles also has ambitions that might endanger the Fens habitat and residence of the newtling and Water Forest Folk cultures. The River Cult temple has released him on this assignment partially as an agent to keep the temple aware of any attempts by outside parties to interfere with the present cultures in the Fens, and Lhankor Mhy was very happy to get him, for a newtling is an unfamiliar sight in human culture, much less a newtling who can speak a little Tradetalk (devilishly hard for them to pronounce because of their anatomy).

As a youth in his home village, Skyfish was known as quite a wrestler, and he also is well schooled in the newtling art of water combat. None can fight and swim as effectively as a newtling, which is a particular advantage considering the broos apparent reluctance to swim. Skyfish also has particular knowledge of the natural history of the flora, fauna, and topography of the Fens, as well as being personally familiar with the environment.

The roles were created with opportunities for conflicts of style and interest between player-characters. This is not intended to disrupt the party or set members upon one another; that kind of dungeon can also be fun, but it is not to everyone's taste. Here the overriding assumption is that the party is smart enough to realize that there must be cooperation to ensure survival, and the problem or conflicts among the party members will simply have to be worked out from time to time.

For example, one of the most charming dialogues took place in a corner of the room as I was attending to the scouting activities of a group of players. Eisen Greffon, essentially a scholar with an itch to get into the action, was engaged in a heated discussion with Fenel Morehall, his bodyguard, who interpreted his duties to mean that Eisen should avoid any risk of injury. These players were so thoroughly into their roles that they did not need my attention to play the scenario; they were solving a problem as serious and meaningful to them as the typical shootout with goblins and evil magic users, while I was free to attend to more typical FRP judging matters with a small group of players.

In fact, I noticed that during periods when I had to handle the actions of a single scout or small group, often a time of deadly boredom for other players, it was possible for the players to continue playing by themselves, trying to handle the conflicts implied in the background sheets or presented by the scenario. For me such play approaches the ideal: FRP without a GM because one is not needed.

I also tried to create within the roles an implied division of responsibilities for the success of the mission. For example, Brude was anticipated to be the tactical leader, in charge of organizing plans for combat or maneuvers. Galan was expected to take the responsibility for scouting; Eisen was expected to function as formal custodian of the party's goals, as the representative of the employer. There roles help divide the responsibility and privilege of the leader.

In FRP the leader of a party often gets to do the most playing, at least in the sense that he does most of the talking and often most of the planning. I prefer situations when the center stage changes hands, according to the situation. This keeps everybody equally busy and equally entitled to regard the success of the party as partly their doing. Much as I enjoy a fine player organize and drive a group of submissive players to a great achievement, I prefer that the achievement be more modest and more equally shared.

After each player has had a chance to read his personal background sheet and some time to think about it, I believe that it is a good idea to have some provision for each player to introduce himself to the other players of the scenario. This is most appropriate in a scenario like New Fens, where the player-characters had presumably never met one another before.

I arranged for the first encounter to be the meeting of the party at the docks to obtain any necessary equipment, meet one another and arrange how they would divide their forces into the small boats they were equipped with. Though there is less justification for such group introductions in a scenario where the players are presumed to have known each other from past adventures, nonetheless I find it is a good way for a player to ease himself into the problems of characterization, and helps to formally fix in his mind that he speaks, not as a player, but as the character.

**DESIGNING THE SCENARIO**

There are great many things to consider in the preparation of the scenario, but the primary thing is to prepare the specific details for the audience you have in mind. Many GMs prepare scenarios with little thought for the kind of players he is likely to have; consequently the players and the GM are often disappointed in the results of the adventure, with the player unimpressed with the scenario and the GM critical of the quality of his players.

An important decision is how many players you want in each session. I have judged events with anywhere from five to eight players, and have played in events with up to twelve characters. Personally I tend toward the figure of eight players per session, because it works for me. Sometimes with small numbers of players I will find that the group does not reach critical mass – that somehow there isn't enough density to bring the group to life. On the other hand I often see players getting very little action in a large group with a couple of assertive members.

Instead of recommending a specific number of players, I prefer to suggest that you design the scenario with a degree of flexibility in the number of players necessary to complete the task. In a practical sense, this will keep you out of hot water if someone fails to show for the event. Furthermore, prepare an extra pre-rolled character pr two, and have some idea of how they might fit into the scenario – in case an old friend or a particularly interesting person would like to play, but was not able to register for the event. It is often a good idea to be able to accomodate these unexpected guests.

How long should the event be? I have run events in three hours, but found them too rushed and unsatisfying, and found that players find it frustrating; often feeling they have just hit their stride when it is over. Four hours is my preference; I still get complaints about lack of time to complete the adventure, but I believe it is a good idea to leave them wanting more, rather than leaving them exhausted and gamed-out. In many cases I'm sure longer event times would be useful; I've sat through some excellent marathons in my time, but in general I believe the level of play, of GM and player, tends to go down after four hours. I have toyed with the idea of running two consecutive four-hour sessions of the same scenario on successive days, but scheduling one set of players for two days is much too difficult to consider.

In general terms, try to keep the scenario simple enough to be played almost without reference to notes, and certainly with no reference to any game system text. My greatest problem as a GM is the time-consuming and demoralizing search for a specific reference in my notes concerning some detail of the scenario. Because I believe in a wealth of detail for my scenarios, I find this particular piece of advice difficult to follow, but in general I believe it pays to keep your notes spare and open to improvisation. You may spend a good deal of time trying to anticipate every event, but I think it is best not to try to confine these careful anticipations to your notes: count on

your memory to retain those details that are absolutely important, and be prepared to accept your forgetting a few details in the midst of play.

It is best to try to de-emphasize the importance of combat in resolving the scenario's conflicts and emphasize other aspects of problem solving.

For example, let scouting and information gathering be important tools to achieve their goals. I believe it is important to emphasize the role of useful information magic, like detect and augury spells. These features will not of themselves insure that you will have a role-playing adventure; these means can be employed as usefully by a skilled wargamer as by a dedicated role-player; however, in general I find that as the amount of actual combat goes down, the degree of careful attention to character roles increases.

It is also a good idea to make character survival a strong criteria for quality of play. In a practical sense, it would be a rare character that was as indifferent to the prospect of death as the average FRP character, and it is not unreasonable to make survival an important goal for a character. It is also a good idea to have some feature of the scenario that encourages prudent retreat before overwhelming forces. The party should be placed in situations where it is only common sense to run away, and likewise I think the opponent should consider retreat when threatened with serious casualties.

To maintain a fairly rapid pace of play, it is a good idea to use a cinematic sense of compression of the events from one important encounter to another. A small number of major encounters is better than a larger number of small and sketchy encounters. Once you have developed a scene or a set, or presented some action, let the party have some time to play with it. If you frequently change the scene, you will spend an inordinate amount of time trying to set the scene and relatively less time playing it.

Make the opponents few and intelligent rather than many and weedy. One of the worst mistakes in my original scenarios was presenting large armies of relatively weak opponents; it takes a very long time to resolve combats between such masses of opponents and the characters, while contact with a single respectable opponent is very quickly resolved, leaving more time for role-playing. Also when you face a single, very imposing opponent, the impulse is to parley and negotiate before you embark on a very perilous attempt to join combat with him.

Such methods of resolving conflicts provide excellent opportunities for role-playing. If the opponent is reasonable and intelligent, it is often possible to achieve your goals without risking slaughter.

For example, in one *D&D* tournament I designed, I sent some very low level characters up against a pit fiend. They knew they were outclassed so they didn't even try to attack it. (That is, the smarter players didn't attack it, and the ones who did attack it regretted their impudence.) Instead they attempted to make a deal with it – an interesting piece of role-playing, since both a lawful-good cleric and a paladin were present.

Be sure your opponent's actions are well motivated. It is difficult to seriously role-play a character if the opponents act in silly and unreasonable ways. Slaying a dum goblin that attacks for seemingly no reason is a lot different than confronting a desperate goblin who believes he is protecting his home and family, but also believes that he has little chance against the giant wielder of greatswords and magic.

Here is perhaps some room for player compassion. It is an ancient concept that there is more honor in conquering an opponent that you can respect, rather than in slaying hoards of cheesy gooks; in this sense it is good to have intelligent opponents at least as capable as the party, and preferably with at least some ambiguous sense of virtue about them. Even the lowliest slime in my adventure is ennobled by some very plausible and sympathetic motivation. In such a case, it is possible to accept the surrender of an opponent with some sincerity.

If you do have intelligent opponents, it is best to prepare for them a list of likely tactics and responses to conflicts that you may anticipate developing in the course of the scenario. I recommend this because I often find that, as the GM, I do not have as much time to carefully consider how an intelligent opponent would deal with the party, simply because I am too busy answering questions and running the scenario. Therefore I find it helpful to have done a little thinking and planning beforehand, so that the opponent won't be unreasonably easy to overcome.

For example, in New Fens the party discovers that the guide and legendary hero they have come to consult is under siege in a small tradepost. They manage to get a character into the tradepost to confer with him and ask for help in coordinating their efforts to try to relieve the siege. Since Mak is a hero, his plan ought to be fairly intelligent. So I had prepared ahead of time a group of plans, each depending on a number of variables, that Mak would offer if the party won through to him. Besides saving time this resulted in a more credible adventure.

If you are considering a wilderness adventure, consider the setting as though it were as important as a character. Prepare the weather ahead of time; have it support and intensify the mood you seek to achieve, but certainly remember how it will affect the party. In the New Fens one of the encounters took place in pouring rain: a more dedicated role-player might have a number of interesting responses to this environment, but one thing was sure – they were not going to burn the forest down, and they were not surprised that they were having a hard time following the day-old tracks of their quarry.

In wilderness adventures it is a good idea to reward real world knowledge whenever possible. For example, when a player observed that streams are always deeper on the outside of their curve, I granted him an easy passage through a section of the river where I had intended to require boating rolls against fumbles and mishaps.

**JUDGING A ROLE-PLAYING EVENT**

This is a knotty issue: I must admit to being still in search of a better way to judge such a tournament. I am personally a bit uncomfortable about the notion of judging FRP tournaments and awarding prizes. One of the most attractive features of FRP has been that it is a game you do not play to win; you play to enjoy and share the experience with others. Adding the element of competition between players is inevitable, but also is in some sense regrettable. I must admit to the thrill of winning a tournament. I still cherish the plaque that proclaims me 'Best Player,' and I run tournaments and give prizes hoping to give some player that marvelous feeling, but it is not without reservations that I set about the task of judging who is the 'best player.' There are, nonetheless, a few observations and recommendations I would like to make.

Most importantly, if you are running a competitive event which will be judged primarily on role-playing, advertise very specifically in your catalog description, so that any registrant who comes specifically with the hope of bearing away the garland will know specifically what virtues he will be expected to display. An excellent wargaming-style FRP player may be disgruntled to find his talents unappreciated in the scenario you have prepared.

Currently our gaming group uses a judging system that attempts to weigh several different components of gaming excellence. We rank players on a scale of one to five in each of five categories: role-playing, gamesmanship, individual play: strategy and problem solving, achievement of party objectives, and GM's subjective ranking.

'Gamesmanship' is a measure of how well the player plays the game: is he considerate of others? Does he observe the conventions of FRP games? Is he orderly and organized?

'Individual play' is a measure of how well he uses the resources of his character to help the party to achieve its goals, and of how well he perceives and approaches the problems and challenges he faces.

'Party objectives' is a relative estimate of the group efficiency in achieving the tasks assigned in the scenario; customarily this is the same score for all players in a single session, and is simply used to recognize good team play, as the members of an efficient team will score better than the members of an inefficient team.

Finally, 'GM's subjective ranking' is a relative ranking of the player by the judge against all the players he has ever faced in a tournament.

These five areas rated from one to five yelds a raw score from five to twentyfive, which is further modified by the awarding of bonus points.

Where the GM feels that a particular action or comment by a player is particularly brilliant or dim-witted, he may award a bonus point. These points are not added into the score; they are only used for breaking ties. This system does not really reduce the high degree of subjectivity involved in judging, but at least gives the judges and players a specific guide to what behaviors will be considered.

Before each event we give the players a brief sheet describing our scoring system, giving specific examples of the kinds of behaviors we will be looking for. I believe this is an important obligation to the player; many times I have been in tournaments, listening to the announcement of the winning players, when I realize that I have no idea what the judge has based his judgement on. In the event that the player has specifically entered the tournament to try to win, it is only fair to be explicit about what he would have to do to win.

The following is an excerpt from one of our group's handouts to players describing our judging system. It describes what we mean by good role-playing.

**DEFINITION OF GOOD ROLE-PLAYING**

Good role-players limit themselves to actions consistent with their character's class and personality. They remain in character throughout the adventure and carefully distinguish between what is said as a player and what is said through the personality of the character. They may add theatrical flourishes to their characterizations, but they do not grandstand at the expense of the party's achievement or pleasure. They try to limit their perspective of the adventure to the given point of view of the character, seeing events through the eyes of the character and not through the more privileged view of the player.

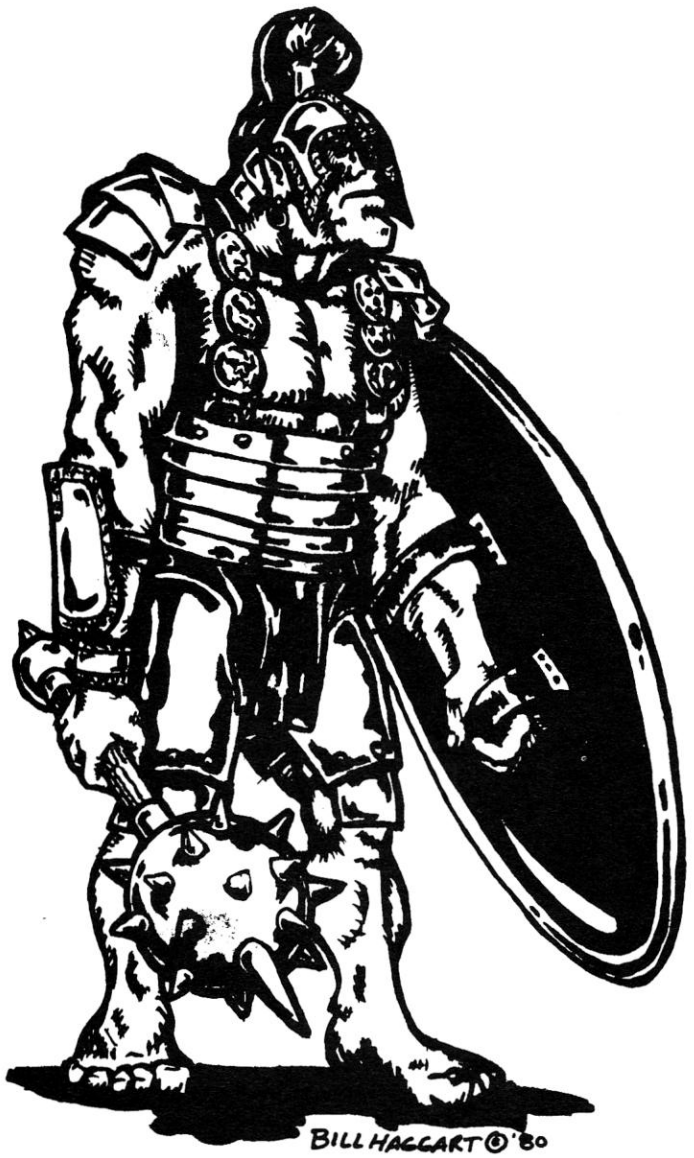
Another technique we found useful is having a second judge available to take notes and discuss his observations with the primary judge. This is most practical in the later rounds of an elimination tournament when there are judges at liberty. The responsibility of the final assessment should still remain with the head judge, particularly in an event where many notes may be passed to the judge and where characters try to keep some of their actions secret: in such an event, the GM may be the only person who really knows what is going on. The second judge is there simply to provide something of a record of what has happened, to refresh the GM's memory on details he may call for, and to offer the head judge his perspective on the scenario.

One very valuable tool we have used is the player self-evaluation. At the end of the scenario, the player is given five minutes to complete this form. These are the questions we ask them to answer.

a. Specifically describe what you feel were the party's objectives.
b. How well do you feel the party achieved these objectives?
c. Specifically describe what you felt were your character's objectives.
d. How well do you feel the character achieved his goals?
e. Give an example of both the most effective thing and the least effective thing you did as a player.

During the time that these are being filled out, the players are asked to remain silent and not to consult with the judge or other players. During this five minutes of quiet, the judge begins his difficult task of judging the players. By the time the players have finished the questions and have handed them to him, the judge has already begun to form his opinions. These sheets often confirm the judge's impressions, or call to mind significant details that the judge may have forgotten, or display an understanding of what went on that may at times even be better than the judge's. At the very least it gives the player a chance to make a case for the quality of his play, and more importantly, the player is asked to consider how well he played. This self-evaluation may be helpful in making a player more aware of his strengths and weaknesses, to help him consider if he might want to change or to add to his current skills.

After the judge has had a chance to review the self-evaluations and his own notes, and has determined the scores and the




winners, usually within ten minutes of the end of play, he then explains his scoring and judgements to the players, giving specific examples to illustrate his judgements.

Here the judge also explains the scenario, describing what the designers had expected the players to achieve and also describing any features the players might have missed or misunderstood. Discussing the scoring is an uncomfortable but necessary obligation to those being judged: they deserve to know specifically what criteria was used for judging and on what basis judgements were arrived at.

In general, players are already aware of their weaknesses and errors; where they are unaware of their weaknesses, most players take the criticism thoughtfully. The tone of your delivery is very important: I never mention a player weakness without trying to preface it with a comment on a strength. I try to make it very clear that I do not consider myself the final arbiter of quality play, and I try to establish my purpose as not to condemn a player, but to offer him a look at my perceptions of his strengths and weaknesses. It is best to set the whole judging process in perspective for the players: the main point is that they (hopefully) enjoyed themselves playing – that they found the scenario intriguing and challenging, and that they enjoyed playing with other players and with their GM. The judging and competition should be at most a secondary concern: the only virtue of adding the component of competition is that it encourages players to play at their best, and presumably, it is most enjoyable to play with a group of players playing at their very best.

In the matter of prizes, it is very important to make the prizes appropriate to the tone of your gaming style. In general I advise against offering loot, because it adds a mercenary component to the play that may be distracting from the main purpose of having fun. Make the prize a badge of honor, or a garland, rather than tons of lead or hard cash. If at all possible, I believe the prize should be as personal as possible: perhaps a hand-painted miniature, or a t-shirt, or a plaque, or some publication from a gaming company that you highly respect. If possible, make the item distinctive from other objects that can be usually bought in a game store: perhaps get the item signed by a game designer or author, or, as is often possible at a gaming convention, have the author or designer personally bestow the item upon the winner. Michael Stackpole of Flying Buffalo personally handed the winner of one of our *Tunnels & Trolls* tournaments a personally inscribed copy of his latest publication; you will find many designers and authors willing to do such a thing, and though you consider yourself too sophisticated to appreciate such an event, imagine the feeling of a young person who has just won his first tournament, who meets the author of familiar materials he has always used, formerly a distant and lofty figure, now personally congratulating the budding FRP fan on his play. This is perhaps the moment that justifies tournament competition; with the proper spirit it can be a fine and noble thing.

Finally, in considering judging an event, don't forget to judge yourself and your scenario. Our group hands out a questionnaire requesting comments on the play of the GM and on the strengths and weaknesses of the scenario. It is possible to learn a great deal from these evaluations as you sit long after the tournament is over and ponder the comments of the players. Theirs is an interesting and useful perspective; since they are your audience, it behooves you to pay attention to their compliments and criticisms, and to take them into account when you are preparing your scenario for the next tournament.

As you look over the comments, observations and recommendations I have made concerning designing tournament FRP games that emphasize role-playing, I hope that the foremost impression that will remain is the intention to help judges (referees) design tournaments that will be enjoyable for the players, and to help players recognize what might be desirable features in a tournament game.

The article is presented in the hope that more judges will prepare scenarios that emphasize role-playing, because I believe such scenarios can be very satisfying for players and judges alike. I also hope that some players may consider becoming judges – to try to develop their own events to run at conventions. There is always a need for more quality events: role-playing games are growing exponentially in popularity, and there is a great demand at conventions for judges and events.

I'm hoping that some of you will lean toward emphasizing role-playing, in the hopes that I may overhear more satisfied gamers sitting in the snack bar at big conventions, loudly exclaiming, "You know, I had a ball in that scenario, but I don't think I ever swung my weapon at an opponent, nor did I take a single point of damage; but, oh, did we con those rascals out of their socks . . . "

RQ/GLORANTHA CULT

# CALADRA AND AURELION

By Charles Huber

## MYTHOS AND HISTORY

### BEFORE TIME

When Lodril, brother of the Sun, came to battle Chaos, his spear-form plunged deep into the Earth. There he knew Gata, embraced her and loved her in his own violent fashion.

When Lodril at last erupted forth in consuming flame, he led Ash, Earthshaker, and others in Gata's defense. But though his violent power was great, there were those mightier still – after receiving a grave wound from Storm Bull, he was conquered, enslaved, and imprisoned by Argan Argar, son of Night.

As Gata bore Lodril's children within her she feared for them. Many gods had already fallen to the power of Death, and Gata would not let these, her last children, dare his awful touch. Thus they were cast into a deep sleep, passing through the Gods War and the lesser Darkness, far from the tumult and destruction above – fiery Caladra, who had inherited her father's element, was tended by the Mostali who depended upon the fire of Lodril for their craft; Aurelion was watched over by his half-sister, Asrelia, who whispered the lore of the wealth within the Earth into his dreaming mind.

Though deep was the Twins' slumber, no part of the world could fail to notice when the Spike exploded. Aurelion awoke first, reveling in his strength. Sensing the agony of Earth under the attack of Chaos, he rose to the surface to find great areas of land being drowned beneath the Chaos-tormented Sea. Enraged, he hurled up the massive bulwark of cliffs called Aurelion's Breakwater. Behind its shelter, refugees gathered and gratefully accepted the young god's leadership against the horrors of Chaos.

Caladra woke sensing her brother's battle. Emulating her father, she erupted from the Earth in fire and wrath, destroying a massed Chaos army in a torrent of molten rock. But unlike her father, she was not deeply tainted with violence. Seeing the destruction all around her, she took pity on the mortals who cowered and fled from her power. She overcame their fear and offered them protection.

Despite the vast distance between them, the Twins were aware of one another and the call of kinship could not be denied. Each set out on the epic Search (which gives form to much of their worship today).

After great travail, they found each other beneath Meeting-hall Mountain. So great their joy, the Twins resolved to share ever after their elemental natures – Fire Within Earth. And so they fought and labored together, inseparably, until Time began and beyond.

Their labors were many and difficult – with Yelm dead, Yelmalio wounded, and Lodril bound, there were few left to fend off the dark and cold. With Ernalda and all her children in mourning for Flamal, even fewer Earth gods were available to fend for the world. Some of their efforts were failures – as when they climbed the pillar of ash and smoke to beseech the aid of lofty Dayzatar (who rebuffed them), and when their fires failed to pierce the glooms of the Underworld in an effort to find Flamal for their sister Ernalda. And not even their combined power could free their father Lodril from the obsidian palace of Argan Argar.

Despite the setbacks the Twins did garner several successes. They helped the humans reclaim areas devastated by Lodril, where things of Chaos still fear to tread, showing people how to make the lands more fertile and productive.

Deep beneath the Earth the Twins sought for a way to dispel the Great Darkness, and there they found the buried remnants of the Green Age. Fused and blackened, these artifacts still had the Heat and Light of the young Sun locked in rock and liquid. Caladra and Aurelion taught mortals their use. Moreover, they took some of the lifeless carbon, poured their power on it – restoring its potencies – and made Diamond, the hardest and most brilliant of all minerals. The Mostali seized upon this new substance with joy and fashioned the Diamond Goblet (from which evolved the Diamond Dwarves).

Though nothing less than the return of the Sun could end the Darkness, humans and Mostali still honor and revere the many gifts of Fire within Earth. Not so the Aldryami, for though the gifts of the Twins helped spare the living forests, the Aldryami considered the burning of *firebone* (coal) and *earthblood* (oil) to be desecration of their dead. And though Aldrya shares the Twins' love of Fertility, her emnity for them is little less than for Oakfed himself.

### SINCE TIME BEGAN

In recent times, the cult has had a following in only a few localities. It was not always thus: its strength spread far and wide, especially in the Middle Sea Empire of Jrustela and the coastal region of Slontos. By the end of the Second Age, many powers were toppled, and the Sea arose to smash Jrustela and drown Slontos. All the fire of Caladra and Aurelion could not resist the Sea's quenching force.

The three great holy places – Breakwater, Meetinghall, and the Vent (where Caladra emerged) – survived intact, as did a few other islands and mountain fastnesses. Though temples far inland were undisturbed by the cataclysm, many were cut off from the leadership of the main temples. Many of the lesser ones did not survive.

Though the cult today is powerful near great holy places, and has reseeded itself in many areas (especially where other Fire cults are strong), the cult never wholly recovered. In many places it is at most a rumor of the old power. Regions where it sought to expand often reacted with fear rather than welcome at the thought of reawakening old volcanic fires.

Despite its up-and-down fortunes, the cult persevered in colonizing the old volcanic wastes, purifying and reclaiming Chaos-blasted lands. Since the end of the Second Age disasters, almost as much effort has gone to reclaiming Sea-drowned land.

### LIFE AFTER DEATH

Aurelion and Caladra promise that the souls of the faithful will be drawn beneath the Earth to the Pools of Liquid Light. If an individual's goals in life are unrealized, the soul will be purified by Fire, strengthened by Earth and "erupted" back into the world for another cycle of birth and death. Those who have found their Soul-Sibling and achieved sufficient development will be received into the Diamond Halls to dwell in Harmony with the Twins and work toward the final triumph of Sky and Earth.

It is generally believed that a pair of Twin Priests who advance the cause of the cult will be reincarnated as twin brother and sister, and will continue to do so (unless they backslide) until they achieve the Diamond Halls. It is also known that on occasion a cultist will be sent back as an Allied Spirit to aid a Rune Lord partner.

Resurrection is tacitly allowed. Though it doesn't fit directly into the cult's scheme of things, success in resurrection is considered sign enough of the god's approval.

Lay Members and Initiates are generally buried within rock, or if that is not possible, cremated. Acolytes, Rune Lords, and Twin Priests will always seek to have their bodies taken to a temple with an active lava pool (so their souls may be more directly conveyed to the Gods).

### RUNIC ASSOCIATION

Caladra and Aurelion are notable in several respects: as two gods in one cult, they share four Runes. Heat and Earth, joined together, were inherited from their parents. The Twins derived Fertility from their efforts to restore the lands Lodril burnt and smothered. The Twins acquired Harmony during their reunion.

## NATURE OF THE CULT

### REASON FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE

So long as the deep fires of earth surge forth, the Twin Priests have a convincing argument for the importance of the cult. It provides reassurance to those living near volcanos (without the cruder propitiatory aspects of the cult of Lodril). The cult also provides important service in restoring fertility and life-giving potential to the earth, especially where Chaos has blighted it.

The cult also provides a powerful symbol of unity in the cosmos. The vertical unity symbol of the volcano comes from the Fire that reaches the roots of the Earth, which is hurled up to the very gates of the Sky: the Cosmic Pillar, with knowledge of Fire and Earth to the service of the faithful.

There is, too, the cult's emphasis on Harmony and the sibling-bond, which orders the horizontal unity of society. Though the cult teaches that each being has one unique kindred soul somewhere, it also teaches that this unique harmony cannot be realized unless one strives for harmony within the broader brother-and-sisterhood of society.

### SOCIAL/POLITICAL POSITION AND POWER

The cult and its priests are influential wherever the gods' presence is manifest. They tend to assume leading roles in the community whenever they can. Away from the old volcanic temples, the cult's presence is that of a pioneering group, small in numbers, and its influence often depends on the personal reputation of the Lords or Priests in the area.

### PARTICULAR LIKES AND DISLIKES

The double elemental focus of the cult causes it to align itself more strongly than most along elemental lines. The Twin Priests are, naturally, friendly to nearly all of their fellow Fire or Earth cultists. Nearly all areas where Caladra and Aurelion are strong will also support a number of Sun Dome cultists, and one or more of the other Earth cults. In particular, the cult of the Twins is one of the few human-dominated cults with strong ties to the Mostali. The Twins rule the volcanic fires the dwarves use in their forges, and though most humans have turned to the Lowfires, the dwarves still treasure and use extensively the gifts of *firebone* and *earthblood* in their craft and daily lives. The Mostali say that Caladra was among Mostal's lovers, and the Diamond Dwarves particularly honor them.

The exact opposite reaction holds with the elves. The Twin Priests claim that the cult bears no emnity toward the Aldryami. The Wood Priests, however, counter that no amount

of honeyed words can atone for "dwarf friends" and "fire lovers."

Before the Second Age, the Water cults were never more than neutral, due to the antipathy of Fire for Water. But the outrages perpetrated when the seas became impassable will never be forgiven, and hostility runs high. On the other hand, bad relations with the Dark cults were incited in the Godtime, when Argan Argar captured Lodril, and Zorak Zoran and the rest fought against those trying to dispel the Darkness.

The Air cults, too, are distrusted, though in a lesser degree, due to Storm Bull's attack on Lodril. The attitude is returned for the most part, as the fuming and eruptions of the volcanos are a constant challenge to the Lords of the Middle Air. Still, the Storm Bull's valor against Chaos is grudgingly admitted.

Orlanth Lightbringer is almost admired. But the claims of Orlanth Rex to supreme kingship are scoffed at.

All other cults espousing Disorder are detested, as anathema to the essential Harmony of Caladra and Aurelion.

## ORGANIZATION

### INTER-CULT

Once, the Chief Priests of Meetinghall were the supreme authorities in the cult. During the long period of tumult in the seas, however, local autonomy was forced on the temples. Now the three main temples have equal eminence, though they consult with each other on important decisions. Lesser temples report to one of the three at least nominally, but often the smaller frontier temples rely on their own judgement and discretion in interpreting the will of the gods.

### INTRA-TEMPLE ORGANIZATION

Each temple has a Pair of priests acting as Chief Priest and Priestess. There may or may not be subsidiary Pairs, depending on the size and age of the community.

The Chef Pair informally divides responsibility between themselves (e.g., one supervises the health of the fields, the other mining and related activity). Both will be present at all official ceremonies, and consultations with other cults. If the community is large enough to support them, the Chief Pair (and even occasionally some junior Pairs) will have an Acolyte assigned to their personal service. At the three great temples, the Chief Priests are generally natural twins.

### CENTERS OF POWER/HOLY PLACES

The three main temples and holy places are: The Breakwater, located on Jrustela Island; Meetinghall Mountain, the highest surviving mountain in the Slontos Isles; and Caladra's Vent, the largest active volcano in the Holy Country. At these three sites, the old volcanic fires are constantly active, though seldom violent, even though the nearby mountains are dormant.

Of course, any site where the Fire within Earth still seethes is holy and a shrine is likely to be established. Locations where *firebone* and *earthblood* may be found are also considered holy. Many temples at such sites are under the control of dwarvish Pairs. With many of the earliest records destroyed, several temples now claim to be the original site where the Twins taught the use of Black Fire to mortals.

There are also various sites connected with the battles and quests of the Godtime, several of which have, over the years, fallen to conquerors lusting after diamonds found there (see Miscellaneous Notes). To such desecrated temples only the most daring will go.

### HOLY DAYS AND HIGH HOLY DAYS

Holy days are celebrated on Clayday through Fireday of Fertility week of each season. The intervening Windsday is devoted to ceremonies of mourning for those members who have died since the last holy day, and in tribute to the sufferings of Lodril and Gata in the Godtime.

Especially elaborate rites are held at the Breakwater on Clayday in Fire season, and at the Vent on Fireday in Earth season – these being the days of emergence from the Earth of Aurelion and Caladra, respectively.

The High Holy Day is celebrated on Godsday, Harmony week, Storm season, commemorating the triumph over adversity and the Sacred Reunion.

## LAY MEMBERSHIP

### REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN

All creatures not of Chaos may join. Even trolls may join but few ever do. For all cult purposes, humans and dwarves count their full CHA, regardless of the race of the priests involved. A fee of 10 lunars or equivalent is charged on joining.

### REQUIREMENTS TO BELONG

Those wishing to belong must make the normal sacrifices of POW on Holy Days and High Holy Days. (Note: this is one point per day on each of the three-day Holy Days.) In addition, they must donate two weeks of service per year to the temple.

### MUNDANE BENEFITS

Temples of the Twins provide room and board for up to a week to lay members away from home.

### SKILLS

No sword, club or mace, whip or flail training is available through the cult, though they are not forbidden. All other skills are available at normal cost except maritime skills, which are prohibited.

### BATTLE MAGIC

All are available at normal cost except:

*REDUCED COST*: Detect Gems, Detect Gold, Harmonize, Ignite, Mindspeech.

*INCREASED COST*: Disruption, Extinguish, Fanaticism.

*PROHIBITED*: Bludgeon, Darkwall, Darkness.

(Note: The Twins grant no benefits with Light spells, since they manifest primarily heat rather than light; almost the opposite of Yelmalio.)

## INITIATE MEMBERSHIP

### REQUIREMENTS FOR INITIATION

Would-be initiates must have served two years as a lay member and be able to convince the priests of their sincere dedication. (This may be abstracted as the average of POW and CHA, times 5 or less on D100.) A gift of 500L to the temple is customary, but may be waived at the discretion of the priests. It is always waived in the case of twins applying together.

**REQUIREMENTS TO REMAIN INITIATED**

In addition to disavowing any unfriendly cults, initiates must tithe 10% of their income and donate one week per season of service to the temple.

**MUNDANE BENEFITS**

Initiates are available to obtain room, board, healing and ransom from the temple for a fee dependent on availability. In addition, aid will be given to initiates needing help with infertile or newly-reclaimed land. They may also purchase parcels of temple-owned land when such become available (though there is usually highly competitive bidding for them).

**SKILLS**

Training in axe, spear and javelin is provided free of charge to initiates as part of militia training. Further training in sword, blunt weapon, or articulated weapon skills is prohibited.

Available to initiates is the following Knowledge skill:

*IDENTIFY MINERAL*: Cost: 200/600/1800/EXP

Perception skill Base % = 05%

This skill enables one to judge the nature of earth by examination of rocks or soil. As taught by this cult, it is most effective at estimating soil fertility, recognizing sites of old volcanic activity, and discovering tell-tale signs of near-surface firebone or earthblood. Recognition of other minerals is at half effectiveness. Identify Mineral skill also counts at half-effectiveness toward mining-related skills. In situations where humans may become lost or disoriented underground, the skill adds twenty percent to the chance of perceiving the correct route to follow. (See Miscellaneous Notes section for more on this skill.)

Initiates may learn Firespech or Earthtongue at no cost up to 25%, and half cost to 50%. They may also begin training in Diamondtongue, the musical ritual language of the cult (see Miscellaneous Notes). Due to the subtlety of the tongue, the cost to initiates is as for standard Speak Other Languages. Initiates are expected to improve in their mastery of Diamondtongue by at least 05% per year as initiates. (Not to do so is considered evidence of inattention at holy day ceremonies.)

**SPELLS**

Spells are as for lay members, except that the following special spells become available:

*DETECT EARTHBLOOD*

Range – 10 Meters Duration – Instantaneous
Non-Stackable Cost – 500L

This is a focused 2 point spell. It, (and the spells below) were devised originally for the use of miners and prospectors, and as such are both more potent and costly than most detect spells. Ignores intervening rock or metal. Otherwise, as per Detect Gold.

*DETECT FIREBONE*

Range – 10 Meters Duration – Instantaneous
Non-Stackable Cost – 500L

This is a focused 2 point spell. It, (and the spell below) was devised originally for the use of miners and prospectors, and as such are both more potent and costly than most detect spells. Ignores intervening rock or metal. Otherwise, as per Detect Gold.

*DETECT DIAMOND*

Range – 10 Meters Duration – Instantaneous
Non-Stackable Cost 2000L
Focused POW Used – 3 point

This spell ignores rock or metal. Otherwise, it is as per Detect Gems.

Initiates may also sacrifice permanent POW for a single use of reusable Rune spells if a Priest Pair deems the cause worthy.

## RUNE LORD MEMBERSHIP

**GENERAL STATEMENT**

The cult of Fire Within Earth is not primarily a warrior's cult. Each temple will generally have one Rune Lord who is charged with overseeing the defense of the temple and surrounding lands. If the temple is sufficiently large and well-established, there may be several with such duties. Frequently, the Rune Lord will have various other Fire or Light mercenaries under his or her command.

However, the primary responsibility of a Lord of the Twins cult lies elsewhere. The cult considers it their sacred duty to seek out, purge and restore to health the tainted and blasted areas of the Earth.

The Rune Lords are pioneers and pathfinders of the cult. It is they who may carry the message and power of the Twins into new lands, and to use their skills to keep old lands fertile.

Any community where the Twins are honored will offer great respect to a Rune Lord.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE**

Candidates must have been initiates for two or more years. They must have a POW of 15 or greater and know the following battle magic spells: Harmonize and Ignite.

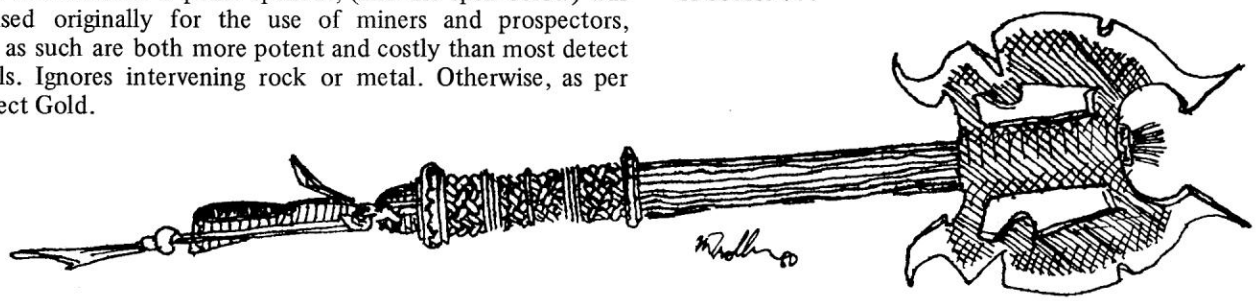
They must also know Diamondtongue at 25% and have 90% or greater in: Identify Mineral, an axe skill, a spear skill, and two or more of the following: Oratory, Map Making, a bow skill, or another axe or spear skill.

Other requirements beyond the scope of *RQ* include many other skills which show these Rune Lords as farmers. These include (undefined) skills such as Agriculture, Identify Plants, Forestry, Harvest, and so on.

**RESTRICTIONS**

No Rune Lord of the cult shall travel by sea except to comply with the orders of his Chief Priests, or other compelling duty. Any Chaos force which is despoiling the Earth must be sought out and destroyed if possible. Any request for aid from other Earth or Fire cults must be honored (though the temple may ask for a favor in return in some cases).

Whenever a conflict occurs between those who are friends of the Twins (as between dwarves and followers of Yelmalio, for instance), the Rune Lord must show no favoritism but seek to resolve the dispute harmoniously. Rune Lords are expected to be intelligent enough to know when the effort is hopeless, of course . . .



Challenge of Lunar cultists is not required unless they are overtly Chaotic or otherwise hostile to the cult. However, if Lunar travellers are encountered within the area of temple-supervised lands or near holy places, they are "encouraged" to move along as swiftly as possible. The Chief Priests are not at all pleased by the efforts of the Red Moon Goddess to seduce Aurelion into her pantheon.

Members of Air cults will generally be avoided and they should not be unnecessarily provoked. It is well known that the "tempestuous" Air cultists will leap at any chance to break the truce that has existed since Time began. Rune Lords should provide aid to them against Chaos, as a form of *noblesse oblige* to the "arrogant cousins." Aid rendered to a Rune Lord by an Air cultist is a grave obligation of honor which must be repaid as quickly as possible, for, the Priests say, a Rune Lord of the Twins should never need such aid.

Lords may marry among members of any friendly cult, but not Priests or Priestesses of the Twins cult itself.

**BENEFITS**

Rune Lords of the Twins get the normal benefits of an Allied Spirit and Divine Intervention and so forth.

Thanks to the generally friendly relations of the cult with the Mostali, it is relatively easy for the Rune Lord to acquire iron weapons and armor, but if his home temple is young or small, he may have to seek out one of the main temples or a dwarf hold and perform some service for them to complete his needs.

Rune Lords also receive a gift of reclaimed land from their home temple to provide income for the Lord and his family. He must make his own arrangements to tend the land in his absence (which will be most of the time) and though the land is free of the 90% tithe to the temple, all other income is not.

## ACOLYTES

**GENERAL STATEMENT**

The Acolytes of Caladra and Aurelion occupy a special niche in the cult. Full Priesthood in the cult demands that two priests join together in imitation of the sibling bond of the Twins. But finding a suitable partner for lifelong mindlink is often very difficult. There are those who are eminently qualified to be Priests, but whose partner is not yet revealed. The need of the cult for such servants is too great to ignore. Thus in the cult of the Twins there is a lesser form of priesthood, so that neither the individual nor the common good will lose out due to mischance.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE**

The would-be Acolyte must have been an initiate of two years standing, meet the standard requirements for Rune Priesthood, and pass examination by a Pair of Chief Priests. In addition, the candidate must know Ignite, Detect Diamond, Detect Earthblood, Detect Firebone, and Harmonize, as well as Identify Minerals at 90% and Diamondtongue at 75% (with some musical skill, usually Play Harp, to at least 50%).

**RESTRICTIONS**

Beyond the restrictions on initiates of the cult, Acolytes may take spouses of any friendly cult, save for Priests and Lords of the Twins.

Due to their subordinate status, an Acolyte must always defer to the wishes of any Pair Priests or Rune Lords. Due to a busy workload an Acolyte will not have any time to continue to improve his DEX-based skills.

**BENEFITS**

The Acolyte receives the standard Priestly benefits of material support and training. However, they do not get the easier POW-gain, or gift of an Allied Spirit that a Priest gets. They receive access to all standard and cult-special Rune spells of one or two points (see Spells section under Rune Priesthood).

**RE-EXAMINATION**

Even though there are some *de facto* permanent Acolytes, this status is considered a stepping-stone by the cult. Therefore each year on High Holy Day, each Acolyte is expected to appear before a Chief Priest Pair for re-examination.

The Acolyte must have testimony from two or more Priest Pairs or Rune Lords of his faithful execution of the duties of his office. If so, Divination will be performed to determine whether the Twins favor the Acolyte by causing a suitable Soul-Sibling to be present at the ceremony. Depending on the Divination results, the Acolyte will be raised to the full Priesthood with his new partner, or reinstated as an Acolyte for another year.

If his performance has been below standard, his rank will be removed and is not allowed to reapply for Acolyte status for two years.

## RUNE PRIESTHOOD (TWIN PRIESTS)

**GENERAL STATEMENT**

The Twin Priests are the center of the cult, directing, harnessing, and symbolizing the two-in-one essence of Aurelion and Caladra.

The full Priesthood is always bestowed on pairs, never singly. The pairs are nearly always male and female, in imitation of the Gods, though there are historic exceptions. The pairs are usually of the same race.

The Twin Priests, like the Twin Gods, are not spouses – the bond between them is deeper, more complex, and more profound than those of common marriage.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCEPTANCE**

Each of the pair to be accepted must be an initiate. Usually at least one of them has served as an Acolyte. Each must also meet the standard requirements for Rune Priesthood. They are then examined by the High Priests to determine their compatibility and fitness for the lifetime bond of the Priest Pair. If the applying pair are natural twins, the examination is waived – twinship is considered a sign of divine favor.

Between the pair they must know Ignite, Detect Diamond, Detect Earthblood, Detect Firebone, Harmonize, and Mindspeech. Each must know Earth Knowledge, Diamondtongue, and some musical skill to 90%, and either Firespeech or Earthtongue to at least 50%.

**RESTRICTIONS**

By the nature of their office, a Priest Pair must agree on all major decisions. In ordinary circumstances, the pair always travels together. The heavy responsibilities of Twin Priesthood reduce DEX-based abilities to a maximum of DEX x 5%.

The most unusual restriction upon the Twin Priests is that while they may take spouses of any friendly cult, they may not wed Lords or Priests of their own cult (an injunction which is enforced most strictly in recent times). The reason lies in the days before the end of the Second Age.

In that era, the natural inclination for the Mindlink union of man and woman to extend to all levels of intimacy led to widespread marriage of Priest Pairs. Towards the end of the Age, this produced a tendency for dynastic lines of Priests to form – each Pair seeking to pass on social power to its children and heirs.

This inbreeding had its tragic effect more on the social than the genetic level. Rivalry sprang up between lines of Priests within the cult., with other cults (especially that of Yelm), and secular authorities without.

Very few Chief Priests perceived how this source of disharmony was weakening the cult. Even more seriously, a slow transformation of the perception of the Twins from their true nature of siblings to a notion of a Sky-Earth marriage, pushed the women of the cult into a subordinate role.

When the crisis of the Seas came at the end of the Second Age, the strength of the cult was fragmented. The Hero-Priests Moray and Telerio perceived the degeneration of their worship. In the rebuilding of the cult, they promulgated the new code: Twin Priests must marry, and beget their heirs outside of the Priesthood of the Twins.

Since then, the cult of the Twins has not fallen into the trap of insularity that befell it. The proper equality of the sibling-bond was preserved. A Priest Pair and their spouses nonetheless, due to the Mindlink, share a degree of intimacy that few brothers and sisters do. The privacy of the spouses is respected, however.

**BENEFITS**

Priests receive the full standard benefits of Rune Priesthood, save for an Allied Spirit. This is both because the diminished strength of the cult necessitates saving this benefit for Rune Lords, and because the link between the Twin Priests takes the place of the Allied Spirit. (Note: Rune Lords who become Priests are allowed to retain their Allied Spirit.)

Even more important than their general leadership role in the community is the benefit of the unique Mindlink spell which forms the central part of the ritual of acceptance into the Priesthood. It can only be performed on Holy Days, when the Gods donate a portion of the sacrificed POW to accomplish the spell.

At the culmination of the ordination, the presiding High Priests enact the ritual of Reunion, in the roles of Caladra and Aurelion, with the expectant Priest Pairs following their lead. At the proper moment, each pair enters into Mindspeech with one another, each casts Harmonize upon the other, and as the High Priests lead the assembled in the song of Triumph, a permanent Mindlink is forged between the new Pair. The new Twin Priests then proceed into the subterranean inner chambers of the Temple to complete the Reunion Ritual's secret aspects while the High Priests continue the public ceremony.

The feelings of unity and harmony among those in attendance are described as remarkable even by lay members. The atmosphere is particularly conducive to sensing the presence of a kindred soul. Initiates and others who aspire to the Priesthood will flock to ordination ceremonies even though the Holy Day itself might be celebrated more conveniently at a nearer temple.

The bond acts as the standard Rune spell, Mindlink, except as follows:

1. It is permanent. No physical attack can break it and only the most awesome magical attacks can do so – usually ones which would be powerful enough to slay both Priests anyway. The range of the link is unlimited.

2. Morale-affecting spells cast on one member do attack the other as well. But unless it affects both, the unaffected member can prevent the other from fleeing, surrendering, etc., Each round the unaffected partner concentrates on it, the other gets an additional resistance roll to throw off the spell.

3. If one member of a Pair is subjected to torture, his chances of withstanding the torture are improved by his partner's POW%. Thus they are hard to break. But should the captive break, the partner must then roll POW or less each day, or breakdown as well, entering a state of helpless depression.

If one partner is subject to the special Than-Atyari spell Create Minor Head, the other has a 25% chance of going insane. Similarly, Create Major Head causes 50% chance of insanity, while Consume Mind a 90% chance.

4. If one partner is afflicted with Soul Waste, the other may, by mutual consent, donate points of POW to sustain the diseased Priest. These points are lost permanently.

5. If one partner is killed, the other will take 2D6 points of damage. The Mindlink will hold the departed spirit near the mortal plane for three days. During this period, the dead partner will resist Resurrection with only half his POW. If no means of resurrection is possible, and the cause is sufficient, the Gods may permit (by Divination) the surviving partner to ally the departed spirit. If nothing is successful, at the end of seven days, the dead spirit will draw its partner out of his/her body and both spirits will go to the reward of the Twins.

6. If one partner is utterly destroyed by Soul Waste, spirit combat or the like, the other takes 3D6 damage straight to CON, but since the Mindlink is now broken, no further chance of death ensues. It is not uncommon for the survivor to take his or her own life in sorrow, hoping to ease the pain in the next life. Though this is not recommended, there are prescribed rituals in the cult for it.

If the survivor decides to live, he or she must consult with the Chief Priests. Among the options available are retirement to the life of an initiate, or total release from cult vows to join another friendly cult. The bereaved Priest may seek to become a Rune Lord, and may follow the Hero Path of Tessele.

**RUNE SPELL COMPATIBILITY**

All standard Rune Spells are available. Priests may summon gnomes and salamanders but only small ones.

**CULT SPECIAL RUNE SPELLS**

*EARTHWARM* Cost – 1 POW point
Range – Touch Duration – 12 hours
Non-Stackable Reusable

Causes an area of earth up to 50 meters radius (10 centimeters deep) to be warmed by 10 °C/hr, regardless of the original temperature of the soil or the surrounding air. When performed at a temple, it will affect a 1 kilometer radius for one week. Primarily used to protect fields against frosts, it is also useful for travellers in frigid climes when no other means of warmth will suffice.

*FERTILIZE* Cost – 1 POW point
Range – Temple fields Duration – 1 year
Non-Stackable Reusable

This is a 12-hour ritual which restores to soil the necessary mineral and organic vitality to support plant life. Use of the spell will increase the crop-bearing potential of an area. Salt and other poisons are neutralized as well. Actual yelds depend on the original fertility of the soil and the skill and care of those who farm it.

*UNISONANCE* Cost – 1 POW point
Range – Variable Duration – 15 minutes
Stackable – 15 kilometers/point Reusable

*This spell and the related Attune Instrument spell were provided by the Hero Pair Telerio and Moray (see Subservient Cults) for the survival of the cult after the cataclysm at the end of the Second Age when the seas became impassable and the temples of the cult were sundered from one another.*

The caster of the spell must sit upon the ground, in front of a fire with a specially enchanted instrument. Upon casting the spell, the instrument will resonate with the other instrument with which it is paired. The caster can then communicate back and forth musically over a varied distance (15 km/point). Communication is carried out in Diamondtongue.

*FIREDWELL* Cost – 2 POW points
Range – Touch Duration – 15 minutes
Non-Stackable Reusable

*This spell alters the metabolism of the recipient to enable him to live among volcanic heat.*

For the duration of the spell, no non-magical heat or flame can harm the recipient. Additionally, the recipient can see clearly through smoke or fumes, and can withstand any natural noxious vapor. On the other hand, the recipient will feel uncomfortably chilled at normal room temperatures and takes double damage from cold. Each time the spell is used, the spell has a cumulative 01% chance of having a permanent effect. Only Divine Intervention by the Twins or another Heat cult can undo this effect.

*ENCHANT INSTRUMENT* Cost – 3 POW points
Range – Touch Duration – Permanent
Non-Stackable Non-Reusable

This spell is used to enchant a pair of musical instruments into mutual harmony. Each instrument (usually a harp) must be capable of at least a full octave of notes, with sharps and flats, and each must have a gem-quality diamond of at least one-quarter carat set in it.

A separate spell has to be cast for every separate linkage. Only one linkage can be used at a time. To switch to a different sacrificed-for linkage a one hour long ceremony has to be performed to change tuning.

## SUBSERVIENT CULTS

**TESSELE**

Tessele was a mortal child of Aurelion, and one of the first Twin Priests. When her Soul-Sibling was trapped and sacrificed by the Priests of Thed, her subsequent quest for vengeance made her the first hero of the cult.

In those troubled Godtimes Tessele set off on impossible tasks which she performed through the efforts of miracles and will power. She actually suceeded in reconstructing and resurrecting her lost partner. This extraordinary act was only possible because she forged and maintained the secret of the permanent Mindlink between Twin Priests.

Tessele thus embodies the defense of one's Soul Sibling. Her stern defense of cult ways embodied her as the cult spirit of Reprisal in all respects.

She punishes anyone who violates their cult vows or become apostate. Whenever the guilty party sleeps out-of-doors or within 3 meters of a fire, she will appear wreathed in fire and attempt to Harmonize the offender and lead him or her back to a temple of the cult for whatever punishment the Priests deem fitting. If successful, the spell lasts one week, but others may attempt to dispell it, though the victim is helpless. Tessele has POW of 25.

Alternatively, the offender may challenge her to spirit combat. If so, she will first sever the Mindlink of unrepentant priests. She will fight until she or the offender is reduced to 6 POW points or less.

The nightly attacks will continue in one form or another until recompense is made to the cult or Tessele is defeated three consecutive times.

**MORAY AND TELERIO**

These Twin Priests earned their Hero status through their desperate struggles to keep the scattered and demoralized branches of the cult together through the tumult at the end of the Second Age.

Telerio and Moray gained their status by altering the remnants of the cult to the dangers of this incest among their priestly ranks, then taking a firm moral stand against such practices. Afterwards, enshrined as heroes because of their famous stand, the pair were further awarded the obligations of being overseer of all standards of conduct.

They send minor troubles, including dreams and irritating diseases, to trouble the worshippers who disobey most moral conditions. For the specific case of cult incest wherein the Soul Siblings engage in marriage they are more harsh.

Such obscene acts are rare (not to mention difficult) given the nature of the Pair-bond, yet there are three such instances recorded in the history of the cult (and conceivably more, for such hideous crimes are unlikely to become public knowledge).

Each of the Pair has 3D6 + 15 points of POW and can combine their POW through their link to use in spirit combat. Within one week after the crime is committed, they will appear. Before attacking, they will destroy his/her Mindlink to the former partner, and free any bound spirits the criminal may possess. They will then attack untill they are defeated, he is destroyed, or he surrenders. If they are defeated, they will withdraw and attack again within the month. If the criminal surrenders, all magics learned from the cult will be stripped

away, along with CHA points equal to the total number of points of Rune Magic. In addition, the ability of the individual to Mindlink, either as donor or recipient, will be destroyed permanently.

## ASSOCIATED CULTS

### LODRIL

Though the cult of the Twins usually eclipses that of Lodril wherever the former takes hold, every temple of the Twins still pay homage to their father. In return, the violent old Fire God lends the following spell:

*HEAT BLAST* Cost – 3 POW points
Range – Limit of Vision Duration – Instantaneous
Stackable Reusable

This spell can only be used on earth previously warmed by the Earthwarm Rune spell or naturally warmed to at least 40°. Causes a blast of heat to erupt from the ground doing 3D6 to the target's CON. Can be stacked with Divine Intervention to add one target/point.

Note: average earth temperature =15°C, near active volcano = 40°C or more.

### GATA

The Primal Earth is also honored by those who worship her children. She grants the following spell:

*GNOME TO GARGOYLE* Cost – 1 POW point
Range – Gnome Duration – 15 minutes
Stackable Non-Reusable

This spell must be stacked with a Summon Elemental spell. It turns the gnome into a gargoyle. It cannot be dismissed by Dismiss Elemental. After 15 minutes it turns back into earth.

The gargoyle will have the STR, INT, and POW of the gnome. The gnome's Hit Points become SIZ. Other characteristics must be rolled for and bonuses figured out. These gargoyles cannot fly.

### MOSTAL

The Twins are probably the closest of the predominantly human cults to the Mostali. The Mostali are now the principal users of firebone and earthblood in their forges and machines (most humans having turned to the Lowfires for their purposes). They also remember the gift of diamond, and in their turn have been very generous to the Twins throughout time. Mostal gives to his allies the following spell:

*DIAMOND EDGE* Cost – 2 POW points
Range – Touch Duration – 15 minutes
Non-stackable Reusable

Essentially a Bladesharp 8 when cast on stone cutting tools, this spell serves the Priest for the purpose of stonecarving and excavating. In battle it acts as a Bladesharp 8 when cast on obsidian axes or other stone weapons. If a fumble occurs the axe was sure to have shattered.

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

### ROLE OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CULT

As should be evident by the nature of the cult, men and women are equally able to take up any role offered by the cult. Women identify with Caladra and men with Aurelion, but either sex can identify with the Hot (purifying, warrior) or Earthly (fertile, nurturing) aspects of the Twins. The ultimate goal of the worshipper of either sex is to master both in coequal Harmony.

### DIAMOND

As mentioned in earlier sections, the Twins are heavily identified with their gifts of firebone and earthblood (called coal and oil by some) to mortals, so much so that they are frequently depicted in sacred art with jet-black skin and fiery hair. However, the most valued gift of the Twins to the world is the carbon which has been touched and transformed by the power of the Twins directly – diamond. Diamond is considered sacred by the cult of the Twins. When such gems are found in the hands of non-cult members, large sums are likely to be proferred, and often, if dickering will not work, violence may ensue.

### DIAMONDTONGUE

This is the musical "inner" language of the cult. It has its origins in the divine song of Triumph sung by Caladra and Aurelion at their Reunion.

On the simplest level, it is a musical code, with notes and chords substituting for the letters or phonemes of the mundane written or spoken language. Those who are more advanced in Diamondtongue can convey many subtle connotations and shadings of meaning through rhythm, timing, emphasis, and so on.

The language is as complex as any language. Many of the sacred hymns of the cult have many levels of meaning: from the words sung by the lay members to the complex harmonies and counterpoints whose rich symbolism is fully grasped only by the High Priests. Diamondtongue is used in communication via Unisonance.

### KNOWLEDGE OF THE EARTH

Identify Minerals as taught by this cult is probably the broadest of the forms of this Knowledge. Other Earth cults, such as that of the Grain Goddess, have more intensive knowledge of the ways of the soil, while the Mostali are far more expert in the lore of metals and the deep earth. The cult of the Twins concerns itself with both, but for specialized knowledge one must seek elsewhere. Fortunately, the Twin's good relations with the others, especially Mostal, means that such training can usually be had (if for a price) even where it is normally denied to outsiders.

# FAVORITES OF THE GODS

**By David F. Nalle**

In most fantasy campaigns, when a character calls on his god he plunges the Game Master into a dilemma. Does the god in question really give a damn about this particular worshipper? Is the character faithful enough to merit his aid? The god's decision should be based on the character's past performance and his potential to be of use to the deity in the future.

Basically, most gods are like humans. If you do something for them, they'll do something for you. Just what you can do for them is not really apparent. As they are not of the material plane most gifts might not attract them, though they have been known to react sometimes. They do, generally, have several needs which a character can provide to gain their favor. Some gods gain strength from sacrifices of beasts, gold, or humans. Also, anything which aids and advances the temple and its minions helps the god they worship. Aid to a temple can consist of donations, conversions, and other services. Finally, on occasion a god will need a task done, and a character who undertakes such a task and succeeds will find himself high in the favor of his god.

Influence with the gods, as with any earthly authority, can be gained by bribes and services. The more a character does for his god, the more faithful he is and the more his god may look after him and try to help him out to some degree.

The more important a god is, the more it takes to impress him and win his favor. These gods whose aid would be most useful are harder to influence than their less elevated fellows. Thus, while Heracles might be pleased with a chicken as a sacrifice, it would take a bull to move Zeus.

In addition, different gods are interested in different things in the way of sacrifices, and some are so aloof that there is little a mere human could do to catch their attention. While a goat would please Ares, it would infuriate Thor, so the wise worshipper knows what will please his god the most. Sacrifices can generally be purchased in any market, and the worshipper

or the priest will follow the formalities in the proper style for the deity. Human sacrifices of several types are also popular with certain gods of more evil persuasions. On occasion, there will be willing victims, but in those types of temples, that is not important – the worshippers are not above kidnapping their victims, or at least buying slaves for the altar. Some gods are very finicky about their human sacrifices, preferring babies, or maidens, or other specified types.

Style of sacrifice also varies wildly. Some gods like to have the sacrifice bled to death. Some, like the Greek Pantheon, like to have them killed cleanly and then burnt, so the smoke can rise to them. Others prefer immolation, drowning, or even drawing, a form used by the followers of Nerthus. One of the most unusual is Tezcat, who takes human sacrifices slain by having hearts torn out while they are still alive. This seems a gruesome prospect, but many milder beings are content with the produce of wood and field. It is most important to make sure that the sacrifice is of a type appropriate to the deity concerned. Clues to what would be a good sacrifice for each god can be found in reading about them and their exploits. The Sacrifices Table contains a general list of popular sacrifices. You should establish their cost and how much they will be worth to your god in accordance with the economics and theology of your world. They are listed in order of cost. A bull will generally cost almost 400 times as much as a rabbit.

**SACRIFICES TABLE**

| *Sacrifice* | *Relative cost* | *Sacrifice* | *Relative cost* |
|---|---|---|---|
| skin of wine | 1 | ox | 300 |
| rabbit | 1 | bull | 400 |
| dove | 5 | lion | 425 |
| chicken | 8 | tiger | 450 |
| goose | 12 | man | 650 |
| sheep | 75 | woman | 900 |
| goat | 125 | baby | 1200 |
| horse | 200 | maiden | 2000 |
| cow | 225 | | |

By using relative costs for various sacrifices, you can figure out how much the different sacrifices would cost in your world. The prices for humans are based on an assumed slave trade.

While sacrifices are simple and effective for currying favor with a god, there are other methods, some of which can bring more efficient results.

Direct donations to a church will please the priests, so they will speak well of the giver, and also advance the cause by keeping it financially solvent. This will please the god. Working for the faith has much the same result for those who cannot afford to give cash and have useful skills. Recruitment is another factor which is very influential with temple and god. If a character can bring new members to his faith, he will also be helping it a good deal. All of these deeds are good works which will show that a character is loyal to his faith, and are more effective in their way than sacrifices, because they bring him closer to the temple.

Quests and services for the god are often assigned, whether by the temple or by the god himself through mystical means. They are assigned either as pennance, or because they need doing. They are usually reserved for the most promising members of the temple, or if they are particularly hazardous, for the most expendable. They generally involve great danger and potentially great reward. They are a gamble, but can usually result in the highest rise in favor. Of course, a character could refuse a quest, but he will fall in the estimation of his god, his peers, and his church. On occasion a quest will be assigned to keep an annoying character out of the way, or to get him killed off. The faithful will strive to death to serve their god in a quest, no matter how small their hopes of survival may be.

But will a god intervene? How much does it take to catch his attention? It is easy to establish a system for this, by assigning each character a number of Deity Points according to the work he does for his god. Using these, and a rating for the aloofness of the god, the chance of his intervening can be found. Each god should be assigned an Influence Rating, the higher ratings for the more powerful and less easily moved gods. The higher a god's IR the more it will take to influence him. A list of gods with their IR's is given in the Influence Rating Table. Not all gods are included, just a sampling of the most popular, from which relative values for other gods can be estimated.

To determine the value of quests and other services they should be fitted into the relative cost scale already established for sacrifices. Gold contributions can be converted directly, as if they were expended to buy sacrifices. Assuming a one to one ratio of gold pieces to relative cost, each gold piece contributed would be equal to one rabbit, or the equivalent. Quest value rests on the discretion of the GM. The value would be far greater for success than for failure, and danger should be taken into account. Also important is the length of time which the character takes on the quest and the importance of it to the god. When all of these are considered, a value can be assigned relative to the other types already given. A moderately dangerous quest of two days duration might have a value of 1000 or so, using the relative scale mentioned before. Going around the corner for a sandwich for the high priest might be worth one point or so. GM discretion has to cover lesser services as well as quests.

Working for the determined value of donations, services, and sacrifices on the relative scale, we can find the chance of a deity intervening on a character's behalf. To do this, the character's expenses and services are totalled and divided by the Influence Rating of his god. This gives the characters their number of Deity Points. The actual cost of these Deity Points

in deeds or in gold may vary from campaign to campaign, but because they are determined from the relative value scale they will remain parallel. Deity Points should be kept on the character sheet and increased with further deeds of devotion.

Actually determining whether the deity will intervene is done by rolling D100. If the roll is within the number of DP, the god has heard the character's plea, and may intervene. If he does, the DP used in the plea are lost. A character need not devote all his DP to a prayer if he does not want to. If the god chooses not to answer, or does not hear, the DP are not lost.

What the god does to intervene, or whether he really wants to bother with the character, is up to the GM. If a character pesters his god all the time, or has very few DP and got lucky, his god may choose to let him go to his fate. Also, the god need not come in person (except in those cases where he feels that it is in his interests to do so). He may send agents, be they demigods or worshippers, or he may just extend his powers to aid the person slightly. What he does should be based on how much he cares for the character, how faithful the character is, whether he cares about anything the character is doing, and his mood at the time. When he is called on, the god may remove less or more of the DP than is standard, at his whim. If he feels that the character has offended him, he may remove all of his DP, or more than all, putting him into a negative range, which he must lift himself out of (usually by a quest).

How a character is aided depends on the situation and the god. A character with a very nice magic item may find that calling on his god, if not afflicted with morals, may help him out, but lose the magic item in payment. With certain gods, DPs may be a mixed blessing, as they work for themselves and do so at the expense of their mortal worshippers. Of course, it is in the God's interest to avoid doing so too often, as it is bad for his image, and could reduce his following. Those characters who have worked up a store of negative DP may find that their gods will intervene of their own accord, by aiding their enemies and hindering them. This state will last, even if the person changes his faith, until he finds a way to remove the stain from his heavenly record.

*EXAMPLE: Razaythe is a worshipper of Ahriman, Lord of Darkness. He is very loyal to his god, and before embarking on any venture he will buy 12 lions at 765 Gold Solidi (monetary system sets cost at 1.8 times relative value). Ahriman has a IR of 1100, so the sacrifice of the lions will gain Razaythe 4DP. As he has yet to call on his god he has built up 30 DP, and an additional 15 from donations (29700 Gold Solidi). So far he has spent 38880 GS for 50 DP. He is sent out on a quest, and realizing the danger, he splurges and buys five certified maidens at the local slave market. The priests sacrifice the maidens with appropriate ceremony, and Razaythe is 18000 GS poorer, but has 9 more DP for a total of 59, quite a respectable number. Always round down.*

Some vatiations which increase the system are possible. One possibility is for exceptionally faithful characters, paladins, demi-gods, and high priest types to be awarded DP just for existing, because they have earned them in their past overal service, and the god takes a great interest in them, watching over their lives. It is also possible that the god might intervene on the behalf of such a character without invitation. It is also important to note that certain gods will rate certain sacrifices more highly, and may react better to some modes of sacrificing. On the field sacrifices count for much less than do ones in a proper temple – many evil type gods particularly go for human sacrifice and may weigh it more highly than other things.

**INFLUENCE RATING TABLE**

| *God* | *IR* | *God* | *IR* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Odin | 1500 | Njord | 800 |
| Zeus | 1500 | Thanatos | 750 |
| Ra | 1450 | Loki | 700 |
| Arioch | 1400 | Mithras | 650 |
| Marduk | 1350 | Annwn | 600 |
| Arianrhud | 1300 | Nodens | 550 |
| Ormuzd | 1250 | Hermes | 500 |
| Cthulhu | 1200 | Hecate | 450 |
| Mannanan | 1150 | Baldr | 400 |
| Ahriman | 1100 | Pan | 350 |
| Baal | 1050 | Dioncecht | 300 |
| Ishtar | 1000 | Diana | 250 |
| Thor | 950 | Dionyseus | 200 |
| Set | 900 | Heracles | 150 |
| Nerthus | 850 | | |

The cost of various things is only one aspect of this system which needs to be adjusted for most worlds. In the example it is adjusted up by 80%. In your world it may have to be altered differently. Rather than converting the amount spent every time you need to, you might adjust the IRs the appropriate amount to suit the prices you use for common sacrificial items. With these few adjustments, the system should work in any world, and make deity intervention a workable practice.

# A Modest Proposal

# For The FANTASY TRIP

**By David R. Dunham**

When I finally saw Metagaming's new *In the Labyrinth (ITL)*, I was both pleased and disappointed. Pleased because there was a lot of good new material, but disappointed because what I saw as the major problem for a campaign based on *ITL*'s forerunners, *Melee* and *Wizard*, still existed.

Over the course of a campaign, attributes are going to build up alarmingly. Several things were done to slow this, notably increasing the experience point costs for raising attributes. Still, they can get very high.

What bothers me even more than a human with a 30 ST is that basic characteristics such as ST, IQ, and DX can increase so dramatically. Certainly they can be improved in real life, but it seems unreasonable that a person's IQ could ever more than double (ignoring any questions of the validity of IQ tests).

On the other hand, a person's abilities can increase indefinitely. You should always be able to learn new talents, although it is reasonable to assume that the more you learn, the more difficult it gets.

The underlying problem with *ITL*, as I see it, is that attributes are used for two purposes. They are your physical characteristics, and they also represent the level of ability you have attained. Just because an individual gains the ability to absorb more damage (increase in ST) does not mean that she would be able to pick up a heavier weapon which does more damage. The ability to learn a new spell or talent (increase in IQ) should be unrelated to the ability to learn a more difficult talent. Finally, the chance of success in attacking with a weapon or casting a spell (adjusted DX) is not the same as a character's coordination, or his chance of not falling down (if walking over a slippery floor, for example).

What I propose doing is splitting all the attributes into their two components. Strength would become ST, the character's raw physical strength, and HP, the character's hit points, or ability to suffer wounds and exhaustion without collapsing. IQ would break down into IQ, the character's brainpower, and knowledge, KN. KN represents how many spells or talents could be learned. Dexterity turns into DX, the character's coordination and agility, and SC, or chance of succeeding when attacking or casting a spell. (A purist might want to further divide SC into CA, or combat ability, and MA, magic ability.) Both DX and SC would be adjusted, since encumbrance affects how quickly you can move and your sense of balance, which are part of both SC and DX.

Having additional attributes means some changes have to be made. Most of these are terminology changes: deciding whether to use ST or HP when the book says ST. As a guideline, I suggest the following uses for the new attributes:

| | |
|---|---|
| ST | Ability to use weapon; holding a rope; holding your breath; encumbrance; bare-hand damage. |
| HP | All damage taken, whether physical (from an attack) or fatigue (from spell-casting). |
| IQ | Ability to learn new spells or talents of a given difficulty; disbelieving illusions. |
| KN | Number of talents or spells that can be learned. |
| DX | Saving rolls; initiative in combat. |
| SC | Determining whether a spell or attack is successful. |

The other important change is in starting attributes, and how they are increased. To start out, you might want to distribute attribute points among ST, IQ, and DX as in the rules, and then say that HP=ST, KN=IQ, and SC=DX. Alternately, you can start with 8 points in each attribute and add 16 extra points to them (no individual attribute can be over 16, however).

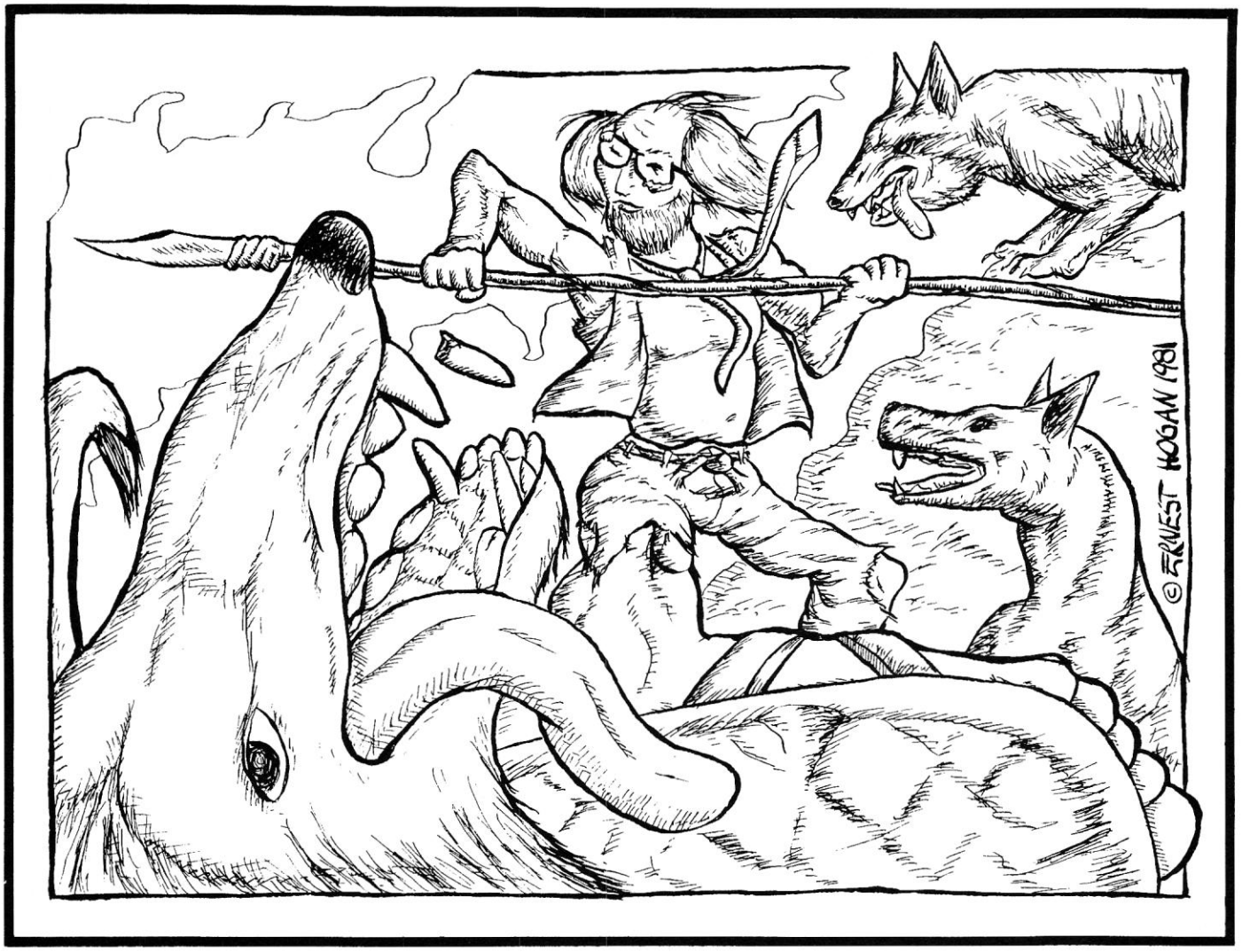
The table of experience points needed to increase an attribute can be revised simply by adding 32 to all the attribute totals. Thus, 1000 EP would be required from 73-77 total attribute points. Actually, this will slow down advancement a bit, since you'll have to spread your increases among more attributes. You may want to counteract this by using a chart such as:

| | |
|---|---|
| 65-68 attribute total: | 125 EP each |
| 69-72 | 250 EP |
| 73-76 | 500 EP |
| 77-80 | 1000 EP |
| 81-84 | 2000 EP |
| 85-88 | 4000 EP |
| 89-92 | 8000 EP |

For each series of 4 attribute totals over 92, double the EP needed. This table will make it slightly easier to advance, until very high attribute totals are reached (around 100). It also has the advantage of being completely uniform, unlike the table in the rules which has erratic jumps.

Breaking down attributes should make characters a little more varied, because there are more attributes. For instance, you could have a character with an IQ of only 9 who nevertheless knows 20 different talents. You'll also be faced with more tough decisions – do I want to hit better or would I rather attack earlier? Do I want to take more punishment or should I graduate from shortsword to broadsword?

Chances are that most characters' ability attributes will rise higher than their physical attributes, so there will be less "supermen" in the game. There will also be more "realism," since a magician who can throw 30 points worth of spells will not necessarily be able to bend iron bars as well.




# MAN BITES DOG

## *ROLE-PLAYING IN THE FUTURE*

**By Ken St. Andre**

*I had nothing for bait except one dead fish – a mutated carp, it had never been edible. Now that it was three days decayed it was truly disgusting. My stomach was empty, or I would have been throwing up – I had to lurk downwind of the carrion lest the prey scent me. I waited over three hours . I was beginning to think I'd give up and go home hungry, when I heard the faint click-click of claws against stone. My spear was already resting against the stone near my right hand, and my one good arrow was ready to put to the bowstring.*

*The sun went down and the sharp breeze grew colder when the dogs appeared. They were three large brutes, a collie, a shepherd, and a great dane. They came in from my left and below me quite cautiously. For a second I feared the fish wouldn't tempt them, but they were gaunt and patchy of fur – their hunting had also been poor. When they decided, they leaped in a snarling mass at the bait. I stood up and fired my one good arrow into the thick of them. The dane went down, whimpering, as I grabbed my spear and leaped into their midst.*

*They looked up snarling and attacked. Instead of impaling one and going down beneath the other, I swung the spear like a staff and knocked them aside. I threw a kick at the collie that broke one of his fangs off, and lunged at the shepherd with the point. It scrabbled out of the way just in time. They were both up again and circling me. I was a treasure-trove of edible meat to them, just as they were to me. They didn't take the opportunity to run.*

*My spear was a good one – an 8-foot length of hollow aluminum pipe with a Bowie knife lashed to the head of it. I concentrated on the shepherd as it looked the more dangerous of the two. And I let the collie get completely behind me. Ignoring its feints I forced the larger dog backwards,*

*trying to trap it against some boulders. At the right moment, I pivoted on one foot and caught the collie in mid-leap on the point of my spear. The impact staggered me, but I gave an extra thrust, dropped the spear, and spun again in a crouch just in time to get my hands between the dog's teeth and my bearded throat. This time I was bowled over by the impact, but I let the momentum carry me and used it to throw the dog over my head to crash into the broken wall I had hidden behind. That stunned it for a moment, and gave me a chance to draw my knife. I closed and in a few stabs it was dead. A sick dog is no match for a full-grown man.*

*I went back and killed the other two dogs that were only wounded. In the next two hours I cleaned the carcasses before starting the trek back to my camp. Dawn was breaking when I staggered into the cave mouth and dropped the dog bodies. Jill took charge of the meat and got some of it cooking for breakfast.*

*Wearily, I staggered in to flop down on my bed of old army blankets, noting who was present and who wasn't. My friends, and fellow tribe-members, Bear and Ugly John were snoring away. Bear had brought in a basket of prickly pear fruit. I grabbed a couple of pieces of cactus before collapsing.*

*The aroma of cooking dog heart woke us all up. There wasn't enough meat on the animals' bodies to make a proper steak, but their organs were intact. Bear, Ug, Jill, and Hank joined me in the best meal we had in a month.*

*"Quite a kill, Ken," said Ug. "Shall we get out the sacred dice and have a go at the Game this afternoon?"*

*"Sounds good to me," I answered. "My 5th level stockbroker was just about to make a killing on the market."*

When Tadashi asked me for an article about role-playing in the future, all sorts of sugar-plum thoughts leaped immediately into my head. What with personal computers, video-discs, and the ever-growing popularity of the hobby, it would be easy to say that role-playing is heading for a golden age. But then, anybody can make that sort of prediction.

I got to thinking about what could stop the growth of role-playing and came up with only one serious possibility – the end of civilization as we know it.

I am what is known as an optimistic pessimist. I tend to imagine that the worst will always happen, and that when it does, I will come through it as well as could possibly be expected. Certain minor disasters in my own life led me to feel this way.

Anyone who reads and thinks about the future today ought to be worried. Although we are in a golden age of unprecedented affluence, we might be very near the end of it. There are so many different ways we could blow it and bring about the collapse of our civilisation. Nuclear war being the most frightful possibility, but ecological pollution is right there as a good bet. The eastern half of the United States doesn't have rain anymore – it has acid baths. We are also facing the spectre of resource exhaustion if we don't find additional supplies or suitable substitutes. There are a lot of ways in which we could blow ourselves back to the stone age.

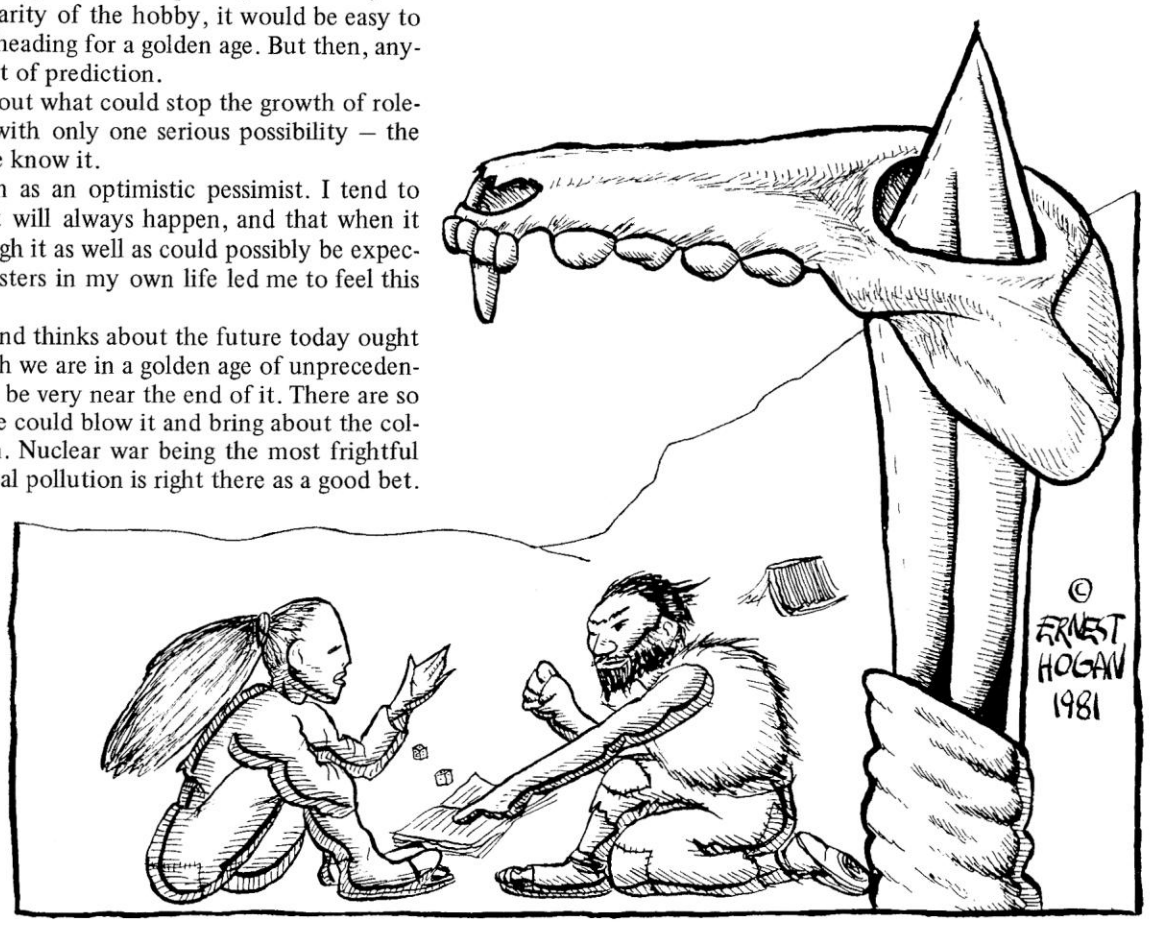
I sincerely hope that it doesn't happen. I'm eagerly looking forward to the projected future when everyone owns a pocket computer and information solves all our problems. If we can get out into space, I believe that an optimistic future has a chance of actually coming true – at least for some people.

But if civilization does crash, which seems at least an equal bet, then hard times are coming in the next 20 years. If role-playing survives at all, I expect it to be a nostalgic sort of ritual for those middle-aged individuals who can remember the good old days back in the 1980's. Back when there were such exotic character classes as bankers, librarians, dancers, scientists. . .ah, those were the days!

*Ugly John was setting the scene as we squatted around him with our ancient ivory cubes in our hands ready for rolling.*

*"The Arabs have announced another 24% price increase on crude oil," he announced. "what do you want to do?"*

*"Sell short on 10,000 shares of Chrysler," I declared. The rest of the party followed my lead. The game was on.*



# BETTER D&D

# MAKING LIFE HARD FOR MAGIC-USERS

**By Lewis Pulsipher**

In a typical *Dungeons and Dragons* or *Advanced D&D* campaign, especially the former, magic-users (MU) are the most powerful characters as a class, and the most powerful individuals in the game are probably MUs. During an adventure the fighters (and sometimes the clerics and thieves) tend to keep quiet during planning sessions, because they know that the MUs carry the offensive and creative load. (True, at first to third level, MUs are nearly helpless, though still the last resort when the going gets tough; but this helplessness disappears at higher levels.) This is a generalization but few would deny that MUs dominate *D&D*. Many players are quite content with this state of affairs, but even among those whose favorite class is the MU – myself for example – there are those who want to even things out a bit. One player does not deserve to play a greater part in the game solely because he happened to roll or choose a MU rather than some other class. In this article I'll describe some interpretations and possible changes in the *D&D/AD&D* rules which make life harder for the MUs.

### SPELL POINTS

The most common MU modification is some form of spell point system, where the number of spells cast each day is limited by the MU's energy, represented by points used per spell. But such changes do *not* weaken MUs. A spell point MU has an increased selection of spells, because he can choose from among all those spells he knows at the time he casts, rather than before the adventure begins. Most spell point systems also enable the MU to cast a variable number of spells of each level, again increasing the selection available. This obviously makes things easier. Finally, most examples of this system enable the MU to cast quite a few more spells than he could using the standard method, though the best spell point systems attempt to compensate by restricting the number of higher level spells the MU can cast.

I have never seen a system of this type which made MUs weaker or harder to play. I recommend that you use a less complicated and more effective means of limiting MUs.

### KLUTZING

A 'klutz' system is a method of assigning a percentage chance that a MU will fail to correctly cast a spell. The failure can result in a wasted spell or even 'backfire' which may harm the caster or his party. More often than not, the klutz is used with a spell point system to compensate for the increased power of the MU. Nonetheless, the combination tends to make MUs stronger, not weaker, unless a really punitive klutz system is adopted.

The klutz percentage may depend on the level of the caster, level of spell, use of more or fewer spell points than the standard requirement for the spell, preparation time, and interference from other activity. While the klutz method does reduce the capabilities of a MU, it does so at a cost of increasing chance in an already risky game. It is rarely used with the standard magic system.

### DELAY

A simple rule which reduces the immediate influence of a MU in many combat situations is a delay system. A MU must spend several melee rounds physically recovering from casting a spell before he can cast another. During the interval he can do anything except cast a spell.

Sometimes use of some magic items such as wands is included in the delay system. Different systems use different intervals: the simplest is one round of 'rest' per level of spell. Therefore, if a MU casts a third level spell he must rest for three rounds, and cast another spell in the fourth round. It is easy to see how this will restrict MUs in combat without actually changing the number of spells the MU can cast. At least, no MU will be able to double as a machine-gun or rapid-fire cannon.

### SEQUENCING

A conservative rule change will weaken lone or relatively unguarded MUs seriously: a spell does not take

effect until the end of the round during which it is cast. If the MU is attacked at any time during the round, his spell is spoiled. However, if the MU has prepared his spell in the preceeding round, it takes effect at the start of the round. Consequently, surprise or readiness to cast when the fighters open a door is still valuable. The casting time (in segments) still counts for determining which spell is cast first, so that it is possible for one spell to cause an enemy's attack to be spoiled.

### MISSILE FIRE

Most Game Masters allow MUs to cast spells from the second line of a formation in a dungeon corridor, so that armored characters protect them. However if one looks closely at the *AD&D* rules one can find ways to allow enemy missile fire to be a considerable danger to second line MUs before melee begins.

On page 64 of the *Dungeonmasters Guide* are "Missile Fire Cover and Concealment Adjustments." Consider that the armored front liners are not complete protection for the MU. Moreover, even if the enemy shoots at a fighter, he may miss him but hit the MU behind him.

You could rule that if the MU is behind a dwarf, or stands behind two adjacent people but not directly behind either one, he is about 50% covered. Directly behind someone of similiar size he is 75-90% covered. The actual die roll modification will depend partly on the angle of attack and relative size (a 6'6" fighter covers a 5'6" MU well, but not vice versa). The result is that MUs armor class will improve anywhere from 4 to 10; this assumes that the enemy is trying to hit the MU in light good enough to see him. Infravision alone would hardly pick out the MU behind his protector if it is dark.

If the enemy misses the MU there is some chance that the missile may hit the protector. To make it simple, roll the D20 again one sixth of the time to determine if the protector is hit. If an opponent shoots at the armed man and misses, roll again one sixth of the time for a shot at the MU, figuring better cover than if the opponent had shot directly at the MU.

Probably this missile fire interpretation, alone, will contribute sufficiently to weakening MUs, unless they easily acquire magical bracers of defense. In the wilderness, MUs are priority targets for any archer with brains, nor can they be easily protected, so there is a built in restraint on them.

### SPELL INTERPRETATIONS

The final and most effective means of restraining MUs is stingy interpretation of spell descriptions, with occasional outright changes. The average player of a magic-using character will do his utmost to convince the GM that a spell can do X, Y, and Z, rather than only X.

For example, I played with a group in which the innocent Magic Mouth spell of original *D&D* was interpreted to turn the spell into an all-knowing oracle better than the Commune spell. After casting the spell the MU stated that if such-and-such was correct direction to reach a destination, or if such-and-such was true, the mouth should speak – after all, the MU could specify the conditions under which the mouth would speak, right? Fortunately this interpretation is definitely not possible under the *AD&D* rules.

Another example is the *D&Der* who used a magic ring as a magic jar. He had his invisible homonculus carry the invisible ring to a giants' castle not far away, where he jarred into one giant after another, starting fights among them until nearly all were dead. He was in absolutely no danger, since his body was well hidden. The GM in this case should have attached some plausible limitation on the spell, such as: when a victim casts off the control of the MU, he is not only forced back into his jar but he cannot get out again, except to return to his body, until a day has passed; or, the homonculus must stay within 360 feet of the MU's *body*, regardless of where his spirit is. If players complain about stingy interpretations, just remind them that the bad guys have to play under the same rules.

In *AD&D*, the Stinking Cloud and Web spells are exceedingly powerful unless the GM does something to reduce the strength of the web or the duration of the cloud. One possibility is to allow those who save against the web to act as though it did not exist, for them. The duration of the cloud, and of its deleterious effects on victims after it has dissipated, should be measured in melee rounds, not turns. Read each spell with an eye for weakening it. In *AD&D*, whenever there is any doubt, the GM's word is the law. And in original or *Basic /Expert D&D*, you have no obligation at all to follow the rules.

# REVIEWS

## UNIVERSE

John Butterfield
Simulations Publications, Inc
$20 (boxed set) $10 (basic set)

*Universe* is SPI's role-playing game for this year, and it attempts to be to *Traveller* what *DragonQuest* attempted to be to *RuneQuest*, the last word in SF role-playing, benefiting from the trail-breaking done by earlier games. Like *DQ*, it is not an unqualified triumph, but it has many interesting features that should find their way into future designs (as well as others that should be written off as not too hot). In this review I will sometimes make direct comparisons with *Traveller* — not because I claim it is a better game, merely because it is probably familiar to most readers of this magazine and is therefore handy to illustrate certain points.

*Universe* comes in two versions. The Basic Set includes the 76 page Gamesmaster's Guide (containing the rules, tables, and many log sheet forms), a 24 page Adventure Guide containing pre-generated NPCs, wild creatures, encounter and accident rules, and a canned scenario complete with characters and maps. There is also the Interstellar Display, a 22"x 34" chart showing the position and spectral type of all known stars within 30 light-years of Sol, and a plastic bag to put it all in.

For another ten bucks, the bag is replaced with a 2" box and counter tray, and additionally one gets two 20-sided dice and the game *Delta Vee* (which has also been published separately in *Ares 9*) consisting of a 16 page rule book, 200 counters and a four section 'geomorphic' map.

*DV*, also designed by John Butterfield, is a tactical spaceship game and is *required* for setting spaceship combat in *Universe* (unlike *Traveller*, which has its own rules as well as separate games like *Mayday* for optional use).

In addition to pencils, paper, calculators, and extra dice that almost all RPGs require for play, *Universe* also requires a blank hexgrid (19 or 25mm size suggested) and counters or miniatures for resolving tactical combat (this compares poorly with *DQ*, in which these were provided). Players owning *DV* are permitted to press its map and counters into action for this purpose; others must scrounge.

Basic *Traveller* (the first three books only) was a bit sketchy in some areas, especially developing player character's prior experience. Some aspects, such as NPCs, wild animals, eqipment such as robots, and scenarios, were left entirely to supplemental publications and or players' imaginations. *Universe* endeavors to include a sizable chunk of all these things within the original rules. In other ways, though, it falls short.

As noted, *DV* is required to resolve space combat (even with it *Universe* has less on spaceship *design* than basic *Traveller*). The designer sweeps this under the rug by arguing that space combat is so lethal that players should avoid getting into it lest their carefully nurtured characters be prematurely terminated. While this may be a realistic approach, as a game design parameter it seems somewhat misguided — after all, these things are supposed to be adventures, and prudence would dictate that any dangerous activity be avoided altogether.

*Traveller* has a procedure for generating characters and giving them a background, if desired, in several military or para-military professions. The closest thing to an intellectual a *Traveller* character could be is probably a physician. *Universe*, in contrast, has 23 distinct professions, of which only seven are military (though an eigth, the 'Enforcer' could be considered a mercenary soldier, among other things) and some are fairly esoteric, such as Scientist or Thinker. There are also more workaday professions, such as Merchant, Journalist, or Spy.

Generating a character in this game, though, is not just a case of sitting down and spending a few happy minutes rolling dice. A full page form (provided to be photo-copied) must be filled out in conjunction with nine columns of rules, numerous die rolls and the consultation of ten tables and fifty columns of descriptions of professions and skills. One does indeed *develop* a character in this game system.

A character is possessed of a number of skills, attained by experience or education, and nine 'characteristic ratings." Four of these are physical (Strength, Endurance, Dexterity, and Agility) and may be decreased by aging; the balance are Intelligence, Mental Power, Leadership, Empathy, and Agression. Once determined, none of these can be increased, and the physical ones are decreased by aging only during character generation (maybe characters won't live long enough to age in play?).

However, these characteristics and skills are not quickly nor easily arrived at. First, a set of four 'potential multipliers' (for physique, coordination, intellect, and social background) are determined by the roll of decimal dice and consultation with a table.

**[5.8] INITIAL SKILL POINTS**

| IF THE MODIFIED RESULT IS... | THE CHARACTER RECEIVES... |
|---|---|
| 0 or less | 1 Initial Skill Point |
| 1-3 | 2 Initial Skill Points |
| 4-6 | 3 Initial Skill Points |
| 7-9 | 4 Initial Skill Points |
| 10 or more | 5 Initial Skill Points |

Roll one die and add the Initial Skill P Modifier (listed with character's social standi the Social Standing Table) to the die result.

These potentials are added and the total entered on the table to ascertain 'Study Points' (the higher the sum of the potentials, the fewer study points).

The character's natural habitat is then determined by dice rolls. There are 180 different combinations of 'native environ' and the skill level in that environ (this automatically determines the skill level in each of the other 32 possible environs), gravity (four possible types), temperature range (three possible types), and whether or not the character has any 'urban' skill level. At this point, the player can choose to have his character be from a 'deep space' environ if certain numbers are in the proper ranges.

This done, a dice roll modified by social background multiplier, urban and home environ skill levels yields a social standing, initial wealth and an 'Initial Skill Points Modifier.' This latter number is added to the roll of one die to yield (on another table,) from one to five 'Initial Skill Points.'

Up to this point, character generation has called for few decisions by the player. Many are called for during the rest of the procedure. There are eight 'Fields of Study': Theoretical Science, Applied Science, Business, Humanities, The Mind, The Body, Military, and General. everyone is allowed to study General for free; the rest can be studied up to twice each at the cost of one Study Point each time

(doubled for study of the Mind). Each field has a number of associated skills. The character's 'Initial Skill Points' may be expended one for one to acquire a level 1 skill in any of the fields studied (any skills in the studied fields not taken at this point are considered to be 'familiar').

Having done all this, the player finally gets to generate his characteristics. He consults a table to obtain numbers, based on his potentials and fields of study, which are added to the roll of decimal dice to yield, via another table, the actual characteristic ratings, which run from 1 to 12 (except that mental power is halved with fractions dropped to yield 0 to 6).

With these in hand, the player can now choose a profession for his 20 year old character. Of the 23 professions, he will probably find many not open to him because he did not study the proper fields or is deficient in some characteristic (at least anyone who wants to, or can't be anything else, can qualify to be a Colonist).

He then decides how many years (4, 8, 12, 16, or 20 year terms only) he will practice the profession of his choice. However . . . Only if he is a Thinker or a Colonist will he actually work all the years he declared. In all other cases, a die is rolled and a table consulted to see how many years were actually worked.

In a military profession, if the years worked are less than years declared, the character is considered discharged after that many years of service and those years are added to his age. In all other cases, the character ages the full number of declared years, no matter how many were worked. The rest of the time he was 'out of work' (unemployment must be a problem in Butterfield's universe — there is a 20% chance of only working 12 years out of 20, and equally only a 20% chance of working the full 20 years).

At any rate, the character now has a new age. If this is greater than 24, the age is added to the roll of a ten-sided die and another table consulted to see how many points from his physical characteristics are lost due to aging (the debilities of age hit early and hard in this universe). He then adds his Intelligence to his profession's 'Skill Point Modifier' and rolls a die, cross-indexing the sum on a table with the years worked to find out how many skill points he gets from his professional experience. He may then acquire skills from the list of those available to his profession as before (again gaining familiarity with those he does not spend points on).

As a last item, the number of years worked is added to a die roll and looked up on a table to determine the character's retirement Benefit Level (a letter from A to F). Each profession lists what in the way of money or equipment is due at each level, rather than consulting tables as in *Traveller*.

Character generation is time consuming, and life-like too in that planning ahead is required if maximization of potential is to be achieved. It is frustrating too in that the system is geared toward averaging out characters. A character blessed with good potential multipliers is limited in his fields of study and hence in initial skills and the ability to influence the characteristics die rolls. A good social standing restricts one's Initial Skill points.

Skills available from professional experience are limited, too. There are 64 skills other than gravity and environmental ones, but the typical profession lets one learn only six to eight of them. The most widely available skills are Handguns and Air Vehicles, and in each case only nine of the 23 professions teach them. Many skills cannot be learned through a profession at all, but are attained only via initial study or game experience. There are some odd facets of this, too. For instance, the skill 'diplomacy' cannot be learned via experience in the profession 'Diplomat' (nor is it a prerequisite for the job). Similarly, Merchants and Traders cannot acquire any 'economics' skills. The result is that even the most experienced possible character (usually a doddering 40 year old) will have only a smattering of the possible skills and may have lost up to 7 points from his physical characteristics in picking up what he does have.

The skills are many, taking up over a quarter of the rulebook (exclusive of the 28 pages of log and map sheets). Each skill has a description of what it can do, how to use it and how to gain experience points in using it (while a similar procedure in all cases, there is no single rule for this — each skill is a special case).

Using a skill successfully or not, has about a one fifth to one third chance of gaining an experience point. These are kept track of on the character's log sheet, skill by skill, and can be spent to improve the skill level. It takes points equal to the new level to move up, except that gaining level 1 in a familiar skill costs 3 points, and for an unfamiliar skill it costs 8 points (picking up something via game experience is not easy). Usually the square of the skill level is added to the base percentage chance of using the skill successfully (possibly along with the values of certain characteristics), making higher skill levels very useful.

So, characters are made not born. What about the worlds they cavort in? Once again, the *Traveller* world generating procedures are skeletal in comparison to this game.

Assuming the player/GM doesn't wish to invent worlds out of whole cloth, he can proceed by the numbers in this area as well. Pick a star on the Interstellar Display and look up its spectral type and planet possessing potential. Roll dice on the appropriate table to see if a planet is present in each possible orbital (there are 12, from .5 to 40 AU distant) — oddly, the probability is the same for each orbital. Each planet present is then rolled for to determine its size and type, the presence of moons (and their sizes and types), and physical features. Planets range in size from one to nine, and a (reproducible) log sheet is provided for each size, including size 0 (moons only) and asteroid belts. On the log, the world is divided into environs roughly 4000km square (two for a size 1 up to 82 for a size 9). The type of atmosphere, mean temperature, and percentage of water for the world as a whole are determined by dice rolls and tables, and those data are used to determine the predominant terrain in each environ. A blank small hex grid is included for the mapping of individual environs at a scale of 100km/hex as desired by the GM (the GM is entirely on his own for this part, beyond minimal advice on keeping consistent with the overall terrain type). The next step is to determine the presence if any of human settlements on the planet and if present, its type, Law Level, Civ (ilization) Level, and the class of spaceport it supports. Finally, the worlds resources are determined and placed, along with population, in the environs at the GM's whim.

**JET PACK**
**6 Levels/Limit: Agility**
The character is able to operate a jet pac device strapped to the back that allows fli A character's Jet Pack Skill Level affect speed and maneuverability he may a with the pack (see 29.3). A skilled charac *Agility Rating* and the *square* of his *Level* are added to his base chance to av jet pack accident (see 27.8). An unsk character has nothing added to his chance of avoiding such an accident. A c acter who rolls a **0** or **1** on either die whe tempting to avoid a jet pack accident rec an Experience Point.

The next section of rules is called Character Action, and seems written on the implicit assumption that the characters are going to always be traveling cross-country (or at worst in a spaceship rather than merely hanging around somewhere. Environ and vehicle types are used to determine how far they can travel in a day, and three times per day (once if traveling by spaceship) the GM consults the Encounter Table to see if NPCs or creatures are run into, or if an accident may occur.

Assuming an encounter occurs, a page of rules is devoted to setting the scene before getting to the actual resolution. This is done in 'action rounds' which represent about 15 seconds, and use of a hex grid (5 meters/hex) and figures or counters are needed. Characters not stunned or otherwise restrained can, within a fairly convoluted sequence of play, move (distance depends on agility rating, gravity, etc.) and/or perform other actions selected from a list of those available.

Combat can be with ranged weapons, hand to hand (or claw, tentacle, etc.) or psionically. Damage inflicted is in terms of temporary reductions (in effect until healed by a variety of methods) to physical characteristics. Reduction of Endurance to 0 causes the character to pass out, and if strength also goes to 0 he dies. Psionic attacks (indeed almost any use of Psionics) can fail and subject the user to damage via 'backlash.' Some weapons and creatures operate by application of poisons, which have their effects resolved on the 'Toxin Effects Matrix.'

The last rules section is entitled Space Travel. In it, the make-up of spaceships is briefly explained (a ship consists of a hull and various detachable pods). Standard hulls and pods are described, and sketchy rules for designing one's own are given. Interstellar travel is via 'hyperjumps," and a ship must have both a hyperjump engine and a psionic navigator to attempt it (the ship may always fail to reach the desired location). For characters without spaceships, commercial flights are available, and rules for determining cost and delays are given. Travel between planets, or between planets and the distant point from which the hyperjump can commence, is handled as an abstraction, with equations given to determine the time and energy needed to go a given distance.

The Adventure Guide lists 40 creatures, with an explanation of their capabilities and advice as to where they might be encountered (they are numbered and keyed to the Terrain Effects Chart). Also supplied are 40 NPCs classed as common, rare, and unique, that might be encountered in a scenario. Rounding this out is a section describing possible encounters in space and accidents

(both avoidable via successful use of a skill, and unavoidable) that may befall the players. The balance of the Adventure Guide is a learning scenario called "Lost on Laidley" which presents the Orionis system in reasonable detail, and a mission to locate and rescue a missing exploration party on the inhospitable planet Laidley.

Unlike the reams of rules required for generating characters or planets, equipment is presented in only five pages. Robots are treated as something more than just equipment, though that is all they are unless they are equpped with 'Learning' and 'Creative Thought' components (there is no provision for using a robot as a player-character for that matter, no non-human characters are possible either). Robots consist of a chassis and various detachable systems, each of which needs a certain amount of hardware and software space on the chassis to operate. Systems vary quite a bit, allowing robots to serve as fighting units, miners, farmers, or even a valet/secretary. Besides robots, the other equipment consists of Weapons (chiefly lasers and projectile weapons), Protective Systems (both armor and breathing apparatus), Personal Equipment (scanners, repair kits, communication devices) and Vehicles, subdivided into Land, Military, Marine, and Air. The latter are either aerodynamic or anti-gravity in function, and include some weirdos like the Ornithopter — "A large flying vessel using the actual beat of its wings for lift . . . nuclear powered." Yoicks! A 'thopter capable of lifting a nuclear power plant must be a sight to behold.

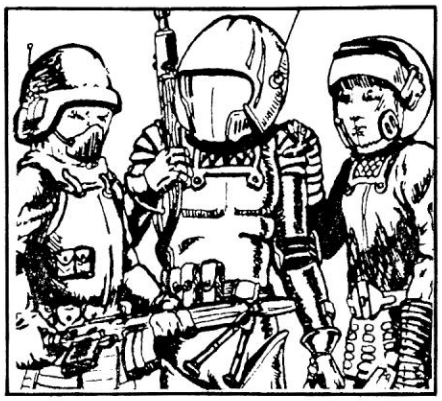
**CREATURE Nr. 13:** Small
**Restrictions:** Air. requires non-corrosive mosphere and moisture. Gravity of **0.2** **1.0**. Temperature between **50°** and **200°**.
**Combat:** 1-2 **AY:** 1-2 **AG:** 1-2
**IN:** na **Initiative:** 10%
**Composition:** Protein; carbon 40%
**Powers:** Poison discharge 100%; multi attack 100%; kinetic absorption 10 unknown propulsion 5%; poison 15%
•**Warning:** What appear to be windblo puff-balls are headed in your direction.
•**Sight:** Each ball is 50 centimeters diameter. Balls have fuzzy appearance.

A reader of this review may have noticed the continual references to charts and tables. That is the basic deficiency of this rules set — so little of what must be done can be done from memory. Both players and GM will be frequently flipping pages to look up numbers, and must write down results when resolution is obtained. The bookkeeping burden in it is not light and the rewards it offers players who stick it out are not commensurate with the workload.

*Universe* is not a bad, nor an unplayable game, but it will probably appeal only to a small and dedicated audience. Among the support materials it could use, foremost would be an abstract space combat system to allow an encounter to be resolved in minutes rather than an hour or more, and a tabular summary of the many skills and the die rolls they require for success and earning experience points. Close behind would be more pre-generated stellar systems combined with scenario situations to aid GMs in setting up adventures.

In summary, *Universe* is a far cry from what *Traveller* is now, but given the same time for development of background and publication of supplementary material, it could easily equal *Traveller* in its richness. However, it will always be a slower game to play.

*Steve List*



## AFTERMATH!

Bob Charette and Paul Hume
Fantasy Games Unlimited
$20

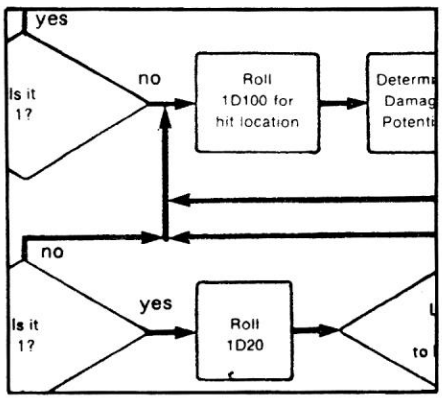
A few months ago I happened to watch a TV special on the Survivalists, a group of understandably paranoid individuals who are preparing for the advent of a nuclear war by stockpiling food, medicine, tools and weapons in caves and cubbyholes throughout the mountains and wilds of California. The leader of one chapter of the Survivalists, a burly, sharp-angled executive from Silicon Valley, was discussing his strategy for life after the holocaust: "All right," he said, taking a relaxed draw on his pipe, "Let's say you have a can of food, and I have a gun. In a few seconds, I will have both the gun and the food. It's as simple as that." Then he smiled.

I was floored by this man's casual indifference to the world he was resigning himself to. One would hope that after the holocaust, the ultimate expression of violence the Survivalists dread, human beings would make steps toward eliminating the militant mentality which destroyed civilisation in the first place. Certainly once the world has collapsed into a Hobbesian war of all-against-all, it is in everyone's best interests to defend against the hungry sniper in the woodpile, but many of the Survivalists, who pride themselves upon being "the hope of the future," have in essence legitimized the continued carnage and shoot-or-be-shot ideology in the post-holocaust world.

The same philosophical criticism can be leveled at *Aftermath!*, Fantasy Games Unlimited's new (fantasy? science fiction?) role-playing game of life after the holocaust. Although violence is gratuitous in RPG's there are parameters of context and qantity which *Aftermath!* seems to overstep. In most RPG's combat is unreal — simulated blood is shed, people die, but there is never the gut-wrenching impact of real violence. It is not surprising that many self professed pacifists play RPG's: the blood they spill is made of the same unreal fabric that their characters are made of. They're playing Sir Gareth or Ensign Flandry, not William Calley. Even *Gamma World*, which purports to simulate the same situation as *Aftermath!*, has a simplicity and 'cuteness' about its design which soft-pedals any death and destruction which may occur in the game.

*Aftermath!*, on the other hand, practically exults in its morbid meticulousness with every minutiae of killing. Everything from the box lid (depicting a mediocrily-drawn figure standing in the rubble of a blasted city, wearing police armor and brandishing an M-16 menacingly) to the thirty hit locations diagrammed on the same character sheet, to detailed charts on the blast radii, and effects of claymore mines and canister grenades, all tell after a brief perusal of the three rule booklets that the name of the game is kill, kill, kill, with as much gory detail as possible. The designers themselves admit that the greatest effort in creating the game was placed in the hundreds of hours of research, design, and play-testing of the firearms rules.

The unfortunate consequence of all this painstaking attention to detail is that the combat system has sacrificed playability for realism. Mayhaps you are made of a different RPG stock, but any combat system which requires a two-page flowchart to explain is a quick turn-off to this gamer. At first glance, *Aftermath!* seems to be as much of a role-playing game as SPI's *Commando*: merely a highly complex, highly glorified firefight.




Certainly there are those who will appreciate this over-emphasis on the martial. For those who enjoy hack-and slash fantasy games or shoot-em-up science fiction games, *Aftermath!* is ideal. It takes little imagination to play the game at this level — only patience to wade through the rules. For the rest of us, the rules leave us out in the cold. Despite *Aftermath!*'s manic quest for completeness, *Gamma World* had a longer and more interesting section on mutations. Weather isn't really covered at all, but *Aftermath!* tells you in detail how to simulate splashing acid in someone's face, and the gun list goes on and on . . . What source books are listed in the bibliography? *Sporting Arms of the World, Ballistics and the Muzzle Loading Rifle, The Gunner's Bible, Small Arms of the World, Soldier of Fortune* magazine . . . *ad infinitum, ad nauseum*.

What is the net effect of all this? When an already overworked GM is faced with page after page overflowing with combat rules and containing very little information on the non-combative aspects of the game, it would be very easy for the campaign to collapse into an endless series of streetfights. Not surprisingly,

the introductory scenario included in *Aftermath!* is a barroom brawl. Likewise FGU's first *Aftermath!* scenario package, *Into the Ruins*, focuses on two adventures, an encounter with a highly militant organization called the Farming Community Cooperative, and an attack on Mad Charlie and his army of mindless 'zombies.'

One thing that Paul Hume and Robert Charette, the designers of *Aftermath!*, will never be accused of is brevity. *Aftermath!*'s three hefty rulebooks total 217 pages of charts and rules, but despite the amount of information to be assimilated by the would-be player, little effort has been made to organize the rules and make them easily indexed. *Aftermath!*, like FGU's other monster RPG, *Space Opera*, is a paragon of bad organization: the combat system is sprawled across all three books, and some of the information necessary for the player's design of their characters is in sections marked, 'Gamesmasters Only!' When I first read the rules, it took me a full half hour of page-flipping to find out exactly how many points a character has available to allocate to his prime attributes. The format of *Aftermath!* is much like the state of the world it attempts to simulate: a bloody mess.

As a result, *Aftermath!* is an extremely difficult game to run. There are many iffy factors which diminish the possibility of a game ever occurring: *if* the GM is able to adequately familiarize himself with the rules to a point where he would feel confident in his ability to run a game; *if* the GM can find the time to design a campaign in a system as complex as this; *if* everyone involved is willing to shell out the $20 for the rules, or wait until one of his friends has finished puzzling over his copy of the rules; *if* after all this has occurred, the GM and players are able to push this leviathan of a game into motion . . . Quite an achievement, if it ever works. And there's still the chance that, after all this expenditure of time, patinece, mental effort, and aspirin, the game will fall apart and become a highly detailed shoot-em-up. No thank you.

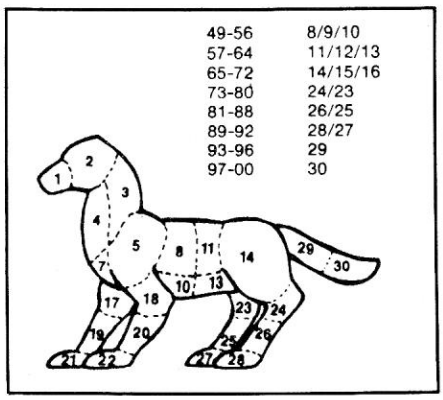
*Aftermath!* is not a pain for the GM alone. Players must (as I finally found out) allocate 75 attribute points between wit (intelligence), will, strength, deftness (dexterity), speed, and health (constitution). Then they must decide their area of talent: charismatic, combative, communicative, esthetic, mechanical, natural, or scientific. When that's finished, the player uses the talent area as a basis for determining which specific skills the character possesses. The player then determines the character's age group, type of origin, physical characteristics, psychological profile, encumbrance capacity, beginning clothing, and initial eqipment. Although this is a far easier project than what lies before the GM, there are two major snags which the player faces. Aside from flipping from book to book in order to find all the information pertinent to character design, many of the rules seem to contradict themselves from book to book. For example, the rules tell one way to calculate encumbrance, but the example a few pages later gives a completely different formula for the same calculation.

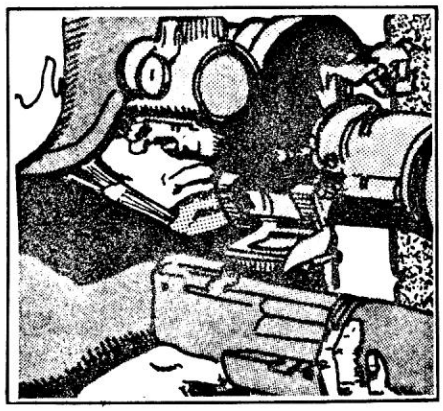
A more drastic problem, though, is character mortality. Characters will die rather quickly in a violence-oriented game like *Aftermath!*, which is hardly compensatory for the amount of work put into designing a then-character, now-corpse. When John Doe steps into the ruined expanses of New York in his first few hours of play and then subsequently on a land mine, what's a player to do? Sit out of play until he finishes another hour or two of character design, or hold up the game until he is finished doing so?

Last, but not at all least, there is no underlying logical structure to all the myriad complexities of the system. *Aftermath!* players are faced with endless rivers of charts and rules simulating everything down to the level of practically giving rules on how a character picks his teeth, but there is no single design strategy behind it all. Players must steel themselves to face the onslaught of BDG's, BSC's, WDM's, DAT's, AST's, CST's . . . It's enough to drive a person back to *Monopoly*. *The Fantasy Trip* rests upon one simulation concept, three primary character attributes and their relationship to six sided die rolls which represent all functions of the game; *RuneQuest*, the most 'realistic' FRP game on the market, is easily comprehensible, and all aspects of the game are logically interrelated and easily resolved without reference to several matrices and a long combat flowchart. If *Aftermath!*, like these games, had one central simulation concept which tied all the rules into a coherent game, then its formidability would be limited to its length alone. Not only would this make *Aftermath!* more easily understood and playable, but expansion would be that much easier. Unfortunately, all that the two years of playtesting which went into *Aftermath!* have to show for themselves is a vast, chaotic sea of rules which only the strong-hearted (and masochistic) would dive into.

A minor haggle (minor because it takes up an undeservedly small portion of the rules) is the encounter tables. There is only one encounter table with a few peripheral subtables, but these tables refuse to take into account terrain, time of day, part of the world in which the adventure is taking place, or common sense. Next to human beings (including the ever-popular disease-carrying maniac) and animals which are indigenous to North America (rattlesnakes, wild dog packs, black and grizzly bears, etc.), we have lions, tigers, elephants, giant constrictors, and polar bears. A rhinoceros grazing in the plains of South Dakota? Although attention has been paid to how much food can be stripped from a freshly dead animal, the designer's ecological knowledge is unforgivably weak.

Now (amazingly), about the good points. Misters Hume and Charrette seem to have the right idea of what role-playing games are all about, but their attitudes are never truly manifested in the rules. I doubt that a new gamer would tackle a role-playing system as colossal as *Aftermath!* as his first venture into the filed, but at the beginning of the first book (why do so many RPGs have to be partitioned into three books?) there is a very good essay on the fine art of role-playing and the parts to be played by the players and the GM in the game. Suggestions are made on how to play the good, the bad, and the ugly as player-characters and what actions can breathe life into the characters and campaign. As source materials, the designers refer players to the classics, both ancient and modern: *The Illiad* and *The Oddyssey*; the Arthurian romances; the works of Zelazny, Leiber, and Anderson; *et al*. Paradoxically, in the face of the 'bang! bang! you're dead' mentality of the rest of the rulebooklets, it almost seems as though these short essays fell into the pages of *Aftermath!* by accident from another game.



The real pearl at the center of the other detritus which forms the *Aftermath!* system are the possibilities for campaign scenarios. The setting for the campaign need not be life in the wake of a nuclear holocaust – suggestions are provided for *Aftermath!* scenarios in a world decimated by a collision with an asteroid or comet (*Lucifer's Hammer*), a devastating global conventional war, and an Earth which has passed into a universe where magic functions alongside with science (Saberhagen's *Empire of the East*, or Zelazny's *Jack of Shadows* or Amber series). Probably the most intriguing concept is lifted from the Marvel comic *Killraven*, basically a *War of the Worlds Part II*. The Martians, frustrated by the first aborted invasion of Earth in the 19th century, have by manipulating world politics for a century triggered a nuclear war. With civilization in ruins and mankind a disorganized rabble, the impassionate Martians have returned to enslave the human race. And, if you are a *Planet of the Apes* buff, outlines are given on how to run the series in the context of *Aftermath!*.

All well and good, but these remain at the level of outlines and suggestions. If you want to run a magic/technology game, you as the hapless GM must create or borrow a magic system and then adapt it to *Aftermath!*. As if it weren't difficult enough already . . . FGU asks purchasers of *Aftermath!* in an included questionnaire how useful they feel specific or general campaign packages would be, but as of now there are no such aids for the would-be GM.

Skill sections are almost mandatory in SF RPGs, and *Aftermath!* is no exception. Skills

range from combat ability to medicine, machine operation, communications, linguistics, physics, farming, masonry, sociology, and fermentation (!). The skills list is comprehensive and fairly plausible – how much do *you* know about how to farm, how to properly dress a wound, how to weave, or how to fix a radio? Not everyone can be an expert in everything. Although vocational and scientific skills would certainly be of utmost importance in a post-holocaust world, but once again *Aftermath!*'s over-emphasis on combat manages it like a drunk Marine at a glass sculpture exhibit to ruin things for everyone. One gun-nut in the campaign can really kill (in more ways than one) the enjoyment for that interesting doctor or merchant character you have spent so much time creating.

*Aftermath!* as an idea has enormous potential; *Aftermath!* as a game buries its potential beneath a mountain of ultra-detailed combat rules, and it is up to the individual GM to make up for the gross inadequacies of the game taken at face value. The important question for anyone considering *Aftermath!* is, "Is it worth the effort?" It is unfortunate that one must overcome the rules in order to enjoy *Aftermath!*. After two years of playtesting, anyone can develop a working knowledge of any role-playing system, no matter how long or disconnected it may be. For the neophyte player, though, it's also a question of how much you're willing to put up with. If you are a Survivalist looking for an educational tool, then this game is for you – given a *good* GM, *Aftermath!* could be the best way of learning what to expect after a nuclear or biological holocaust. For the average gamer, its worth is dubious. As to me, until a capable GM willing to undertake the Herculean task of setting up an *Aftermath!* campaign comes along, my copy will sit on the bookshelf – in other words, for a long, long time.

*Thomas A. Grant*

## SORAG

Chuck Kallenbach II
Paranoia Press
$3.50

The term SORAG is an acronym for the Scientific Operations Research and Administration Group, an intelligence and counter-intelligence service for the Zhodani Consulate. The Zhodani, as *Traveller* GMs who have chosen to base their campaigns in GDW's Third Imperium will recall, are a sub group of Humaniti who foster psionic powers. Their interstellar political grouping, the Consulate, is implacably antagonistic to the Imperium, a hostility that has recently led to war, as chronicled in GDW's new game *The Fifth Frontier War*, and featured in the *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society 9*. All this tends to create some interest in Zhodani, and Paranoia Press' new playaid, *SORAG*, helps a bit on this account.

SORAG is essentially the espionage service for the Zhodani. It is divided into four branches: Scientific (technological improvements for weapons, surveillance, medicine, and the like), Operations (assassination, terrorism and sabotage), Research (routine surveillance and translation) and Administration (record keeping and information analysis). A character entering the service cannot choose which particular branch he will get into; this is determined by die roll, though a college education, high social standing and the like will help attain a position in the more interesting scientific and operations branches.

**Lance Corporal**/Research 9
College/Honors; Recruiting-3, Inve

**Major**/Scientific 7
Zhodani; College/ROTC/Honors;
Counterfeiting-2, Communicatio
Admin-1; Gun, High Passage.

**Leading Sergeant**/Operations 9
Investigation-1, Linguistics-1, S
Computer-1, Torture-2, Interrogatio
Cbt-2, Special Weapons-2; PSR 8 (
dead" age 33, DCM, Cross-Trai
Defection, Dishonrable Discharge/C

The procedure for determining the outcome of each term of service is the same as that used in *High Guard* or *Mercenary*. Each term is broken down into four component years. Each year consists of an assignment, such as surveillance, clerical, or the more flashy assassination and sabotage. The type of assignment is dependent on die roll and the specific branch the character belongs to. In addition, each assignment is rated for security clearance; the assignment rolled could be negated if the character doesn't have the proper clearance rating.

The assignment is resolved through a series of die rolls for survival, decoration, promotion and skills. Some interesting modifications to standard procedure have been made, however. Failure to make a survival throw doesn't necessarily mean death; the character could have been captured by the enemy while performing his mission (with a small chance provided for escape), or been part of a security leak and subsequently 'reconditioned.' Because of the nature of many missions, cash awards are often made in lieu of medals.

*SORAG* introduces some new skills appropriate to the character type. Cryptography allows the user to attempt to crack codes or come up with some of his own. Counterfeiting enables the character to turn out quantities of illegal printed items like currency. Research and Investigation are skills that deal with information gathering; the former is a more intuitive and generalized skill, while the latter concentrates on the examination of public records and data banks. Examination is a related skill applying to cases involving forensic analysis, such as ballistics or chemical testing. Identification aids in piercing disguises and physical alterations. More interesting are Psychological Warfare, used to undermine enemy morale and that old favorite of information extraction, Torture.

The character generation process can be a bit tedious, and one can question how often it will be used by player characters – how many campaigns are set up to allow players to act as Zhodani? With little effort, the material could be changed to allow generation of Imperial intelligence agents, however.

The *SORAG* book concludes with a section of equipment. Included are some new drugs, such as nutrient tabs, anti toxins and the more exotic mood-altering psychotomimetics and intoxicating Narcolethe. Many of the devices offered are appropriately 'James Bondish': an interchangeable small arms system that is carried in a briefcase, laser listeners and wiretaps and vehicles such as amphibious ground cars, infiltrator aircraft and intruder shuttles. Many of these items would make useful additions to any GM's equipment lists, and would not necessarily have to be used by intelligence agents.

For the campaign that wishes to include spies and their ilk, or the GM who wishes to add some new skills and equipment to his game, *SORAG* is a good choice.

*Tony Watson*

## SEA OF MYSTERY

G. Arthur Rahman
Flying Buffalo, Inc
$6

*Sea of Mystery* is the latest in a series of solo adventures for *Tunnels & Trolls*. It is 32 pages long, 8½x11 inches in size, with a color cover on heavy stock and a number of good interior illustrations. It is intended for a single adventurer of any character class with no more than 45 combat adds (meaning that he had better have at least 20 or so). Magic spells are resolved on a single page chart at the end of the book called a Magic Matrix. The spell used is cross-indexed with the paragraph number to find the likely effect in the body of the chart. Other possible character actions are accomodated within the body of the text.

The adventure involves crossing a body of water by ship, and all the possible adventures and mishaps which can befall a character as this is attempted. Just about every seagoing

plot device from adventure novels, comic books, or Hollywood occurs in this book. The action is often colorful and exciting.

The adventures are varied. Play begins in an anonymous seaport (it could even be Gull, the City of Terrors) when the character decides to take a sea voyage. From this base, the ship may receive word of a temple besieged by evil, or encounter pirates, storm, slavers, shipwreck, or just reach the next port safely. Characters can be marooned on tropical islands populated with amazons, spend years as galley slaves, or resting contentedly in the lap of luxury. Your character could explore the remains of a decadent civilisation or explore the delights of pub-crawling in the port city.

By now, the more intelligent readers will have tumbled to the fact that the voyages across the Sea of Mystery don't actually go anywhere, that getting there is indeed all the fun. This leads to the thought of providing destinations for the voyages, places to continue the adventure once the travel is done. In solo *T&T*, the ship could run from Gull to Khazan, home of the infamous Arena and the Overkill adventure. Another land could be the land where the Blue Frog inn is located. Another might be Buffalo Castle, etc. The problem with this scheme is that one's character couldn't reliably count on reaching his destination — the Sea of Mystery is very dangerous in terms of an ordinary trip between destinations. This problem also crops up in contemplating the use of this solo to move a character between locations in a GM style *T&T* campaign.

Many of the solo adventures become predictable after a few runs, in that there are a lot of paragraphs where the reader must decide for himself where the character will go next. In these cases, the player rapidly learns which choices lead to the magic treasure and which lead to the Balrog (monster rating 250), and generally prefers to choose the former over the latter. Many of these choices are superfluous to the adventure, and are holdovers from the primitive button-box school of dungeon adventure design. In any event, the adventure becomes stale quickly if there are many paragraphs whose consequences can be learned by the reader — I find I have to put many of my solos away for months until I forget the solutions to the special paragraphs.

VB = Vorpal Blade (
eets WHAM = Whammy
eeze Pleeze SMOG = Sm

| LF | WHAM | ROCKA | BP |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ×2 | ★[MR] | ☐ |
| ★ | ×2 | ★[MR] | ✓ |
| ½ | ★ | ×2[42] | ★ |
| ★ | 1-3 | ★[MR] | ★ |

*Sea of Mystery* has the virtue of not containing many paragraphs of this sort. The adventure segments are connected by random decision paragraphs based on luck saving rolls or by plain rolls of the die to see what happens next. I don't know if this is good practice generally, but it seems to have been well applied to this adventure. It works and I have not had to put this booklet away as I have many solo adventures.

I liked this adventure. Actually, I like the solo adventures that Flying Buffalo publishes generally, and this booklet is of similar quality to the other adventures in the line. Specifically, though, it provides a relatively low-key interlude between adventures which are a bit deadlier. This solo adventure features color and playability over danger and gross rewards. It is a good buy, especially when you consider the price.

*Anders Swenson*

## FIEND FOLIO

Edited by Don Turnbull
TSR Hobbies
$12

It seems that TSR's *Monster Manual* just didn't provide enough gruesome uglies to fill the worlds of the hundreds of thousands of *AD&D* players out there. Something had to be done, so they went over to England and came back with a selection of some 185 illogical, inaccurate and generally silly monsters mostly culled from the pages of *White Dwarf*. They called this collection the *Fiend Folio*, continuing the alliterative tradition of *Deities and Demigods* and *Monster Manual*.

Don Turnbull of *White Dwarf* edited the collection, but oddly enough *White Dwarf* is never credited in any way as the source for many of the monsters, perhaps as many as 90% of them.

*Fiend Folio* looks very nice. The cover art by Emmanuel, is among the best pieces I've seen on TSR products. The interior art is mostly good, and at least functional. All of the creatures are clearly described with all of the necessary statistics and facts. There are 124 pages of text, the book is hardbound, the printing is good, and there are a full 185 new monsters stuffed in. Superficially this seems to be an excellent buy.

However, look more closely at the monsters which are presented. Not only have almost all of them already been published in *White Dwarf*, but they are of very questionable quality. Not everyone has all the back issues of *White Dwarf*, especially not newer readers in the U.S., so most of the monsters will still be novel enough. The real problem lies with the nature of the monsters which are presented. For the most part these are 'burnout' monsters. They are the type of illogical creature which is designed as a joke, to lighten up an adventure, or for a campaign which is stagnating and trying to stay alive by the introduction of radical and ridiculous ideas. This can be clearly illustrated with examples from the text:

CARBUNCLE — This seems to be an armadillo with a gem in its head which exists only so that that gem, which is magical, can be taken away.

COFFER CORPSE — An aquatic undead. Essentially a wet zombie.

CRYPT THING — A standard variation on the Liche.

DISENCHANTER — A combination camel vacuum-cleaner which eats magic items. One of the most ridiculous ideas I have ever seen.

LAMIA NOBLE / LIZARD KING — Higher level versions of common monsters. Anyone with even a pea-sized brain could have extrapolated these.

NORKER — A goblin with bigger teeth.

These are just a few examples of the problems which exist here. Many of the monsters are totally illogical, like the Carbuncle and Disenchanter, and many many more, the undead especially are very similar to monsters from the *Monster Manual*. If a person has had the wit to make obvious variations on older monsters he will find that he already has half of the items in the book.

In additon to the new monsters there are monsters taken from history and literature. For the most part these are the obvious choices that were overlooked in the *Monster Manual*. Unfortunately many of these have been published before in places which have definitely not been credited. A large group of them were taken from a booklet called "The Book of Monsters," from Little Soldier Games, and some others, like the Kelpie have been done dozens of times before. Some of these are also done so incredibly inaccurately that I flinch when I see them. If you are going to write up a historical or legendary creature you ought to at least make it resemble the source monster. The worst case of this in the *Fiend Folio* is the Vodyanoi, a creature from Russian folklore, which they describe as "close aquatic relative of the umber hulk." Nothing could be more inaccurate. Rather than a drooling trolloid, the Vodyanoi was actually a humanoid water and storm spirit which resemblesd a kindly old man. This shows a disgraceful lack of interest in creating creatures with more depth and development.

The last area I have to criticize is the encounter tables which take up 20 or so pages of the book. Encounter tables and random treasure assortments are one of the worst aspects of *D&D*, which render it unnecessarily random and unrealistic. That 20 pages should be wasted on yet another set of these seems criminally inefficient to me.

I don't want to say that *Fiend Folio* is totally worthless. There are some very good ideas presented here. Some of the monsters are brilliant, for example, the Necrophidius, the Sandman, and the Urchin. There are also some very good descriptions of legendary monsters, including Chinese Dragons, Drow, and Eye Killers. A person who has very little imagination or time could find a substitute for inventiveness in this book, though it would only last for a while. For those who

habitually make up new creatures the value of the *Fiend Folio* is much less.

I cannot honestly recommend this play aid to most game masters. It is a limp effort at best. It was clearly written more to make money than to expand the field, and it would probably not add anything to most FRP campaigns. My advice would be to think up a few monsters on your own, or derive new variations from old monsters. If this works you dont have to buy *Fiend Folio*, if you can't make up monsters on your own go out and buy *Fiend Folio*. Enjoy it, it is at least an adequate attempt. Whichever course you take, definitely look the book over before you spend your money. Check first to make sure that you want to add this kind of monster to your campaign and determine whether you wil actually gain anything from it. This book is definitely not to the taste of every GM, and its value will vary from campaign to campaign.

*David F. Nalle*

## HIGH PASSAGE

Christopher Kupczyk, Scott Walschlager, Jim Cunningham and Craig Johnson
High Passage
$3.50

The popularity of GDW's *Traveller* has prompted a number of design groups to get into the act of producing play aids for the game. The subject of this review is an effort by a group of hobbyists who have combined their efforts in order to share their ideas with other players. Their magazine/playaid, *High Passage no. 1* is a good example of what 'amateurs' with some good ideas and the desire to present them in an attractive and informative manner can do.

*High Passage* is a magazine and combination playaid, and the first of a series. The physical presentation is first rate. The graphics and typesetting are surprisingly well done for a product of this type. The artwork is a bit lacking however, and not quite up to the standard of the text. This criticism extends primarily to the illustrative art; the more functional drawings, such as the deck plans included with the featured scenario, are much better executed. The booklet is 5½ by 8½ inches, the same size as the *Traveller* rules books and supplements, and numbers fifty-six pages.

*High Passage* is chock full of ideas and should have something to add to just about any SF campaign. About a third of the book is devoted to a featured scenario, the "Solar Flare Mystery," which deals with a kidnapping and rescue aboard a casino starship. Deck plans for the ship design are included as well as notes on the creatures and the robots that work on the Solar Flare. The robots are designed according to the rules provided in past issues of the *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society*.

Also included in the booklet is a section on small craft, introducing the sandcrab ATV, Star Dart Tech 14 fighter, and the deception drone. A character type is provided in the section dealing with the Ministry of Justice Special Branch. The JSB is a sort of internal security and counter-intelligence organization. The information presented is extensive, ranging from organizational charts to skills tables paralleling those found in Book 1 of *Traveller*.

*High Passage* is rounded out with four pages of drawings of Book 1 weapons and deck plans and statistics for the 800 ton Tral Wolf class intelligence cruiser. The starship is completely detailed and statistics are provided in *High Guard* format.

The final stages of the book are devoted to a sector map and a subsector map. The Dethenes subsector is the site of the previously mentioned Solar Flare Mystery and future adventures in the *High Passage* series will probably take place somewhere in 'The Old Expanses' sector.

I was pleased with *High Passage* and can give it a solid recommendation. The authors have made a concerted effort to mesh their information with the already large body of *Traveller* material available elsewhere. The booklet is well worth the asking price, when one considers the large amount of material included. Judging the playaid as an initial offering from a group of relative unknowns, I was very impressed.

*Tony Watson*


THE GEOMORPHIC DUNGEON CHAMBERS GAME

FANTASY PATHS

A Complete Game for FANTASY ADVENTURING

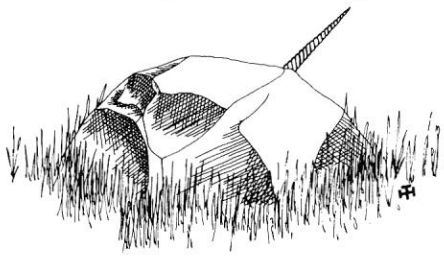
- Floor plans in minutes, thousands of combinations
- No accessories needed. Includes pre-made Dungeon
- The perfect set for novice & experts. Instructions and **Basic Role-Playing** rules by *Chaosium, Inc.* are included
- **FANTASY PATHS** can be used also as a playing aid and is for use with both 15mm and 25mm fantasy figures.

BOARD-CRAFT SIMULATIONS, INC.

P.O. Box 23256 (415) 798-5010 Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

# WIN $10,000

## Find the golden unicorn!



The Fantasy Trip™

Last year Thomas Davidson won $10,000.00 from Metagaming. On September 21, 1980 he found a silver dragon atop New Mexico's Sacramento peak by deciphering clues in TREASURE OF THE SILVER DRAGON.

TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD, sequel to TREASURE OF THE SILVER DRAGON, goes on sale August 10, 1981 (also at GenCon). UNICORN GOLD contains clues to the location of a hidden object. The finder wins $10,000.00 from Metagaming.

When's the last time you got $10,000.00 for winning a game?

TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD is a programmed MicroQuest adventure for Metagaming's popular THE FANTASY TRIP role-playing game system. To play it, you'll need the two MicroGames TFT: MELEE and TFT: WIZARD. It isn't necessary to play the game to decipher the clues, but it can help.

Thomas won $10,000.00 by finding real treaure playing the game. It only took him 30 days.

Maybe you can find the TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD and win the second $10,000.00.

But, you'd better hurry...

TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD, TREASURE OF THE SILVER DRAGON, TFT: MELEE and TFT: WIZARD are $3.95 each.

### ORDER FORM

| quantity | stock # | price | description |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | total: | | |

☐ send me a free catalog
☐ let me know whats new from Metagaming

Interplay, our new magazine, is now available.
Subscription: $9 per year (6 issues).

name

address

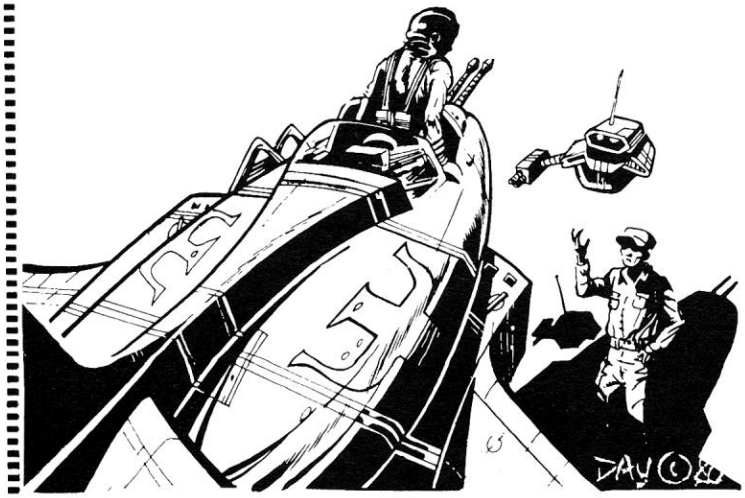
city, state, zip

Metagaming Box 15346·W Austin, TX 78761

# SPACE OPERA

THE COMPLETE S.F. ROLE PLAYING SYSTEM

**Character generation which includes the influence of conditions on the character's planet of origin * many racial types available as Player-Characters and NPCs * over 175 skill areas * advancement of character skills by a logical system which allows for development of chosen skills * characters built with initial skills chosen to fit a given profession * 6 basic character classes in each of 12 starting areas of service or profession * a detailed psionic system with over 90 talents * realistic system for learning skills and psionic abilities * a complete and rounded character with skills chosen in a non-random fashion to meet his or her needs**



**StarShip construction & maintenance rules * equipment and systems breakdown rules * StarShip movement with advanced technology * faster than light travel * non-vectoring sub-light travel * StarShip combat * trade & commerce * mapping * planet & system generation * economics & taxes & ground combat * wounds * medicine * morale * banks & loans * StarPorts * NPC races * Bug-Eyed Monsters* NPC expertise * animals & creatures * rental of vehicles * living costs * everything needed to create a complete and 'realistic' universe with workable and complete systems***

**Space Opera consists of two 90+ page books, handy reference sheets, character, ship, and planetary record forms in a box. It is available from better game and hobby shops or direct from:**
**Fantasy Games Unlimited Inc., P.O.Box 182, Roslyn, N.Y. 11576 U.S.A. $18.00 postpaid.**

**Also Available: GROUND & AIR EQUIPMENT heavy military equipment for use with Space Opera. Including military aircraft, StarFighters, military vehicles, heavy weapons, and nuclear weapons. $5.00 postpaid.**

**Coming This Month: MARTIGAN BELT**
**Adventure scenario for use with Space Opera.**

# QUICK PLUGS

**LIBRARY DATA (A-M)** — This is Supplement 8 for *Traveller*, It is a compilation of essays and background data entries from various previously published material. The 48 page book includes the Imperium article that appeared in *DW 9*, Library data entries from A to M, history of the Solomani, megacorporations, and a list of emperors. It sells for $3.98. **FIGHTING SHIPS** — Supplement 9 for *Traveller*, it contains specs and artist's rendition for 28 starships. Original specs by Tim Brown, artist's conception of the ships by Paul Jaquays, the book is 48 pages. Additional material includes notes on Imperial bases, the Imperial fleet, and more ship information. Price is $3.98. **FIFTH FRONTIER WAR** — Designed by Marc W. Miller, Frank Chadwick, and John M. Astell, this is a SF boardgame simulating an interstellar war. Designed for two players, from 4 to 6 hours, it is usable with *Traveller*. Components include a 22"x28" map, 720 counters, 20 page rulebook, and two dice. The rules include suggestions for using the game as a campaign setting for *Traveller* role-playing activities. It is priced at $14.98. All the above are available from Game Designers' Workshop, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61701.

**CAR WARS** — This micro-format game comes with 105 counters. There are rules, data sheets, maps, etc. Designed by Chad Irby and Steve Jackson, the game involves designing a vehicle with weapons, armor, power plants, suspension, and body style. The object is to destroy other vehicles and survive. Playing time is 30 minutes and up, any number can play. Price is $3. **UNDEAD** — Set up to be either a boardgame or a RPG for three to six players, the Vampire hunters must find and destroy his coffins. The game includes maps, rules, and counters in a micro-format and is designed by Steve Jackson. The price is $3.

**KILLER** — Designed by Steve Jackson, this 40 page book simulates a 'live' role-playing game where players try to knock off each other with water or dart guns, or water balloons. The rules involve, The Contract, bystanders, witnesses, masks, wounding, duels, money, scenarios, weapons, bombs,etc. Price is $5. **GAME DESIGN: THEORY AND PRACTICE** — This 48 page book is written by Nick Schuessler and Steve Jackson. Basically a collection of articles, the book covers background, mapping, terrain, combat and play sequence, research, components, playtesting, etc. Available for $5. All are published by Steve Jackson Games, PO Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760, add 50 cents per item for postage and handling.

**THE RING OF GILROD** — This is the first scenario in the Uttgart series. Designed by David Nalle for *AD&D* and other FRP systems, this one contains background information for new low-level characters. The adventure itself involves exploring a mine with five levels, each with three to six encounters apiece. **BLOOD TRIBUTE** — This is the first in the Ysgarth series. This is similiar in scope to *The Ring of Gilrod*.There are three outdoor encounter descriptions and thirteen in the castle. Designed by David Nalle, it is 16 pages. They are $1.50 each and $5 for 4 issue sub for each series. Available from Ragnarok Enterprises, 1402 21st St NW, Washington DC 20036.

**DWELLERS OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY** — This is dungeon module I1 by David Cook. An adventure for levels 4-7, the 28 page description includes over 60 encounter areas. It also includes scenario suggestions, new monsters, and magic items. **THE SECRET OF BONE HILL** — This dungeon module L1 is by Leonard Lakofka. An adventure for levels 2-4, the 28 page description includes over 130 places for encounter. There are random encounter tables, rumor lists, wilderness descriptions, new monsters, and sample player characters. Both are published by TSR Hobbies, Inc., PO Box 756, Lk Geneva, WI 53147, available from retailers and mail order dealers.

**GRAND MASTER** — This is a card game of zen combat and strategy in which masters of various fighting arts match skills to earn the title of Supreme Warrior and become the Grand Master of the Martial Arts. For two to six players, the game comes boxed with a 28 page rulebook, pads of score sheets, and 112 playing cards. The cards involve attacking, enhancing, challenging, defending, assassins, etc. There are more rules for advanced play. Designed by Chris Goedecke, available from Wind Warrior Company, PO Box 23, Short Hls, NJ 07078.

**FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING GAMES** — This is a 224 page book on our hobby. Written by J. Eric Holmes, M.D., it covers how the games are played, history, *D&D*, SF RPGs, computers, miniatures, magazines, etc. Price is $14.95. Published by Hippocrene Books, Inc., 171 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016.

**THIEVES' WORLD** — This is a city description of Sanctuary, Robert L. Asprin's *Thieves' World*. Designed for use with nine of the more popular RPGs (*A/D&D, RQ, Traveller*, etc.), it comes boxed with three maps and four books. There is a 22"x34" map of Sanctuary and surrounding areas, an 11"x17" map of the Maze, and an 11"x17" map of the Maze Underground. There are two copies of the 16 page *Player's Guide to Sanctuary*, one *Game Master's Guide for Sanctuary*, and one *Personalities of Sanctuary*. It sells for $15.95. Available from Chaosium Inc., PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706-0302, add $1 for P&H, Calif. residents add appropriate 6/6½% sales tax.

**HEROES OF OLYMPUS** — This is a FRP game based on the quest of the Argonauts for the Golden Fleece. Designed by B. Dennis Sustare, the components include 56 pages of rules, five maps, 216 counters, 1D6, and 1D20. The rules cover gods, wealth and magic, parentage, trickery, aerial combat, grappling and boarding, rituals and sacrifices, campaigns, experience, and GM notes. Published by Task Force Games. Available through retailers and mail order dealers.

**HANDBOOK OF TRAPS AND TRICKS** — In *DW 13*, this product was incorrectly described as being 24 pages. It has 108 pages. Sorry for the error.

**THE OUTWORLDS** — This is a *Space Opera* starsector atlas designed by Stefan Jones. It is 40 pages and sells for $6.50. It contains twelve planet descriptions, nine new race descriptions, and various encounter notes.

**WILD WEST** — Designed by Anthony P. LeBoutillier and Gerald D. Seypura, components include a 40 page rulebook, a 22"x28" map of the South West on one side and Dodge City on the other, and play aids, all in a box. This RPG has rules on employment, gambling, dynamite, horses, cattle drives, mule trains, railroads, stage coaches, military, Indians, and notes on Dodge City. Price is $11. Both are available from Fantasy Games Unlimited, PO Box 182, Roslyn, NY 11576.

**SPELL LAW** — This is a spell system designed by Peter C. Fenlon Jr., S. Coleman Charlton, and Terry K. Amthor. Comes boxed with four 24 page rulebooks and eight playaids on cardstock. The rules cover spell users, spell lists, casting spells, tactical considerations, experience, research, resistance, etc. There are over 2000 spell descriptions. Available from Iron Crown Enterprises, PO Box 6910, Charlottesville VA 22906.

**FANTASY LAND** — This is a game for one to six players. Designed by Gary Lange, it comes with a pad of score sheets, four pages of standard rules, two dice, and a page each of rules for the six settings : Wizards Battle, Glagiator, Ace, Space Patrol, Gunfight, and Joust. They all basically simulate one-on-one combats. Comes in a box for $9.95. Available from Lange Games, 1026 W Third St, Ottumwa, IA 52501.

**ENEMIES** — This book provides supervillains for *Champions*. The 24 page book describes 35 supervillain types. Edited by Steve Peterson and George MacDonald, it sells for $5.95.

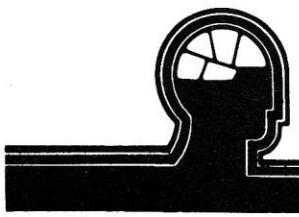
**THE ISLAND OF DR. DESTROYER** — By Steve Peterson and George MacDonald, this is an adventure for *Champions*. This 16 page scenario involves a raid into a fortress island. There are sensors, radar, computers, troops, vehicles, supervillains, defensive weaponry, etc. Sells for $4.95. Both are published by Hero Games.

**LARA'S TOWER** — Designed by Kevin Nunn, this 16 page scenario is approved for use with *AD&D*. The tower has ten levels plus basement and roof. There is a short description for each level. Price is $3. **RAVENSCRAG** — Designed by Scott Fulton, it comes with a 64 page guidebook and four 22"x34"maps. Basically a description of a castle, it has notes on the various parts: the different levels, cisterns, temple, common areas, maze, wizard's level, dungeon, etc. It sells for $10. Both are available from Judges Guid Inc., RR 8 Box 9, 1221 N Sunnyside Rd, Deactur, IL 62522. ●


# THE TRIBES OF CRANE

*You, task chief of the Leopard people wandering tribe of crane, sit in your great wagon awaiting news from your swift searching outriders. Suddenly hoof beats approach. The outriders leap from their mounts to your wagon flushed with excitement for they know full well the meaning of their news. But one sector to the North the great merchant caravan of the Impala people has been spotted. The order is given, "To arms . . . to arms!" You snap your orders, "Gather my captains of hundreds. Let all know the tactic will be enfilade right. Now my arms, my mount." You heard that Kate, chief of the Impala people, has chosen a stand and defend tactic twice before; will he again? You know also that the Impala people are fine warriors as are all the people of the many tribes. This will be no raid of the strong on the weak, but rather a mighty clash of the* **TRIBES OF CRANE . . .**

1979 Schubel & Son



Send to: **Schubel & Son**
P O Box 214848.
Sacramento. CA 95821

The **Tribes of Crane** is a unique correspondence game, allowing for interaction between players and the fantasy world of Crane and each other through a continuous game that may be entered at any time.

As a new player you will start as the chief of one of the many wandering tribes of Crane. Perhaps your tribe will be of the Sea people or Caravan merchants.

As chief you will know many secrets of your people and their lands, but there will be much you have still to learn of the lost secrets of Crane. It will be you who decide if your people will remain in their familiar homeland or begin a journey to new lands as you strive to increase your herds, train warriors, and learn of the ancient lost secrets that can move your people toward prosperity and dominance.

The land of Crane is a complete fantasy world with a full range of geography from the permanent ice of the polar regions, to the deserts, and tropical forests of the equator.

Cities dot the continents of Crane providing centers of trade and homes for the powerful Shamans and KingLords.

The creatures of Crane are as varied as its geography. Cattle, goats, and the caribou are the mainstay of the tribes, depending on the geography. But horses and the great mancarrying war hawks are important to the fierce warriors. Many undomesticated creatures also inhabit Crane such as the Euparkeria, a huge bipedal lizard that feeds on cattle in the grasslands of Crane.

Interaction between players is very common. Alliance, trade, and combat are always possible. Combat is determined in part by a comparison of tactics used by the antagonists, the relative number of warriors, and the geography.

The games objective is to increase the relative strength and prosperity of your tribe which is measured by different criteria, depending upon the type of tribe, and thus obtain points. Players try to obtain high average points per turn thus placing new players on a par with those who have been playing longer.

The **Tribes of Crane** may be entered for $10.50 which includes the first two turns, set up turn, a rule book and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, turns are $3.50 each. A rule book may be purchased for $3.50.

LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO DIFFERENT VIEWS

# DIFFERENT VIEWS

## ON ISSUE TWELVE

Dear Tadashi:

Comments about *DW 12*. The editorial content was good. Except that way too much space was given over to the name generation (selection) tables. It would have been an ok article for the *Dragon* or *Pegasus*, since they have a lot more editorial space.

Paul Jaquays
Manchester, CT

Dear Tadashi:

I just got through looking at *DW 12*, and I have to tell you that I enjoyed it thoroughly. *DW* has surpassed, in my opinion, all of its competition (no matter how slick or full of reviews), in reliability and usefulness to the gamer.

I am glad that *Interplay* is not in direct competition with *DW*.

I look forward to *DW 13*, keep up the good work.

Trace Hallowell
Editor, *Interplay*

## ON ISSUE THIRTEEN

Dear Tadashi:

In *DW 13*, I appreciated the Cult of Erlin the Harper most, since I have a bagpiper I'm trying to play. The article wasn't as clearly written as it might have been, however. For example, I would guess that Erlin's runes are Harmony and Truth, though this is never explicitly stated. The description of Peace Making is confusing, though the example is clear. Another problem is the cost of training in instrument making. On the positive side, there is specific mention of the time delay to try again to attain an advanced membership (missing from almost all other cult descriptions). I was overjoyed at the list of different instrument skills — now I don't have to make them up. Thanks, Jane!

Though Steve Marsh's listing of weapon makers wasn't too useful, the general discussion and table of weapon abilities were. Similarly, there were useful parts in the other articles. Overall, they were good, and are a good example of your eclectic flavor.

Though the reviews were a bit dated (to me, at least), they were well-written, though perhaps a bit long.

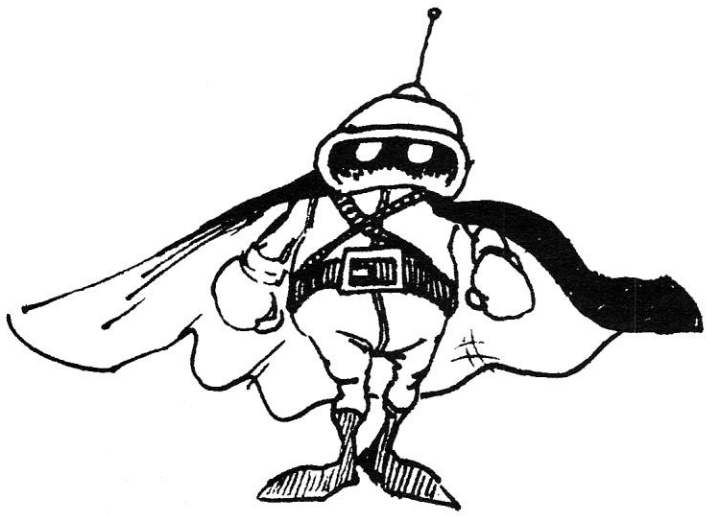
David Dunham
San Antonio, TX

## ON GIGI

Gentlemen:

I have generally enjoyed the magazine, notably the figure and product reviews; however, I must admit the 'Letter from Gigi' feature seems uniformly silly, pretentious and offensive. The information contained therein is interesting, however its presentation is rather childish and wastes a lot of space due to unnecessary verbiage. Perhaps someone should explain to 'Gigi' that *Different Worlds'* readership is not preponderately impressed with junior high school quality journalism.

H.W. Nagley III
Seattle, WA




## CATACOMBS OF CHAOS

### COMING JANUARY 1982

The next generation in computerized play-by-mail fantasy games. **CATACOMBS OF CHAOS** from the leader in play-by-mail moderation — Schubel & Son. Supported by 23 million bytes of fixed disk on-line computer power and the speed of optical mark sense turn processing! Starting January take a giant step with us in gaming and discover how great a computerized play-by-mail game can be.

Send to **Schubel & Son**
P O Box 214848
Sacramento, CA 95821

# GAME CONS

**October 17-18, 1981** **ChaotiCon**
Sunnyvale Hilton Inn, Sunnyvale, CA
ChaotiCon
Po. Box 485
Campbell, CA 95009

**October 30-31, November 1, 1981 Vol Con II**
Yakima Valley Comm. College, Yakima, WA
Vol Con/ASB
Yakima Vly Comm.College
PO Box 1647
Yakima, WA 98907
(509) 575-2442

**October 30-31, November 1** **Octocon '81**
San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton, CA
Delta Dragon Masters
PO Box 4487
Stockton, CA 95207

**November 6-8, 1981** **Armageddon '81**
University of Houston, Houston, TX
Armageddon '81
University of Houston
4800 Calhoun
University Center N-23
Houston, TX 77004

**November 13-15, 1981** **WinterCon 10**
Cobo Hall, Detroit, MI
Metro Detroit Gamers
2616 Kenwyck
Troy, MI 48098

**November 14-15, 1981** **RICon '81**
Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge, Warwick, RI
RICon '81
PO Box 171
Lincoln, RI 02865

**November 27-29, 1981** **AugaCon 1981**
Dunfey Hotel, San Mateo, California
AugaCon
Po. Box 485
Campbell, CA 95009

**February 13-15, 1982** **DunDraCon VI**
Dunfey Hotel, San Mateo, CA
DunDraCon
386 Alcatraz Ave
Oakland, CA 94618

**February 19-21, 1982** **Kawartha-Con 1**
Red Oak Inn, Peterborough, Ontario
DeBy's Hobby Emporium
Po. Box 1552
Peterborough, ON k9J 7H7

**June 10-13, 1982** **Michi Con 11**
Cobo Hall, Detroit, MI
Metro Detroit Gamers
2616 Kenwyck
Troy, MI 48098

**November 12-14, 1982** **Winter Con 11**
Cobo Hall, Detroit, MI
Metro Detroit Gamers
2616 Kenwyck
Troy, MI 48098

**June 9-12, 1983** **Origins 1983/Michi Con 12**
Cobo Hall, Detroit, MI
Metro Detroit Gamers
2616 Kenwyck
Troy, MI 48098


# GAMES OF BERKELEY

REMEMBER THE GREEN TAG SPECIALS !

Chaosium's *Thieves' World* at $14.95
*Boxed RuneQuest* at $17.95

All TSR hardbound books at $10.66
except *Dungeon Masters Guide* at $12.95

All Ral Partha miniatures will be sold at old prices
until 12/31/81

GAMES OF BERKELEY
2110 ADDISON ST
BERKELEY CA 94704
(415) 843-9436

Mail order inquiries welcome
OPEN EVERYDAY !

Near UC campus, one block from BART in midtown Berkeley

# Battlemats T.M.

THE GAMING AID YOU ALWAYS WANTED

**23½"x26" Vinyl Mats with 21 or 25mm Hex or Square Patterns**

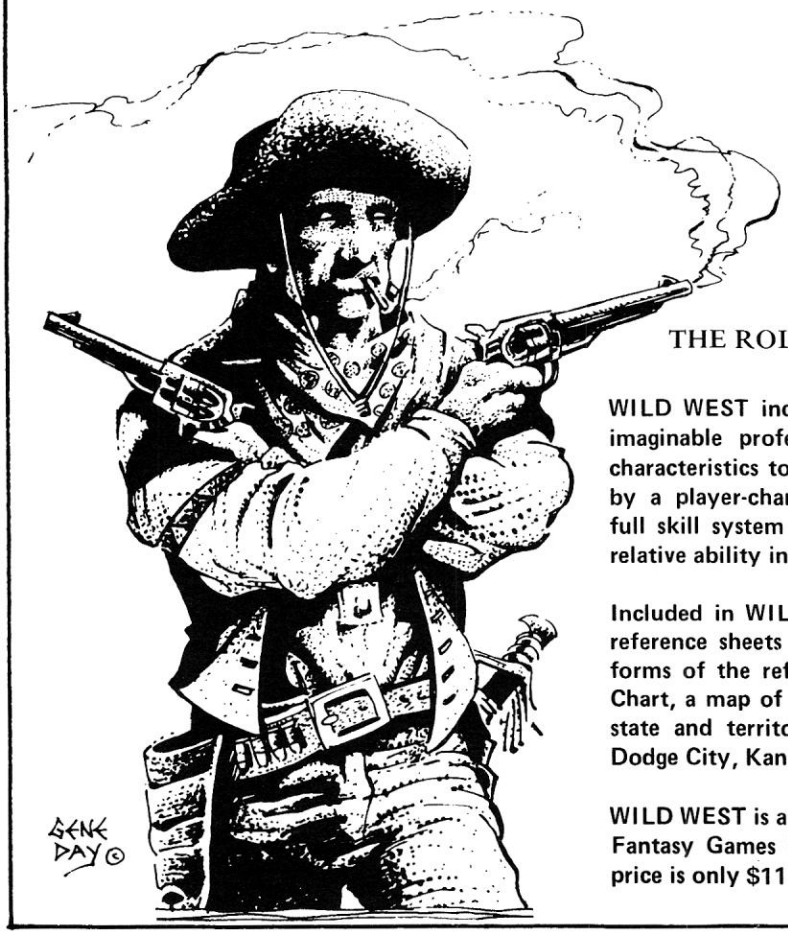
* Cloth-backed to prevent wrinkling
* Lasts forever!
* Portable and convenient—rolls up and flattens out
* Great surface for rolling dice
* If you use water-based pens, the ink will wipe off completely with a small amount of water.

**$7.98 each. Pens for $3.20 per set of four colors.**

Order from: BERKELEY GAME COMPANY
2490 CHANNING WAY (SUITE 503)
BERKELEY CA 94704

Or your local retailer. Shipped postpaid, California residents add appropriate 6% or 6½% sales tax. Dealer inquiries welcome.

*Be sure to specify 21mm hex, 25mm hex, 21mm square, or 25mm square patterns*




# Wild West

THE ROLE PLAYING GAME OF THE OLD WEST

WILD WEST includes 45 skill areas which can be used for virtually any imaginable profession. Each skill is cross referenced with appropriate characteristics to determine the chances of success for each task attempted by a player-character. The unique RPG probability chart allows for a full skill system combined with experience to reflect the character's true relative ability in a given skill.

Included in WILD WEST are complete rules of play, character and horse reference sheets suitable for reproduction, ready reference charts, short-forms of the reference sheets for the Game Master, an RPG Probability Chart, a map of the Old West (showing towns, cattle trails, railroad lines, state and territorial boundaries, etc.) and a 20 year composite map of Dodge City, Kansas (complete with building interiors).

WILD WEST is available from better shops or direct from:
Fantasy Games Unlimited Inc., P.O.Box 182, Roslyn, N.Y. 11576. The price is only $11.00 postpaid.

305
961-5660

THE COMPLEAT STRATEGIST

305
961-5660

*Fantasy Game Center*
*Wargame Headquarters*
*for Southeast Florida*

*TUES.-SAT. 11:00 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M. THURS-TILL 9:00 PM*
*5406-8 STIRLING ROAD DAVIE, FLORIDA 33314*

212
685-3880

THE COMPLEAT STRATEGIST

212
685-3881

*Fantasy Game Center*
*Wargame Headquarters*
*for Greater New York*

*10:30 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M. DAILY OPEN TILL 9:00 ON THURS.*
*11 EAST 33rd STREET, NYC, NY 10016*
*We Pay Shipping On All Mail Orders. Sorry No C.O.D.'s*

212
582-1272

THE COMPLEAT STRATEGIST

212
582-1272

*Fantasy Game Center*
*Wargame Headquarters*
*for Greater New York*

*11:00 A.M. TO 8:00 P.M. - MONDAY - SATURDAY*
*320 WEST 57th STREET, NYC, NY 10019*

(201)
744-6622

THE COMPLEAT STRATEGIST

(201)
744-6622

*Fantasy Game Center*
*War Game Headquarters*
*for North New Jersey*

*TUES.-SAT. 11:00 A.M. TO 7:00 P.M.*
*THURS.-OPEN TILL 9:00 P.M.*
*209 GLENRIDGE AVENUE*
*MONTCLAIR, N.J. 07042*

# Recruiting Board

## LOOKING FOR MORE GAMERS IN YOUR LIFE?

Looking for other gamers? ***Different Worlds*** will run notices for our readers that are looking for more players for their games. Simply send us your name, address (with zip!) and/or phone number (with area code!). If you only send a phone number you must at least give your city, state, and zip. Give the RPG systems that you are interested in (if you are also interested in playing other types of games, add "general games" or "board wargames"). Let us know the number of issues in which you want the notice to appear—maximum of six to keep the list updated. If you wish to remain listed after the six issues, simply send another notice. If you do not specify the number of appearances, it will run only once. This service is open to anyone and is free until further notice.

Milo B. Shiff
HHC, 2 Supcom
Nellingen Barracs
Stuttgart, Germany
APO NY, NY 09160
Nellingen Military (2724)-6221
*RQ, AD&D, T&T, TFT, Traveller*

Pandemonium, The NY FRP APA
The Compleat Strategist
11 E 33rd St
New York, NY 10006
Robert E. Sacks
4861 Broadway (5-V)
New York, NY 10034
*Collation and gaming*

Schenectady Wargamers Assoc
c/o Studio of Bridge and Game
1639 Eastern Pkwy
Schenectady, NY 12309
(518) 346-3773
*Most RPGs*

Chris Hogan
771 West St
Cleveland, NY 13042
(315) 675-3637
*D&D, AD&D, RQ, Traveller, Other RPGs*

Burton Glass
5768 Mildred Ln
Milford, OH 45150
*Traveller, Arduin, FRP design*

Mark J. Lukens
25290 Aqua Dr
Elkhart, IN 46514
(219) 264-2991
*RQ, D&D, AD&D, Traveller, most RPGs*

Thomas Tanner
222 S Mission
Mt Pleasant, MI 48858
(517) 772-3212
*RQ, Traveller, Boot Hill, Gw*

Chris King
3876 Rodney Apt 1
Granite City, Il 62040
(618) 797-6413
*TFT, T&T, RQ, Traveller*

R. Gordon Griffith
7918 Cliffbrook Apt 1059
Dallas, TX 75240
(214) 239-3083
*RQ, AD&D, Traveller, Fantasy Games*

Ian Straus
1500 Royal Crest Apt 246
Austin, TX 78741
(512) 447-2045
*AD&D, TFT, Boardgames*

Dwain Kaiser
169 N. Euclid
Upland, CA 91786
(714) 981-9282
*RQ, fantasy games*

Aaron Peter
442 18th Street
Richmond, CA
*RQ, Some others*

John E. Burns
4336 S Bennet
Seattle, WA 98118
***RQ, D&D, boardgames***

Sam Linker
420 Maple Ct
Toppenish, WA 98948
(509) 865-3383
*RQ, AD&D, D&D, C&S, Traveller, other RPGs*

**TÉKUMEL PLAYING AIDS**

**The Northwest Frontier $3.95**
Six 18 x 11" detailed maps of the frontier of Tsolyánu and Yán Kor.

**The Yán Koryáni Alliance $4.95**
Detailed description of the Legions of Yán Kor and allies. 30 pages—illustrated.

**The Book of Ebon Bindings $5.95**
The religion and magical arts of Tsolyánu. 80 pages—illustrated.

**The Tsolyáni Language $12.95**
Grammar, pronunciation, travelers' phrase book, English-Tsolyáni/Tsolyáni-English dictionary. Two volumes—130 pages.

871 Edgerton Street, No. 22 St. Paul MN 55101

**Gamemasters Hobbies, Inc.**

ADVENTURE GAMING SPECIALISTS

**ROLE-PLAYING GAMES AND AIDS**
Chaosium, Excalibre, Fantasy Arts Enterprises, Fantasy Games Unlimited, Fantasy Productions, Flying Buffalo, GDW, Gamescience, Grimoire Games, Metagaming, TSR

**MINIATURES**
Archive, Broadsword, Citadel, Grenadier, Heritage, Dragontooth, GHQ, Martian Metals, Minifigs, Ral Partha, Superior Models

**BOARDGAMES**
Avalon Hill, Metagaming, OSG, SPI, Task Force, GDW, Yaquinto, Eon

**AND MUCH MUCH MORE!!!**

**GAMEMASTERS HOBBIES, INC.**
**4627 GEARY BLVD**
**SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94118**
**(415) 387-4118**

*OPEN EVERY DAY*

Catalog available for $2.00.
Phone orders accepted with VISA or Mastercharge.

# Wyrms Footnotes

RuneQuest players! Up on the latest legends? Hear about the best advice on the RuneQuest rules? Read about the Men-and-a-half, who find the courage to stand against a full charge by rhino riders? Do you know the limits on Divination and Divine Intervention? All this and much more is available every other month in **WYRMS FOOTNOTES**, the RuneQuest magazine. Here you'll find fascinating articles on the cultures of the fantasy world of Glorantha as well as interesting or influential personalities. Here the latest releases from Chaosium are introduced, and those sticky Runequestions answered. Subs are $12 per year (six issues), and each issue is a guaranteed minimum of 32 pages.

## chaosium inc.

BOX 6302-DW, Albany, CA 94706. Authors and artists are encouraged to write. Free catalogue is also available upon request.

This is Free Trader Beowulf,
calling anyone. . .
Mayday, Mayday. . . we are under
attack. . . main drive is gone. .
turret number one not responding . . .
Mayday. . . losing cabin pressure
fast. . . calling anyone. . . please help. . .
This is Free Trader Beowulf. . .
Mayday. . .

TRAVELLER
*Science-Fiction Adventure in the Far Future*

Game Designers' Workshop

# TRAVELLER

*Science-Fiction Adventure in the Far Future*

**GDW's award winning SF role-playing game!**

Traveller and more than sixty other fine GDW games are available at better hobby shops around the world.
*Free catalog on request*

Game Designers' Workshop
P.O. Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61701 Dept. DW

# by GIGI D'ARN

Dear Tadashi,

Well, now that *DW* is monthly, it's harder for me to accumulate as much gossip as I used to. Can you fans help?

Nova Game Designs, the people who brought you *Ace of Aces*, will have another stop motion picture book system simulating a shootout inside and around a wild west saloon. Look for it, it'll be titled *Bounty Hunter*.

Automated Simulations now has expansion modules for two of its EPYX games. *Upper Reaches of Apshai* adds four new levels to *Temple of Apshai*. *The Keys of Acheron* sends a *Hellfire Warrior* in search of four keys. Computer role-playing is coming but I haven't seen it yet.

*DragonQuest* second edition is due out this month with a new combat system. Hope for the hopeless.

Is Heritage bankrupt? My sources conflict. It doesn't sound good in any case.

At least SPI might last a while. Latest word is that they got a $300,000 infusion into their budget. I wonder how long that'll last?

STEVE LIST is replacing ERIC GOLDBERG as the new review editor for *Ares*. Eric in the meantime is considering doing a SF RPG with GREG COSTIKYAN. Sounds like an interesting partnership.

Arizona gossip says GREG STAFFORD and KEN ST. ANDRE are getting together to do a King Arthur RPG. Any truth?

Is Archive Miniatures moving to Texas? If so, be sure to tell me Nevile!

The Judges guild review in *DW 14* must have done some good. I hear they've started to ask for manuscript rewrites. Now if they would only ask the artists to redraw . . .

Martian Metals has plans to do *Troll Ball* gum cards to go with their boardgame. And yes, I saw their ad in *Sorcerer's Apprentice* right side up.

Hot rumor is that SPI is going to have the *Wreck of the Pandora* computer game distributed by APPLE.

There is a Game Designers Guild recruitment drive going on. Designers should send $15 to Jack Radey, 3972 Gardenia Pl, Oakland, CA 94605. Benefits include a free dinner at ORIGINS and a free sub to the GDG newsletter. Associate membership for people who like to associate is $10. My money is on the way, is yours?

The GHQ fight with Mego over the trademark 'Micronauts' was settled with the judge giving a decision that the two will never have problems in competing with each other — the toy trade is different from the adventure games/hobby market. Does this mean someone can come up with a 'Hot Wheels' game?

Is it true that *The Space Gamer* cannot publish any variant *TFT* material because of legal complications?

More SPI news: they have purchased a *Land of Xanth*-based X-rated FRP game from CATHRYN BEREND. Are they desperate or what? Does PIERS ANTHONY know about this?

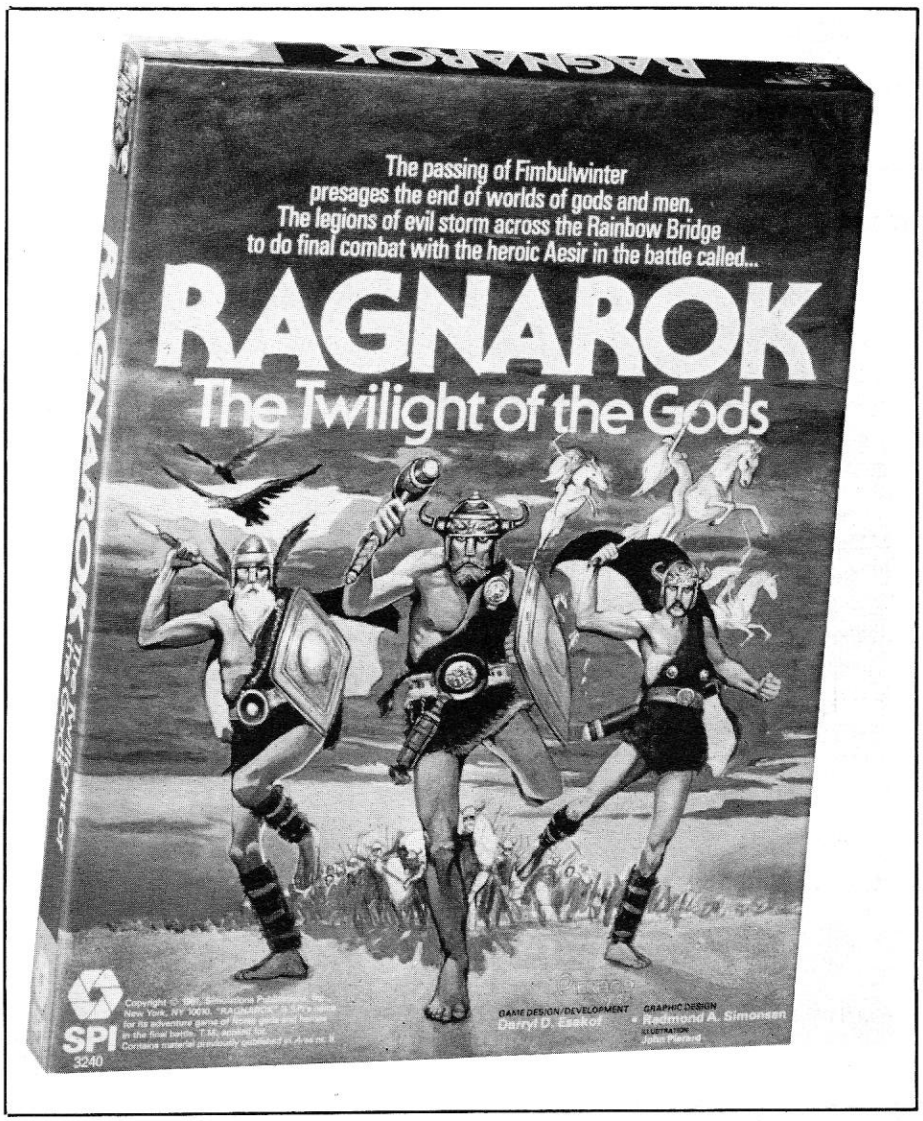
Is it true that Chaosium is going to publish a Viking RPG based on Hagar the Horrible?

Speaking of art, did you see the cover for SPI's *Ragnarok*? The Vikings really get loaded before battle don't they? And such cute legs!

Social news for this month: MARC MILLER is tying the knot with DARLENE FILE. I hear it's a match made in GDW. They'll honeymoon in Europe with first stop at GAMESDAY in London.

Love,

Gigi



# GAMESCIENCE

IS ASKING DISTRIBUTORS & LOCAL HOBBY SHOPS TO HELP US GIVE AWAY

# FREE MICROHEDRA™ 20 Sided Dice

Although the dice pictured here have inked digits to make them easier to photograph, the ones given away will have uninked digits.

Only GAMESCIENCE makes HIGH IMPACT™ polyhedra dice. Do not be fooled by terms like Hard Impact or High strength!

## THE ESTABLISHMENTS LISTED BELOW ARE ALREADY GIVING AWAY MICROHEDRA™ DICE

**The Games People Play**
1105 Mass. Ave
Cambridge, Mass. 02138
492-0711

**The Name Of The Game**
Faneuil Hall Mkt. Pl. North Build.
Boston, Mass. 02109
367-1979

**The Gamekeeper**
18 Broad St.
Bangor, Maine 04401
947-8806

**Just Hobbies & Crafts**
833 Post Rd.
Darien, Conn. 06820
655-6583

**Complete Strategist**
209 Glenridge
Montclair, N.J. 07042
744-6622

**Complete Strategist**
11 E. 33rd. St.
New York, N.Y. 10016
685-3880

**Complete Strategist**
320 W. 57th St.
Rd. New York, N.Y. 10019
582-1270

**Great Escapes**
5801 Sunrise Hwy. Sun Vet Mall
Holbrook, N.Y. 11103
567-0716

**Gamers Guild**
518 Reading
W. Reading, Pa. 19611
373-0111

**High Command**
3108 N. Boulevard
Richmond, Va. 23230
355-1941

**Campagin Headquarters**
145 E. Little Creek Rd.
Norfork, Va. 23505
583-9451

**Simulation Corner**
(at Stillwells)
150 Pleasant St.
Morgantown, W. Va. 26505
296-6378

**Hobby World**
3120 Platt Springs Rd.
W. Columbia, S.C. 29169
794-1893

**Doorway To Fantasy**
2110 Commander Rd.
N. Charleston, S.C. 29405
744-8783

**Tattersalls**
902 Center St.
Conyers, Ga.30207
922-1536

**Enterprise 1701**
716 N. Mills Ave
Orlando, Fla. 32803
896-1701

**Sunshine Comics**
6370 Bird Rd.
S. Miami, Fla. 33155
667-8287

**Complete Strategist**
4506-8 Sterling Rd.
Davie, Fla. 33314
961-5660

**Village Toy & Hobby**
908 Opelika Rd.
Auburn, Al. 36803
887-7878

**Games & Things**
106 Mitchell Rd.
Oak Ridge, Tn. 37830
482-1350

**Hobby Craft**
Cooke Mall
Cookeville, Tn. 38501
528-2040

**Middle Earth Hobbies**
01956 Pass Rd.
Gulfport, Ms. 39501
896-8600

**Something To Do Store**
**Bashford Manor**
Oxmoor-Greentree
Louisville, Ky. 40218
456-1720

**Sieglings**
222 Andalus Dr.
Gahanna, Oh. 44077
475-0158

**Gamemaster's Guild**
954 Mentor Ave.
Pinesville, Oh. 44077
354-4515

**A.B.C. Hobbycraft**
2156 E. Moran Ave
Evansville, Ind. 47711
477-9661

**Alcove Hobby Shop**
3976 12 Mile Rd.
Berkly, Mich. 48072
545-6237

**Michigames Dist.**
310 S. Charles St.
Lansing, Mich. 48912
482-2596

**Hobby Games Dist. Inc.**
1222 W. Morse
Chicago, Ill. 60626
262-8433

**New Fantasy Shop**
5651 West Belmont
Chicago, Ill. 60634
889-6122

**Royal Hobby Shop**
3920 E. State St.
Rockford, Ill. 61108
399-1771

**Adventureland**
103½ E. Mulberry
Bloomington, Ill. 61701
829-3622

**D & D Hobbies**
216 6th St. Box 310
Charleston, Ill. 61920
348-0664

**M & D Hobby**
2339 Elm
Quincy, Ill. 62301
228-1887

**Judges Guild**
1221 N. Sunnyside Rd.
Decator, Ill. 62521
422-1930

**Black & Co. Hardware**
**Hobby Store**
8th S. Monroe
Springfield, Ill. 62702
525-1910

**Black Co. Hardware**
**Hobby Shop**
1614 S. Mac Arthur
Springfield, Ill. 62704
544-3454

**Academy Of Fantasy**
6821 Brookside Rd.
Kansas City, Mo. 64113
333-7071

**The Armchair General**
**2307 Classen Blvd**
**Oklahoma City, Okla. 73107**
524-1175

**Books Etcetera**
1820 45 th St.
Gavelston, Texas 77550
762-1422

**Oracles Lair**
1759 Tommy Aaron
El Paso, Texas 79936
592-8573

**The Learning Store**
5515 N. 7th St.
Phoenix, Az. 85014
274-0926

**Len's Crafts**
3346 W. Bell
Phoenix, Az. 85023
866-1984

**Things For Tinkers**
4500 E. Speedway #36
Tucson, Az. 85716
326-7679

**Wargames West**
3422 Central South East
Albuquerque, N.M. 87106
265-6100

**M & M Coin**
211 W. 3rd.
Roswell, N.M. 88201
622-4651

**The Game Store**
249 N. Palm Canyon Dr.
Palm Springs, Ca. 92262
325-7545

**Games & Things**
1128 Standford Shopping Center
Palo Alto, Ca. 94304
528-4331

**Games & Things**
2413 Larkspur Landing Cr.
Larkspur, Ca. 94939
461-9696

**The Dragon's Den**
5819 Stockton Blvd.
Sacramento, Ca. 98524
452-6647

**Heritage Book Store**
Renton Shopping Center
Renton, Wash. 98055
271-1776

**Fantasy Forest**
384 Queen St. 2nd. Floor
Freidricton, N.B.
Canada, 455-9274

## GOOD FOR ONE FREE MICROHEDRA™ DIE

**Regardless of coupons presented, no one is to receive more than one die. Xerox copies of coupon are void. Offer expires 31 Dec 1981. Shops wishing to participate can call 601-896-8600 for details. Valid only if top portion is printed**

NAME_____

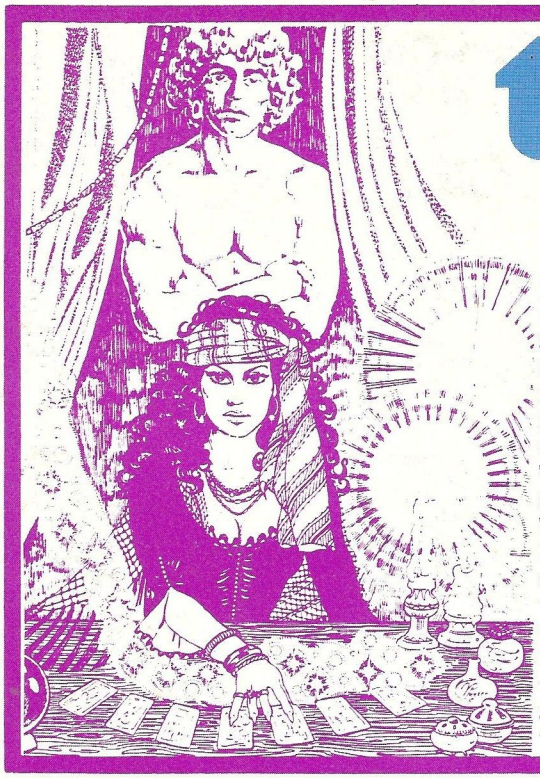
STREET_____

CITY_____State_____Zip_____

STORE NAME_____

**Put your phone number on bottom line if you want this store to call you when they have new Adventure games in stock.**

_____



ROBERT L. ASPRIN's

# thieves' world

Based on the immensely popular novels **Thieves' World** and **Tales From the Vulgar Unicorn.** You can now adventure through the city of **Sanctuary** with this fully authorized adventure pack usable with the best role-playing systems available. Best of all, no conversions are needed. Each major, and many minor, characters are fully presented in each system's format and style. Dave Arneson (for Adventure Games, Inc.), Eric Goldberg (for SPI), Rudy Kraft (for Metagaming), Wes Ives (for Fantasy Games Unlimited), Steve Marsh and Lawrence Schick (for TSR Hobbies, Inc.), Marc Miller (for Game Designers Workshop), Steve Perrin (for Chaosium Inc.), and Ken St. Andre (for Flying Buffalo, Inc.) all combine their notable talents and present the statistics for each company's role-playing system. The pack includes two 16-page Players' Guides, one 64-page Gamemasters' Guide, one 64-page Personalities book, one 20"x30" map of the city and two 11"x17" maps of the Maze and the Maze Underground. Cover art is the same as on the first book (by Walter Velez), interior illustrations are by Victoria Poyser. City encounters are by Midkemia Press. All this, boxed, for $15.95.

by permission of ARKHAM HOUSE

# CALL of CTHULHU

Based on the 1920s horror-fantasy writings of H. P. Lovecraft. **CALL OF CTHULHU** contains two books. The first explains the characteristics, skills, occupations, and resources available to Investigators, and includes information on beings specific to the mythos, full rules for magic and explains two new chracteristics: Education and Sanity. The second book is a sourcebook for the 1920s with price lists, maps, plans, more. Also includes all SIX dice needed to play. Four-color cover and boxed for $19.95.

# chaosium inc.

**BOX 6302-DW, Albany, CA 94706. Add $1 for postage and handling when ordering. Free catalogue is available upon request.**