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SHADIS

The Fantasy Games Magazine

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Issue No.#9
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CRIES FROM THE ATTIC

Editorial of a Madman

And the Adventure continues...

I've made it a habit of starting all my editorials with that simple phrase. It all goes back to the cover of issue no.#1 which bore the headline *"Witness the Beginning of a Great Adventure!"*

In a few minutes I will be putting the finishing touches on this issue and shipping the masters to the printers where 10 to 15 thousand issues will be published. I sit here wondering how the humble little magazine that was first produced in the corner of an upstairs bedroom has managed to come so far. It has indeed been an adventure.

The issue you hold in your hands is the first offering of what we've been dubbing the "New" SHADIS. For the first time SHADIS is expanding its *'fantasy only'* focus to embrace all genres of gaming.

Of course, the new format required dropping some of our regular columns and introducing new ones. Undoubtedly, some of our regular readers are going to be upset that the *Alderac Anthology* (Bones of Ruin) has been temporarily dropped because of space constraints. My partners have assured me that we will be able to expand our size to nearly 100 pages within the next few issues - so you can expect a new story line that picks up your favorite characters soon.

While, I'm on the subject, you may be interested to know that a new publication will be appearing down the road appropriately named, *"The Alderac Anthology"*. That publication will be picking up all the *Alderac* specific articles and columns from SHADIS. (This includes From the *Scrolls of Greytar*). We are negotiating with *Runaway Graphics* to do a comic book version of the Alderac Anthology as well, so the anthology is by no means being put to rest.

With the second publication supporting the anthology, SHADIS will run short pieces of fiction from time to time that tie in with the Alderac Setting, hopefully tempting readers to pick up both publications.

OK, now to the issue at hand. Perhaps the single biggest change is the full-color cover by George Vrbanic (Infinite Images). George has been instrumental in helping SHADIS since issue no.#1. (The original painting will be on sale at our GENCON™ booth, by the way.)

If you flip to the back of the magazine, you will see our new serialized comic - *Bright Future*. Bright Future was produced by the creative-staff of *Runaway Graphics* (publishers of the *Lucky Seven* comic book). The interesting thing about Bright Future is that Runaway Graphics will be releasing a comic book version of the same setting in the near future. The stories appearing in SHADIS will tie in with the on-going story in the comic book, so SHADIS' readers will have some added insight into Bright Future.

The other big change for SHADIS is the inclusion of the new mini-magazine "Post Marque". The Play-by-Mail Industry has been running strong for several years and has a large following. Unfortunately, it's probably the least known form of gaming and the most misunderstood. Hopefully, Post Marque will change all that. Virtually everyone who read the early proofs of Post Marque - came away wanting to play a PBM Game. (Check out the FREE offer to play-by-mail from *Adventures by Mail,* in the Post Marque section.)

Before I close, I want to formally introduce our new official guides to SHADIS magazine; The *Gameweaver* and his gnome assistant, *SHAD*. You'll be seeing allot of these two in the coming issues. I have a sneaking suspicion that they are trying to take control of the magazine - but I have no proof. At any rate, I'll be keeping a close eye on them, especially the little one.

Good reading, let us know what you think. Remember - our magazine is driven and influenced by reader feedback. Many of the changes you see were a direct result of reader demand.

Jolly R. Blackburn
August 1, 1993

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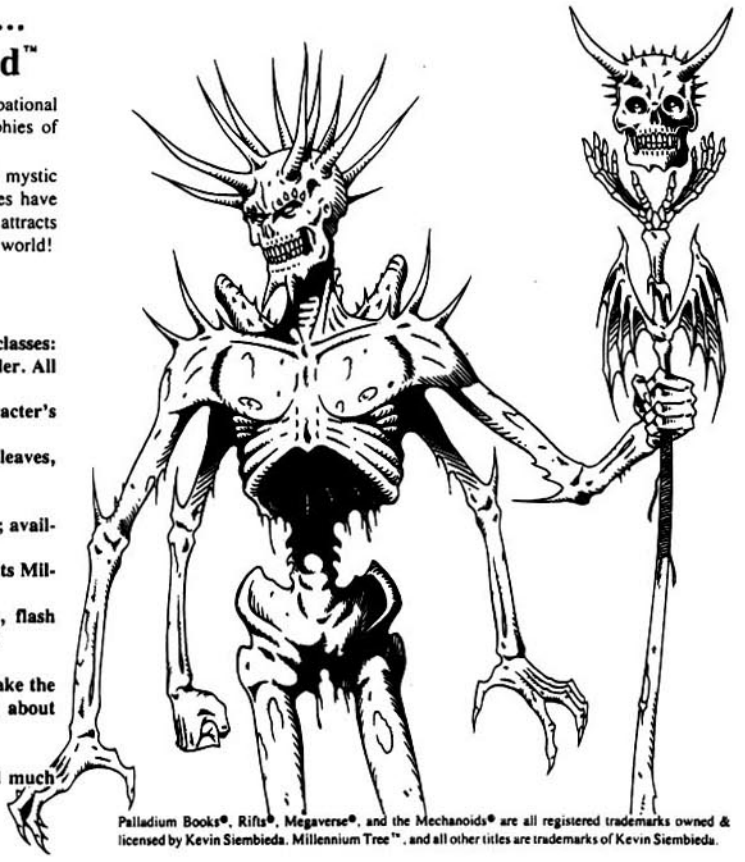

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- **The gathering of heroes.**
- **The Mind Bleeder (finally; bumped from Atlantis and England).**
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The Rifts® Megaverse®

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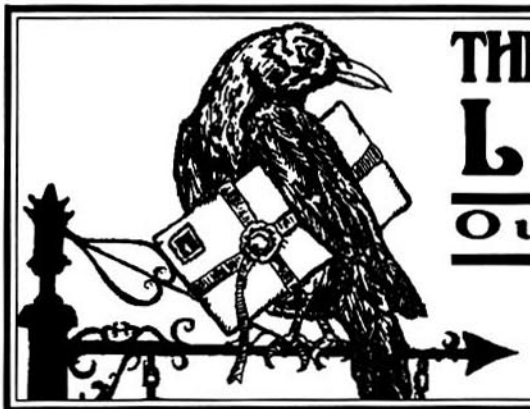

THE LETTERS PAGE

Our Readers Talk Back

Due to space considerations some letters have been edited. While praise and "atta' boy" letters are greatly appreciated, letters containing constructive criticisms, complaints and/or suggestions are more likely to see print. Keep the Letters Coming!

Dear SHADIS,

Just had to write and tell you that SHADIS #8 was the best issue ever! My only complaint was the implication that the *Alderac Anthology* may be dropped or moved to another zine of its own.

I love the gaming articles, but it's the fiction and great stories that keep me coming back to SHADIS. You are making a terrible mistake if you follow through with your threats! The anthology was unique and a great hook for readers. I know you are constantly trying to shape SHADIS into a magazine with broad appeal, but some things just need to be left alone. Look what happened to Coke when they changed a good thing!

Have you found Joe Genero? What a tragedy if this comic strip is lost. It was really a bright spot and a favorite of mine. Keep up the search!

Can't wait for the full-color SHADIS. Even now, I am eagerly staring out my window waiting for the postman. "What no Shadis today?" Oh well, guess I'll go back to bed and see what tomorrow brings.

Tony Watts
Charleston, SC

Editor *- The subject of keeping the anthology in SHADIS has been hotly debated both here at the SHADIS offices and among readers. The survey we ran last issue ran roughly 50/50 in regards to those opposed and in favor of keeping the Anthology. The problem may have a solution. As this issue goes to press, we are discussing the possibility of expanding SHADIS to nearly 100 pages next issue. If this actually happen, then we could possibly justify 10-15 pages for the Anthology.*

As far as Joe Genero, we are still looking. We did receive a hot tip and actually located a person who knows a friend-of-a-friend - but to date nothing has come of it.

For those of you who are just joining us - Joe Genero was a comic strip donated to SHADIS that proved to be highly popular. The problem? The artist has apparently dropped off the face of the earth and we do not have his name. His work was forwarded to us through a third party.

Dear SHADIS,

Congratulations on an excellent article! My big pet peeve with game magazines is that they are usually geared toward younger audiences. How refreshing to find an in-depth article that spoke on my level and actually educated me on something I thought I knew quite a bit about!

The Criminal Justice article was a real gem. Mr. Blackburn expertly balanced a solid historical subject with gaming elements so that the end result was a piece of work of interest to the history-buff as well as the avid garner. If I were not a gamer at heart, I would still be tempted to subscribe to SHADIS if there were more historical-type articles presented.

Enough praise - I just wanted to commend you. Are there any other articles of this nature in the works?

Richard Hobbs
Sarasota, Florida

Editor *- Yes you will undoubtedly see more in-depth articles such as the Criminal Justice piece. Currently, we have a campaign setting/mini-game in the works which is based on Roman Arena Combat and draws heavily on historical data. I also have a verbal promise from one of the country's foremost authorities on medieval weapons and armor for a historical article which blasts many of the popular FRPG's for inaccuracies. I am always in search of these type of articles so if anyone out there is sitting on one, send it in!*

Dear SHADIS,

Your magazine is a waste of time! Get a real job and stop living in a dream world. I don't understand half the articles and I think it's priced entirely too high.

Name Withheld by Request

Editor *- Awwww Mom, cut it out!*

Dear SHADIS,

The Bob Hobbs cover on #8 was FANTASTIC!! Of course, I'm a big fan of George Vrbanic and I surely hope he continues to do covers as well. Can you tell me more about Bob Hobbs? What other work has he done?

While, I am on the subject of artists - I also love Janet DuPuy's work and David Dixon's cartoons. I hope all of these talented artists become a permanent fixture at SHADIS.

Troy Goff
Seneca Rock, WV

Editor *- Bob Hobbs is the first featured artist in our new Knight Gallery column, Bob has also agreed to do a full-color cover for a future issue of SHADIS!*

As for George, he has honored us with our first full color cover (and I hope we can convince him to do more.). We will do everything possible to keep our artists happy and busy! I hope to get some more Dixon cartoons in shortly and Janet has agreed to grace our pages with more of her work as well.

Dear SHADIS,

I've been a big fan of SHADIS since the beginning and I've always noticed you run a listing of your competitors in the Market Platz. I think this is very commendable, especially when you consider that your competitors do not return the favor. I suggested to the editor of another magazine that he run a similar list of gaming publications and his response was "Why would I shoot myself in my foot?" His answer betrayed more than he could possibly know.

I won't get up on a soap box and berate such attitudes but I will commend you on taking a positive attitude and being a good example. There has been so much feuding in the gaming community lately, it's refreshing to find a safe harbor where a gamer can weigh anchor and just enjoy his hobby.

Michael Greene
Portland, OR
❑

KEEP THOSE LETTERS COMING REMEMBER - SHADIS THRIVES ON READER RESPONSE!

THE THINGS DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Making Dream Park a Reality

By Gerald L. Wallner
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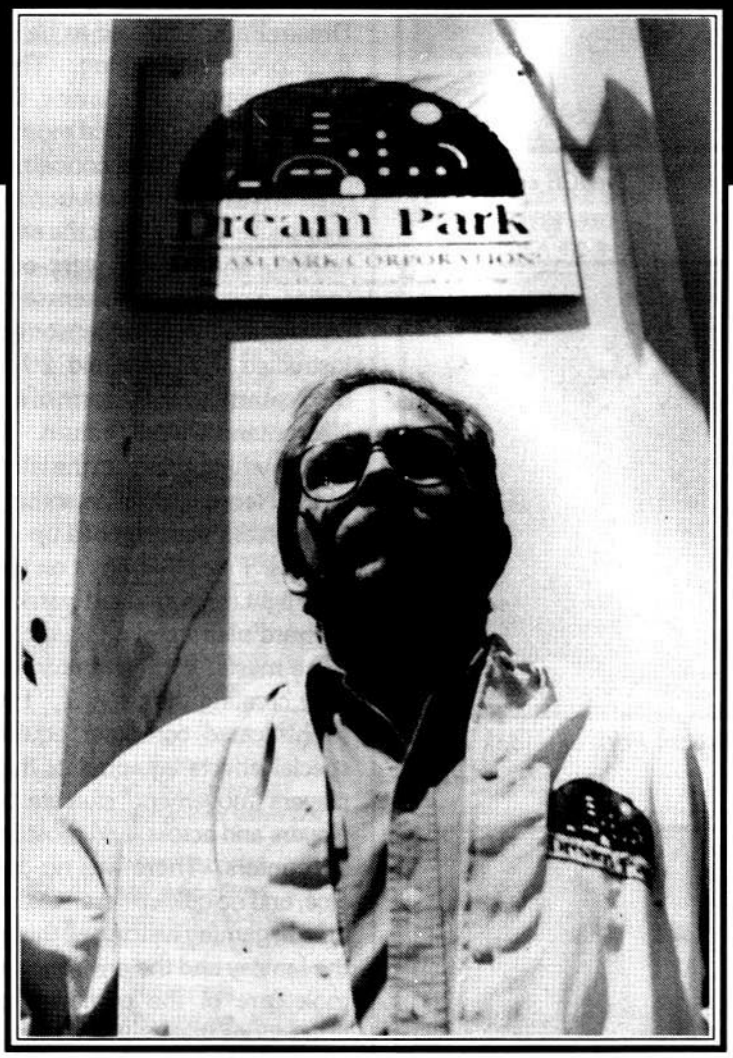
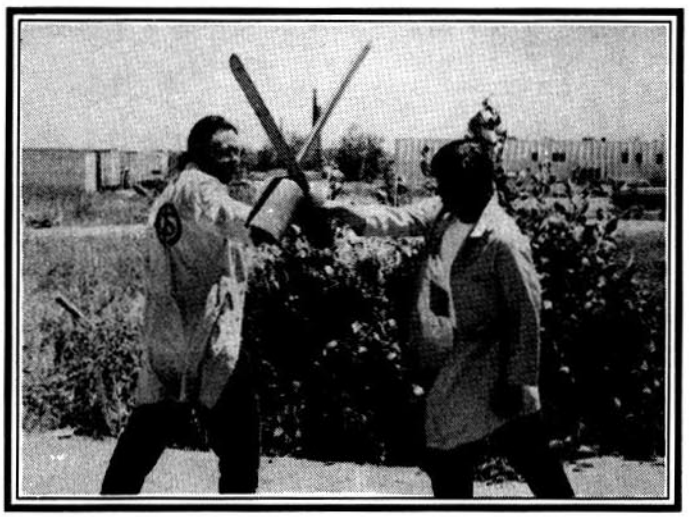


Mark Matthew-Simmons, President and CEO at the entrance to Dream Park photo by Brian Booker

You enter the Necromancer's Lair to find the horrors that await. Or, you stalk the corridors of the headquarters of an international espionage ring, Walther PPK in hand, training to become a secret agent. Or, the spaceship you just took off in sustains damage and all the condition lights go red, claxons sound from the engine room...

The environment is real, all around you. The challenges are real. The teamwork you must display, actions you take, feeling of danger, is all real. You carry a force-sensing foam sword, an infrared pistol or a magic wand, wear an audio link feeding you sound effects, supporting the overall atmosphere. No one actually gets hurt, but that doesn't allay the adrenaline rush which hits you when the 'poison gas' starts to fill the room. That is the magic of the Dream Park Project.

Dream Park Corporation, based in Boulder Colorado, was founded in 1989. Based on the mythical high tech, interactive amusement park depicted in the novel "Dream Park" by Hugo and Nebula award winner Larry Niven and co-author Steven Barnes, the Dream Park Corporation is dedicated to making the fictional amusement park a reality. Spearheaded by its president and CEO, Mark Matthews-Simmons, an eighteen year veteran of the gaming industry, and a team of engineers, programmers, artists, and designers, Dream Park Corporation is now bringing the illusion to life. After four extensive years of research and development the Dream Park Corporation has now unveiled their Interactive Gaming System™ or I.G.S.™ The I.G.S. is an electronic melee and line-of-sight system that allows the players to interact with one another, the environment, and the non-player characters within the gaming environment. By use of sophisticated electronics, props, and a theatrical stage design system, the engineers and designers of Dream Park are now able to send players into a gaming environment where they not only may view the wondrous props and effects but interact with them as well. Over this past Memorial Day weekend the Dream Park Corporation opened its doors for the first time, shuttling gamers up from a nearby convention to play in the *Lair Of The Necromancer*™

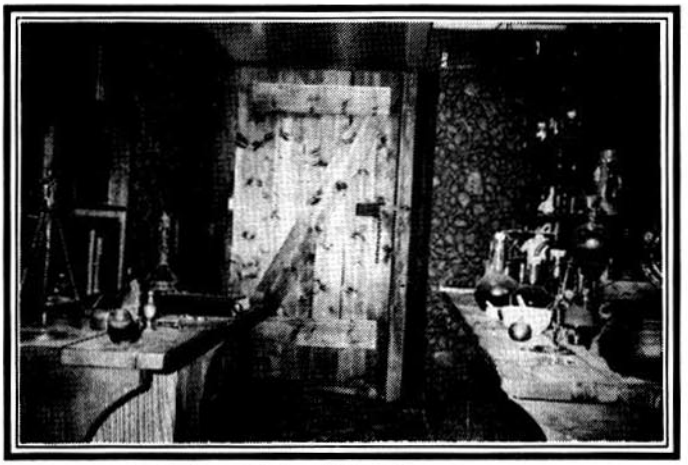


Game Central Technicians demonstrate the IGS equipment.

photo by Brian Booker

Artist's rendition of what Dream Park will look like.

photo by Brian Booker



Lab from Lair of the Necromancer.

photo by Gerald L. Wallner

game. Though Dream Park had rented its facilities to local live role-playing groups to hold games in the past, this was the first time they entertained gamers with the I.G.S. equipment in place. Building a two story set within their corporate offices, these gamers were in for the experience of their lives.

After the gamers paid a registration fee at the Dream Park booth on the convention site, they were loaded into a van and were driven up to the Dream Park corporate headquarters. There they were escorted inside where they were greeted by a man in a gray lab coat sporting Dream Park and Interactive Gaming System logos, carrying a clipboard. "Welcome to Dream Park," he said as he stepped forward to give them their pre-game briefing. The briefing entailed questions about the players' interests, descriptions of the equipment they would be using, and most importantly, it stressed safety. While Dream Park is concerned about the players enjoying themselves and the environment, they are equally, if not more concerned, about the safety of the players. During the briefing, the players were outfitted with wireless headset radios, a sophisticated sensor system, and foam latex weapons outfitted with the sensor equipment as well. They were instructed that they had 20 minutes to recover a stolen magical artifact in the form of a scepter and escape before the Necromancer would return. They were not to get greedy with anything else from the lair or they would suffer the wrath of the Necromancer (as some did).

The team then climbed up a ladder to the entrance of the tunnels. From that point on they encountered secret doors, laser light traps, undead warriors (played by staff and actors), a wizard's laboratory, fog, etc. Meanwhile, in Game Central (The master control center for Dream Park), the staff was busy creating their magic. From this control room; using sophisticated computer equipment, visual monitors, and special effects equipment; the staff was able to track the players' movement, execute traps, communicate with the players and actors, and most importantly, score the combat encounters. There was no game master leading them, no dice, and no quick references to the rule manual. For the first time in gaming history, all the players had to think about was the fantasy and the environment. Dream Park's computers took care of the combat results, rules and the general distractions that interfere with the illusion in table top games as well as live-action games. This was a real time adventure with combat, puzzles, traps and nothing to distract the players from their fantasy. The illusion was complete. One player commented "It was the most intense twenty minutes of my life!" Other players were amazed at the level of realism, special effects, and over-all set construction that made the environment so life like. Not only were the adult gamers impressed, but the young children ranging in ages from about 7 to 10 years old appeared to have the time of their life. The

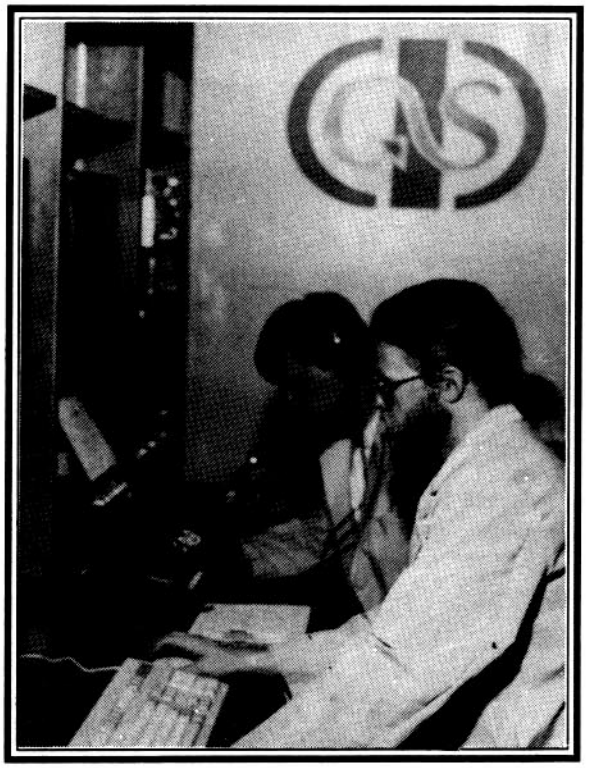
game was modified to accommodate the younger age groups so as to create an environment more suited to their playing ability. This modification took little effort and proved to be very successful.

Dream Park Corporation's live system has been likened to a 'physical' virtual reality. However, the company does plan to implement a non-physical, computer generated virtual reality system into their gaming environment in the future. The goal of the company is not only to create medieval fantasy settings, but to offer adventures in all genres from ancient gladiatorial combat to the reaches of outer space and beyond. They are also focused on making an educational impact with their system by teaching people about different mythos and cultures as well as the learning experience of physically solving traps, puzzles and clues within the environments. As quoted from Mr. Matthews-Simmons, "I've seen this in eleven years of interactive gaming, they can adopt a different viewpoint for just a little while, and they can take that viewpoint home with them." Dream Park Corporation already markets a line of high quality foam latex weaponry for use in live action role-playing, as well as masks, props, and promotional materials. They are also currently developing software games for home computer systems to be released in the coming year.

With sponsorship and development deals from the Rayovac Corporation, Tower of Night, Inc, and many others the Dream Park Corporation is now embarking on a worldwide tour. They are visiting major conventions here in the United States and abroad, with their Interactive Gaming System™ and modular wall system, displaying their products and entertaining people with their state of the art gaming environment. Other plans include the opening of The Interactive Haunted House™ to run throughout the month of October in a retail site located in the Denver, Colorado metro area. As more investment comes in Dream Park also plans the opening of their Danger Quest™ interactive gaming center. Eventually Dream Park Corporation plans to open an interactive amusement park, the Dream Park itself.

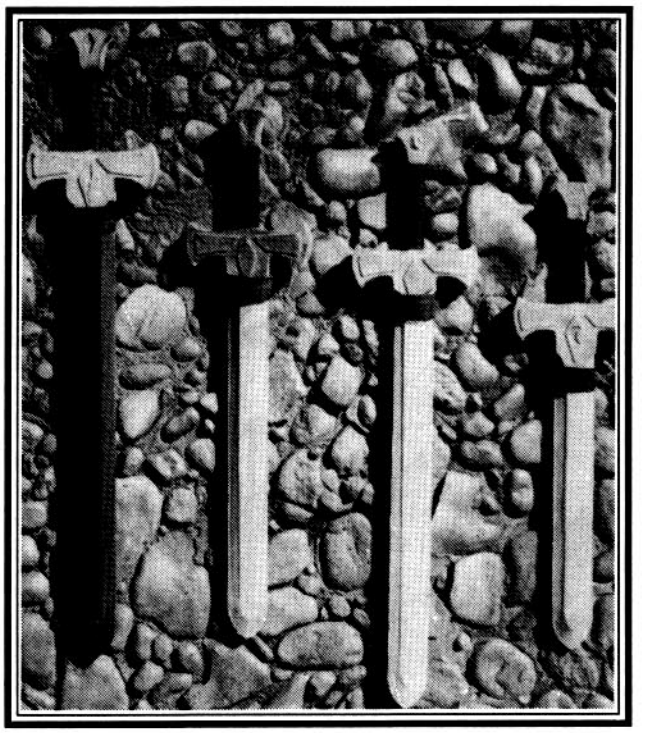
To quote Locus Magazine *"Niven and Barnes' book is definitely dream stuff. Dream Park would be a wonderful place, exponentially more involving than Disneyland-unadulterated wish fulfillment. For now, we'll have to be satisfied with our dreams once removed- in Dream Park".*

Well, Dream Park is steadily, step-by-step, becoming a reality, and as Dream Park Corporation continues its research and development, it will not be long before we'll be standing at the entrance gate, eyes wide, chins dragging the ground, with anticipation of the adventures that wait inside. ❑



Dream Park Technicians working in Game Central.

photo by Brian Booker



An assortment of IGS foam latex swords on one of Dream Park's dungeon wall sections.

photo by Brian Booker

SHADIS MAGAZINE © 1993

IT'LL BLOW YOU AWAY!

STAND UP AND PLASTIC HEROES ARE NO MATCH FOR THE LEGIONS OF STEEL !!!

SHADIS
INTERROGATIONS

Prisoner 275-85: Dave Newton
Aliases: Unknown
Scars: None Listed
Priors: Co-designer Mythus , Mythus Magic, Mythus Gamemaster's Screen, Ærth Beastiary

Welcome! We've knocked out a wall and added a new addition to the complex. I'm afraid we've grown tired of hounding various gaming celebs and designers for interviews. Last month I issued an executive order to construct the SHADIS HOLDING BLOCK. Our bounty-hunter is scouring the country and bringing back those hard-to-get individuals of the hobby who have been avoiding us. Once they arrive at our facility they are interred until I can get around to questioning them. So join me, Gameweaver and my little bailiff, Shad, as we extract those answers you're dying to hear by means of painful interrogation. Enjoy!

Gameweaver: Let's see, who's first on our list of prisoners? Hmmm....Dave Newton. Now that name rings a bell."

Shad: Never heard of 'em boss. I think the Bounty Hunter made a mistake. Wanna toss him?

GW: Of course not. Bring him in and let's see what we can find out.

SH: Hmmrrff! Waste of time if ya ask me boss.
(Prisoner is escorted into the Interrogation Chamber and is seated.)

SH: Those shackles wouldn't chaff so much if you'd stop resisting.

Newton: Shut up you little runt! If I get my hands on you...

GW: Well! I see why the guards have been writing you up so often. You've been flogged five times and reprimanded seven times since your arrival. And I understand you've been complaining about the rations here. I'm sure three days of fasting has helped you to reevaluate that assessment.

Newton: The food stinks! What are those green things in the gruel?

GW: No time for that now. Would you mind stating your name for the record?

Newton: My name is Dave Newton, and I'm originally from Southern California — Hawthorne, to be exact.

GW: California eh? Hmmmm...dosen't speak well of you, Mr. Newton. Continue please.

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Newton: I am 33 years old, married for the second time, with a son by my first marriage. My current wife, Michele, and I live in rural West Georgia, with our Keeshond and 3 computers. In the mundane world, I am an Artificial Intelligence Developer, but the jury might recognize me as a game designer.

Shad: Did you hear that boss? He's a fugitive! Tell me Mr. Newton, just why did you flee Califor....

GW: Shad, please refrain from asking questions. Remember I AM the interrogator here. Now Mr. Newton, you claim you are a game designer. Could you list your prior work in this endeavor?

Newton: I co-authored the Mythus Fantasy Roleplaying Game System, with its creator, Gary Gygax. So far, I have worked on Mythus, Mythus Magic, the Mythus Gamemaster's Screen, and the Ærth Bestiary.

GW: Gygax? Somehow he has managed to elude our bounty hunter, but I trust he will be dragged before me shortly. I don't understand how you leapt from computers to gaming? How did you get into gaming?

Newton: I started gaming in 1981, with Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Over the past 13 years, I played and GM'ed a number of the other obligatory game systems. You know, the Arduin system, Call of Cthulhu, Twilight 2000, Shadowrun, Vampire - though I guess you could say I prefer fantasy and cyberpunk best.

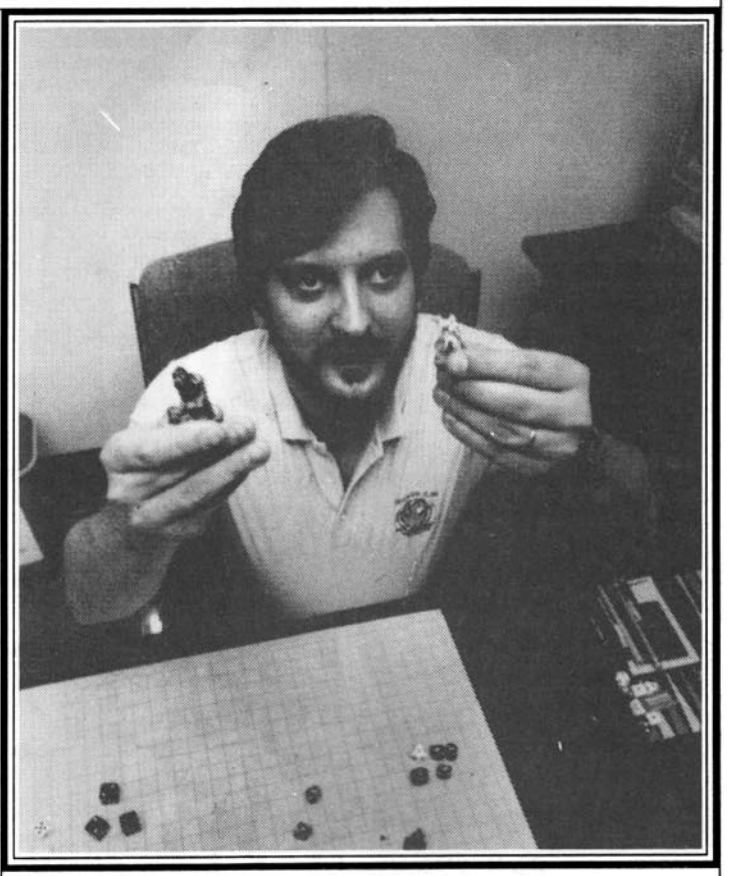
GW: So how did that lead to game design?

Newton: When Michele and I decided to move to Georgia in 1988, I thought I'd find a job in the computer industry without too much trouble. But after about three months, I was starting to get a little nervous. I happened to notice that SSI was doing some computer-related gaming stuff, so I sent letters to all the major game companies, looking for contract work. All except two of the replies were rejections. And only one wasn't a form letter. That one was from Gary Gygax. Well, actually it was a rejection too, but only because he didn't need any programming. Instead, he asked me if I'd ever written any adventures or campaign material. Since I had a campaign that I'd been running for about 5 or 6 years, I wrote back.

Then a funny thing happened - he called me one Saturday. He told me that New Infinities could always use new material, and urged us to send in something. So Michele and I started working on some stuff to submit, basically re-writing and fleshing out a campaign scenario based on my hand-written adventures. After nearly 18 months, we presented what we'd done. It turned out to be our portfolio, though it was never published. You see, New Infinities went under about the same time the campaign was submitted for evaluation. I can remember being really depressed, because it seemed like we just missed our shot at getting published.

GW: Oh dear, you're not going to cry are you?

Newton: No I'm fine. Anyway, another funny thing happened. I guess he really liked it, because in early 1990, Gary and Gail sent me a copy of a manuscript to review. It was a rough draft of "The Unhallowed," a Supernatural Horror system. It was supposed to be part of a multi-genre system that was then called Dangerous Dimensions (the name was later changed to "Dangerous Journeys" because of the TSR lawsuit). The system itself contained the core rules of DJ, and I was really impressed. I mean, it looked like a really cool system, and they said they were planning on doing the fantasy portion of it next. And they were offering *me* the chance of helping to design it!



Dave Newton attempts to bribe a guard with a gift of lead miniatures.

After I read through it, I told them I was *definitely* interested, and they sent me a contract. I was cautious at first, because I'd heard all of the nasty rumors started by the snotty posers who were too stupid the read their contracts. But eventually, I decided to gamble on the contract. Besides, *this* was the chance I'd been waiting for, and despite what I'd heard, I trusted Gary. And you know what? He never failed me. My name's on the cover, though according to the contract I signed, it really didn't have to be. But I made it clear what was important to me, and we worked really hard together for a shared goal. I've never regretted it. After two and a half years, and over a million words later, the game premiered July 1992 at DragonCon in Atlanta.

GW: So you rolled up your sleeves and actually helped the Grand Master design this thing huh? What part of the game are you most proud of?

Newton: I'd have to say the Mythus Magick system. It was probably

the part Gary and I worked most closely together on. Originally, he sent me a number of casting descriptions and this long list of casting names broken down by likely area (Sorcery, Spellsongs, etc.). No description, no notes, just names. For a long time, I sort of just looked at them and said to myself, 'neat — I wonder what they do', and went back to work on the other chapters. Then, when I finally figured out that I had the latitude to make up what I wanted, I just started writing. When I thought I had done enough on a group, I sent them to Gary, and he picked it up from there.

GW: Is there anything about DJ you would have handled differently?

Newton: Well, our biggest complaint so far has been complexity. Given the penchant we both have for being wordy, I might have toned it down a bit. But still, there are a lot of people that want that level of detail. And it's much easier to throw rules out than it is to add them after the game's been released.
Also, I would probably have inserted more castings and creatures in the first book, but that's an editor's job.

GW: Is there anything you've written that causes you to cringe in shame?

Newton: No, not yet. You'll have to get back to me on that one. Given the proper material and/or deadline, though, I'm sure it's just a matter of time (chuckles).

GW: Give me a brief history of Mythus from conception to publication?

Newton: Like I said before, the concept of Dangerous Journeys as a multi-genre roleplaying game was always Gary's, I was just lucky enough to help shape the fantasy system. I started by re-reading the Unhallowed rules and marking the sections that didn't fit within a fantasy framework. With a revised outline from Gary, I started filling in the new sections and adding what I thought needed to be there. For each chapter, section, and subsection, I wrote several paragraphs of text that helped me understand what I'd be covering.

From there I just started writing, beginning with the basic game, Mythus Prime. When I'd finished those chapters, I sent them to Gary for additions and editing. At the same time, Gary was compiling material for additional chapters, and we each passed the information along as we worked.

The magick system was one of the last sections we tackled, and it was one of the most enjoyable. I guess the reason was that I'd been working with Gary long enough to realize I could speak up about things I felt should be done differently. Anyway, he kept saying that we needed more castings, even though we had already fleshed out around 500-600 of them. So finally, I just sat down on my back deck with a couple of beers and a composition book. I put myself into this mindset where I asked myself: if I could do *anything* with magick, what would I want to do. I did this for each type of magick, Alchemy to Witchcraft - and it really helped. Because the magick system in Mythus reasons that castings operate from effect to cause, I didn't have to worry about the statistical part of it until later.

We batted the castings around for months, and by the time I said 'enough!', there were about 1200 in my final draft. Of course, Gary took that and added nearly 300 more... Believe it or not, the result — Mythus Magick — was originally envisioned as a single chapter!

GW: Are there any Dangerous Journeys surprises in store for us?

Newton: Since DJ is owned by Omega Helios Ltd., I'm not completely sure what's in the works. And unfortunately, I can't pass along what I do know because of its proprietary nature. I suspect the Grand Master has a few tricks up his sleeve that none of us could predict.

GW: Don't get tight lipped on me now Mr. Newton. Now how about projects outside of DJ?

Newton: First of all, I plan on doing a lot more for DJ, as the projects come along. I owe everything to Gary, and I'll write material for him as long as he'll have me. I've been itching to do something pertaining to time and/or probability travel, so I hope that isn't too far in the future (pun intended).

But there are other projects I would like to pursue beyond DJ, one of which is a novel I've been kicking around for awhile. And though I don't have any offers yet, Michele and I are always talking with other companies in the industry. We'd love to work with the folks at White Wolf and Wizards of the Coast. We are really impressed with the quality of their products, and we admire the creative spirit we've seen there. We also place a high value on things like vision and teamwork, and I think they have a great deal of both.

Something else I'd really like to be involved in is the growing area of virtual reality. Since I work in the Artificial Intelligence field, its one of those cool things I'm familiar with, but I haven't had a chance to try doing. I spend quite a bit of time programming knowledge base systems and such, but so far it's mostly been business-related.

GW: What are your thoughts on the hobby as a whole?

Newton: I think it's wonderful getting a chance to meet all the established people in the industry. And I really have a great deal of hope for the future of roleplaying games, and games in general. There is so much new talent out there, too — all the seasoned gamers aspiring to do what I've done. Since I work with technology, I see so much potential just waiting to be tapped. And as long as we have the current masters around to guide us, people like Gygax, Rein-Hagen at White Wolf, Adkison at Wizards of the Coast — the gaming industry has a long, interesting future.

GW: I think that will do it for now Mr. Newton. Shad, please escort Mr. Newton off the compound.

Newton: You mean I can go?

GW: For now Mr. Newton, for now. But, we'll be watching and I warn you. If you insist on continuing to dabble in game design we are going to pull you back in for an update.

SHAD: Boss, you're not letting him go? Ask him about the jagged scars. And are you forgetting he threatened me?

GW: That will do for now SHAD. We know where to find Mr. Newton if we need him. ❑

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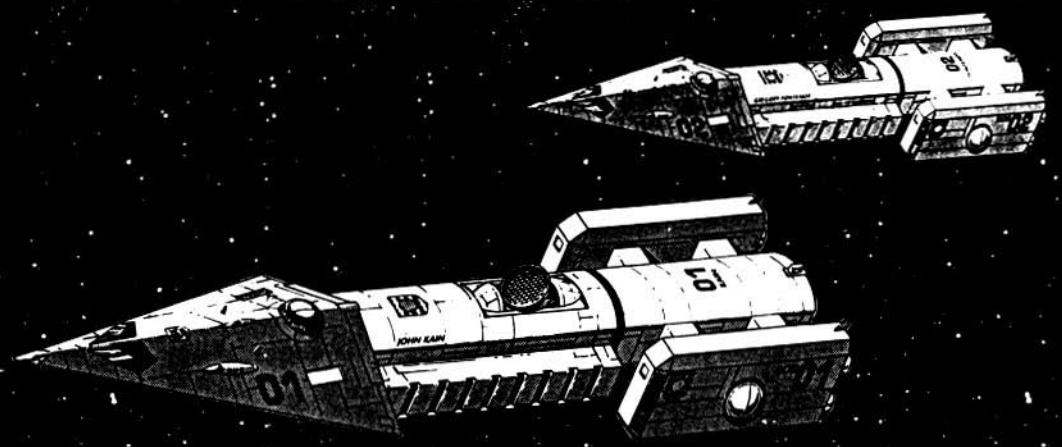

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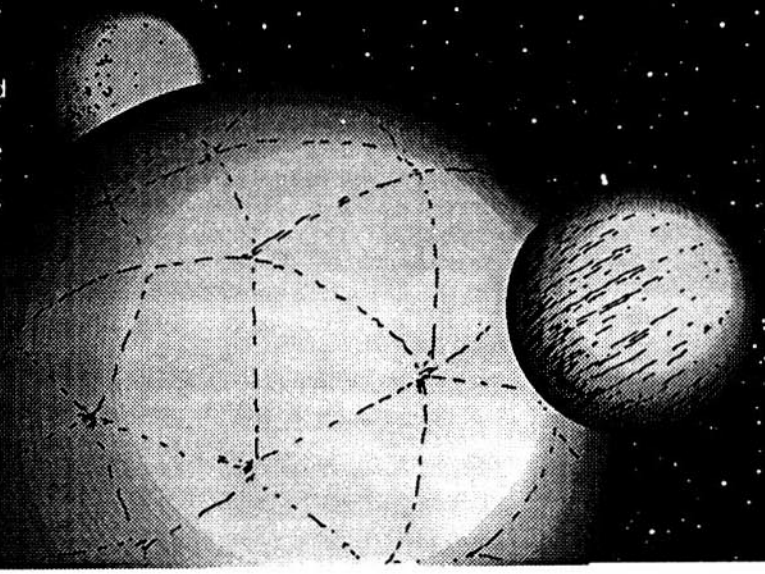

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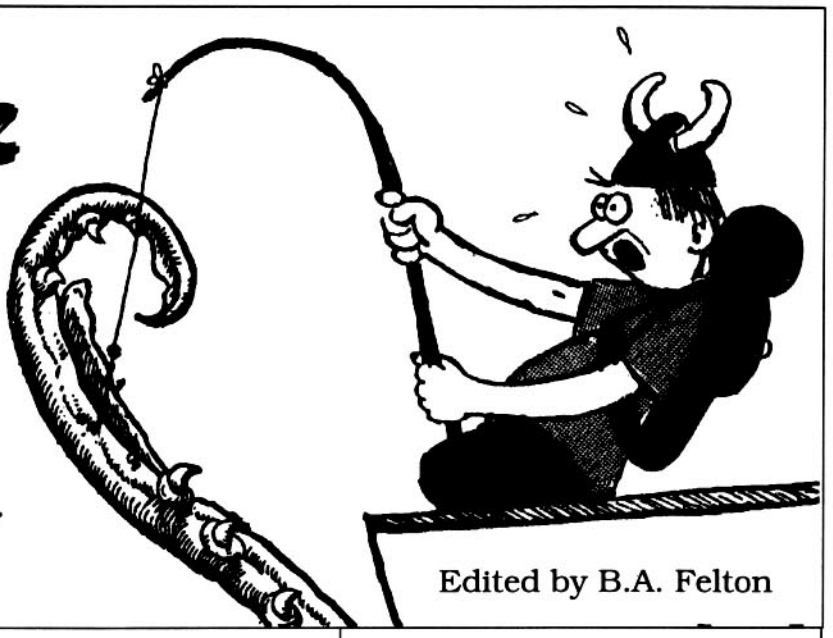
Hook, Line and Sinker



Adventures on the Fly

Edited by B.A. Felton

Hook, Line and Sinker, continues to be one of the most popular columns to have appeared in SHADIS. Now that SHADIS is a multi-genre gaming magazine, we will be expanding the Hook, Line and Sinker concept to cover all genres. That means we need your submissions now, more than ever!!

For those of you unfamiliar with the HLS format, the following is a reprint of the original introduction to the Hook, Line and Sinker Column;

How many times has this happened to you?

After spending all week preparing and designing a massive adventure for the next gaming session, you finally sit down at the table with players assembled. It feels like a good night, the adrenaline is pumping and everyone is anticipating a full night of adventuring. However, as the night progresses, you begin to panic. The adventure you thought would take hours to unfold is beginning to wind down and the evening is still young.

You thought that battle with the Orc raiding party would take at least an hour to resolve but it actually only took 10 minutes of real time. The trap you cleverly laid on level 5 to slow the player's progress wasn't even encountered! It's only 8 p.m. and you normally play to midnight. The players look toward you with trusting anticipation as if to say, "We know you won't let us down." You scoff because you know how quickly they can turn on you.

You begin to sweat as you thumb through your notes. Nothing! Usually you can think of an adventure on the cuff and ad-lib your way through. Tonight nothing comes to mind. What's a GM to do?

It was a similar situation to the one described above that first inspired the **Hook, Line and Sinker** concept. (Eight years of being subjected to the Army's wacky methods of training had finally proved useful).

With HLS you simply find a situation (Hook) that most closely resembles your player's current situation. (For example, if your characters just ended an adventure and are lounging in a bar waiting for something to happen you look for a Hook that reads something like, "The party is sitting in a Tavern/Inn"). It's as easy as that. You will then be given the seeds for a new adventure. All you need to do is let the players run with it and flesh out the details as needed. The most appealing thing about HLS scenarios is that they are generic. No game stats or hard rules are included.

Each HLS scenario has the following format:
HOOK: The current situation/location of the party.
LINE: This is the opportunity for adventure that presents itself to the party. A line is normally presented in a short paragraph. Think of a line as a 'pick-up' line that you use to bait the players with.
SINKER: This is the clincher to the line. Here the Game Master is presented with the dilemma that makes the situation an 'adventure'.

Using the HLS scenario is easy. In fact, many GMs have reported that they have adopted the format to design all of their adventures. They are purposely vague so that the GM can fill in the detail with the particulars of his own world and tastes. Think about it, how many commercial modules have you purchased only to pick and choose elements that you preferred and ignoring those you didn't like?

We invite you to send in your own HLS scenarios to add to our library. In the future we will compile these scenarios into collections and make them available.

WHO'S THE REAL MONSTER?

HOOK: The party should be somewhere they can be approached by a potential employer.
LINE: A potential patron, a middle-aged woman in shabby travelling clothes and wearing an eyepatch, approaches the party offering them a bag of gold. She says that she wants the party to help her avenge the death of her husband and son and the theft of all their possessions. The perpetrators are a group of men who raided her home and killed her husband and son in their sleep and who left her badly injured— including the loss of her eye. The woman fled, hoping to avenge herself later, and eventually came back to find her home stripped and her family horribly butchered. She has traced the criminals to someplace nearby, and needs help to capture them. Any magic used to see if the woman is telling the truth reveals that she is indeed telling the truth. Investigation will also prove the woman to be very magical, and much more than she seems.
SINKER: The "woman" is really a shape-changed dragon. Her story is true, from her perspective. The "criminals" she is after are a party of adventurers much like the players. They only did what adventurers are wont to do— kill the dragon, grab the treasure, and get valuable scales and the like from the slain. The surviving dragon wants the players to occupy and weaken the NPC party so that she can kill them and gain vengeance. Make the dragon/woman very sympathetic. Perhaps she is even a good dragon, turned bitter and angry. Get the heroes to understand her perspective as much as possible before introducing the NPC party— who should be very similar to the heroes. The idea is to make your players think twice in the future about killing and looting monsters just because they aren't human.

Doug Easterly

THE SCAM

HOOK: While visiting a town or community, the group is approached by a well dressed merchant. After exchanging niceties, the merchant invites the

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group back to his villa to discuss a business proposal.

LINE: After the group is well fed, the merchant announces that one of his servants recently found a locked chest in the bushes alongside a road. Upon inspecting the contents of the chest, claims the merchant, it was found to hold stolen gems and artifacts from a local temple. The merchant explains that the cache is worthless to him because everyone in the surrounding area knows of the theft. However, if someone were to take them out of the province or kingdom and sell them elsewhere...well, that person would be fabulously rich. He offers to sell the group the chest for 5,000 gp.

SINKER: The treasure is actually worthless lead and other base metals. A powerful illusion spell has been placed on the contents of the chest. The merchant has a lucrative scam running - selling worthless junk to greedy strangers. If the strangers attempt to blackmail the merchant by threatening to notify the temple that he possesses the 'stolen' treasure, the merchant will laugh and seem unconcerned. Note: This illusion will last only 24 - 48 hours.

J.R. Blackburn

THE MENACE

HOOK: The party is leaving on a big quest or adventure. Much planning and effort has been put into the quest and the adventure is going as planned.

LINE: When the party gets as far from civilization as possible, they see a small boy of about 7 years old trapped at the top of a very tall tree. He is yelling for help and will ask the party to please get him down. If the party asks him how he got up in the tree, he will yell back something that sounds to the party like his caravan was ambushed and the, "monsters" did not see him slip away to the tree where he climbed to hide. It will be very difficult to talk this way and conversations will be very limited. The child will not climb down on his own, because he seems afraid of falling. To further confirm the boy's story, there is a battle site about 100 paces from the tree where several human bodies lay dead (the boy's previous party).

SINKER: The boy is indeed a 7 year old child who is stuck in the tree. If the party saves him, he will be very grateful, and to show his gratitude, he will become a royal pain in the butt. The child is the equivalent of Dennis the Menace, and is in fact a runaway from a nearby castle. He is the spoiled brat son of a powerful lord who is looking for him. He will show particular affection to the one who he feels saved him. He will be a constant thorn in the side of this adventurer and will always seem to be running off into trouble thus allowing the GM to lead the party into all kinds of mischief. He will hold out on his true identity as long as possible. If the party tries to dump him off at the nearest town, he will escape and rejoin the party a few turns later. If the child is killed, the lord will be very displeased. If, however, the party finds out the identity of the child and can deceive him enough to return him to his father, (he will never go willingly-not because of abuse but because he is having too much fun), the party will be rewarded and aided on their quest.

David Seay

THE ESCORT SERVICE

HOOK: The players have successfully completed a typical "save the princess" type of adventure.

LINE: The players must escort the princess home through perils and the outdoors.

SINKER: The princess is just that, a spoiled princess. She will complain about camping outdoors, about the food, about walking, about sharing a horse with "a sweaty mercenary." She will be insulting and unprepared for travel. She will want to nap and to be catered to. Of course, this will lead to delays, attract brigands and monsters with the noise, and so on. In all this, the players must protect the princess—she must be brought back alive if the players are to be rewarded. And if she dies, there may be a price on the heads of the players! This scenario works equally well if the players must escort a prince. Nothing will do more to raise the hackles of a manly barbarian than to have to deal with a whining effete noble! The idea is to put a little variety into a standard scenario, to force a little role-playing, and to add a little comic relief. If you don't let the gag run too long, it should turn into a good source of stories among the PCs.

Doug Easterly

ELEMENTARY MY DEAR WATSON

HOOK: The party is having a holiday meal and the main course is goose. During the course of the meal one of the party members bites down on something hard and spits it out. The item is a Blue Sapphire Gem.

LINE: The Gem was stolen three weeks ago from a jewelry store in town. The party has the first clue as to how to find the thief by finding out where the goose came from.

SINKER: The Thief is a man by the name of Jerald Washington. Jerald is a huge fan of the Sherlock Holmes mysteries and has started a crime spree around the city, imitating some of the books he has read. To catch Jerald, the party will have to solve three mysteries.

1) Blue Sapphire: The party must trace the ownership of the Blue Sapphire back to a store and the store owner can give the party a description of Jerald saying that he was a strange customer. He came in to look at the geese and wanted to see them alone. Then he returned a few days later and he bought a couple of the birds. He returned it buy another bird but couldn't find one he wanted. (The Party Ended up with his Bird)

2) Red-Headed Man: The next day the party will notice a strange ad in the local paper. *"Hiring Red Headed Man as scribe. Pay 100 Pounds per day work between 11 and 2 weekdays."* Hundreds of men show up for the interview with red hair but the people doing the hiring have been instructed to hire a specific gentleman.

Jerald has found a red-headed man who owns a store next to a local bank. He put the ad out so that the man would come to work for him. He is working on a tunnel in the mans basement to rob the bank. If he is successful, or if the party thwarts his game, he will move on to his next reenactment

3) The Girl in the Tower: Jerald will kidnap a local girl and trap her in a tower. By this time he has gone completely off the deep end and plans on killing her and the party. He then hires an actress to play her part at her work. As it turns, out the party knows the girl, (Imagine that) and they figure out what has happened by the story the girl tells.

In the end, the characters will have a battle with the evil Jerald who now thinks he is Professor Moriarty in the tower. He may escape to re-enact other crimes.

A little research into Sherlock Holmes and this could become a continuing challenge for the characters.

John Zinser

THE CLERK FROM HELL

This HLS is dedicated to anyone who ever wanted to crawl through the phone or reach over the counter and kill someone because they just wouldn't make an exception to a tiny stupid rule. Now you can.

HOOK: The party is about to leave on an adventure, any adventure.

LINE: Before the party can leave, they have to pick up a specific item from some place in the city they are in. (Temple, Constables office etc.) The item can be anything from a magic item to a map. The item doesn't matter; how they get it does.

SINKER: The item the party needs is guarded by one of the most fearsome monsters any GM could ever devise, "the idiotic rude clerk" The item the party needs has been put into the safe hands of the local clerk and he cannot release the item *"with out proper identification and since it's after five and the Boss isn't in, you will also need to leave a deposit in Silver Kings Coin (Something the party can't get until Monday) as well as fill out all the following forms in triplicate. And after this is done I still can't give it to you until Monday."*.. AAARRGGGHHH The idiot clerk will begin to sound like a broken record never deviating from his assigned task. If the party does not follow his procedure to the letter and they suggest something else (Something that makes sense) he will just repeat the things he has already told the party five times. Sooner or later someone

in the party will become so irritated with the little man, that they will threaten his life or better yet beat him to a pulp. This of course will bring repercussions but it will have to make the party feel good..... After all the guy probably deserves it.

John Zinser

PARALYTIC STINKER

HOOK: The Party is travelling down a corridor or dungeon hallway.

LINE: Coming down the passageway, floating 12 to 14 feet off the ground, the party sees what appears to be an undead being. Casting ominous shadows about the area, a surrealistic light beams forth from the horrifying undead.

As the party gets a little closer (not too close), they will notice the many vibrant, twinkling colors of gold and silver floating around the being.

SINKER: The alleged undead is not an undead (just dead), but an individual that met his or her recent demise by a gelatinous cube (or similar creature). Note: The victim and all equipment he or she was carrying at the time of death will still be floating in the cube.

This encounter relies heavily on the GMs abilities to Hook and Line the party with creative descriptions, not leading them to think of an easy attack. The encounter should fit into most campaigns and works very well as a wandering monster. Don't forget, the placement of a light source behind the cube gives the encounter its initial poltergeist effect.

For a tougher battle, throw in a second cube from behind. After combat and a few paralyzed players, the group should catch on and easily defeat the cube, or cubes. You might even be able to catch a few slower (special) players twice, maybe in the same game.

Troy M. Hintz

WHERE NO MAN DARES TO GO

HOOK: The party comes across a ship that appears to be abandoned or set a drift.

LINE: When the party checks the ship out, they will find no damage to the ship itself. The ship also seems to be without a crew and is unmanned. It appears as if the crew abandoned the ship in haste. In the captain's cabin they will find a map with a location marked off and a note below it saying "Great Treasures - Certain Death."

SINKER: The spot marked on the map is a ships' graveyard. There are possibly hundreds of ships, some partially submerged, many of them of older design.

The ships are set adrift by the undead sailors trapped here. These beings are under the control of another undead being who is trying to amass an undead army to conquer the world.

Brian Peters

LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

HOOK: The party is travelling along a road when they come across a broken down wagon with two passengers.

LINE: The passengers are an old man and a small child. Neither is strong enough to make the necessary repairs and they don't want to abandon the wagon for fear of having their few possessions stolen. They ask the party if they could either make the repairs or notify someone in the next town to come to their aid.

SINKER: The party has two choices. They can either help or ignore the pair. Depending on their actions, one of the following things will happen.

If they help, the group will be approached by an individual, or small group, who will offer the party some type of reward for their help.

If they don't help, they will be hunted by an individual, or small group, who try to harm the party in someway because the two travellers were well respected in the nearby town.

Either of these events should happen either later in the same session or in the following session.

Brian Peters

SAY UNCLE

Hook: The party is in a tavern and is approached by an obnoxious drunk who challenges them to some type of contest involving strength.

Line: The drunk is terrible at such contests but he is also filthy rich. No bet is too rich for his blood and he will turn down no challenge.

"Wanna bet 100 gold pieces I can throw a dagger further than you?"

"500 silver says I can leap over the bar while carrying a barmaid on my back!"

"300 gold says I can hold my hand over a hot flame longer than you!"

The players are amazed that the man hands over his gold without an argument or word and then quickly challenges the players to another contest.

SINKER: This situation will continue as long the players' greed allows it to. Eventually three LARGE men, who have been watching the proceedings will corner one of the players and inform them that the drunk is their uncle and that he is insane. They kindly request that the party give back all their winnings.

If the party refuses, the nephews will be obliged to take it by force and of course a classic brawl breaks out. Now should the party win the battle and keep the gold - they will become the scourge of the territory. It will seem as if everybody for miles around loves the old man and has heard how he was taken advantage of. The party will be the recipients of rude stares, insults and slammed doors.

Jolly R. Blackburn

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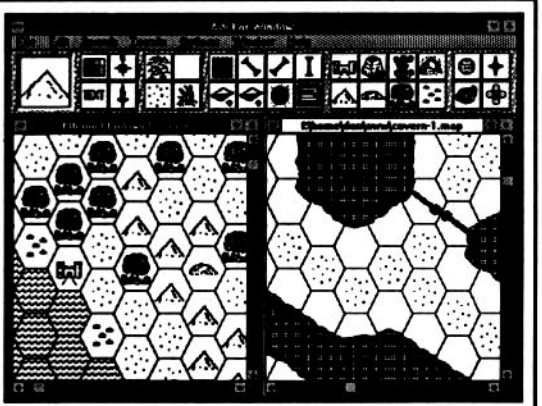

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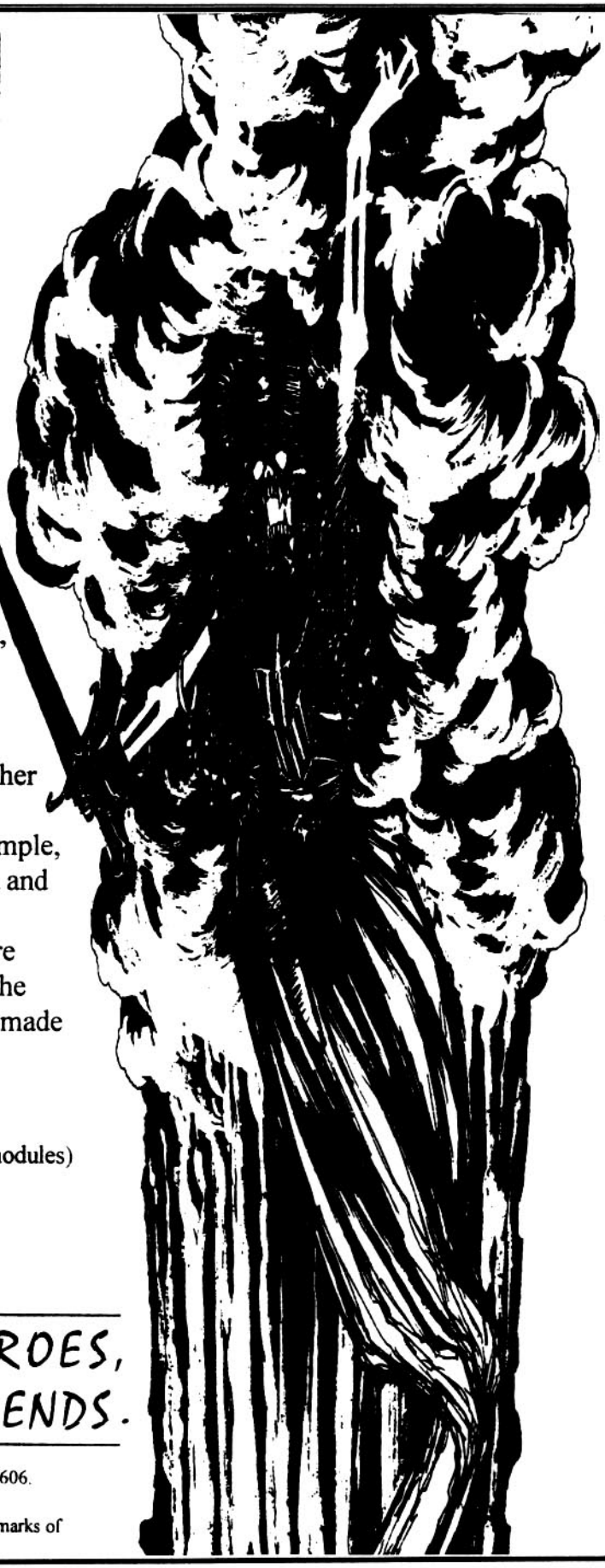

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THE BLUE ROBED MAN AT THE IRON MULE

AN ADVENTURE IN THE WATERFRONT DISTRICT OF KINGSPOINT™

By Luke L. Ahearn ©

"The weary adventurer opened one eye then the next, the lids fighting a crust of sleep and exhaustion. His own body weight held him fast to the floor, his wet clothing pinned his arms and legs. He knew the vomit he lay in was his own, and the blood someone else's. What truly baffled him was the place. What place was he in?

"He peered through the wet, charred hay about his face and into the gloom beyond and saw shadowy figures scuffling in the dark. A few sat at crude tables, while others stood and muttered.

"With sudden recollection, he moaned to himself in drunken agony. His head exploded in pain as he sat up. He furrowed his brow tight and shut his eyes.

"The Iron Mule," he moaned, as he held his stomach., "The Iron Mule." His friend was nowhere in sight, his possessions were gone, and daylight streamed into the front door of the wretched inn as it was ripped from its hinges. Another fight had started at the Iron Mule."

FORWARD

This adventure is designed for two adventurers of mid level, one of which is willing to participate in a heavy drinking contest. Fighters and strong thieves are preferred, but a magic-user or cleric may survive.

GM'S NOTE:

The Iron Mule is a seedy bar in the Waterfront District of Kingspoint, but the adventure is largely generic and the seedy bar can be placed in any setting. Kingspoint is a new city included with KINGSPOINT™, a computer Super Utility that serves as a command center for the Game Master.

PLAYER'S BRIEFING

It all comes back to you as you prop yourself up on one arm, hoping the brawl will stay clear of your dark corner. You were new to Kingspoint, laden with gold, and in a great need to unwind. The cart driver told you the best spot for adventurers to unwind was the Iron Mule, and drove you straight to it. Sure, the street was strewn with refuse, lined with dark and boarded-up warehouses, but the inn came so highly touted. You didn't even think twice about the cart driver dropping you at the corner and not in front of the establishment itself.

The shabby, sagging, run down building looked innocent enough, with its sign leaning against the wall. The sign read " The Iron Mule." You barely gave the name a second thought as you pushed the door open with a thump.

The interior of the building was so dark that you were sure you had stepped into an abandoned building, then your eyes adjusted. Two or three sputtering candles barely illuminated the inside. The floor was covered in wet hay, charred and mixed with mud and other unspeakable refuse that now coats you. The roof sagged terribly, and in places was propped up by timbers. The crowd seemed to gather in the back corner.

The Iron Mule, you guessed, as the show began. In the dark back corner of the inn, a mule was being fed glass, coins, broken mugs, and anything the crowd would give him. The show ended and the drinking began.

You and your companion had sat in the near dark for an hour when suddenly a burly dwarf, with a slick black beard and bright blue eyes, hefted the nearest candle and barked, "This place is filled with silk -bellied humans!!" A few hisses

and jeers greeted him, a dagger whizzed past his head. He glared into the dark, "Is that your answer to a challenge? Can't any of you humans stand against me, a lowly dwarf, in a bout of drinks?"

A fat slob of a man pushed into the light, his cracked teeth and yellow eyes shone with wetness. "I will put you under the table, little man."

The room erupted in cheers for the brave man as the dwarf raised a gritty hand, " I will drink you and another, of your choosing, under the table. So choose and meet me at my table."

The dwarf leapt towards a corner, the yellow light of the candle dancing about the Iron Mule's walls. A hand from the dark grabbed your shoulder and lifted you off your feet. "That would have never happened if I weren't so damn drunk," you thought as you were shoved forward.

"I have found him!!" The odor of bile wafted past your nostrils as the fat man pushed you, "I have found my partner! Not that he will even need to drink a drop as you will be sucking hay before I even get a bit dizzy." You tried to argue, but your lips just flapped, and you laughed.

"You were born dizzy," the dwarf growled as the two of you faced him, a crowd gathering behind.

Suddenly, the crowd surged and everyone fell forward. You remember the wide blue eyes and frantic screech as you fell forward and onto the panicked dwarf. Then the others fell on top of you. As you smelled the bile to your right, your companion to your left began to struggle. He was being dragged from the heap. Something crashed into your skull as you ventured to look sideways.

And now, as you rub your sore head, a man approaches. His soiled blue robes are frayed from dragging the ground, his black turban veiled and revealing little, his voice a harsh whisper. "I know of your friends whereabouts, but it will cost you. Agree to the price, or your friend dies."

FOR THE GAME MASTER

The companion can be another PC who can try to escape, but communication between the two players should NOT be allowed during his abduction.

The PC and friend are apparently being helped out by the Blue Robed man, but were actually selected by him to be conned by the Dwarf and Fat Man earlier in the day. The Blue Robed Man will lead the first PC to a ship in the harbor that contains the other PC. The captain, an agent of the Blue Robed Man, will be on board and will release the player for ten gold. He claims that he has not yet paid for the slaves and makes it a practice to "not buy men of any real skill, profession, or association such as your friend." But the Blue Robed Man still needs to be paid his due.

The PCs should still assume that the Blue Robed Man is their savior.

The man in the blue robes will ask both the PC and his companion to help him by stealing back something that has been stolen from him. The two players will be sent to the docks and asked to break into a ship named the "Sea Cat." In the captain's quarters is a locked wooden box with silver inlay on the lid. He tells them that the box is magically trapped, but safe as long as they do not open it. The Blue Robed Man gives a sketch of the ship to the players and instructions where to bring the box.

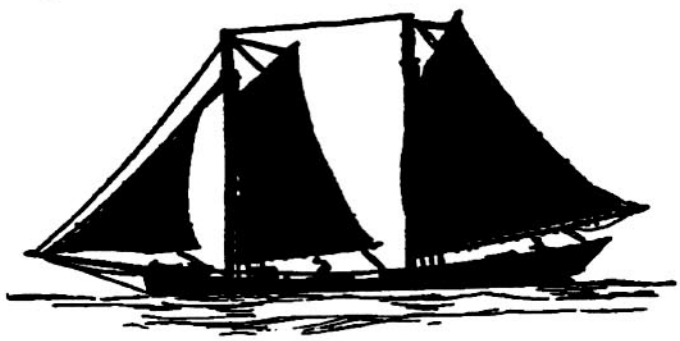
If the players do not agree, they will be jumped by the Fat Man and Dwarf, both high level fighters, and killed. If they do, they will be successful in retrieving the box, but not without a fight as the caper must look real. The ship has a skeletal crew on board and they are all usually busy with maintenance, sleeping, or gambling. The crew consists of:

First Mate - *Warrior/Mage. High-level fighter and Mid-level mage. Parrot familiar. Appears to be a pirate.*

Able Bodied Seamen (6) - *Low-level fighters. Short swords and daggers.*

Cabin Boy - *Zero level. Will 75 percent be able to hide and go to authorities after following PCs.*

A fight above deck will attract attention. Unless the ship burns, or the fight is carried onto the land, no one will do a thing.



THE SEA CAT

The "Sea Cat" is a typical merchant ship. It has twin masts, two steering oars, main decks, and a double level poop deck. It is 72 feet long and 26 feet wide.

1. The Main Deck has an entrance on either side that is accessible by ladders. In the center of the Main Deck is a small boat able to hold ten people. There are hatches and doors to the various decks below and on the poop.
2. The First Poop deck is to the rear of the ship and above the Main Deck. This is where the twin steering oars are and the passenger's quarters. A steep stair/ladder leads up to the Second Poop Deck.
3. The Second Poop Deck has a door leading into the Captain's Cabin and a steep stair/ladder leading up to the top of the poop deck.

a. The captain's cabin has a nice bed, writing desk, and three small chests nailed to the floor. The chests have poisoned needle locks on them and the writing desk has a

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secret compartment that is empty (The captain's log is usually here but has been removed.) The other chests contain small weapons and clothes. One chest has a sack of coins (250 gold) and a ledger of crew pay and supplies.

The small wooden box with the silver inlaid lid sits under the clothes in one of the chests.

4. There are other places on a ship not important to this adventure but may be used in battle, such as the crow's nest at the top of the main mast, the other rooms, crew quarters, and decks and cargo holds below. Below deck are also three guard dogs in cages.

THE BLUE ROBED MAN AND THE MYSTERY BOX

The Blue Robed Man is actually Kadeem Manx, the owner of the Sea Cat, and is carrying the box as a passage. He does not know what the box contains.

Kadeem was always an inquisitive fellow, but the box had taken him past curiosity to the point of obsession many months ago. The box was given to him almost a year ago by a mysterious man who said that Kadeem would be paid on a yearly basis to watch the box and carry it with him always until it was reclaimed. His last instructions were to never open the box under any circumstances.

The man has not been heard of in ten months.

Kadeem has spent the time becoming increasingly absorbed by the puzzle of the box. At first he idly watched it, becoming distracted during conversation on occasion, then took to staying in his cabin and examining it for hours on end. He would shake it and try to feel or hear what may be in the box, but to no avail. He began to bring the box to sages in all parts of the world, stopping off and losing time, sometimes going the long way on a route to do so. None could tell him where the box had come from or what it may contain. Some Mages casts spells that told him nothing other than whatever was in the box was a greatly protected secret. Kadeem had to end the torment of what was in the box soon.

THE MYSTERY MAN is an agent for one of Kadeem's past lovers. Kadeem has been particularly cruel to her and is still suspected of having killed her brother. She had the box constructed and the plan set in motion to get her revenge.

She knew that if Kadeem had to choose between breaking maritime law (and being assured of being caught), and risking everything he cared about, or satisfying his curiosity, it would be torture for him. Either way he would lose. She knew he would be killed by his own weakness, curiosity. On top of that, his ship would be left to his former lover, the party he had broken maritime law against, by opening the box.

AFTER THE PARTY STEALS THE BOX, they will leave it under the bed of a prearranged inn room in the city. They will go on their way and soon be found by the city guard and held. The Demon Mages will be brought in to cast spells determining the PCs are the one's who stole the box. They will still probably not suspect Kadeem of foul play.

IF THE PCs DO NOT OPEN THE BOX, by the time the PCs convince the authorities to look for the box at the inn, it will be open on the floor. Kadeem will be shredded and tossed about the room and surrounding area.

IF THE PLAYERS OPEN THE BOX, they will be confronted by an Efreet. The Efreet will offer them each 250,000 gold if they can bring his captor (Kadeem's former lover) to him on the Elemental Plane of Fire. (This can be a great offshoot long term adventure) The Efreet will disappear and seek Kadeem.

LATER THAT DAY

The Mystery man arrives and clears the PCs of all trouble. As he escorts them from the jail, he tells them the story of Kadeem and how they were set up. The man tells them of Kadeem's cruelty and his lover's plan to seek her slow and painful revenge.

If the players mention the reward the Efreet offered, the man will make a counter offer to them not to hunt her down. He offer 5,000 gold up front and lifetime free passage on the Sea Cat wherever she may sail. □

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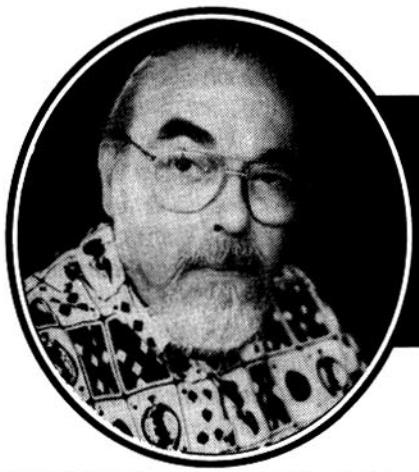

By Gary Gygax

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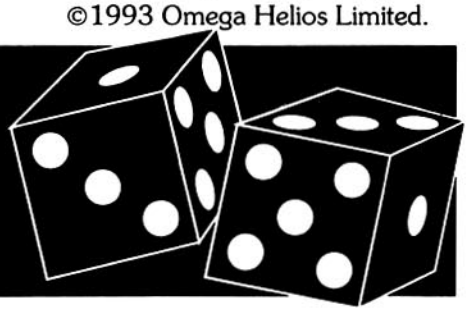
FUN AND GAMES



Favorite Games & Beloved Characters

Favorite games and beloved characters in campaigns are topics which one always hears being discussed whenever one is at a convention in which even a few role-playing enthusiasts are gathered. More to the point, these are questions put directly to me whenever I speak to an audience at such a gathering.

I've often said that I've never seen a game I didn't like. This is an exaggeration, of course, but not a very great one. When I was just a toddler, I got my hands on a mechanical horse racing game called GEE WHIZ. It had six horses of different color in a like number of upward-inclined tracks. Colored flags rose from a horizontal position to a vertical one when a horse reached the top of its slot. By vigorously pulling a string which was wrapped around a metal shaft, a player could make cams strike a host of little ball bearings, which in turn flew randomly into a track and drove the horses along. One horse would always come in first. It was clearly a gambling device. There were little colored areas matching the horses' colors where wagers were placed. I played with it for hours, trying to see if one color predominated. No, sorry. I don't recall ever determining if there was anything other than a pretty random outcome. The point is, I liked gaming.

By the time I was five, I was playing blackjack and pinochle when the adults would let me sit in. The game of checkers was OK, though I soon dropped it for chess when my father bought me my first real set for my sixth birthday. Prior to this we had been using checker pieces with the names of the chess pieces written on tape.

After this came ROOK, PIT, PARCHEESI, Snakes & Ladders, and silly games like Old Maid and SLAPJACK were what I played. After all, I was a kid! Don't get me wrong. I grew up on Kenmore Avenue with a dozen chums around and there was a lot of tag, cops & robbers and fist fighting as well as board and card games. It was all in good fun.

I had a big bag filled with metal toy soldiers, the 70mm type from the dime stores.

I never will forget the trouble I got into when my father discovered the "neat caves" I'd patiently excavated under our sidewalk to house the men and guns. Protection from air raids, you know and bound to make sidewalks crack and break!

So at eight years of age we moved to Wisconsin, and there I learned how to play CAMELOT, backgammon, Chinese checkers, FOTO ELECTRIC FOOTBALL, and did a lot of "realistic" cops & robbers-type gaming with a teenage referee who adjudicated things for us kids. We also played TOURING, MONOPOLY, and BIG BUSINESS (and about that game I'll say more later). Then I got into playing such card games as poker, canasta and stamba, a dozen kinds of solitaire, bezique, hearts, fantan, casino, and cribbage, even mah jjong.

It was around this time that Don Kaye and I began to try to put some rules to the mock battles we'd have with the World War II 54mm toy soldiers, guns, and AFVs which tended to litter the floor of the attic of my house. The old dime store figures had been replaced by then with Britons, of course. From shooting ladyfinger firecrackers in the nifty cannons that were there - and breaking a lot of troops thereby - we went to coin flipping and finally a pair of dice to determine the high score. Young nephews played havoc with those figures though, so the exercise ended for a while.

I was in my early teens by this time, and my buddies and I were out and about whenever the weather was half-way decent. We swam and played "shark-tag" at night, built rafts, fished, bicycled, hiked and camped, enjoyed scrimmaging in sand lot football, had snowball and BB gun fights (tamer by far than those with sling and slingshot), practiced quarter staff fighting (and go many bruises and mashed hands) - in short all manner of fun and stupid things teenage boys could do back in the early 1950s. Winters in Wisconsin are long, so on rainy days or the extremes of cold were we heavily playing card, board and table games. My favorite indoor games were ping pong, pool, poker, cribbage, bezique (six-deck rubicon rules), pinochle, BIG BUSINESS, and chess.

The forty-eight state version of Milton Bradley's BIG BUSINESS game was very well balanced and made no pretensions about being serious. We played that one a lot, and not infrequently my two best friends, Tom Keogh and Don Kaye, and I would remain fighting it out for hours, each having a "tycoonship" (manufacturing usually went to Don, oil to me, steel to Tom), and a sufficient balance of other state cards to make it anyone's game. In fact, I am looking for one of those old versions of the game now, so that I can teach it to my son, Alexander. Perhaps he and some of his buddies might get as much enjoyment as we did when the January deep freeze hits.

There were many bookcases full of books around, so I wasn't limited to the science fiction, fantasy, horror hard bounds, pulps, and paper backs I'd been collecting and perusing since age twelve. Edgar Allen Poe, Balzac, Mark Twain, Shakespeare and all

manner of histories were to be found on the shelves and I cracked them frequently. Likewise, a lot of the less serious works which had belonged to grandfathers, uncles, cousins etc. were read with great enthusiasm. I'd go through a book or two a day. One particular gem was THE BOY'S OWN BOOK. In it, I discovered the rules for Double Chess, a chess variation played on a circular board of sixteen squares in four bands, and a mention of the "many kinds of chess played in the past." That set my friends and I to having wonderful battles on the Double Chess board I made. It also directed a lot of my gaming energies for the next seven or eight years. Dragon Chess and more recently Fidchell (see DANGEROUS JOURNEYS, EPIC OF AERTH Companion Volume) are direct results of the interest generated from that old tome located in the family library.

I can still play Chinese, Korean, and Japanese (shogi) chess, Chatturanga, Timur's Chess, and the Courier Game amongst a few other variations. However, I mainly play "standard" chess or shogi-which I think I the best game of the lot in general. Naturally, the scope of ability means I'm not much good at any of those games. One has to specialize and devote one's self to a singular subject to really excel. I once played Class A chess, but now its push a pawn and hope. Truthfully, if I get in more than a game or two of any kind of chess a year, I'm lucky.

So on with the account. I was on my own in Chicago, and it was 1958. I was wandering around in one of my favorite Loop stores, Kroch's & Brentano's, when I came across Avalon Hill's GETTYSBURG board wargame. It was just published and I fell instantly in love! Home it came, and soon thereafter a chum and I were spending whole nights and on into the mornings completing battles once again. Sometime around 1961 I spiffed up a college term paper on the Battle of Gettysburg - the game had inspired me to even more reading and research on the American Civil War - and sent it to the Avalon Hill General. That was my first gaming article published in a non-fanzine, "The Battle of Gettysburg, If Heth Had Gone Forward".

By the mid 1960s I was back in Lake Geneva where I helped found the International Federation of Wargaming, and had added postal DIPLOMACY and a lot of PBM wargaming to my busy schedule. I found that "Dippy" was fun for me only postally, and only with a great deal of humorous "press releases" to accompany moves. Alan Calhamer's game is a classic, and I long to have sufficient time to get into some postal gaming. . . and write those nasty and propagandistic bits again for the amusement and discomfort of my postal foes. One day Sultan Omar V (last time I played Turkey the sultan was Omar IV), J. Akbar Hooka, head of the FBI (Faithful Believers in Islam, of course), Ghengis Kohen, Levantine military mastermind of the Turkish armed forces, and all the rest will appear once more to strike terror (would you believe mirth and a little scorn maybe?) into the hearts of the foe!

True military miniature gaming was likewise added to my repertory during this period. A sand table appeared in my basement and on shelves nearby were tanks, Napoleonic soldiers, medieval troops, ancient armies, and all manner of paraphernalia needed for table-top gaming of this wonderful sort. Eventually came CHAINMAIL and the fantasy part of gaming history which developed thereafter is sufficiently well-known to need no further mention.

Although role-playing has taken the vast majority of my attention since 1972, I have never abandoned other game forms. In fact, I have since learned to play bridge and think it is a superb card game indeed, and I enjoy wargames and computer games too.

In those halcyon days of roleplaying, I favored the brash and bold "Yrag." Running a fighter was pretty simple, and there wasn't much time for me to extensively prepare for an adventure with the really demanding schedule I had. Yet I couldn't resist sneaking in a bit of play with a magical-type character. I liked Finnish mythology so I called him Mordenkainen after the great Finnish wizard Vainomoinen. So that's how old "Mordie" came about in 1973. Soon I was adventuring with him about five times per week, while the rest of my stable of PCs took a back seat. Bigby was subdued and captured by Mordenkainen early on. My GM was already getting tired of my character's luck and ability. Thus I was forced to run a lot of sub-PCs with names which were frivolous - Rigby, Digby and Sigbie (to which name I added Grigbyson to show panache) amongst others.

One of the things Mordie did after obtaining fifth level was to find and subdue a dragon. Then my other PCs and those of my fellow players (Ernie Gygax, Don Kaye, Terry Kuntz and sometimes a couple of others) would disguise themselves as merchants. We would equip several wagons and hide the red dragon inside one of them. Then we'd go forth looking for brigands and piratical raiders near the shores of the Nyr Dyv. We grew fabulously wealthy that way, and enlisted quite a host of ex-outlaws too. Then we went northeast and had some fun with nomads and eventually walled cities.

When Mordie managed to get a couple of magical rings which doubled his spells in first through third land sixth levels, the going got a lot hairier for him thereafter. The "Fantastic Adventure" (Kuntz) was a dramatization, much cleaned up and simplified, of what got thrown at he and his fellow PCs thereafter. After a campaign, a lich with a rod of cancellation came rushing forth to greet Mordie in the first encounter, I decided his days as a dungeon-exploring adventurer were just about through.

But of course I played all manner of other characters in that period. I had a short-lived half-orc cleric-assassin, Curley Greenleaf in a Francoise Froideval campaign, some "Barsoomian" (WARRIORS OF MARS) personas, several PCs for EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE (warriors, mostly), "Quinto Villa Lobos" and "Mr G" of the Rocking G Ranch for BOOT HILL, a gangster named Garislav Pirogue for GANGBUSTERS, a couple of agents for TOP SECRET, as well as quite a few characters in METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA for which I started a campaign (that Brian Blume eventually borrowed all my maps and notes for and never returned!)

Ernie and I were pretty deadly with our "desert nomad" MA characters. Mine was named "Az Al-neen," and somehow he and Ernie's PC managed to survive, gather goodies, and eventually founded the "Vigilists" who took over a level of the *Starship Warden*. We recruited all manner of mutants, had robots and a considerable arsenal of weapons. Once we assailed the wolfoids "Old Folks Home" and twice we tac-nuked android attack bases. The wretched GM was always making up new critters to get us, including things that turned power cells to foam rubber, bringing in the dreaded *dis*, and so forth.

Seeking revenge, I transported that GM's own characters into my AD&D campaign (Greyhawk, of course) into his MA campaign. Was he unhappy! He ran into the Vigilists, and being an elf was happy enough,

for "muties" aren't welcome in a lot of places on the *Warden*. Ernie and I were happy too, for the elf possessed a fireball wand that was far more potent than any weapon that could be found in the campaign!

After that, the Vigilists really took off, and as far as I know the wretched elf remains stuck there aboard the lost colony space vessel. I think the last time Ernie and I played in the campaign was 1982.

I tried a bit of play in TRAVELLER, for my son Luke, was a great fan of the game. The campaign, though, was one more of economics and record keeping which I was not able to get into at the time. Having only infrequent opportunity to role-play, I wanted more action and adventure.

That was found rather quickly when PARANOIA hit the shelves. Luke began running a campaign, and I enjoyed quite a few episodes. In fact, "Irving 6-AX," the last of several PCs I played, frequently Equipment Guy, or Happiness Officer, was Orange and about to make Yellow rank when the campaign petered out. It was too hard to find players who liked creating a new PC for each adventure, maybe only to die almost immediately, and then go forth to make foes of friends through the play of the game. In my opinion PARANOIA was a flawed masterpiece for those reasons. Had it been designed to allow for another style and level of play, it would have a much greater following today, I assert!

From 1986 on I've watched play in many different RPGs, discussed rules and systems and play, but not actually done much active participation other than serving as master for prototypic play of the DANGEROUS JOURNEYS Multigenre Role-playing Game System. I began testing it with the modern supernatural genre, and then Mike McCulley and I wrote the UNHALLOWED game, and I was JMing that in 1990-91. When JVC said they wanted to base their computer games on the fantasy genre, the UNHALLOWED game was put on the back burner, and I developed the second modular portion of the DANGEROUS JOURNEYS SYSTEM, the MYTHUS game, with Dave Newton. Not surprisingly, I now run a regular campaign in the fantasy genre. I do wish I was more fluent in the French language, for they have a game in which one's players take the roles of demons or angels to plague or aid mankind. *That's* one game that would be really humorous and fun to GM.

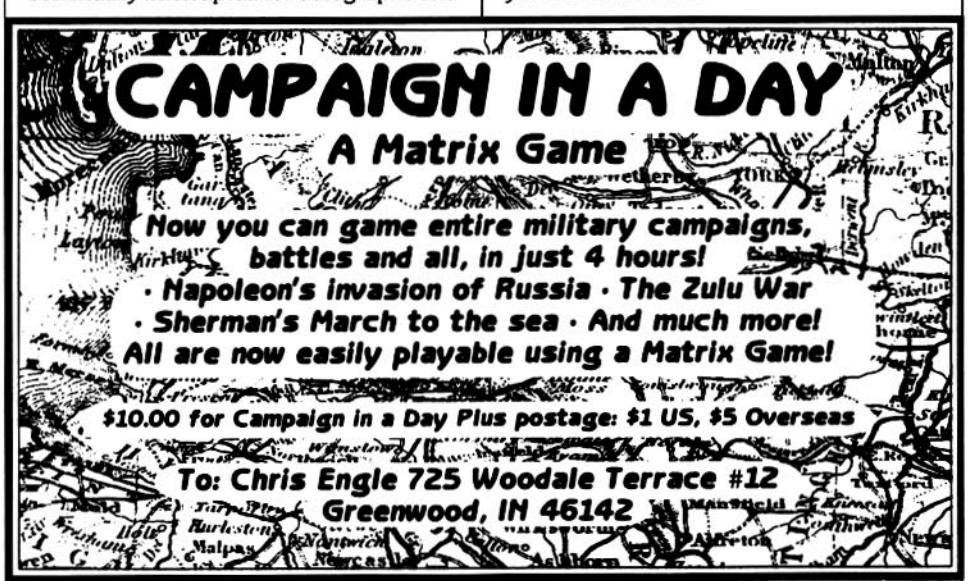
It is hard to stay put in regular fantasy though, for it's pretty old news to me these days, and also I have to consider what to do for the third offering in the system. No word will I breath . . .yet. However, there just might be a hard-core infozine coming out which will deal exclusively with the DANGEROUS JOURNEYS system, have much about the MYTHUS game, and maybe begin a sneak preview of the next portion (as I sit down and write it!)

Before I close, it is necessary to touch on a couple of additional areas. I love railroad games. RAIL BARON, RAILS WEST (computer game done by Martin Champion, an old PBM wargaming opponent and ex-IFW member from the 1960s, by the by), EMPIRE BUILDER, and so forth - I will almost always try to squeeze in a bit of play there. In general I avoid computer games. It's not because I don't enjoy them, but it is rather that once I get started playing I want to do nothing else! Being a true gamer, I will let everything go by the board and keep on playing despite work demands, family, meals, and sleep too. No more needs be said, save that I don't care - when virtual reality stuff is finally available in good form, I'm taking a few months off to play! No joke. My son Luke and I used to play SOURCE OF THE NILE for days on end, trying to fill in the whole map. Anyway, if you happen to stop by here and enjoy boardgames, I am very fond of OVERLORD.

Well that's about it. To me most games are fun, and I don't mind playing any kind of character in a role-playing game. Generally, though, it's hard to get into a game. Why? First, because at a convention I am continually interrupted for autographs and questions. That's neither wrong nor disturbing to me, but it makes playing nearly impossible - certainly not great fun for the others playing with me who must wait. Second, it's . . .well because of who people *think* I am and should be. Sure, I authored the first RPG and have done a lot since too. However, in truth I am just another gamer. That won't do for most folks, of course. Such a concept doesn't make them wrong, but it's hard for me to manage. I can talk a lot about the history of things, and discuss rules and systems, scenarios and styles of GMing and play, but I'm not the best GM nor the cleverest player. It's simply a lot of fun for me to do if nothing special is asked or expected of me. Thus, I am usually a lot more comfortable, as are those likewise involved, if the group is well-acquainted with me and know it's only ol' Gar' there to cause a little havoc and see what amusing things might develop from that activity.

So what do I play now? I JM a MYTHUS game on Tuesday nights, usually. Cribbage, backgammon, bridge and a bit of poker are family and social regulars. Our son, Alex, likes crazy eights, so we play that a far bit. I've kicked SIM CITY off my computer, so I don't get tempted into playing when I should work. I've stared at GUDEIRIAN's LAST BATTLE a fair bit but haven't tried to play. Actually, if there's an opponent, and I have time, I'll usually try any game.

Here's hoping that you have as much fun with games as I have had for half a century now. Personally, I'm looking forward to playing some really crusty old persona on my seventy-fifth birthday a whole lot of years from now. ❑



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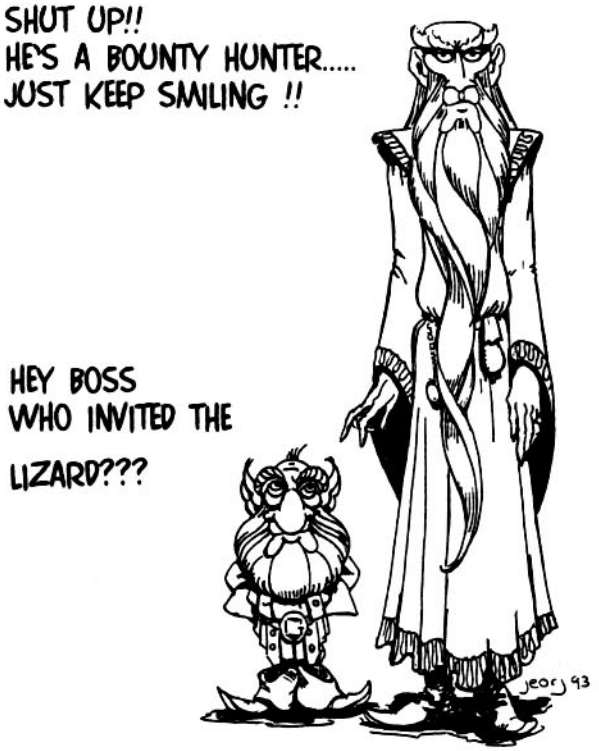
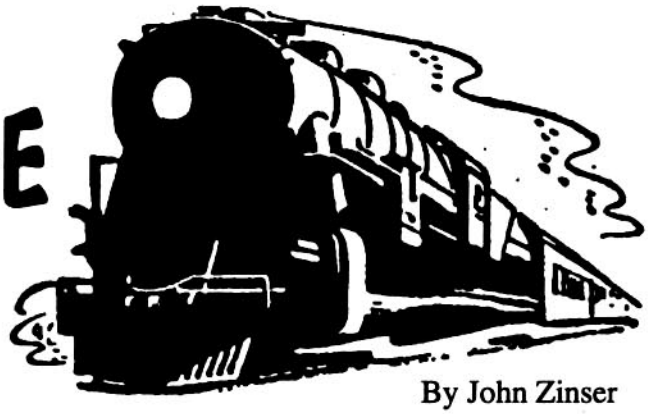


Mr TODE'S WILD RIDE

When you mix non-stop SUSPENSE with HORROR, You're in for one HELL of a ride!



By John Zinser
and Brian Peters

The following adventure is presented in our popular Hook, Line and Sinker format (refer to the HLS article in this issue for more information.) Although this adventure was designed for **West End Game's TORG™** system, the HLS format presents the elements in a generic manner so that it can be adapted to any system.

The adventure is set in a Pulp Fantasy Realm and is a fast paced adventure in which the players are constantly being challenged with obstacles. The adventure centers around the villain, Mr. Tode, a citizen of Orrorsh Mr. Tode thrives off the fear of others and loves to terrify his opponents. He will try to literally scare the party members to death.

HOOK

The party has been chasing a spy/thief from Nippon Tech Realm who has stolen documents from Jean Malraux and the Cyberpapacy Realm. They have been chasing him for some time and have finally caught up to him in Cairo, Egypt where he has boarded a train called the **Cairo Express**. The Cairo Express is traveling non-stop to Baghdad, Iraq.

LINE

On the train is a denizen from the Realm of Orrorsh. He is also after the information the Nippon Tech agent stole. As the party boards the train, it starts on its merry little ride of death and mayhem. During the first part of the adventure, the party will have the opportunity to explore some of the train before they track the agent down and finally corner him in the dining car.

Just as the party approaches the Nippon Tech agent, the train passes through a tunnel where the lights go out. There is a scream and a sound of a body falling. The train exits the tunnel, the lights come back on and the party sees that their quarry is dead.

Before any of the players have a chance to move to the body, the train passes through another tunnel and the lights go out again. This time the party hears a deep, yet melodic laugh. The lights come on again and the body is gone along with the documents.

Game Master Notes

The feel of this adventure should is one of suspense and horror, therefore it is 'script' driven. The GM should funnel the players along the chosen storyline. Since the pace is fast - and the players are trapped on the train - this shouldn't prove too difficult and the players will never notice they are being taken on a 'ride'.

The GM is encouraged to add any devices to the adventure to keep the players on the edge of their seats. The lights flickering, mysterious sounds, unexpected encounters, and so on. Theme music from movies like *Halloween* and *Friday the 13th* might provide good atmosphere.

SINKER

The adventure begins in the dining car. The party, along with several stunned train passengers, will be left standing in the middle of the aisle, empty handed. All traces of the Nippon Tech agent are gone except for a fresh bloodstain on the carpet where his body was seen after passing through the first tunnel.

Since the party can't stop the train, they will be unable to determine if the body has been dumped off at some point. Try to keep the players believing that the body must still be on the train. The party's next objective should be to try to find the body of the agent and attempt to recover the information.

The party now has a large Victorian style train to search; the train consists of seven cars and the engine. The dining car is towards the front of the train, and will be fairly unoccupied at the moment.

THE DINING CAR

Two thirds of the car is occupied by tables and seats and the last third contains the kitchen and food storage areas. There should be approximately a half dozen guests and a couple of waiters in the dining area. They can be from any of the realms that sound good, but the only probability rate persons should be the party members.

Exploration of the dining area:

If the party searches for clues as to what just occurred they will find the torn half of a playing card lying where the body

of the Nippon agent was last seen. The card is the Joker.

Elements of Horror:

A waiter drops one of the dishes he was about to serve, saying that for a moment he could have sworn that it was maggot infested.

A passenger complains that his glass of milk has curdled, and the waiter apologizes. On his way past one of the party members, the waiter mutters about how the train just picked up a fresh delivery and all of the food seems to be quickly spoiling.

Exploring the Kitchen Area:

If the party searches for clues, they will find that almost all of the perishables on the train have begun to spoil. A cook is heard to say that this is the first time he has ever seen food spoil so quickly. If questioned, the cook will furtively explain that he thinks this started shortly after picking up passengers in Khartoum, in the Sudan.

Elements of Horror:

One of the party members thinks that he sees blood dripping off the knives hanging above the stove. When investigated the player can find no blood, but as the player approaches , the train jerks suddenly and one of the knives falls. You can make a roll to see if it actually stabs the player. Otherwise simply describe how the player is narrowly missed by the blade.

The Scream: *The party will hear a blood curdling scream while investigating the next car (whether it is the Smoking Car or the Second Class car doesn't matter, however, the Scream comes from the First Class Car)*

The Smoking Car

This car, often called the smoking car, is essentially a lounge. There are couches along the walls of the car and towards the center of the car, against one wall is a well stocked bar. There will be a few people in the car including a bartender.

Exploring the Smoking Car:

If the party members question the people in the car, no one will have seen anything, although one gentleman thinks he heard someone dragging something through the car as the lights went out through one of the tunnels.

Elements of Horror:

As one of the players is talking to one of the occupants, who is smoking a large Stogie, a humanoid shape manifests within the smoke and attacks the party member. This could be a Shadow or some other creature from Orrorsh following Mr. Tode's orders. (Shaden)

THE SLEEPING CARS SECOND CLASS

There are at least two of these cars that are the sleeping quarters for the passengers as they ride the train. The one nearest the dining car is often the second class car, with the first class car the next one forward.

Exploration of the Second Class Car:

The second class car has a couple of wash closets and the rest of the car is taken up with rows of seats where the passengers sit.

There are about 10 Passengers in this car. If questioned they will say that they saw a strange looking fellow in a cape and top hat about the time that the lights went out walking through the Cabin.

Elements of Horror:

1) If the party spends too much time exploring this cabin, Mr. Tode will cause the car to come under his Cold Aura and everyone will feel the chill of evil.

2) While the party is exploring the first class cabin Mr. Tode will return to the second class cabin and select a victim for his sword in the basket trick. He will have one of the Passengers get into the basket using his hypnosis ability he will then move the basket to the doorway between the first and second class cars. If the party has split up and left a guard in the second class cabin than he will probably be the unfortunate victim of Mr. Tode's first trick. (See first encounter with Mr. Tode in the next car.)

THE SLEEPING CARS FIRST CLASS

The first class car is divided up into small cabins where the first class passengers sit during the day. At night the passengers can pull down the beds for sleep. Each cabin usually has its own small wash closet.

Exploration of the First Class Car:

When the party first enters the car it will most probably be to explore the scream that they heard after leaving the Dining Car. The party finds four gentlemen passengers huddled around the opening to one of the cabins. Inside an Indian doctor is trying to revive a little old lady who is obviously dead. A look of extreme horror is etched on her unmoving face.

Elements of Horror:

1) As the party searches the cabins in the first class for clues they will find an empty cabin with nothing but a top hat sitting on the chair. This is Mr. Tode's Magic Hat and he has left a little surprise in the hat for the party. Anyone picking up the hat or worse reaching into the hat will be attacked by the evil creature left inside. An undead rabbit will jump out and attack the party member. (Dm's option at how powerful the rabbit is.) When the party kills the rabbit it will disappear in a flash of smoke as if it were never there.

2) **First Encounter with Mr. Tode.**

When the party is gathered in the middle of the cabin Mr. Tode will make his first appearance to the party. He will appear in the doorway between the First and Second Class cars with a large wicker basket in front of him. The basket is moving and there is obviously someone or something inside it. There are already four swords sticking out of the wicker basket and Mr. Tode is holding three more swords in his arms. As soon as the party notices him he will slide another sword through the basket and immediately set up to push the sixth sword through. He will then talk to the party.

"There is something about this trick that always puzzles me. I just can't seem to get past this sixth sword."

He will then slide the sword into the basket, the party will hear a muffled scream then the sword will come out on their side of the basket dripping blood. As soon as the party makes a move to attack Mr. Tode he will drop a Flash Bomb and disappear. He will reappear at the other end of the first class car.

"You see gentlemen it's all done with smoke and mirrors."

He will then drop Another flash bomb and through the smoke you will hear him say;

" Gee I wonder who is driving the train?"

His laugh will then grow loud and fade out. His question will obviously incite a panic among the passengers and the confusion will help his escape.

CREW QUARTERS CAR

The crew quarters car is set up much like the first class although not nearly as nice.

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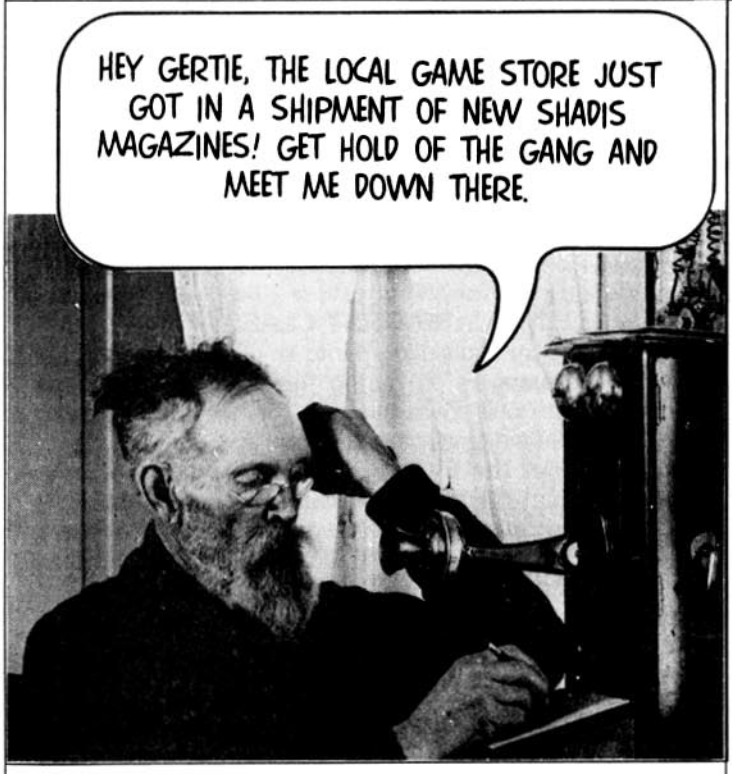

Exploration of the Crew Car:
Each cabin is the home for two train crewmen and there are a few personal things hanging on the walls and each room will have it's own personal feel.

Elements of Horror:

1) Those few crew members that were unfortunate enough to be staying here are now all dead. The party will find a total of three dead bodies in different cabins of this car. Since Mr. Tode is in Essence a Vampire these bodies will rise from the dead in a few days unless Mr. Tode is killed or unless the party cuts the heads off the dead bodies.

2) There is a ladder leading to the top of the train between the crews cabin and the engine. The ladder is covered with a green ectoplasmic slime.

THE ENGINE

The party will have to climb over to the engine from the crew car. (A scary proposition in itself with the ground speeding by underneath.) The Engine of the train is basically just that a huge locomotive engine with a small cabin up front where the driver and an assistant watch the train's speed, and the track ahead for any obstacles.

Exploring The Engine:

Much to the parties' chagrin Mr. Tode was not lying. The engineer is laying dead on the floor face down. There is a small metal plate sticking out of the back of his head. [If the party checks this out they will find that it is actually a thin metal playing card. (7 of spades) A clue as to what the party may face in the future.] The assistant, thank goodness is not dead but he is unconscious. The train seems to be chugging through the mountains at a normal speed.

Elements of Horror:

1) As the party starts to revive the assistant, he will mumble something about a ravine and a left turn. Party members looking out the front of the engine will notice that you are about to crest a hill and start down into the mountains again. As the train starts down the mountain, the assistant will wake up and slowly realize what is happening. (The train is picking up speed) He will panic and try to get at the controls. He will scream something about the crazy-magician changing the tracks and needing to get back on the right one.

It may be an old movie cliche' but the only solution to the problem is using a gun or projectile weapon of some sort to hit the track switch up ahead and put the train back on the right course. If not the train will continue on its current course and the track will run out and the train and it's passengers will plummet to their deaths. The track switch should not be too hard to hit but the situation should be suspenseful.

GM HINT: *The Game Master at this point in the game can start raising the panic level among characters by making them make decisions right away. Mixing in the ramblings of the assistant who can't get the train to stop and the screams of the passengers as it picks up speed. The party may avert the disaster this time but Mr. Tode is still on the train.*

Getting to the back of the train the party can either move through the cars towards the back of the train or follow the slime up onto the top of the train and follow it back to the Caboose.

THE LUGGAGE CAR

The luggage car is a little smaller than the other cars on the train. It is here that the belongings of the passengers as well as freight items are stored for the trains journey.

Exploration of the Baggage Car

The goods in the baggage car are stacked neatly on shelves and the floor space of the cabin, leaving a walking area to get back to the caboose. There are locked cabinets for the first class passengers, belongings. If the party explores the items in the car they will find a few large boxes in the corner painted on the outside of the crates in bold colors is, MURLO THE MAGNIFICENT. One box stands almost 7 feet tall and it is locked. The other box is a chest.

Elements of Horror:

1) The tall box when opened, will appear empty. It is Mr. Tode's disappearing box there is a secret compartment behind the main panel and hidden within this panel is the body of the Nippon Tech agent.

2) The chest contains Mr. Tode's personal belongings as well as 10 very poisonous spiders and a very poisonous cobra snake. The spiders are very small and they have strewn webs all over the contents of the inside of the box. Anyone not taking precaution has a good chance of being bit. The chest contains the following: two black capes, a top hat (no rabbit this time), a few wands, a flute, some silver Victorian coins, two decks of cards, a fish bowl, a flower wand (flowers pop out but they are dead). A couple of glasses and a small wicker basket. The wicker basket contains a live and very unhappy cobra.

3) If the party explores this cabin before the caboose, Mr. Tode will try to lure the party into the caboose by using his hypnosis power and causing someone in the caboose to start a ruckus so that they have to check it out. If the party finds the Nippon Tech agents body Mr. Tode will show himself and the final battle will take place. See the final battle.

THE CABOOSE

The caboose on the Cairo Express is actually a small luxury cabin and Sir Reginald Martinique and his wife have rented it out for the trip.

Exploration of the Caboose

There is a small bar and a nice bed as well as its own personal water closet. Sir Reginald and his wife are on their second honeymoon.

Elements of horror:

1) Mr. Tode, after his little show in the first class cabin, changed form and slimed over to the caboose where he took a few minutes and had some fun scaring the Martiniques. He then used his hypnosis power to put them under his control. If the party explores the baggage car first he will have Mr. Martinique attack his wife in the caboose, causing the characters to come running to her rescue. Once the party is in the caboose, Mr. Tode will no longer care about the Martiniques. He wants to get rid of the party now that he has had his fun with them. As the train starts to chug down another hill he will release the caboose from the rest of the train. The separation will begin immediately, but since the train is going down hill, the separation will be a slow one. The party will see Mr. Tode disconnect the train, then head back into the luggage car. The party will have to find a way to move from the caboose to the luggage car or lose their quarry, and if Mr. and Mrs. Martinique are still alive, they will also have to worry about them.

2) While crossing over you could have one of the characters or the Martinique's slip as they are crossing and the train makes a sudden lurch. The caboose can pick up speed and possibly crash back into the train crushing the unfortunate victim. (Then the process starts all over again.)

THE FINAL BATTLE

The final battle with Mr. Tode will be a classic train battle. After the party discovers the Nippon Tech agent's body, Mr. Tode will show himself, attack the party with his metal playing cards, then run up the ladder onto the roof of the train. The party can chase him up onto the top of the train where he will be waiting for them.

Elements of Horror and Suspense:

As the fight begins the train will start over a huge tressel bridge with a fall to the rocks off the train many hundreds of feet below. During the fight, Mr. Tode will use all the powers at his command, including his playing cards, flash bombs and the paralyzation wand, as well his personal attacks. The fight should be suspenseful with party members either falling off into the ravine or sliding off the edge hanging on for dear life. In the end, the party will probably triumph by knocking Mr. Tode off the train and he will fall to his "death" on the rocks below. Yeah, the world is saved and the agent's information is recovered etc.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Unless the party chopped Mr. Tode's head off, he is still alive. Want to really scare your party? As you are concluding the adventure and starting to pick up your gaming materials, you can tell them how they pull into the train station the authorities want to question the passengers and the party is asked to remain in there cabin until the investigation is finished. All of a sudden, out of nowhere Mr. Tode, battered and beaten in all his glory, appears in the cabin and again starts attacking the characters. Players who have already put their sheets away will have to scramble to get them, for Mr. Tode will have the advantage of surprise and fear.

You can also have Mr. Tode show up a few game sessions later, bent on revenge with a whole new bag of tricks. Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha!!!!! ❑

THE HORROR: Mr. Tode:

Mr. Tode, as we have come to know and love him, was actually once a Victorian performer and magician by the name of Murlo the Magnificent. Murlo discovered the power of Corruption and began using it through black magic to make his act more exciting and soon his luck ran out and he was transformed into Mr. Tode. For all intensive purposes Mr. Tode is a Vampire, a phsycopathic one albeit but still a vampire. He has turned this errand to recover the secret plans from the spy into his own personal performance of Horror on the Cairo express, with a little magic thrown in just for fun.

Dexterity 12
acrobatics 20, dodge 19, maneuver 17, running 17, stealth 20, unarmed combat 20.
Strength: 16
climbing 19
Toughness: 18
Perception: 11
find 14, language 15, scholar 16, trick 16
Mind 14
test 23, willpower 23
Charisma: 14
charm 26 persuasion 21
Spirit: 9
faith (Orrorsh)18, intimidation 17, reality 18
Possibility Potential: some 7
Natural Tools: fangs (Str +2/ damage value 18)
Power Rating: 9
Corruption Value: 24
Fear Rating: 7
Perseverance DN: 18
Weakness: Magic
True Death: Beheading
Items: Wand of Paralyzation.(Paralyzes with fear for 1-4 rounds)
Throwing Cards: (Str +1/ damage value 15)
Cane Sword: (Str +2/ damage value 17)

Mr. Tode will have a myriad of ticks up his sleeve at different time's but he will always have. His cane which is actually a sheath for his sword. His favorite weapon is a deck of metal playing cards with razor sharp edges which he can throw with surprising accuracy. He uses a wand of Paralyzation which will paralyze with fear by touch and his flash bombs which he uses for dramatic flair and escapes. Since Mr. Tode is not your ordinary vampire he is not turned by normal means. His weakness is true magic and when used against him it has double the normal effect.

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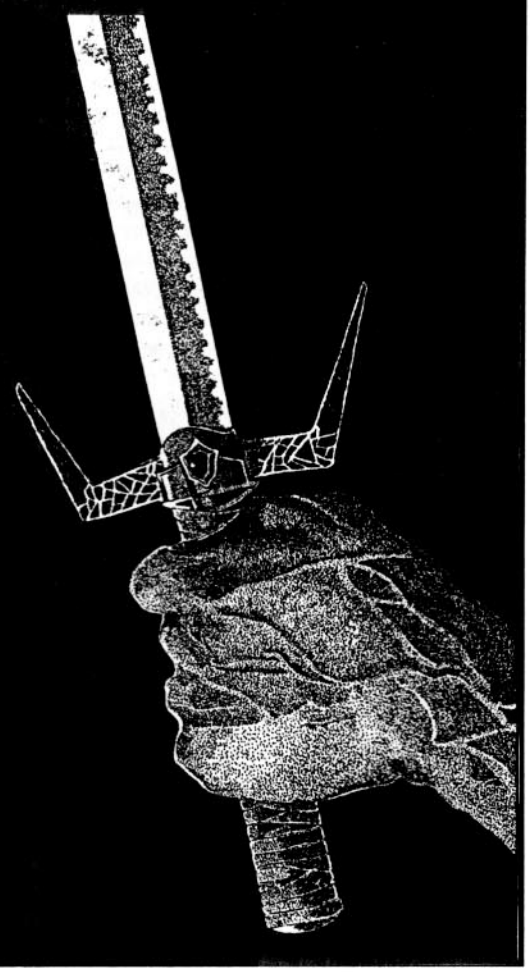
KNIGHT GALLERY

An Artist Showcase

Featured Artist:

Bob E. Hobbs

BOB E. HOBBS began his career in fantasy art in 1990 when he participated in a group exhibit held in New York City by the *Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Artists*. Since then his works have appeared in *Amazing Stories, Quantum, The Leading Edge, Figment Magazine,* and England's *Strange Adventures and Dark Horizons*. He is also a winner of the *L. Ron Hubbard Illustrators of the Future* contest with one of his works appearing in the recently released *Writers of the Future Vol. 8*. Bob also has illustrated several trading cards for Comic Zone's *Famous Dope Fiends* series. He will soon release his first graphic novel to be published by Earth Prime Productions entitled *Scarabaeus* and he is the illustrator for the highly acclaimed small press comic called *Creature of the Night*. Hobbs lives in Rhode Island with his wife Rachel.



BACK ISSUES

MAIL CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO: SHADIS •110-B KAMINER WAY • COLUMBIA, SC 29210

SHADIS #1 ($4.00)
January, 1990 (Available) 60 pages, Digest sized.
Our humble first issue which premiered in January, 1990. It's fascinating to look back and see how things were started.
Contents:
- Under the Spotlight: A feature focusing on small game companies. In this case Infinite Images.
- From the Scrolls of Greytar: Historical background on the fantasy milieu of Alderac.
- Shadis Interviews: Sandy Petersen, creator of Call of Cthuluhu RPG.
- Game Reviews
- World Beyond Hack n' Slash Part 1.
- Pushing Your Luck: New games of chance.
- Bones of Ruin part 1 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Tales From the Parched Frog
- Of Embers Born (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Shriek of Soult Tet Part 1

SHADIS #2 ($3.75)
March, 1990 (Available) 60 pages, Digest sized.
A great second issue. With this issue, SHADIS found its audience and began to thrive.
Contents:
- Under the Spotlight: A humorous look at the I.F.G.S.
- From the Scrolls of Greytar: Historical background on the fantasy milieu of Alderac.
- Shadis Interviews: Paul Hayes of I.F.G.S
- World Beyond Hack n' Slash Part 2.
- The Equalizer. character class
- Just Spoils for the Unjust: Criminal Justice for RPGs
- The Pitfalls of Playing an Evil Character
- Bones of Ruin part 2 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Tales From the Parched Frog
- Of Embers Born Part 2 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Shriek of Soult Tet Part 2
- Introduction of Knights of the Dinner table
- And much more!

SHADIS #3 ($3.50)
May, 1990 (Available) 64 pages, Digest sized.
This is one my favorite issues. Lot's of fun and interesting things in this one.
Contents:
- From the Scrolls of Greytar: Historical background on the fantasy milieu of Alderac.
- World Beyond Hack n' Slash Part 3.
- Face Off: A debate on the merits of Reassurection
- Rustlers of the Night: New creatures
- An Axe to Grind: Guest Editorial
- Bones of Ruin part 3 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Of Embers Born Part 3 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Shriek of Soult Tet Part 3 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Knights of the Dinner table. (comic strip)
- The Hungry Undead: Game module
- And Much more!

SHADIS #4 ($3.50)
August, 1990 (Available) 64 pages, Digest sized.
By this issue, SHADIS was really beginning to hit it's stride. The magazine was developing its unique character and atmosphere and reader interaction was running heavy.
Contents:
- From the Scrolls of Greytar
- GARY GYGAX Interview
- World Beyond Hack n' Slash Part 4.
- Face Off: A debate on the merits of Reassurection
- Pozoe & Logo: This bizzare comic actually made it's debut in no.#3 but returned here by popular demand.
- Delving into the Greater Magicks
- Bones of Ruin part 4 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Of Embers Born Part 4 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Shriek of Soult Tet Part 4
- Knights of the Dinner table. (comic strip)
- Much, much more!

SHADIS #5 ($3.50)
October, 1990 (Available) 64 pages, Digest sized.
With this issue, we took to the high seas and introduced our maritime business rules for FRPG's.
Contents:
- From the Scrolls of Greytar: Historical background on the fantasy milieu of Alderac.
- Plying the Trade Waters (maritime trade in FRPGS)
- World Beyond Hack n' Slash Part 5. (Summary)
- Shadis Interviews: Kevin Siembieda - Palladium
- Pozoe & Logo
- Bones of Ruin part 5 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Of Embers Born Part 5 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Shriek of Soult Tet Part 5 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Tales from the Parched Frog
- Knights of the Dinner table. (comic strip)
- Much, much, more!

SHADIS #6 ($3.50)
December, 1991 (Available) 64 pages, Digest sized.
Comeback issue after the publisher was pulled away for Operation Desert Storm.
Contents:
- Shadis Realty Company: Generic floor plans ready for the DM to populate
- Hook, Line and Sinker (Debut)
- From the Scrolls of Greytar
- Pozoe & Logo:
- All Things Magic
- Bones of Ruin part 6 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Campaigns Made Easy: Matrix Gaming and RPGS.
- Joe Genero: Comic Strip
- Alderac the Play-By-Mail Game: Rules
- Full color map insert for PBM game.
- Much, much, more

SHADIS #7 ($3.50)
May, 1992 (Available) 68 pages, Full sized.
Our first full-sized issue and a whopping 68 pages. Our theme for this issue was the anti-roleplaying movement.
Contents:
- Parting Shots: Cartoon page
- Hook, Line and Sinker scenarios
- From the Scrolls of Greytar
- The Whole Loon Catalogue: A look at the anti-rpg groups
- Dead Guild: an AD&D adventure for thieves.
- Bones of Ruin part 7 (Alderac Anthology Series)
- Joe Genero: Comic Strip
- More Alderac the Play-By-Mail Game: Rules
- Own Kind, Lizard Men as Player Characters
- Much, much, more

SHADIS #8 ($3.50)
June, 1993 (Available) 64 pages, Full sized.
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CLOSER LOOK

Reviews: Games, Books. . .

OUR REVIEW POLICY: As our cover clearly states, SHADIS is an independent gaming magazine. This reflects our policy of not showing preference to one game company over another, regardless of that company's size, popularity or its investment of advertising dollars in SHADIS. Of course, the reviews presented here are dependent upon submissions by you the readers. If it appears some game companies are popping up more often than others, it is probably due to the fact that those companies have provided review materials to our reviewers or because more unsolicited material has been received for products of these companies. SHADIS will publish reviews for ANY gaming product if quality reviews are received. Game Companies and Designers can forward review copies to our office to have their products reviewed, and we will assign independent reviewers to their material.

We encourage our reviewers to actually play game materials in the environment for which they were designed. We feel this is fairer to the game companies and designers and also provides reviews with more insight than material from reviewers who merely peel the shrink wrap and quick-read the rules.

SHADIS accepts unsolicited reviews. We also pass on review materials to qualified reviewers as we receive them. Write in care of this magazine for further information.

Title: Adventure Writer™ For Windows
Company: Digital Alchemy
Category: Software
Reviewer: Brian Peters

The idea is such a simple one we are surprised that it has not been done already. I don't have a lot of experience writing computer programs but I do create quite a few adventures and the **Adventure Writer™** by **Digital Alchemy** is something every GM with a Windows Capable PC should get.

Don't let the packaging scare you off! In this slick is world of ours, the Adventure Writer Cover art leaves a little to be desired from a marketing standpoint. But like my mother always told me, it's not what's outside that counts but what you find inside.

Adventure Writer allows you to create highly detailed hex and square maps using a variety of terrain styles and colors. The maps can be printed at a variety of scales including those suitable for 15mm and 25mm miniatures.

The Basic Program Adventure Writer, has 32 built-in-terrain styles available including indoor terrain styles. It is set up so that you can use your mouse to point and click and create maps easily and simply. The program allows you to edit more than one map at once, as well as write out the details of your adventure on the document editor while you are working on the map.

Although the Adventure Writer is all you need to put out quality dungeon and terrain maps for your adventures. Digital Alchemy also has a group of support programs that work with and enhance the Adventure Writer Program's abilities. Included in these, is a Natural Caverns Terrain Pack which allows you to create detailed Cavern and Catacomb maps with your computer. Also available is the Medieval Arms and Armor pack which allows you to add detailed items to your maps. For those of you who stray from fantasy and modern military is your thing, Digital Alchemy also offers a series of Modern Military Programs for use with the Adventure Writer starting with the Ground Forces Terrain Pack.

Digital Alchemy promises that there are many more terrain packs that will be made available soon. Of course, you know this means the end of those hand drawn and scribbled upon maps, but don't throw all that hard work away. Save it. Someday it may be a collector's item.

System Requirements: IBM Compatible computer with 1 Meg of RAM, a mouse, and Microsoft Windows 3.0 or Greater.

Title: Minion Nation
Company: GDW
Category: RPG Supplement
Reviewer: Jimmie W. Pursell Jr.

Just what the dark future needed, to get darker! Minion Nation, an expansion kit for Minion Hunter, adds new rules, encounters and options to its parent game.

One of the folio supplements of which GDW has become so fond, the expansion consists of a three-panel screen and an eight-page booklet. The screen contains the new encounter tables, along with 16 cut-out equipment cards. The booklet contains more than a dozen optional rules, some to make the world grimmer, some to make it friendlier.

By far, the most interesting section is the expanded charts. Each encounter area, except for proto-dimensions, is doubled in size, giving twice the encounters. The proto-dimensional encounters are divided into ten proto-dimensions. When a character finds a portal, an average difficulty empathy roll allows him or her to choose which dimension he travels to, a failure on the roll sends the character to a random dimension. Each dimension has its own table, some of which are exceedingly nasty.

Another useful section is the glossary, a complete list of the terms and encounters in Minion Hunter along with the definition for each. Ever wonder what you were doing when you "drafted" an empath?

For players who love Minion Hunter, you'll love Minion Nation as well. If you didn't like Minion Hunter, well...

For $4.50, Minion Nation is a bargain for Minion Hunter players.

Title: Over the Edge
Company: Atlas Games™
Category: RPG System
Reviewer: Doug Easterly

The question that first came to mind reading this game was "why would anyone write a role-playing game based on and influenced by such odd sources as William Burroughs, "Twin Peaks," "Repo Man," "The Outer Limits," "Liquid Sky," and supermarket tabloids. The next question was why I bought it. In fact, Over the Edge has a lot going for it. It plays fast and loose with game rules (not just its own rules, but the concept of rules) and with reality on nearly every level.

The answers I came up with were that I still don't know the kind of wonderful perverseness that would result in the background for this game, but I know that it works in a very odd sort of way. And this entertainingly odd background and its simple— sometimes simplistic— background gave me a reason to buy the game.

Over the Edge dubs itself "Psychosurreal Role-playing." I guess that's as good a description as any. What it really boils down to is that, in the setting of the game, anything might be true, and many implausible things in fact are true. Weird conspiracies, alien invasions, ancient evils, improbable science, and equally improbable politics all exist on the mysterious island of Al Amarja, and interact in complex and unpredictable ways. Players are caught up in the weirdness of Al Amarja as new residents of the island, possibly with weird secrets of their own.

The Rules

At the core of the game is a set of very simple, open-ended mechanics for creating your character. Character creation is aimed at making any character a player may desire. Characters are defined by developing a character concept, and working from there. From this, you develop a central trait, which defines the basics of your character, two other side traits, and a flaw. One of your three traits is then chosen as your superior trait, with which you gain a higher rating. Skills are rated in dice, which are rolled in resolving tasks. Each of your character's characteristics is marked by some outward sign your character adopts for each.

For example, you can choose a simple concept like a jaded hack journalist for a major tabloid. Your central trait could be "Investigative journalist" which could include knowledge in following leads, looking through trash, and following clues, as well as skill in writing. Your other two traits could be "Manipulative Fast-talker," reflecting the character's ability to lie and connive his way into a story, and "Jaded" meaning that the character is never surprised or frightened by anything and seems to have a way to explain away nearly any phenomenon. Each of these is rated in dice, and one is chosen as a superior trait—let's say, "Manipulative Fast-talker." As a flaw, "Heavy Drinker" is chosen. The signs for each are as follows, his sign as a journalist is "asks probing questions constantly," for his fast-talking "seems slick," for being jaded "cynical remarks" and for being a heavy drinker "always looking for a drink."

Dice ratings are developed by the GM and player, from which the combat rating and hit points for the character are developed. In a matter of moment, you have a character. Note that despite this rather mundane example, it is possible to create nearly any kind of character, such as a time traveller, alien, vampire, or spy—any of whom will fit in on Al Amarja.

Two concepts underlie the rules: simplicity and open-endedness. The idea is to allow players to play any type of character they wish, and to allow them to do so in a way that stresses role-playing by eliminating distracting intrusions of rules on the game.

I liked these aspects. However, there are many who disagree with this set of mechanics, and would argue that the philosophy behind the rules is flawed. If you tend to follow the school of thought that

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believes detailed rules are more important to emphasize role-playing, you are sure to dislike these rules.

The World

No matter your opinion of the rules, the game world gives you another reason to buy the game. Of more than two hundred pages, only about thirty to fifty are devoted to rules. The rest describe Al Amarja and give a handful of adventures in Al Amarja.

The island of Al Amarja exists in the modern world, though it is a well-kept secret. It is a small Mediterranean island run by President Monique D'Aubainne, who seems more an oddly libertarian dictator. That is to say, she allows people to do more or less as they wish, but her word is law. Al Amarja remains isolated diplomatically from the rest of the world and from the UN. D'Aubainne keeps the island as secret as she can.

The main location for the game is the city called the Edge, populated by odd factions, decadent tourists, and players in multiple conspiracies. It's hard to discuss any details of these without spoiling the game. Suffice it to say that every nightmare, nutty conspiracy theory, and tabloid revelation is true, and exists on Al Amarja.

Players are "burger," newcomers to Al Amarja. They are dumped into the weirdness and may become players, pawns, or victims of the many odd goings on on the island and in the Edge. GMs should not hold back, and players should be prepared for some serious mind games. That is what this game is all about.

Recommendation

From the character creation to the setting, Over the Edge is one of the few games I have seen recently that tries to cover new ground, albeit strange ground, but fairly fertile, and generally unused. It would take a strong, eclectic, and imaginative GM to run a campaign, and players would have to be willing to invest some effort into the game. It is quite apparent that not everyone will like this game. It is an odd game for odd tastes. But it has plenty of room for anyone adventuresome enough to make a go of it. Horror, humor, and complex sub-plots are all possible to anyone who lets go and submits to the surreal logic of the game.

If you like games with deeply-entrenched "realism," detailed combat, and mechanics that cover every detail of your game, Over the Edge probably isn't for you. If you can't stand the unusual, you will probably dislike the game. But it you want a game that plays quickly and in an unpredictable setting, Over the Edge is an excellent choice.

Title: Twilight: 2000/Merc: 2000 Referee's Screen
Company: GDW
Category: RPG Supplement
Reviewer: Jimmie W. Pursell Jr.

Lock and load, time to rock. This supplement follows the same format as the earlier folio releases from GDW; it contains a three-panel screen and a 16-page booklet.

The screen it self is an array of charts and tables used frequently in Twilight: 2000. It displays Human/animal and vehicle hit location, combat movement, body armor protection, burn damage, and a host of other charts and tables.

While the charts and tables are convenient, the most useful part of the supplement is the expansion booklet. The most dramatic section is the D20 systems update. Though the new system was supposed to bring the game in line with its sister product, Dark Conspiracy, the systems are not identical. To put it simply, the new skill numbers are the total of the skill and governing attributes. This decision simplified the update process, because it is not necessary to change any numbers on the character sheet, simply add the two numbers and note the total next to the skill. For example, a character who formerly had a small arms skill of 5 and a strength of 6, now has a target number of 11.

In addition to the D20 expansion, the supplement also has several long needed rules' additions. The most important one, and the only one I'll mention here, are the skill-based automatic weapons' rules. The design decision made for second edition Twilight: 2000 to remove skill from the automatic fire rules has been called into question by many gamers. For that reason, the guys at GDW modified the system to account for skill. The regular recoil system is used to determine the number of dice rolled, but now a D20 is rolled against an impossible level task to determine whether or not each round hits. To give an idea of the number required, it equates to roughly half of the character's former small arms' skill.

Though the system is a giant leap forward for Twilight: 2000, has a few problems. The rules section on unskilled use of tasks disagrees with the chart on the subject. In addition, many players will disagree with the small arms target numbers; strength is added to the skill to reach a to hit number. So the stronger you are, the better you shoot? Not!

Though a few gaps and inconsistencies exist, the product as a whole is excellent and a must for Twilight: 2000 referees.

Title: Taslantia Product Line
Company: Wizards of the Coast
Category: RPG System & Supplements
Reviewer: Doug Easterly

A Little Background

The world of Talislanta is one of the many fantasy worlds to have cropped up in gaming over the years. Like Glorantha, Tekumel, or Jorune, this world seeks to depart from the "generic" sorts of fantasy worlds produced at companies like TSR and create a sense of awe and wonder, and to create the feel of an alien but understandable world. The project of Talislanta was begun in the mid–1980s by Stephan Michael Sechi, under the banner of Bard Games. Beginning first with a generic world description, then developing into a specific role–playing game and its supplements, Talislanta became a fairly substantial body of material. But Bard Games didn't last, and it seemed that with its passing, Talislanta had disappeared.

What brought Talislanta back was a deal with the fledgling Wizards of the Coast, which licensed all Stephan Michael Sechi's materials from Bard Games to Wizards of the Coast. This led to the project of the third edition of Talislanta, and the revival of Talislanta.

The Game

The basis of the game is the Talislanta Guidebook. This hefty tome weighs in at over three hundred pages, and includes all the rules you will need to run a beginning Talislanta game. It combines mechanics, and overall world description in one volume, providing the basic reference work for all aspects of the game.

The game mechanics focus on simplicity. A single die mechanic controls all task resolutions. The basis of the roll is a d20 roll on the Action Table, which is only a few lines long. Results are described in very vague terms (Mishap, Partial Success, etc.) with some range for the GM to decide what this means. Guidance in adjudicating results is given in both the combat and magic sections with specific descriptions of what results mean in combat, and with several spells.

Die rolls are modified by skills and by characteristics. Both skills and characteristics are rated as a plus or minus score, with a score of zero being average. For instance, a strength of 0 is considered normal while a strength of +3 is a fairly strong individual and a -1 strength indicates a relatively weak individual.

There are drawbacks to the simplicity of the system. It doesn't take much effort to manipulate the rules to one's advantage, and with fairly little effort, the rules do show real problems. But I'll get into that more with my comments on combat and magic.

Character Creation

Talislantan character creation is based on archetype. The Talislanta Guidebook gives archetypes for 118 different types of Talislantans. They cover all parts of the Talislantan game world, and many types of professions. While each may be customized, they create quick descriptions of "typical" denizens of Talislanta, including characteristics and skills.

I'm not a big fan of archetypes. They often restrict players, and can be more of a straightjacket, a sort of detailed and narrow character class mechanic. That said, I also think that the archetype system seems to work for Talislanta. The reason for this is that the archetypes system enforces the logic, atmosphere, and background of Talislanta into the forefront.

Also, the game allows players to develop skills and abilities outside of their archetype. Thus the archetype is a beginning for characters, from which players may choose whether or not they wish to diverge. Despite my reservations, I must say it works.

Finally, I should note that the sheer number of archetypes can be daunting. The Talislanta Guidebook recommends narrowing down choices for beginning players until they are more familiar with the game and with the world. I would tend to agree. Keep it simple at first, then sample other possibilities.

Talislantan Combat

Combat in Talislanta is aimed at being quick. That aim is achieved quite readily, and combat runs at least as quickly as combat in systems like D&D which focus on simple mechanics. The problem with this simplicity is that it sometimes breaks down easily. The two examples I have noted are:

- The range penalties for missile weapons makes them nearly useless in combat. Only an absolute marksman should be feared in Talislanta
- All combat skill rolls are based on the Dexterity characteristic. This means that nimble characters, like the rat-like Ferrans, who are known for their thieving abilities, are more likely to hit than the warrior race of Thralls, who are bred for battle from the day they were born!

These things can be fixed fairly easily—with a new set of range modifiers on the one hand, and a modified way of calculating the basic combat skill for a character that factors in more than one characteristic. Even so, I wish such problems were fixed in play-test before the game was published.

Magic

Magic is essential in Talislanta. Magic is the basis of all technology, and of all physical laws. Science, on the other hand, is looked on with the same skepticism as mysticism is in our world. That being the case, magic using characters are much more powerful in Talislanta than in many other games.

This can be a real problem in the game, as powerful wizards can be untouchable by puny warriors, and have the power to incinerate them with a few blasts of magical power. It also makes it hard to run a game without a magic-using character in the group.

The magic system in Talislanta also gives a wide selection of spells to beginning spellcasters. This makes sense for those characters whose focus is magic, but this even applies to those who only dabble in magic. Thus a Cymrillian sorcerer, trained at the Lyceum Arcanum—a sort of university of magic— will know as many spells as a Sarista Gypsy who has picked up some witchcraft over the years.

Again, this can be fixed fairly easily, but shouldn't need fixing at all.

Role Playing vs. Game Balance

One thing players and GMs should realize is that the idea of game balance much stressed since the early days of D&D is pretty much ignored on Talislanta. That, I think, isn't a bad idea. The roles of characters in Talislanta don't necessarily balance out, especially in combat. The strengths of each archetype are in the potential for roleplay and for interaction with aspects of the game world.

Combat, therefore, isn't a focus of the game. I think that this is the reason for some of the flaws I noted above. The game designers didn't think about the fine details of combat. They don't want us to think too much about them either. They want the mechanics to fade into the background, and for us to focus on the world of Talislanta.

Talislanta

Talislanta is a continent on the world of Archeus, a world where magic is the basis of all physical laws. Archeus works differ-

ently than Earth. Millennia ago, the primitive sub-human inhabitants on the continent of Talislanta discovered a crashed space vessel, and from it found a magical device that taught them the basics of magic. From that, they built a great society. These men, known as the Archaeans, build a global civilization of much magical power and wonder. But their excessive use of magic led to a great cataclysm, destroying their society and casting the continent of Talislanta into a new dark age.

During this time, humankind warred with the races of Sub-Men to regain some level of civilization. Thus has come the current age. Civilization has come again to Talislanta. Adventuresome souls seek to uncover the magical secrets of the past, and to bring civilization to the glories of the past. Meanwhile the Sub-Men gather under a single banner to overthrow the civilization of Men.

This is the background for the campaign. Seeds for adventure exist in the world itself— in trading, exploration, and politics. In addition, there are ancient secrets to unearth, Sub-Men uprisings to stop, and threats to the very fabric of civilization.

Within this framework are several interesting and colorful societies, some based loosely on historical civilizations, others entirely unique. There are several non-human civilizations with which to interact, ranging from friendly to hostile. Political intrigue can be found in all parts of the world. Plot hooks for any GM exist throughout the fabric of Talislanta.

In addition, in all this information there is a lack of specific detail. This is intentional, giving each GM room to make his own mark on Talislanta. The game world can be detailed to a GM's content, or left vague for future exploration, allowing each of us to make Talislanta the game we want it to be.

More Talislanta

For those of us who want more detail, however, that is also available. Wizards of the Coast has been diligent in producing support materials for Talislanta. The best supplement they have released to date has been the Archaeans Codex, by Stephan Michael Sechi. The Codex details "the lost secrets of the forgotten age" for Talislantan campaigns. It is an all-purpose compendium of things to know about the Forgotten Age. Its main focus is on the forgotten magics of the Forgotten Age, including skills, spells, and artifacts from the ancient Archaeans and other people of ancient times. However, it also includes a more detailed early history of Talislanta, profiles the powerful magicians of the Archaeans, and details ruins of the ancient world.

How do you use this in a Talislanta campaign? It is an excellent guide to exploring ancient ruins— including where ruins might be found, what might be found in them, and what kinds of benefits may be gained from them. Any wizard worth his or her robes should be interested in finding forgotten magics.... and this book details exactly what those magics are, and gives you some guidelines on where players may find them. It is an excellent piece, the only work I would currently call a "must-have" supplement for Talislanta Game Masters.

The Scent of the Beast, a scenario by Jonathan Tweet, is the first adventure published for Talislanta. It is designed as an introductory adventure to the world of Talislanta, and continues directly from the introductory adventure in the Talislanta Guidebook. It provides opportunities for travel, trade, exploration, intrigue, and combat, allowing players a chance to get the feel for Talislanta and their roles in the world. It is a well-done adventure with plenty of room to customize the adventure for your personal tastes.

Talislanta Geographica is more difficult to recommend. For your purchase you get a beautiful full-color wall map of Talislanta, a game screen with the same map (only smaller) on one side, and some useful tables on the other, and a few pages of mini-adventures and general world information. The work is good, but a bit overpriced at $10 for what you get.

Tales of Talislanta also gets a mixed recommendation. Tales of Talislanta is not a game supplement per se. It is, rather, an anthology of short stories set in Talislanta. The quality of the stories varies a great deal, but they do provide a good feel for Talislanta, and act as a sort of introduction to the alien nature of the world. Oddly enough, none of the stories seem to focus on the Seven Kingdoms, the part of Talislanta that the Guidebook recommends as the start of a campaign world. Tales should be looked on as a fairly inexpensive sampler of the game world for those who wish to get a feel for it, or as an item for the Talislanta completist, but is not otherwise highly recommended.

On the Way

As I write this, another adventure, Quantrigue, by Stephan Michael Sechi should be on the shelves, providing intrigue in the eastern lands of Talislanta. In the works are Thrystram's Collecteana, a compendium of the creatures of Talislanta, treated in detail; the Talislanta Omnibus, a detailed description of the game world; a sequel to the adventure The Scent of the Beast; and GURPS Talislanta, a supplement (licensed by Steve Jackson Games) to permit you to play in the world of Talislanta using the GURPS rules. It seems that Wizards of the Coast is going whole hog into supporting Talislanta, and it should enjoy a lively run.

Overall

I recommend looking into Talislanta. It is a colorful, interesting world which still gives GMs room to build their own campaigns. It is well-supported by a line of well-executed products which show attention, good writing, and excellent editing and production values— though the rules also show a few kinks that need working out. You can easily begin with a single rulebook and branch out as you desire, with fairly minimal outlay.

Which products should you buy to begin your Talislanta adventure? The Guidebook is a must, and if you have a limited budget, it is the only book you absolutely need. After that, I recommend the Archaean Codex quite strongly. The Scent of the Beast is a good adventure, but isn't necessary, while the other products in the Talislanta line— the Talislanta Geographica and Tales of Talislanta— aren't necessary at all.

Title: Mythus Gamemaster's Screen
Company: GDW
Category: Game Supplement/Accessory
Reviewer: Jimmie W. Pursell Jr.

More than just a screen to shield your secrets from prying eyes, the Mythus Gamemaster's Screen is a wealth of information for the Mythus player and GM alike.

The "screen" consists of two three-panel screens and a 40-page chart and table book. Adhesive backed clips are provided which attach to the top of the "Notes" panel of one of the screens. These clips can hold your notes, as the name implies, or they can be used to combine the two screens and make a single five-panel screen, the front of which makes a full-color panorama.

The charts on the screen are primarily combat and heka use charts, though several general tables, such as joss factors are included. Even the different combat procedures' charts are reprinted on the screens, eliminating constant reference to the game book.

Dozens of charts and tables inhabit the supplemental book. Weapons and spell tables are present, along with a host of miscellaneous charts such as the poison table, et. al. What's more, many of the problems with the weapons and armor tables from the Mythus book are corrected here.

For instance, many missile weapons, especially longbows, are given armor-piercing capabilities. Archers rejoice. Despite the near completeness of the product, one piece has been omitted; a chart which would have been useful. The hit location chart, probably the most used table in the Mythus game, is conspicuously absent. While not a major malfunction, it does detract from the product.

The overall quality of the product is unparalleled; I recommend the Mythus Gamemaster's Screen without hesitation. At $9.00. it's a great value.

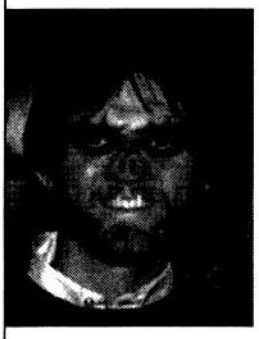
Title: Astrogator's Guide to the Diaspora Sector
Company: GDW
Category: RPG Supplement
Reviewer: Jimmie W. Pursell Jr.

"Welcome to Diaspora." The Astrogator's Guide to the Diaspora Sector provides the MegaTraveller gamemaster scores of worlds with which to work, as well as the political and military background of the sector.

Set in the Hard Times era of MegaTraveller, the guide lists the UWP of every one of the 476 worlds in the Diaspora sector. Additionally, data is given for both the year 1124 and 1129, with guidelines for pro-rating values in between. Major worlds in each subsector are described in short paragraphs, organized by subsector.

The now typical three panel screen contains the map of the sector, along with a political map and a chart showing the insignia of several organizations within the sector.

Rooted in the various descriptions are numerous scenario leads which can be expanded by an enterprising GM into fully



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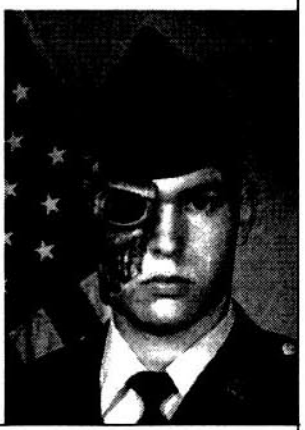

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fleshed-out scenarios.

The guide is a wealth of information for MegaTraveller players and the $5.50 price tag makes it almost irresistible.

Title: Legions of Steel
Company: Global Games Company
Category: RPG System
Reviewer: Brian Peters

You are almost out of grenades and you can hear the machines coming up the corridors behind you. The sarge is dead as well as half the unit. The objective is just behind the door but no one has seen the Mark 1. Where is he?!

Knowing that you have no other choice, you have Blackburn, your only remaining heavy weapons trooper lead the way through the door. [Editor's note: kissing up to the editor by making appear heroic, is no guarantee of getting your review published. But it helps! - JRB] There is a screen of Nachtmachers behind the door, and Blackburn starts spraying plasma as he disappears into the darkness! You move through quickly and are stunned when you step out of the darkness. The academy pep talks could never have prepared you for this. It's the Mark 1 Assault fiend. He was waiting beyond the veil of blackness and now Blackburn, obviously dead, is impaled on his power trident. The metal beast turns toward you and you rattle off as many shots as you can on auto fire while running towards the next exit. One hits the creature but doesn't slow it in its pursuit. How can anything that big move so fast?!

You know it's over as you look back and see that your other troops were unable to follow through the blackness of nachtmacker grenades. You turn to face the Mark 1 and seconds later, the blast from his flame thrower envelopes you. The pain only lasts a second....

This is what awaits you in Legions of Steel, a board miniatures game that pits the UNE commandos (Shock Troops of the United Nations of Earth) against the Legions of Steel; robots created by evil invaders bent on spreading their evil empire through the entire solar system.

The game comes with a changeable map board and nineteen great metal miniatures (Over 1 lb. as the box boasts) including a miniature of the Mark 1 Assault fiend which is just darn scary to look at let alone fight against. The rules are well laid out and easy to follow, and there is a good story line about what is going on in the game. The rule book offers 8 preset scenario situations including a different map configuration for each game and story lines for each.

Over the course of the last month we have played the game extensively, (much to our enjoyment) and have found the following about the rules of the game. My friend, Dave, who happens to be a police officer, was amazed at how simple and realistic the rules on cover fire and suppression of fire were. He kept commenting on how he could use actual things he had learned in training in the game to protect his men. Unfortunately for Dave, it was to no avail. The dice turned against him and all the great tactics in the world couldn't prevent eventual disaster. Needless to say, although we found the rules to be simple, they were very effective. Since the game is basically a man versus machine battle, leadership rules come into play and the person playing the UNE commandos can use this distinctly human advantage to even the odds in a game where he is often outnumbered.

Legions of steel is easy to set up, fun to play and very diverse. The only complaint we had was that it is best suited for play by two people, but the folks at Global Games have promised us that by Christmas advanced rules, allowing for more players, will be on the market. By the way, if miniatures are your thing, Global Games is releasing miniature packs of both the UNE commandos and the Legions of Steel, and like we said earlier, no miniature collection could be complete without at least one Mark 1 Assault fiend in it.

Title: Bonin Horse
Company: Atlas Games
Category: RPG Adventure
Reviewer: Parker Whittle

Bonin Horse is an adventure developed by Atlas Games for R. Talsorian's Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0. dark future sci-fi role-playing game. Billed as a technothriller, it lives up to that claim.

Set in the claustrophobic confines of a submarine, this adventure is fast-paced and packed with suspense. Complication is heaped upon complication in a deadly spiral that sets the players' nerves on edge and gets the blood pumping.

In the spirit of the Abyss, a team of Arasaka operatives is sent to work with the tight-knit and resentful crew of a submarine owned by a company hastily acquired by Arasaka, simply because it was in the wrong place at the wrong time. The potential for tension is rich, and adds to the level of suspense. The operatives are charged with locating a downed Arasaka sub and retrieving its cargo and surviving crew members.

Player characters can be introduced in several ways. In hindsight, the most compelling option is not the one we chose to take. Instead, I introduced my players as the Arasaka agents. Although this worked well in the suspense department, the twists and turns in the storyline left the players feeling as if they hadn't really accomplished anything. A better choice would have been to run the adventure in a one-off fashion, with the players taking on the roles of the submarine crew forced to deal with arrogant and paranoid Arasaka agents.

Another option that I would recommend only to experienced role-players would be to divide members of the party between the sub crew and the operatives, thus creating a level of tension within the group that intensifies the suspense of the storyline.

A caveat: one of my players has actually had some experience on submarines, which proved to be a problem. Since I have had no such experience, I cannot confirm his claims, but according to him, some of the technical aspects of the adventure were inaccurate or even blatantly incorrect. Several of the high tension moments in the adventure were deflated easily by his corrections. Few people have had such experience, so I don't suspect this will be a problem with most playing groups, but it would have been nice if the designers had done a little more thorough research.

TITLE: DARKURTHE LEGENDS
COMPANY: BLACK DRAGON PRESS
CATEGORY: RPG SYSTEM
REVIEWER: SHADIS STAFF

Darkurthe LEGENDS is a new RPG that puts the power of creativity back in the hands of players. In this game, spell casters make their own spells, alchemists their own potions, and fighters can create special combat moves to compliment their fighting style. This individuality compliments the games focus on the story. The setting of the game is the continent of Darkurthe, where ancient struggles make the land a dark and dangerous place. The continent is detailed in the main game book. The game system itself is built around skills, and the success for pretty much every Action is based on the skill level VS + or modifiers. Combat is fairly simple, yet realistic. Fighters compare combat skills and the fighter with the higher skill level gains the difference on his to hit roll. Also weapon lengths are built into the simple system. Longer weapons must be fought past in order to use shorter ones. Magic is also very interesting. Spell casters are required to create their own spells in this game. Spells are rated by difficulty, and casters must be careful not to go into negative numbers when making their casting rolls. Spell casters can also meld together to cast spells decreasing the difficulty. Darkurthe LEGENDS is a stand alone game book. All the rules needed to play the game, as well as creatures, planes, and deities and the continent are included in one 280 Page book. In addition Darkurthe LEGENDS will be an interactive, allowing players to send in their parties actions to LEGENDS, the upcoming Newszine, and watch them in the Darkurthe news section. Using the interactive element, Game Masters can change the continent of Darkurthe with the actions of players from around the world. The Black Dragon Press has a full line of supporting products planned for Darkurthe LEGENDS.

Look for them in finer gaming stores.

Title: Traveller: The New Era
Company: GDW
Category: RPG System
Reviewer: Parker Whittle

Traveller: The New Era is the latest chapter in the continuing saga of GDW's Third Imperium milieu for the Traveller rules. It follows MegaTraveller, which was an attempt to unify the vast body of rule books and supplements developed during Traveller's long and successful reign as the best known sci-fi role-playing game.

Traveller: TNE continues this evolution on two points: first, it ends the interstellar civil war introduced by MegaTraveller, casting known space into a technological dark ages induced by a sentient life form known as Virus (hence the New Era). Second, it brings the Traveller system into the fold of GDW's new "House Rules" system which has been used in other GDW games, including Twilight: 2000 (second ed.), Dark Conspiracy, and Cadillacs and Dinosaurs.

Unlike previous incarnations, the TNE rule book is bound in a single paperback volume, nearly 400 pages long. Although the overall organization is good, the text is dense and many of the paragraph headings are hard to see, which required extra page flipping and squinting during our play-testing. The table of contents is large and well organized, but the index (a single page) is hardly useful. Though I give GDW credit for including one in the first place, the proliferation of desktop-publishing software leaves little excuse for the kind of futile afterthought that a one-page index represents.

Traveller and MegaTraveller referees will notice significant improvements in character generation — an Achilles heel of TNE's predecessors, where characters could actually be killed during generation. This rule has been laid to rest in TNE. Additionally, players enjoy much more control over their characters' careers and skills than in the previous systems.

The list of careers is extensive, though not as well integrated into the storyline as I had hoped. Referees will need to modify the rules to ensure that the characters will be suitable for the campaign. The homeworld generation table prohibits most characters from receiving any high-tech skills and can severely unbalance the party with heavy attribute penalties for characters unfortunate enough to be reared in a hostile environment. Lacking a well architected point-based generation system, referees will need to fudge die rolls and ignore some homeworld restrictions to ensure that the party is well-balanced.

Using a modified version of the task resolution system introduced first in Traveller's Digest and later integrated into MegaTraveller, skills are now combined with a "controlling attribute" into an "asset" that is used for most tasks. Some skill/attribute combinations presented by the game, like Mechanic skill and Strength, seem inappropriate and the referee may wish to base tasks on different skill/attribute combinations as circumstances dictate.

World generation, encounter and animal generation, trade and commerce, and

space travel are all largely identical to their original Traveller/MegaTraveller counterparts. World generation has been updated to show the effects of the Imperium's collapse on existing worlds and is integrated well with the familiar rules. These rules have always set Traveller apart from other games in the genre, and it is good to see that they haven't been tampered with.

Starship design is conspicuously absent in TNE. Since this was one of my favorite aspects of the original Traveller, and after the hopeless abomination of vehicle design in MegaTraveller, I was hoping to see a return to elegance in the TNE rules — especially when I learned that Frank Chadwick was designing the game. Undoubtedly, vehicle design will be introduced in a later supplement. Referees hoping to make do in the interim with Traveller or MegaTraveller design rules will face a daunting conversion process.

The combat rules are well-designed, betraying Chadwick's experience in designing tactical simulations. In fact, as with most Traveller products, the rules have a hard time breaking away from their military focus. My only objection is that the slug throwers don't seem to do enough damage. Combat flowed smoothly, however, and was easy to run.

Starship combat has been completely redesigned, but the adventure we ran did not require any. At first glance, it appears to be an improvement on the previous systems.

The equipment list is somewhat shorter in TNE than the previous systems, especially the starship listings, and since many of the rules have been redesigned, converting your favorite items will be time-consuming.

Referees who already enjoy Traveller should find something to like about the TNE rules, and the chaos of a fallen empire is fertile ground for adventuring. For those who prefer a more traditional Traveller campaign, the Spinward Marches remain relatively untouched by the collapse. However, if you are happy with Traveller or MegaTraveller and you don't find the fallen empire premise intriguing, I must admit that there are few compelling reasons to purchase Traveller: TNE.

Referees considering their first Traveller campaign may be mystified by some of the references to material published in earlier versions of the game. I strongly recommend an additional investment in MegaTraveller's Imperial Encyclopedia to fill in the gaps.

If I were to choose between the three systems, I would have to say I have the least affection for MegaTraveller because it failed to capture the elegance and cohesiveness of the original. TNE is a much better effort, and is good for the character generation rules alone. My own Traveller campaign would likely be a hybrid of the original and TNE rules systems — simply because I have all the books available. If I had to run a campaign using the new system alone, I would find the system consistent and quite playable, with a few rough edges.

Title: The Complete Book of Humanoids
Company: TSR
Category: RPG Supplement
Reviewer: Mike Lampman

Most of the books in TSR's 'complete book' series are laid out in a similar manner, so just go get one of the ones you have, and pretend you have the Humanoid book as I take us through it. Now, the first thing we notice about the book, is the brown cover with gold colored lettering. Snazzy, huh? But, rather than stare at the cover all day, we'll open it up and take a look inside. Be careful of paper cuts though. Opening it to page 2, we find the table of contents.

We see that the book is broken up into seven chapters, as well as an introduction, and some miscellaneous stuff at the end. So, rather than list the headings, we'll just take a short look at each chapter, and explain what they are as we move along. Flipping the page, we find the introduction area, where they explain the concepts behind the book, as well as its purpose. If you've played AD&D for any length of time, you can skip this part, as its fairly redundant.

Flipping another page, we find ourselves in a section entitled "Humanoid Creatures", which explains some general things about the humanoids in the book, such as creating a humanoid character, level limits, as well as a few paragraphs explaining broadly about groups, classes, kits, and multi-class characters. But, this chapter really excels in providing a few ideas for adding humanoid characters into an ongoing campaign. While they only provide 4 ideas, they're not bad, and could give a beginning GM some help in adding them in, as well as maybe inspiring an experienced GM. You'll also see that they've continued their tradition of putting black and white pictures every few pages to hold your attention, and while they're not bad, they're still not of the quality of the color plates scattered in a few places throughout the book.

Moving to chapter 2, you find the heart of the book, as this is where the "Humanoid Races" are listed. There are 25 entries in this chapter, and each entry is laid out in the same manner, with information ranging from Ability score adjustments, to special advantages and disadvantages, and much more. As you might guess, each entry contains quite a bit of information about the race in question, and even goes so far as to list an optional superstition for each race as well. The information in each entry is arranged logically, and thoughtfully, and gives you a clear understanding of each race. While most of the information regarding each race was culled from their entries in the Monstrous Compendium, some new information is added, including role-playing suggestions on how to play a member of that race. What are the races in the book, you ask? Well, the races with entries in the book are...Aarakocra, Alaghi, Beastman, Bugbear, Bullywug-Advanced, Centaur, Fremlin, Giant-Kin:Firbolg, Giant-Kin: Voadkyn, Gnoll, Gnoll-Flind, Goblin, Hobgoblin, Kobold, Lizard Man, Minotaur, Mongrelman, Ogre\Half Ogre, Ogre Mage, Orc\Half Orc, Pixie, Satyr, Saurial, Swanmay, and Wemic. As you can tell, they have a wide variety of races represented, although they didn't include every humanoid race that they could have, but I guess you have to draw the line somewhere, or it could wind up as big as a phone book. Some of the races in the book are quite wimpy, while others are quite powerful. So, in order to maintain game balance somewhat, the truly powerful races, such as Giant-Kin, have to have more than the regular amount of experience to advance levels in their class. This seems to be a fair trade-off, except that some of the wimpier races, such as Kobolds, get no real special benefits to offset the disadvantages they wind up with, so the balance between the races is not as great as it could be.

One problem I noticed, is that they included no aquatic humanoids, such as Nixies, or Tritons. And while this is hardly a big loss, as most campaigns take place on land, there are plenty of opportunities for the creative GM to add in a regular aquatic humanoid to the party, such as a campaign that takes place on a sailing vessel, or even underwater. All in all, the races chapter is well done, and gives players a wide variety to choose from, as well as trying to help players with their attempt to role-play a character of that race. Flipping some more pages...Hey! Who ate the greasy food, before flipping these pages? Anyway, we next come to the Kits area, which lists kits for humanoid characters. There's a number of kits here, of which a few are just variants of other kits or classes. They're categorized according to class, and are: Tribal Defenders, Mine Rowdies, Pit Fighters, Sellswords, Saurial Paladins, Wilderness Protectors, Hedge Wizards, Humanoid Scholars, Outlaw Mages, Shamans, Witch Doctors, Oracles, War Priests, Wandering Mystics, Scavengers, Tramps, Tunnel Rats, Shadows, Humanoid Bards. As you might notice from some of the names, there are already kits similar to some of them, that have just been altered to fit a humanoid race. Such as Tramps, which are similar to Beggars from the Thieves handbook. The kits are alright, but none of them seem all that interesting, or exciting. There are no multi-class kits. Moving on, we find that the next chapter deals with humanoid proficiencies, and there are some interesting new ones here, designed with the humanoid in mind. You'll find a Close-Quarter Fighting proficiency, and a Natural Fighting proficiency to help those with natural attacks, like claws or such. You'll also find Wild Fighting, and an intriguing new one called Danger Sense, which enables your character to sense nearby danger, which I know many adventurers wish they could do. There are descriptions of these new proficiencies, as well as descriptions of ones that have come out in other handbooks, but which are appropriate for humanoid characters.

Flipping some more pages...ooops, hold up a minute, a couple pages stuck together, must be the fault of the guy with the greasy fingers. Ah, there we go, moving on to the next chapter, we find that it deals with role-playing humanoids, and what life as a humanoid is like, as well as the bestial traits of the humanoid races. There's also a section devoted to the complications that a humanoid character could wind up facing in a campaign, and range from being arrested to being exploited, with other fun things that could really ruin a humanoid's day. This chapter reads well, and has some interesting ideas to give the GM on what to do to a humanoid character, as well as what life as a humanoid character is like to a degree.

Moving on, we reach chapter 6, which deals entirely with Superstitions, which are an optional part of the handbook. This chapter explains superstitions in game terms, as well as how to use them in play. There's also an extensive list of possible superstitions for your character to be afflicted with. The superstitions idea is not a bad one, and having it as an optional feature is nice. I feel it should be the characters choice as to whether they are sidled with this additional bother or not, as it's their character, and they know best how they want that character's personality to be, and not have it dependent on some die roll. Moving on...ah ah ah, don't dawdle back there looking at the list of all the superstitions. We still have some more pages to cover, and then you can go back and look over all the superstitions you want.

Reaching chapter 7, we see that it deals with Arms & Armor for humanoids, and gives armor restrictions, weapon size restrictions, and weapon breakage, as well as listing a bunch of new weapons used specifically by certain races. These weapons are varied, and include the dreaded Flindbar, and Lizard Man dart. The weapons vary in size from the teeny pixie-sized ones, to the huge giant-kin weapons. This chapter also has a table listing the weapons, just like the one in the Player's Handbook. Finally, we finish with the chapters, and you would think you'd be done with the handbook, but guess again, as there's a lengthy appendix at the rear of the book, and it's mostly filled with tables. It starts with a height comparison of the various races, and then follows up with table after table. The tables are updates to tables listed in the Players Handbook, and list the different heights, weights, ages, and aging effects of the various races, as well as bunches of other stuff. There are 13 tables in all. And, as you've noticed, we're basically done looking through it, as the few things left are just the Humanoid Kit creation sheet, as well as Humanoid character sheets for each of the classes.

So, overall, the Humanoid handbook is a good investment if you're an AD&D player, or GM, looking to spice up your campaign by playing something a little out of the ordinary. It's well written, and edited, as most of the TSR products are, and is laid out nicely. And the information contained within is helpful to most GMs no matter what type of AD&D campaign they run, as long as they're willing to add humanoid PCs to it. Also, it can make for quite a change of pace, when the party runs up against that group of Kobolds, and instead of the wimpy MC version expected, they are facing a few Multi-Classed 8th level Fighter/Cleric NPCs. That ought to bring a smile to their faces.

Title: POD
Company: POD Company
Category: Board Game
Reviewer: Shadis Staff

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YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST.

POD the Acronym for "Power of Direction" is a new, yet-to-be-released game by a fledgling game company in Southern California. In fact, the company has not come up with the financing to put the product on the market in the fashion that they want. So why are we spending time on a game that the public can't even get its hands on yet? Because when we feel it is an excellent game and deserves any help we can offer to get this game on the market. POD is one of those classic games just waiting to be discovered by some enterprising company with the backing to do it right.

POD is similar to Chess in a few ways. First, when you look at the board, the pieces and the set up have a Chess look to them. Second, each piece has a specific mode of movement, and third, the game ends when you capture the Communication and Command Pod (Which I quickly found myself protecting like my king).

That is where the similarity ends. The Game Board is a maze which players negotiate by moving their pieces using a specified number of Directional Changes for that game piece. This makes things exciting and challenging, unlike Chess which has a structured movement for its pieces. The POD Game pieces break all the rules of board games. Some move off and back onto the board. Others move as if in hyperspace, jumping from Transport Zone to Transport Zone, while others still, jump, freeze and even push opponents pieces out of the way.

No cards, no dice, no luck, POD is simple enough for an eight year old to learn how to play, but hard enough to master that it will bring hours of intellectual enjoyment to the most cerebral of gamers. As you master the game, you can add difficulty levels by changing the maze layout, and adding new game pieces that have different movements and abilities.

Craig Hancock, Bill Bolhuis and Irv Silberman the game company owners and creators of POD have spent the last three years play testing and perfecting the POD game. They think it's ready to hit the market and we couldn't agree more. The POD company is still entertaining financing and investment offers. So if you are considering investing in games this is a product we recommend you take a look at. The POD game can be played at popular Southern California Conventions and we hope the owners take it nationwide soon.

For information and inquires about the POD Strategy Game you may Contact: Craig Hancock, 6232 Adobe Circle Dr. Irvine Ca. 92715 or call (714) 856-3655.

Title: Black Death
Company: BTRC
Category: Board Game
Reviewer: Theresa Verity

For those who take perverse pleasure in such games as Nuclear War, and appreciate giving a good back-stab, look to BTRC's Black Death...

The board game was released early June and I was fortunate enough to play with Greg Porter himself, along with Ed Stark of WEG and another guest at the D-Cubed convention in Florida.

The object of the game is to become the deadliest plague/virus to strike the known world (14th century, to be more exact with an upgrade sheet for Death in the 16th century). The millions you "serve" are counted in and players jockey for position as the deadliest disease. The real fun is coming up with an original name for your plague (Infectious Halitosis was one used, Skippy was another)...

Through the game you can move around, using superior tactics, and make an area of the world uninhabitable (making it hard for other diseases to flourish), use "plot-turning" cards to make your lot easier or someone else's hell, and other nastier things...

For the price you get: a re-usable carrying case, a game board, counters, rules (very quick read and easy to pick up), and "plot cards".

All you need to do when you buy this game is to wrangle up 2 D6's and do a small amount of manual labor (punching out the cards and counters).

If you liked Nuclear War, you'll love this one.

Title: Vampire: The Masquerade second edition
Company: White Wolf Studios
Category: RPG System
Reviewer: Ben Strother

A Storytelling Game of Personal Horror...That is the self description that graces the back cover of this tome and it sums up Vampire: The Masquerade very well. In my decade of gaming I have never played a game that was so innovative and completely captivating. The subtle undercurrents and rich atmosphere of the Gothic-Punk setting are further enhanced by the breaking of stereotypes, an indicator of free-thinking game design. The portrayal of women and ethnic groups in positions of power as NPCs is evidence of that. This game enjoys a wide appeal because of the effort made by White Wolf and its designers to fairly present their work without the bias found in many RPGs.

The premise for character generation is "you've been turned into a vampire. While you explore the intricacies of vampiric society, you struggle to hold onto your humanity." From there the emphasis is not placed on stats and combat, but on role-playing and storytelling. Numbers are largely absent from the character sheet; being replaced by more abstract dots. The character is determined by player point assignments, with almost no randomness. To further flesh-out your vampire, specialties are given to all traits of four dots and above (normal traits range from 1-5 dots). Equipment and combat are sparsely dealt with and can be virtually ignored in character design, if desired. Many times your character will be facing foes too powerful to face in direct conflict and must resort to diplomacy, tactics, duplicity, and heavy cooperation of many allies.

The Kindred (as vampires call themselves) have a rich and detailed history leading back to their legendary progenitor, Caine, who was Damned (turned into a vampire) for slaying his brother Abel. This is built on all through the book, including a detailed accounting of Kindred society in the introduction. Atmosphere is further developed by quotes at the beginning of most headings. The quotes come from a varied amount of sources ranging from the book of Genesis in the Old Testament, to modern rock bands like Metallica. The artwork tops off this attention to atmosphere by providing the dark imagery needed for the life-style of the vampire. The monsters of the game are not the two dimensional villains commonly portrayed in the past, but deep and sophisticated individuals. This style leans heavily on the Vampire Chronicles by Anne Rice and the films like The Lost Boys and Near Dark. Over a period of time Vampire: The Masquerade becomes more interesting as layer after layer of subtitles is revealed.

The game vampire is not what you would call "technical" most of the book revolves around storytelling, plot development and character histories out of the 272 pages, game mechanics takes up maybe 20 of them. While this will not please everyone, it suits my gaming group very well. The Storyteller is left to arrange and fill to their own taste the level of rules and detail. A common attitude in the text is that rules are made to be broken and that imagination is supreme. This means that if you feel you can come up with something better than you are being invited to use it. Although some of this makes it difficult for new people in the campaign to grasp the basic rules of play, the lack of hard edged rules creates a totally free-flowing style that I particularly enjoy.

As if all this wasn't enough, live role-playing is an additional option for Vampire. With some basic ground rules (common sense) and a little preparation time on the Storyteller's part, you can enjoy an entirely different level of play. This adds to the system by making you even more involved in the campaign, soon making it very easy to slip into character. All of this builds a complete role playing experience.

For my money, I'd say that White Wolf and their Storyteller games are well worth buying (or at least playing with someone else who did) and will offer you a different view of the word monster. Vampire: The Masquerade is a definite A-/B+ on the grading scale. If all the great material that is inside of this book was presented in an easier-to-access-information format instead of having important information spread throughout the text, then this would be the best game I've ever played or run.

Title: Dark Champions
Company: Hero Games/I.C.E.
Category: RPG Supplement
Reviewer: Mark Asrenault

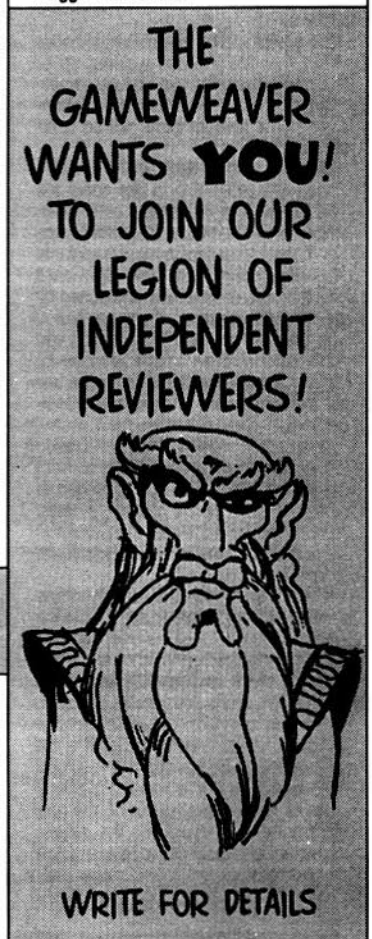
Ever get tired of flying into scenarios, cape waving, ordering the bad guys to surrender? Ever wish you could just hit first, and hit HARD? For those of you whose favorite comic characters include The Punisher, Silver Sable, The Batman, or Bloodshot, this supplement is a dream come true.

The subject of vigilante characters in Champions was deserving of its own book, since it deals with such a different aspect of heroing than the traditional four color campaign. Fortunately, the people at Hero Games felt the same way, and have released Dark Champions.

The book, written by Stephen S. Long, covers all aspects of the street level campaign, from character creation, to campaign creation and game mastering, to the law and how it affects paranormals. This last section gives an in-depth consideration to the Constitution and how relevant articles apply to super-powered beings. It also defines "superhuman" (also known as "metahuman"), "trained paranormal", and "normal" from a legal point of view. There are also notes on legally sanctioned and unsanctioned heroes, and the limitations and advantages of each. There is also an excellent overview of the criminal justice system, which is accurate and interesting reading all by itself!

All in all this is an excellent sourcebook that contains something for every campaign! Whether or not you're wanting to run a gritty, street level campaign, this book will bring a wealth of information.

My recommendation? Of all the supplement books that Hero has published since Champions' 4th Edition, this book is far and away the best ever released. Not only does it provide an incredible amount of information and detail, but it also inspires, and deals with many of the issues that have likely arisen in your campaign! If you buy only one supplement for Champions, I suggest this one! ❑



OUT TIME DAYS

Out Time Days is a Play-By-Mail game of life on a strange world. Emphasizing role-playing and inter-player communication, OTD is a game for those who like to join with other players around the world in figuring out puzzles, creating working economies, exploring large sections of worlds, undertaking or tracking criminal activities, or fielding capable armies. The worlds explored are living, vibrant locales that will change through your character's actions.

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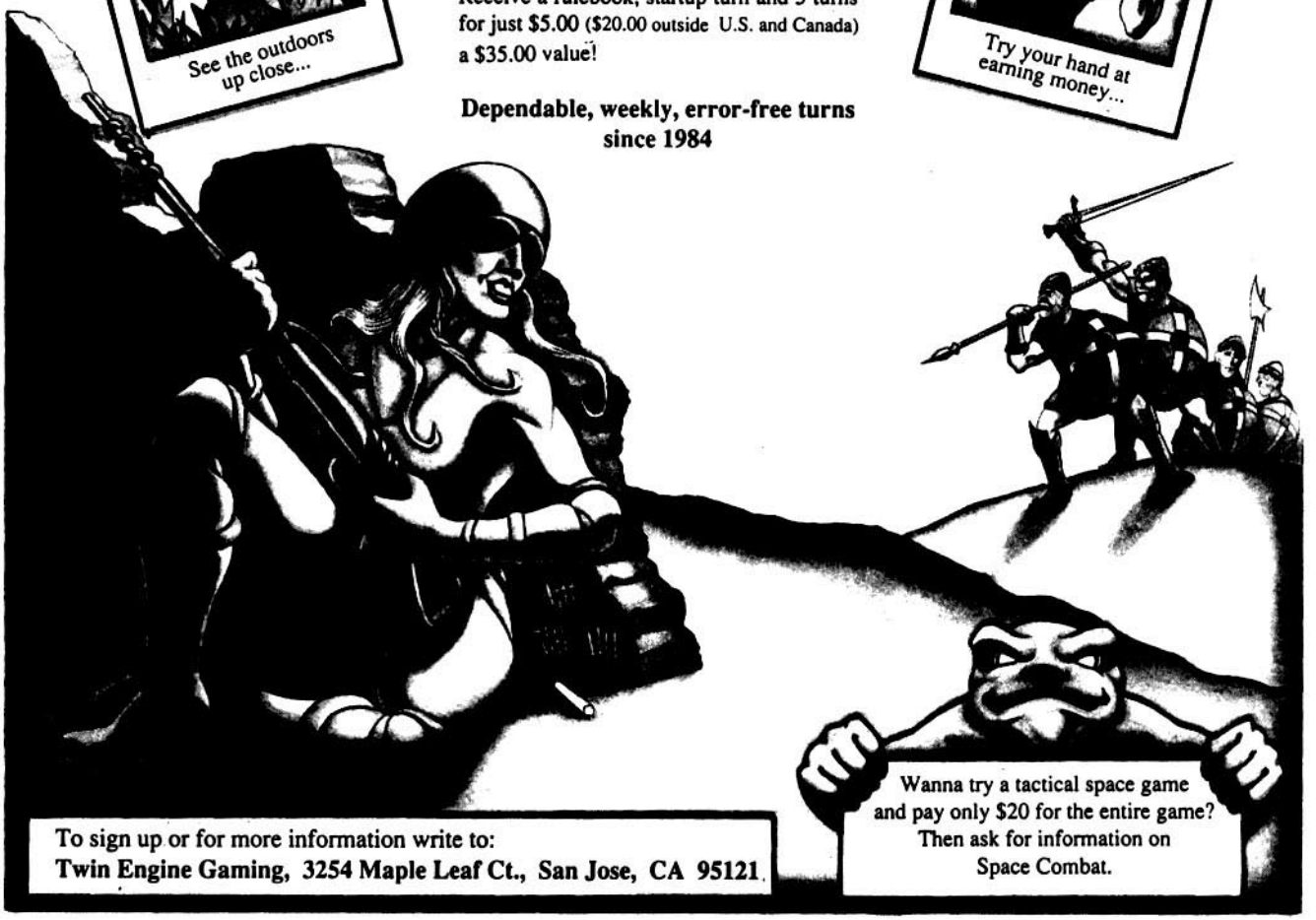

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Twin Engine Gaming, 3254 Maple Leaf Ct., San Jose, CA 95121

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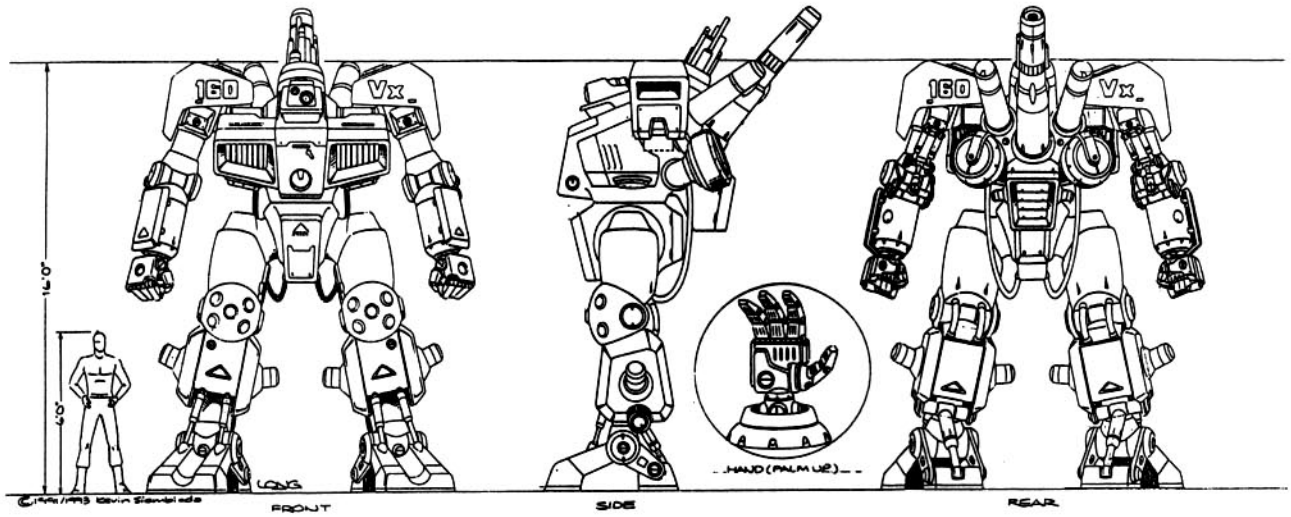

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What you can expect

Unfortunately, we don't have any photographs available yet to show you what we have planned. The best we can do is show some of the front, side and back views created as reference guides for our sculptors.

Initial figures will be **Rifts** characters and, with time, will include just about every major player character, D-Bee, bot, cyborg, dragon, monster and villain in the series. **Other figures** will include characters and mecha from **Macross II** and we have several other plans up our sleeves, so keep an eye out for all our products.

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- **The Glitter Boy and GB pilot:** Blister Pack: $7.95 (looks great).
- **Dog Pack:** Four different dog boys ready for action! $6.95
- **Xiticix & Black Faerie:** A dynamic xiticix warrior armed with a TK rifle, plus the maleficent black faerie. $6.95
- **Borgs Pack One:** Four different cyborgs, including the red borg. $7.95
- **Coalition Soldiers:** Four different soldiers, including grunts, and officer. Blister Pack: $6.95
- **CS SAMAS:** Two figures. $7.95
- **CS Sky-cycle and pilot:** Two figures (one seated & one standing) and cycle. $7.95
- **Skelebots:** Four different menacing CS robots. $6.95

Boxed Sets

- **Ulti-Max Boxed Set:** One of the most popular Triax power armor suits ever! Plus the Triax Terrain Hopper and Explorer body armor. Price and date of release not yet determined.
- **UAR-1 and CS troopers Boxed Set:** Price and date of release not yet determined.
- **Dragon Boxed Sets:** Specific dragons, price and date of release not yet determined (probably not before 1994).

Highlights Include:

- **No lead content! All of Palladium's miniatures are made of non-lead metal alloys.**
- **25 mm scale with figures ranging from one to seven inches tall for a real and consistent feeling of scale!**
- **Excellent quality and appearance.**
- **Produced, packaged and distributed by Palladium Books.**
- **Manufactured by Rafm.**
- **Average prices: $6.95 and $7.95 per blister pack.**
- **Available starting July or August 1993. Watch for them!**

NO LEAD! There has been a long, controversial debate regarding the potential dangers of lead and lead poisoning. The well being of our fans is too important to take chances with, so all of Palladium's miniatures are made of *non-lead* metal alloys. This may mean higher prices, but one can never put a price on health, safety or the preservation the environment. We hope to make up for the cost with quality, dynamic figures.

Warning: Metal miniatures should be kept out of the reach of small children. The figures are small items and/or may contain small parts that can be harmful if swallowed. Miniatures are recommended for people 10 years of age and older.

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Available at hobby shops and comic stores everywhere!

Marque My Words

EDITORIAL

By Patrick Rodgers

Welcome to POST MARQUE, the section of Shadis devoted to play-by-mail gaming. Many of you may not be familiar with PBM gaming, and many of the terms we use may seem confusing to you. The first PBM ad I ever saw was very confusing, full of references to "Turns" and "2 week turnarounds" and similar gibberish. I was so thoroughly confused that I shrugged my shoulders and ignored the ad, which was in a popular RPG magazine. It wasn't until years later that I discovered PBM, when I found a postcard inside Steve Jackson's "Illuminati" boardgame that promised me the chance to play Illuminati by mail. Woefully short of players, I sent the postcard in, and two weeks later, I entered the world of play-by-mail.

It is my hope that any gamer can pick up any issue of this magazine and find the material in this section mostly comprehensible. I absolutely adore the postal gaming hobby, and I'd like to introduce it to as many people as possible. If you've never really experienced PBM before, I'd like to encourage you to read the "Welcome to Play-by-Mail" article, and then to try and read this section. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to direct your attention to the free trial offer that Adventures by Mail has extended to POST MARQUE readers; details are available in the "Ship Ahoy" section. This is an excellent opportunity to get in on the ground floor of a game that has been successfully tested and marketed in Europe for years.

Veteran PBMers will also find POST MARQUE of value. We will be profiling several games each issue, as well as reports of what's happening in various games, narratives by players, industry news, the occasional interview - the usual collection of information, in the unusual Post Marque style. The industry is expanding rapidly, and the interaction between the American, European, and Australian markets is bringing an even larger number of games to an ever-expanding audience. More and more innovative games are breaking out of the traditional genres and expanding the horizons of the hobby. However, we have had our setbacks. Many would-be PBMers were introduced to the hobby by the ill-fated "Buck Rodgers" game, and subsequently swore "never to mess with play-by-mail again!" PBM has also met with competition from on-line game networks and play-by-modem games.

Overall, though, the hobby is strong, and will become even more so in the years ahead. How long will PBM be around for? I think play-by-mail games will exist as long as mail exists - which would seem to be for at least a few more years, anyway.

About our name: Post Marque is, first and foremost, a pun on the term "postmark," which of course is something a PBM gamer sees frequently. The term "Marque" refers to a "Letter of Marque," which was a license, granted by a country, that allowed the licensee to attack any vessels which flew the flags of enemy countries. Individuals who possessed Letters of Marque were referred to as "privateers." This also explains the nautical/piratical humor in the magazine (but doesn't excuse it). ❑

POST MARQUE

needs your parcipitation in order to grow and thrive.

Send your letters or comments to

Post Marque
c/o Patrick Rodgers
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Chino Hills, CA 91709

SHADIS MAGAZINE © 1993

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF PLAY-BY-MAIL GAMING

An Introduction to PBM Gaming

By Patrick Rogers © 1993

If you've never played a play-by-mail (PBM) game before, please take a few minutes to read this section. PBM is often very different from what many people expect, and can provide you with many new friends, and countless hours of enjoyment.

PBM gaming, as we know it, has been around for over twenty years. There are currently several hundred different games on the market, all over the world (although PBM is most popular in the United States). Many different genres are represented, from fantasy to sci-fi, sports to wargames, economics to historical, and many unique fields in between. Participants in each game can number as few as two or as many as five hundred or more.

HOW IT WORKS

Most PBM games are operated in essentially the same way. A player will learn of a PBM game that interests him, usually through a friend, a review, or an advertisement. He then contacts the company that offers the game for more information. If he decides that he would like to play the game, he provides any information and/or fees that the company requires, and then eagerly waits to hear back from the company.

Some games require a certain number of active players, and as such, a company may need to wait to receive a commensurate number of requests before the game can begin. Such a wait might typically take three to five weeks. Often, though, little or no wait is required, and a player will hear back from the company in short order.

When the player is entered into the game, he will receive something called a "setup." The setup is a description of the player's "position" in the game, listing everything that he might be responsible for or have control over.

A new player should also receive a rulebook, which explains how to play the game. Some rulebooks are exhaustive, and spell out everything a player can do, and exactly how to do it. Some may be quite detailed, but will not provide specific information on how everything works. For example, such a rulebook might provide facts such as "Infantry units may not cross rivers," or "A tank is generally superior to an infantry unit in combat," but would stop short of providing details such as, "An infantry unit has a 75% base chance of scoring a hit in combat," or "Three infantry units are needed to have a 50% chance of destroying a tank." Finally, some rulebooks may provide only the information you need to begin the game, allowing you the chance to discover the rest on your own.

Using the rulebook and his setup, a player then fills out a "Turn Sheet." A turn sheet is simply a sheet of paper that is used to describe what actions a player would like to attempt. Many companies provide pre-printed turn sheets that make this an easy task. The length of time that this requires varies dramatically. Depending on the player, his familiarity with the game, the type of game, the player's standing in the game, and several other factors, a turn sheet can take anywhere from five minutes to five hours to complete. The average length of time seems to be between twenty and sixty minutes.

When the company receives a player's turn sheet, it processes the orders that a player has sent for his position. Typically, a computer is used to assist the company, since there are often hundreds of elements of game data to keep track of. Finally, a printout of the player's current standing is produced, and mailed to the player. This is called a "Results Sheet."

When the player receives the results sheet, he can see for himself what results his actions had. He can then fill out another turn sheet and the process repeats.

This process is referred to as a "turn." Thus, when a company states that its game will cost $4.00 a turn, they are telling you that you may fill out a Turn Sheet and receive a Results Sheet in return for a service charge of four dollars.

IS THERE NO END TO IT ALL?

There are many different ways of classifying and categorizing PBM games. As previously discussed, there are many different genres of games available.

Almost all PBM games can be classified as either "closed-ended" or "open-ended." A closed-ended game has a set of specific conditions that, when met, will bring the game to an end. For a wargame, the condition might be, "when one player controls 50% of the sectors on the map." For a fantasy game, it might be, "when a character retrieves the Chalice of Death and returns it to the High Temple." In a closed-ended game, there are methods of ranking the players in the game that will determine who the winner was and who the other finishers were.

An open-ended game has no specific end. Like most RPGs, there are often many successes and failures - your party slew the Overlord, your troops captured Versailles, the Sheriff caught your boys red-handed - but in spite of all of these, the game continues. In an open-ended game, all players usually participate together, similar to a hundred people sitting down at the same Scrabble board. A closed-ended PBM game will often have players participating in smaller groups, similar to ten Scrabble boards with ten players per board (everybody's playing the same game - Scrabble - but not the same game of Scrabble).

ALL THINGS IN MODERATION

Another important area of classification for PBM games is moderation. Some games are "hand-moderated," which means that the results of the game are determined entirely by a human moderator. The moderator may use a typewriter or computer to print out results, but the computer would be used for little else. Hand-moderated games offer a greater degree of flexibility, as a human is capable of responding to practically any scenario that a player can devise. The player's options are far more numerous.

Some games are classified as "mixed moderation." This means that the bulk of the game is handled by the moderator, while some aspects are relegated to a computer. Typically, these might include combat, random hazards, an ability score check, etc. This still allows for the creativity of the moderator, and leaves the often complicated task of "dice-rolling" to the computer.

Finally, there are games that are "computer moderated." Such games are run by a computer, using a special program. A human moderator receives the player's orders, and enters them into the computer. The computer then uses the program to determine the outcome of those actions, and prints out the results. This can lead to occasional "input errors" on the part of the moderator, and does not allow for much creativity on the part of the players. Additionally, if a piece of computer equipment fails, the game can experience processing delays. However, the moderator will be able to process turns more efficiently and quickly. Additionally, there is never any question of impartiality, since the computer never plays favorites. A computer is not subject to mood swings, writer's block, or memory lapse.

HOW MUCH, AND HOW OFTEN?

Another important difference between games is turn length. This is the frequency with which players are expected to submit a turn sheet. Some games require a player to provide the company with a new turn sheet every seven days. Usually, the length of time is two weeks, but can range up to one month.

Of course, cost is an important feature of any PBM game. PBM games generally charge players in one of two ways:

1. Each time a player submits a turn sheet, he will be charged a certain amount of money. This

STELLAR REALMS

10 player game of space conquest. Simple rules make this game easy to learn while a 3 dimensional playing field makes play challenging. This game requires the ability to form the right alliances and the savvy to know when to break them.

Over 500 locations arranged in a 3D space with 100 star systems. Each player starts with control of one star system and one fleet of starships. Players may build additional fleets as they capture star systems. The first player to capture half the star systems is the winner.

Rulebook - $3.00
Turn fee - $4.00
Startup and first 4 turns - $10.00

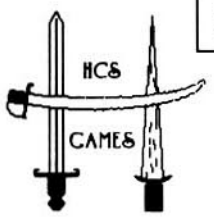
DARK AGE

The scene is Dark Age Britain, a land where a dozen nations and kings and a multitude of tribes and races jostle for supremecy. Britons, Picts, Welsh, Scots and Irish battle for survival against invading Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, and Norsemen.

This is the age of Beowolf, of Aurthur, of Alfred the Great, Eric Bloodaxe, and Ethelred the Unready. This is an age of bitter wars, of ever-shifting alliances, of great population movements, as the many kings and people of Britain pursue their destinies with sword and plough.

Rulebook - $3.00
Turn fee - $4.00
Startup and first 3 turns - $10.00

Also available - GLORY II, the game of the American Civil War



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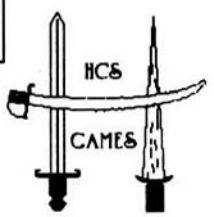
Compuserve:71202,3355



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* Your term in office has just begun. The list of campaign promises glare up from your desk. It's truly a..

SIRIUS COMMAND

* Heroically Spearhead a Glorious Revolution; OR (private note) Ruthlessly Dominate the People; OR do *new* Political Madness!
* Amass a Military of Epic Proportions! Then Search Out and Destroy up to 19 other Players, or Prepare for the Inevitable!
* Exploit Marketing Powers that can Make or Break the Entire Planetary Economic System!
* Shamelessly Sneak About and create Worldwide Chaos with Unfettered Acts of Subversion, Sabotage, and Violence!
* Throw Your Weight Around or Suck Up to your Enemies in Public Forum (and/or in Private). When you play *Siriusly*, *you'll do everything* to keep your nation on Top!

There's 16+ turns per game.
Rules: **$3.50** Turns: **$4.75**
Pre-pay first 2 turns for **$8.50**.
Rules FREE for first time SC players on signup. For signups, details, and ***specials*** contact:

Inner Dimension Games
51 Henry W. Dubois Drive
New Paltz, NY 12561
914-255-7028

approach is known as "no hidden charges."

2. Each time a player submits a turn sheet, he will be charged a certain amount of money. However, there will also be additional charges in some circumstances. For example, some games will assess an additional charge for a "battle report," which is generated whenever a player initiates combat. Some games will charge an extra .50¢ when a player controls in excess of a certain number of units.

Most games use the "no hidden charges" approach. Players can expect to pay between three and nine dollars a turn, depending on which game they choose to play. The average cost for a PBM game turn is currently between four and five dollars.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

One criticism that has been voiced about the PBM hobby is that it involves paying money for meaningless pieces of paper. This is similar to saying that RPG gamers make their investment (countless hours of time) in return for meaningless pieces of paper (character sheets). PBM gaming is no more about results sheets than role-playing games are about character sheets.

PBM releases a player from the burden of finding other players with whom to game; the PBM companies take care of this. Additionally, PBM provides a wide range of new people to game with. Many alliances will be formed during a PBM game; some will be broken. Players will make friends, and occasionally bitter enemies. With so many new people to interact with, predictability is seldom a problem to contend with.

PBM can also accommodate all of the creativity, humor, and emotion that a Fantasy Role-playing game can (depending on the game, of course). PBM is like a board game, computer game or RPG, on a larger scale.

SO MANY GAMES, SO LITTLE TIME...

Now that you've learned a little bit about PBM games, you may be wondering how to give it a try. The first step would be to find a magazine (such as SHADIS) that devotes some coverage to PBM games. There are also two magazines that entirely devoted to PBM games: Flagship Magazine (PO Box 6105WSS, Gainsville, FL 30504); and Paper Mayhem (1518 Adams T., Ottawa, IL 61350).

The next step is to read the reviews and advertisements of the available games. Look for something that appeals to you. Don't concentrate on how a game is run, or what the cost is - just find a few games that you think you would enjoy playing.

Once you have selected four or five games, begin to examine the differences between them. Are they open or closed ended? Human moderated computer moderated, or mixed? What are the charges? How often are turns run? Sometimes you will have to send for further information, but usually this is provided in a review or ad.

While "open vs. closed ended" is often a matter of personal taste, it is perhaps wise for a PBM novice to select a closed-ended game for his first attempt. This allows a new player to begin with a position comparable to that of all the other players, since everybody will be starting the game at the same time. There will be a definite ending to the game providing the feel of a "complete experience." Additionally, it provides the player with an opportunity to learn about PBM games, without being "committed" to a particular game for a lengthy period. Role-players who cannot abide with boardgames or simulations should be advised to find a game with an emphasis on role-playing; this is not as common amongst closed-ended games as it is in open-ended games.

It is recommended that a new player select games that are processed once every two weeks. New players often find once-a-week games too expensive or too quick, and can often lose interest in once-a-month games.

As for moderation, die-hard role-players will probably find the most enjoyment from a human or mixed moderation game. Those gamers that also enjoy computer simulations and board games should probably try a computer-moderated game first, as the reliability and consistency of the rules will more than compensate for the loss of "creative input."

Finally, for a first game, try to find a game that offers "no hidden charges." In an initial letter of inquiry, one can simply ask if there are "any additional fees." Naturally, the amount of money that one can afford to spend on a game is dependent upon one's income. Be sure to consider the possibility that you might want to contact another player by phone at some point, and this, too, can add to a game's cost.

While the industry has been in operation for over twenty years, and has supported many wonderful companies, it would be a disservice not to provide this brief cautionary note. Due to the skill and attention with which many companies serve their players, it can sometimes seem that moderating a PBM game is a simple thing to do. With this in mind, it is sometimes possible that a sincere, well-meaning individual can attempt an undertaking which is entirely over his head, in attempting to moderate a PBM game of his own. On rare occasions, it has been known for a new company to cease operations, and neglect to return the payments that players have provided them. For this reason, it is strongly suggested that players use caution when dealing with large amounts of money. Generally speaking, players should have no fear of dealing with "established" companies - companies who appear (at whatever ranking) in the "Ratings" section of a magazine; companies that have advertised over the course of several issues; companies who have been in business for six months or more. These criteria are by no means definitive, but are a good guideline. Personally, I have joined nearly twenty play-by-mail games over the course of five years, some of them after seeing only the first advertisement. I have yet to be "ripped off."

While this is an inordinately long discourse on a simple topic, it seemed important to be thorough. It's easy for those of us in PBM to lose sight of the fact that much of our jargon can separate us (and our hobby) from those who aren't familiar with it. While PBM isn't for everyone, there are many, many gamers who have never tried it, that would certainly find it a rewarding experience. ❑

Ship Ahoy!

This section is where we will be looking at new Play-by-Mail Games that are hitting the market. These are only overviews, based solely on promotional materials received from PBM companies and should not be construed as endorsements or complete reviews.

Edited by Patrick Rodgers

GAD Games, the company that brings Middle Earth PBM to the UK, is starting a new game called **"Timelapse."**

The object of Timelapse is to collect fifty different items, known in the game as "enigmas." Possession of the required enigmas will allow a player to repair the tachyon generator on his starship, and escape the planet, winning the game.

To complicate matters, however, players will find that they have crash landed on a very primitive, Bronze Age planet. Furthermore, the extreme tachyon emissions from their damaged ships are causing "timelapses," which cause characters to shift forward in time. Thus, while the game starts in the Bronze Age, it will usually reach the Space Age before someone attains victory.

While a player may be lucky enough to find an enigma or two that is totally unguarded, the majority of enigmas will be in the hands of non-player entities - villages, armies, generals, rulers, etc. Interaction between the players and the NPCs is essential to gaining the required enigmas.

The rulebook is well organized and pleasant to read. Even more pleasant is the unbelievable offer that GAD games is currently extending: a free rulebook, free setup, and three free turns, just for the asking! To see Timelapse for yourself, contact *GAD games at 20A Belle Vue, Buede, Cornwall EX23 8JL, United Kingdom.*

While **New Dawn** is undergoing further reprogramming, Marguerite Dias is offering **Kavernes**, a solo PBM game, presented in a similar style to the "Choose your own Adventure" solo gaming books.

After generating a character, the game begins in an abandoned old house. Underneath the house is rumored to be a system of caverns that contains wealth untold. As the character explores the caverns, a list of options will be given to him, as certain situations arise. During each turn, a character has the opportunity to select three options to pursue.

The results sheets appear to be laser quality, as is the double-sided single sheet of paper that serves as the game's rulebook. A setup in the game costs ninety-nine cents, as do subsequent turns. Kavernes appears to be a simple, straightforward game, and at ninety-nine cents a turn, it's certainly worth a look. Expect to see a review of this game sometime soon in our "For a few dollars less" section. Those anxious to explore Kavernes should contact *Marguerite Dias at 1650 Sequoia Ave, Tracy CA 95376.*

Europe's largest role-playing PBM campaign has just arrived in America. **"Quest: World of Kharne,"** which has been offered overseas for several years, was recently licensed by Adventures By Mail. The rulebook is written in the same fashion as that of "Monster Island," giving the player enough information to start out with, but preserving the sense of discovery in the game by not giving away too much. Players begin with a party of six characters, but may eventually control up to fifteen characters.

If the rulebook is any indication, it would seem that Quest employs a game engine that is slightly superior to similar games. Through the use of standing orders, players may direct their party through a greater number of scenarios than the typical "enter room, kill monster, get treasure," games allow. Examples include an Attitude rating (ranging from friendly to hostile) that can be set for up to eight different groups or individuals, and a Depth Control order, which will

automatically cause the party to ascend, descend, or ignore any encountered stairways.

Like any good RPG, Quest abounds with Non-Player Characters (NPCs). While it is difficult to tell from the rulebook just how detailed the NPCs are, there appear to be several methods to interact with them. The most ingenious of these is the Chat List -a list of up to twenty different words or phrases that the player's party will attempt to gather information about. When a character meets an NPC, the party may receive information from that NPC, if the NPC knows anything about any of the items on their Chat List.

As the name implies, Quest also offers a large number of quests for parties to pursue. A party may pursue up to three separate quests at one time. These may range from simple courier missions to complex, involved challenges. Upon completing a quest, all characters receive an experience point award, and occasionally other rewards as well.

Each individual game of Quest can support up to one thousand adventuring parties. ABM has priced the game at three dollars per turn, and promises an approximately-monthly player-produced newsletter, free of charge. The game is open-ended, and turns appear to be processed once every ten days, with makeup turns allowed.

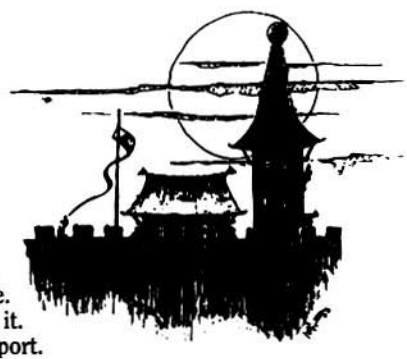
As part of a special deal with POST MARQUE, Adventures by Mail is offering a free trial to all POST MARQUE readers. Enclosed with this issue is an insert that is valid for a **FREE RULEBOOK AND FREE SETUP IN QUEST.** After filling out and mailing the Enrollment Turncard (the detachable postcard at the bottom of the insert), readers will receive a copy of the Quest rules, and a starting printout. This is free of charge and there is no obligation to continue playing. Fees for subsequent play will be assessed at the normal rate.

If your copy of POST MARQUE is missing the insert, contact Adventures by Mail at PO Box 436, Cohoes NY 12047-0436. Identify yourself as a POST MARQUE reader, and they will send you a replacement insert.. ❑

Quest: World of Kharne

Europe's #1 Play-By-Mail Campaign is here!

You begin with a party of six adventurers. You can choose from versatile Humans, brawny Dwarves, clever Elves, and sneaky Halfbloods. You choose their starting profession: Fighter, Mage, Priest, or Thief. You then outfit them in the Town or City where your party begins.



You can...

- Study in a library.
- Learn thieving skills.
- Research new spells.
- Workout in the gym.
- Chat with shop owners.
- Explore the wilderness.
- Buy the local newspaper.
- Sleep and drink at an inn.
- Tithe your gold to a temple.
- Scout a shop and then rob it.
- Take a ferry to another seaport.
- Learn of quests to other towns.
- Battle NPCs and deadly creatures.
- Buy and sell weapons and armor.
- Search for a hidden lair or cave system.
- At a bank, take out a loan, if you qualify.
- Ride a stagecoach to another settlement.
- Purchase spell powders and magic items.
- Visit the town council and collect bounty.
- Explore one of more than a hundred dungeons.
- Stock up on rations and dungeon delving equipment.
- Eight Gods grant your priests the ability to do miracles.
- Locate hidden shops to obtain exotic items & knowledge.
- And much more!

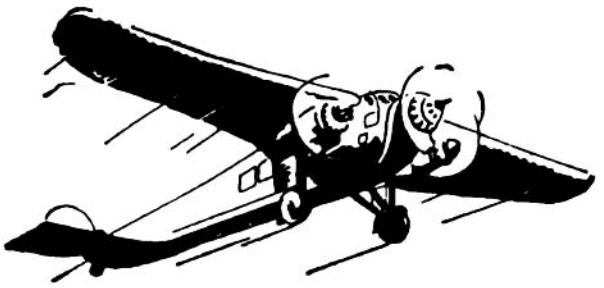
Just The Facts

- 1000 player parties.
- 40,000 wilderness locations.
- 100% computer-moderated.
- 3 turns per month.
- Same-day turnaround.
- Fully supported by a team of professional GMs and programmers.

Low $3 Turn Fee!

FREE ENTRY!
FREE RULEBOOK!

Begin play instantly. Quit at anytime.
Send your name and address to
Adventures By Mail, Box 436-S1, Cohoes NY 12047.
Or phone us at (518) 237-4870, or fax us at (518) 237-6245.



PLAY-BY-AIRMAIL

PBM GAMES FROM OVERSEAS

This issue features a decidedly different PBM game from the United Kingdom. While many PBMs focus on traditional gaming genres, such as fantasy, sci-fi, World War II, or sports, a trend towards unconventional games seems to be making its presence felt.

"Movie Mogul," from the company of the same name, is one such game. "Movie Mogul" places the player in the role of a fledgling Hollywood film producer. The goal is to amass awards and box office receipts by producing blockbuster films. All aspects of the process are covered, including casting, production crews (and costs), censorship, advertising, and distribution. Players also have the option of submitting a short (220 words or less) script synopsis!

The players are predominantly European, but the moderator, Andrew Perry, is serving his American players well, and is seeking to expand his US player base. Turnaround via airmail is reasonably quick, and a fifty cent stamp is all that is required to mail a turn. Payment is presently only accepted in British currency, so a trip to the local post office for an International Money Order may be in order. Those fortunate enough to live near major cities or international airports may enquire about currency exchange at such locations.

The setup package is available for L5 by surface mail, or L7 by airmail. It includes a setup, a free turn, a 26 page rule book, and a 20 page source list. The source list is essential to "Movie Mogul," as it contains a listing of all actors, actresses, directors, editors, writers, and cinematographers who are currently available, as well as important information about their "asking price," the quality of film that they normally work on, and their previous work. The following examples are taken from the source list:

Prof.	Name	Nat.	Style	Age	Advance	F%
Actor	Sean Connery	GB	d,a	60	$2.5m	70
Actress	Kim Basinger	US	c,d	30	$500k	40
Director	James Cameron	—	s,a,f	—	$1.0m	50
Writer	Wes Craven	—	h,f	—	$300k	40
Editor	Robert Brown	—	—	—	$75k	40
Cinemat.	Adam Greenberg	—	—	—	$150k	60

The filmographies normally present in the source list are not presented here. Nationalities and ages are listed for actors and actresses only; ages are rounded to the nearest 10 years. "Style" refers to the genre(s) that the person has proficiency in; (a)ction, (ani)mation, (c)omedy, (d)rama, (f)antasy, (h)orror, (s)cience fiction, or (t)hrillers.

"Advance" represents the minimum advance that the person in question will accept. This figure is only a guideline, however, as many factors will affect the price that a producer must pay. Someone who has offers from other players on the same game turn, or who had recent success at the box office, may demand more money. By the same token, a seldom-hired individual may accept less than his usual advance. Another way that a player can hire someone for less than the usual advance is to offer a percentage of the box office take. Naturally, professionals will be wary of accepting percentage-heavy deals from novice filmmakers, but established players with a proven track record may be able to significantly lower somebody's "asking price" by offering a percentage.

"F%" represents the overall quality of a film, and in the sourcebook listing, it indicates the quality of films that the individual is used to participating in. If a player is known for producing films of a quality greater than the listed F%, then a lower "asking price" can be offered.

The source list, which is updated every few months, is quite comprehensive. Additionally, players may hire individuals who are not in the source list by providing the GM with whatever information about the individual that they have; the GM will respond with a suggested advance, and the individual may be hired thereafter. New positions consist of one Movie Mogul, and $1,000,000 cash. The Movie Mogul (the player) has a skill range of 0-100 in the following categories: Business, Acting, Cinematography, Directing, Editing, and Writing. The latter five categories are used if the player casts his Mogul in any of the corresponding positions. The Business skill will affect negotiations with professionals, distributors, and anything else involving money.

A Mogul also has a Status rating, which starts at 200. It increases with the production of quality and/or successful films, as well as when a Mogul's film is nominated for (or wins) an award.

Filling out a turnsheet can be accomplished in an hour or less, if the player has an idea for a movie. The first step should be selecting a film genre. Then, the player should hire and assign crew units. For a "C Grade" film, which will be the first sort of film any new player will produce, each unit costs $2,000, and represents about 10 people. Units need to be assigned to eight departments, including Camera, Sound, and Labor, in both the pre- and post- as well as actual production phases. A typical first effort could involve as many as forty or fifty crew units total.

The player must also select a "production scale" for his film. This represents the size of the film in terms of physical locations. For example, the film "E.T." uses only a few rooms

and a small, suburban street. The rulebook rates "E.T." at a 3 on the production scale (PS). A film like "Total Recall," with many large sets, might rate as high as a 9 PS. A film with a larger PS will naturally require a greater number of crew units.

Next, the running time of the film must be specified, and the shooting rate selected. A quick shooting rate (e.g. 30 minutes per week) may result in more mistakes and a poorer film quality. Of course, with a "C Grade" film, this is not too important. Dividing the running time by the shooting rate will yield the shoot schedule, which is the amount of time that the actual production stage of the film will take.

The player must then determine how much time is to be allocated to pre- and post-production. Usually, this is at least as much time for each stage as actual production, and often twice as much or more. A typical first effort might require seven weeks of pre-production, six weeks of production, and twelve weeks of post production, for a grand total of twenty-five weeks.

All of this can easily bring the production cost of a first effort to between six and seven hundred thousand dollars. This leaves the fledgling mogul a mere $300K with which to attract Big Name Stars. However, the sourcebook is filled with lesser-known individuals who are often play important roles in first films. Another excellent source of inexpensive labor is child stars.

Once the player has cast his main roles, and signed on a Director, Cinematographer, Editor, and Writer, he must select a distributor. There are presently eight major distributors available, and each has their own special characteristics. The player may also specify how much money the distributors will spend out of their own pocket to advertise the film, and exactly where the advertising will appear. However, distributors who make large expenditures on advertising are likely to take larger percentages of profits to cover their fees.

If the Mogul has any money left over (highly unlikely on early turns), he may invest it in a number of low, medium, and high risk ventures. Finally, if a Mogul has any time left over (highly likely on early turns), he may seek work through his agent. His chance of finding work, and the amount of work, depend upon his abilities in the job for which he applies. For example, a Mogul with a high Writing ability would be advised to seek work as a Writer.

All that remains is to write a brief, 30-word synopsis of the film, as well as a more detailed script summary. Plot synopses for all films will be printed in the newsletter that accompanies every turn. If the film is nominated for an award (or if the player pays an additional fifty pence), the full script summary is used.

Each player receives a detailed individualized results sheet, detailing the performance of the film, the effectiveness of all components of the film process, and (of course) finances. Additionally, all players receive "That Was the Turn That Was," the newsletter that is published with every turn. The newsletter contains plot synopses and script summaries, as well as player messages, GM notes, rankings, and other similar information. It averages around twenty pages in length.

Overall, Movie Mogul certainly represents a break from traditional PBM design. The subject matter is certainly fresh, as is the game system. At first glance, it appears to be largely arbitrary and moderator-driven, but once players have actually run a turn, it is apparent that the computer plays a large role in the process. Turnsheets and results printouts are easy to read, and well laid-out. Results sheets are usually one side of a single page, but they do contain all pertinent data. The printing appears to be simple dot-matrix.

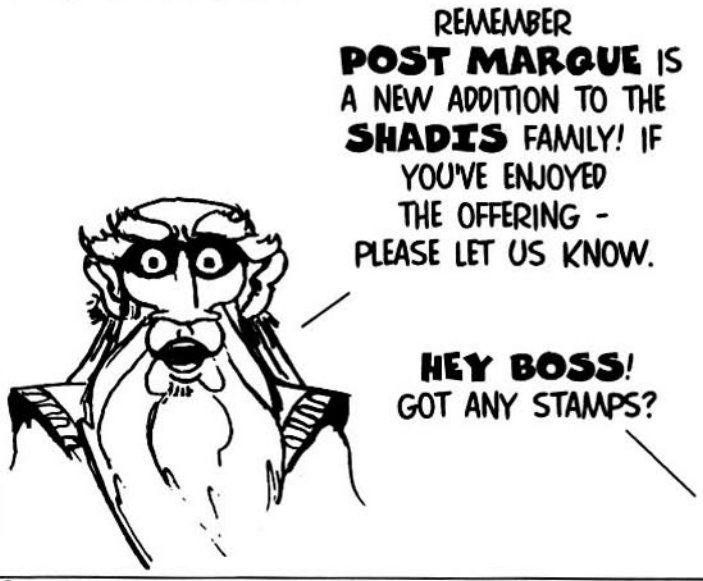
The newsletter can be very dull for players who don't care to read the script summaries of their fellow Moguls, but most people who will be attracted to this game will find it a pleasure rather than a chore, as there is usually a smorgasbord of creative concepts to enjoy. The Gamesmaster seems friendly and knowledgeable about the game, and has been both communicative and accomodating in the task of bringing in American players.

Game turns are currently priced at L2.54 for surface mail (not recommended) or L2.95 for Air Mail. Players who miss the biweekly deadline will be sent the newsletter by surface mail for a charge of 90 pence. Exchange rates between the dollar and the pound fluctuate constantly, but a safe rule of thumb is that it will require $1.50 to purchase L1.00.

For more information about Movie Mogul, contact:

Movie Mogul,
55 Martley Road,
Worcester, WR2 6HG, England

Be sure to write or stamp "Air Mail" on the outside of the letter, and be sure to mention SHADIS & POST MARQUE. See you in the movies! ❑



SIRIUS COMMAND

A Play-By-Mail Review

By Patrick M. Rodgers

Sirius Command is a closed-ended PBM game with a two-week turnaround. Each player controls one of the game's twenty major nations, while the computer maintains the one hundred minor nations that also participate. The object is to accumulate Victory Points, which are earned through military conquest (no surprises there), but also through creating and maintaining a high National Standard of Living (NSoL) in your home nation.

After Turn 16 is run, the players with the three highest victory point totals are declared the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners, respectively. If any of those three happen to be at war, the game continues until the war is resolved (and no further wars may be declared).

****** OFFICIAL DOCUMENT of Ferret Islands ******
Only for the eyes of the Commander in Chief
**** STATE OF THE NATION ****

This is the section of the turnsheet where your nation's current characteristics are located. Every nation in the game has a rating of 1 through 100 that define their Aggression, Climate, Economy, Information, Morale, Nationalism, and Piety. An Aggression rating of 1 would indicate extreme sloth, and thus it would be difficult to motivate such a nation into action. Extreme ratings will have effects that vary with each characteristic. Characteristics also have a tendency to slide toward a middle "homing range" over time.

The census and birth rate also appear in this section. It is assumed that every member of your population is employed. A larger population makes it easier to earn victory points, so it's important to keep your citizens alive.

Of course, you might be tempted to let a few million of 'em die after you see your wage rates, which are printed in this section. Your population are all paid wages by the government (you), consisting of Agriculture (AP), Fuel (FP), and Industry (IP). The higher your wage levels are set, the greater your National Standard of Living (NSoL) will be, and this is essential to earning Victory Points. For your convenience, your NSoL will be calculated for you and printed in this section.

You receive victory points every turn based on your World Standard of Living (WSoL), which also appears here. A nation's WSoL is determined by dividing its NSoL by the highest NSoL in the game. Thus, the country with the highest National Standard of Living in the game has a WSoL of 1.0, and all other nations will have a lesser WSoL. This creates competition amongst players to have the highest NSoL in the game, since everybody wants to have the WSoL of 1.0, thereby gaining more Victory Points.

Information on the National Wealth is provided here, as well as money in the "Slush Fund" (to be used for diplomatic or covert actions) and the "Slush Tax rate," which determines how much money is siphoned off from the National Wealth for "other use."

To encourage players to more accurately simulate the diversity of nations in a world, all countries have a "Character Modifier" to Victory Point awards. The modifier is higher in nations that have more characteristics in the extreme ranges, and thus increases the amount of Victory Points earned each turn. The Character Modifier is calculated and printed each turn.

In addition to Victory Points, a player will also be notified of how many Influence Points he has at his disposal. Influence Points are required for most actions within the game, and are a very real measure of how much power a player has at his disposal. Influence Points are awarded every turn, based on the National Wealth. In addition, on every fourth turn, an Influence Point bonus will be awarded based on the nation's military readiness, and its NSoL. Influence Points can be saved for use on later turns. They can even be used to purchase Victory Points, although it is generally more cost effective to spend them on changes in your nation that will, of themselves, produce greater Victory Point gains.

**** COMMODITY ACTIVITY SUMMARY ****

This section of the results sheet contains complete details on your nation's economy, and the World Market. There are six commodities in the game - in addition to AP, FP, and IP, there are Non-strategic resources (NP), Research (RP), and Strategic resources (SP). Each nation can produce a certain amount of each commodity per turn, which is called their Current Capacity. Each nation also has a Maximum Capacity, and by expending Influence and commodities, a player can increase his nation's Current Capacity until it reaches its Maximum Capacity (thereby producing more of the commodity in question).

The amount of each commodity produced, and the amount consumed are listed here. The quantity of each commodity that a nation has in reserves is displayed similarly. During a given turn, a nation can only consume the commodities that were in its reserves at the end of the previous turn; thus, the reserve is the amount of the commodity that the player's nation may expend during the coming turn.

To offset the often unforseen effects of commodity shortages, production growth, and unstable supply/demand, each nation has a reserve rate for each commodity, which is set by the player. By way of example, if a nation's reserve rate for IP is 10%, and on a particular turn the nation consumes 200,000 IP, then the player's nation will try to end its turn with 220,000 IP in reserves. If the reserves fall short of this number, then the nation will try to purchase IP on the open market. If the reserves exceed this figure, then the nation will attempt to sell IP on the open market. There are no commands to "buy/sell commodity" in Sirius Command; the reserve rate serves that purpose.

Whether or not a nation can buy or sell a sufficient quantity of a commodity to meet its reserve rate will also be determined largely by its asking price. If your nation is offering IP for sale at 20.00 CU per unit, and a hundred other nations are offering to sell at 5.00 CU, then the chances are that the hundred other nations will sell most or all of their IP before anyone buys from your nation. Players who are serious about the economics of the game will change their asking prices for all commodities on almost every turn.

Following the Activity Summary is an itemized commodity consumption chart, which shows exactly how much of each quantity went to each type of expenditure: wages, commodity production, military maintenance, military production, and commodity capacity increases. Needless to say, this is extremely useful information.

It may seem as if the economics system in the game is somewhat complicated, but this is not the case. For those who like to crunch a few numbers, the time it takes to become conversant with the economic system is minimal. For those who hate economics, there is some degree of built in "help" offered by (computer generated) "advisors," which will appear on turn printouts. It is not necessary for you to micromanage the economy on every single turn.

**** WORLD MARKET EXCHANGE ****

The first figure presented here is the net currency gain/loss experienced by your country for that particular turn. Following that figure is a detailed description of the trading that took place for each commodity. An average market exchange might look like this:

AP Market: Economists rallied as their prediction of an AP squeeze came true. 7,676,999 AP sold for about .604 CU. Our interests had to pay about .575 CU, with buyers' prices of .702 to .504 (before the haggling started). The count of other involved nations totalled 89. On average, one might say that economists' predictions are getting pretty hazy.

FP Market: The market was flooded with FP this quarter! The Cumulate Commodity Compendium concluded that 67,181,204 FP sold at a price of .270 CU. They paid us .309 CU (avg) per commodity point. The sellers' prices initially varied from .392 to .203 CU. There were 45 other nations selling, just like us.

IP Market: IP was in short supply this quarter. Juicy intelligence from the economic grapevine revealed that 7,821,818 IP retailed for 5.676 CU. Our interests sold at 5.709 CU. The 66 buyers started the bidding at between 6.594 and 5.090 CU. Analysis: no one is rocking the boat. NP Market: Sellers had a hard time giving NP away in this environment! The Economer Journal surveys acknowledged that 12,429,003 fresh NP were sold at about .448 CU. Our interests had to pay about .444. All of 97 sellers created an initial pricing array of .506 to .391 CU.

RP Market: Economists sought raises, they ALL AGREED, there is a need for more RP! 768,998 RP were retailed for about 15.613 CU. We received 16.046 CU Per unit, with 5 buyers' prices ranging from 21.499 to 10.030. Then the haggling started.

SP Market: The SP supply was almost on target. 30,653,479 units of SP were purchased at a cost of around 1.657 CU. Our businesses accepted a 1.565 CU unit value. The 78 buyers started the bidding at between 1.690 and .743 CU. Sirius Stuff: ATTENTION should be paid to currently unstable supply: demand indicators.

Finally, in this section, information on your research and development programs are listed. Each commodity, (with the exception of RP) and each of the three military forces have a Tech Level. All player nations begin with Tech Levels of 1.0 in all categories. The only way to increase a Tech Level is to allocate RP (Research) to the task. It requires 25,000 RP to establish Tech Level 1.0 (which all player nations start with). An additional 150,000 RP (for a total of 175,000 RP) will provide Tech Level 2. A whopping 575,000 RP in total are required to reach Tech Level 3.

At higher Tech Levels, a nation will produce larger amounts of a commodity, while production expenditure stays the same. For example, at Tech Level 1.0, a nation will expend (among other things) 2,000 IP to produce 200,000 FP. At Tech Level 2.0, that nation would still expend only 2,000 IP, but would produce 220,000 FP. This represents the application of research into improving refining techniques, etc.

While military units will not be produced at lower cost, higher Tech Levels will lead to more effective units. Tech Level (TL) 2.0 units will naturally outperform TL 1.0 units. Towards the middle of the game, TL 2.0 units will become essential, if only as a deterrent to would-be attackers. TL 3.0 forces are rare, but represent incredible military power.

(*) MINISTRY OF THE MILITARY (*)

A list of any current declared Allies is printed here. There are two types of alliances in the game: Primary and Limited. Primary allies can call on each other in times of war, and can provide a deterrent to attackers (who are naturally less anxious to take on a group than a lone target). Limited alliances provide fewer benefits, but are still worth forming.

A report on each of the three military forces follows. There are Anti-Missile Defense units (AntiMiD), Mutually-Assured Destruction Capability units (MADCap), and Tactical Force units (TacForce). AntiMid provide the sole defense against MADCap assaults. MADCap units are the equivalent of nuclear missiles; their destructive capabilities usually surprise players when they first experience them. TacForce represent infantry-type ground units, and have no effect on MADCap or AntiMiD units.

Each force has a Tactical Readiness rating (TacRed). TacRed declines naturally every turn, but can be raised by expending Influence. Higher TacReds lead to higher costs for military maintenance. Obviously, forces with higher TacReds will be more effective in combat.

Finally, a breakdown of all forces within your borders is presented. Each country has a Primary Zone (PZ) and a Neutral Zone (NZ). There are no maps in Sirius Command, since it is assumed that, given modern technology, a country could conceivably attack anyone, regardless of whether or not they were geographically adjacent. Only TacForce are actually "present" in an NZ or PZ. If an enemy TacForce occupy your NZ for two turns, or your PZ for one turn, and you have no TacForce to send against them, you will be forced to surrender.

Surrendering to your opponent will not put you out of the game. About the only way to realistically be put out of the game is to have your population reduced to zero, since that will effectively prevent you from earning any Victory Points. However, even in such a case, if your lead is large enough, and the game close to its conclusion, victory is still possible. In game 11, the winning player gives a total of eight surrenders to enemy players. Surrenders can be voluntary, but if certain conditions are met, your nation will be forced to issue a surrender. Surrenders cause a loss of a quantity of Victory Points, and a gain of Victory Points for the victor(s). An important point about surrendering is that it is significantly more costly in Influence to declare war on anyone who has recently given a surrender.

=== MMN BROADCAST NEWS ===

This is the quarterly summary of the Major Major Network news reports, edited for the Supreme Commander. It is here that players issue news items for the general public - some of them quite colorful and creative. Wars, troop movements, sabotage, diplomacy, and much more also comes to light (whether the players like it or not) thanks to dedicated MMN investigative reporters.

WHY WON"T THEY LEAVE ME ALONE DEPT... Item: A security breach revealed.. Dissidents showed their strength in Duchy of Sherlock (7). Government directives to manage RP allocations to the production of IP were sided tracked by 4,500 influence push..Item: A security breach revealed..Dissidents took action in Kargad (10)! Moves to alter te market value of RP and the production of ANTIMID sere sidetracked by a 3,000 influence push...Item: Qully (16) faced reactionary threat. Administration attempts to readjust the market value of NP and the production of TACFORCE< MADCAP adn ANITIMID were sidetracked by a 15,000 influence push.

HOT FLASHES If commodity subsides weren't enough.. look what else we snaked out. NO doubt they assume gifts of CU are best given out of PUBLIC VIEW! To Clinico (40) 10,000 CU by Reverie (19). To Fento (54) 10,000 CU by R.O.D.S. (12). To Insual (71) 5,000 CU by R.O.D.S. (12). To Seta (114) 6,000 CU by Freedonia (2). To Sheana (115) 5,500 CU by Freedoinia.

+#+ SPHERE OF INFLUENCE +#+

One of the more important aspects of Sirius Command is the relationship between your country and minor nations. Each turn, you will receive a small Influence award from every minor nation in your Sphere of Influence. To place a nation in your Sphere of Influence, a SOFI order is issued, along with an Influence expenditure. All nations in your Sphere will be listed here, as well as your esteem value in each nation. "Helping" minor nations by tinkering with their economies, or by simply providing cash and/or commodity subsidies, will increase your esteem value in that nation. However, a minor nation can be in any number of Spheres of Influence, and whenever your esteem value goes up, the esteem value of other players who have SOFId that nation will drop. Of course, through careful use of espionage, there are more direct methods of causing other players' esteem values to drop...

*** TH-E S+P.Y NE/T=WO.(R).K ***

The spy network, naturally, reports to you on the activity of your spies, as well as any spies that may be working against your interests. Every nation that your spies have infiltrated is listed here, as well as their undercover value, which represents how much "exposure" they face. Higher undercover values will lead to more effective espionage.

Spies can also recruit supporting rebels from amongst the host nation's dissident population. These rebels will assist your spies in any actions they perform. Spies will automatically report any spies that they have located in any nations that they occupy.

Spies can perform a variety of useful actions, and they require no expenditure of Influence. Although CU can be used to enhance their efficacy, it is by no means necessary to do so. Spies are capable of capturing and/or killing other spies, sabotaging commodity production, destroying military units, gathering vital information, lowering esteem values, and a few other dirty tricks besides.

Spies that are captured can be subjected to "debriefing" and "realignment" procedures, which can sometimes lead to some of them defecting to the captors. This is usually announced in the MMN Broadcasts, and causes a drop in the morale of the spies' former home

nation. Of course, not everyone survives the procedures.

A particularly devious feature of Sirius Command is the FOOL order. In its simple, generic form, it causes the spies that respond to it to seek "deep cover," thus raising their undercover value. However, when used in conjunction with a sabotage order, the FOOL order will cause additional spies to spend time creating false leads. The end result is that, if performed successfully, the acts of sabotage will be blamed on another nation. Needless to say, this has led to many an undeserved attack.

+(Add'l Intelligence Reports)+

This section of your turn will provide you with any private messages (Notes) sent by other players. You will also receive notices of any sabotage that has occurred within your nation, and any other miscellaneous pieces of intelligence.

How does it all fit together? Quite well. There is sufficient military activity to satisfy most PBM gamers, but die-hard strategy-oriented wargamers are advised to look elsewhere for games of pure conquest. Likewise, the game allows for enough control of the economy to give most players a real sense of control over the nation, but pure number-crunching Economy majors should realize that one well-executed military strike can wipe out ten turns worth of spreadsheet-driven calculations.

Overall, Sirius Command is a balanced game. Economics, military prowess, and espionage will all play important factors. Naturally, the single most important factor can often be diplomacy. SC does not necessarily require diplomacy - there have been victories by single players with no allies - but a skilled diplomat can acquire a serious advantage. Allies are extremely useful and it is important to try and make a few. Communication between players is excellent, and there is often a degree of role-playing that is not normally present in closed-ended games.

The printouts themselves are well organized, and pleasant to read. The text is presented in full English sentences, and is fairly non-repetitive. Turn printouts average about six or seven pages. Players are limited to a maximum of thirty orders per turn, and this is almost always more than enough.

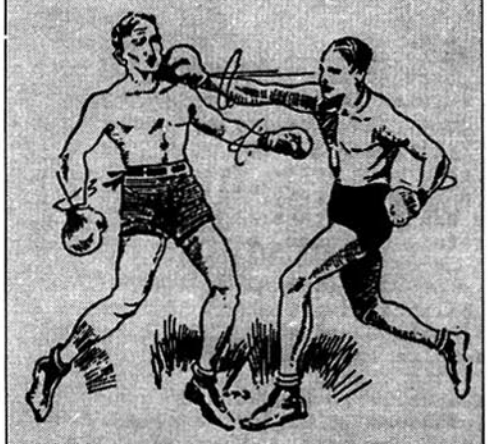
The thirty-four page rulebook is printed on hole-punched paper, with the intention that players keep the rules in a ring binder. When rules updates occur, the GM simply sends a replacement page for the outdated page. Rules updates are occurring fairly frequently. These are not massive, game-altering changes, but rather an addition of an option or two to existing orders, which certainly improves the game.

Inner Dimension Games charges $4.75 per turn for Sirius Command, which seems to be a fair price. However, there are usually several "specials" available, which can lower the turn price substantially. There are also discounts for winners - the first place winner receives $1 off per turn in his next game; the second and third place winners receive smaller but similar prizes. It seems that few companies today offer prizes to the winners; it's certainly nice to see one that does. Another nice perk of winning is that one of the minor nations in the game will be named after your nation, forevermore. So, don't be surprised if you find the Ferret Isles on your printout somewhere!

Lou Aubain is both the programmer and the GM for Sirius Command, so he is quite familiar with the program. He maintains reasonable phone hours, and is very helpful with any problems that come up. His sense of humor is quite evident in the SC printouts, as well as in the company newsletter, which is distributed every few months.

More information about Sirius Command can be obtained by writing to: Inner Dimension Games 51 Henry W. Dubois Dr. New Paltz, NY 12561

Final analysis: *A siriusly enjoyable game. Highly recommended for anyone who has ever looked at a world leader and said, "Ah - I could do better." Here's your chance.*❑



COMPUTER BOXING

A Capsule Review

By Trey Stone

Do you like to put together the strategy that brings the victory? Do you like to climb the ranks and stand head and shoulders above your peers? Do you like to bludgeon your foes senseless? Then check out Computer Boxing, now run by Northwest Simulations (formerly run by Schubel & Sons)

Computer Boxing (which does not require a computer to play) is very simple in its initial premise. You create a boxer who is just starting his professional career, by assigning points to three different categories. His statistics (Strength, Speed, Willpower, Reflexes, Precision, Intelligence, Endurance, Coordination, and Balance), his punching abilities (Combination, Cross, Hook, Jab, and Uppercut), and his technical abilities (Aggressiveness, Defense, Movement, and Power Punching) will determine what type of boxer you have.

From there, you match your boxer with an appropriate strategy. The turnsheet consists of a chart that comprises three time periods (Rounds 1-4, 5-8, and 9-12), and three contingencies - whether your boxer is winning, losing, or "running even." You decide on strategies appropriate for each situation, and see how your boxer matches up.

Computer Boxing is an easy game to learn, and it doesn't take much time to prepare a turn. It is also cheap to play - one dollar per turn. Turnaround time is somewhat slow at present (6/93), as Northwest Simulations takes over the operation, but this is not expected to be the norm.

Northwest Simulations can be reached at: PO Box 5080-274 Fairfield, CA 94533❑

Example of Computer Boxing Results Sheet:

The announcements are over. The match is about to start!
** DING! ** THAT's THE BELL FOR THE START OF ROUND #1
SOL FUBAR SCORES WITH A STRONG LEFT HOOK
SOL FUBAR IS CLINCHING
SOL FUBAR FAKES A RIGHT
TALON BLADE FAKES WITH A LEFT
SOL FUBAR CONNECTS WITH A LEFT CROSS
SOL FUBAR SCORES WELL WITH AN EFFECTIVE COMBINATION
TALON LADE IS KNOCKED DOWN! THE REFEREE IS COUNTING!
1..2..3..4..5..6..7..8..9..10
*** TALON BLADE IS OUT! ***
SOL FUBAR IS THE WINNER BY A KNOCKOUT!

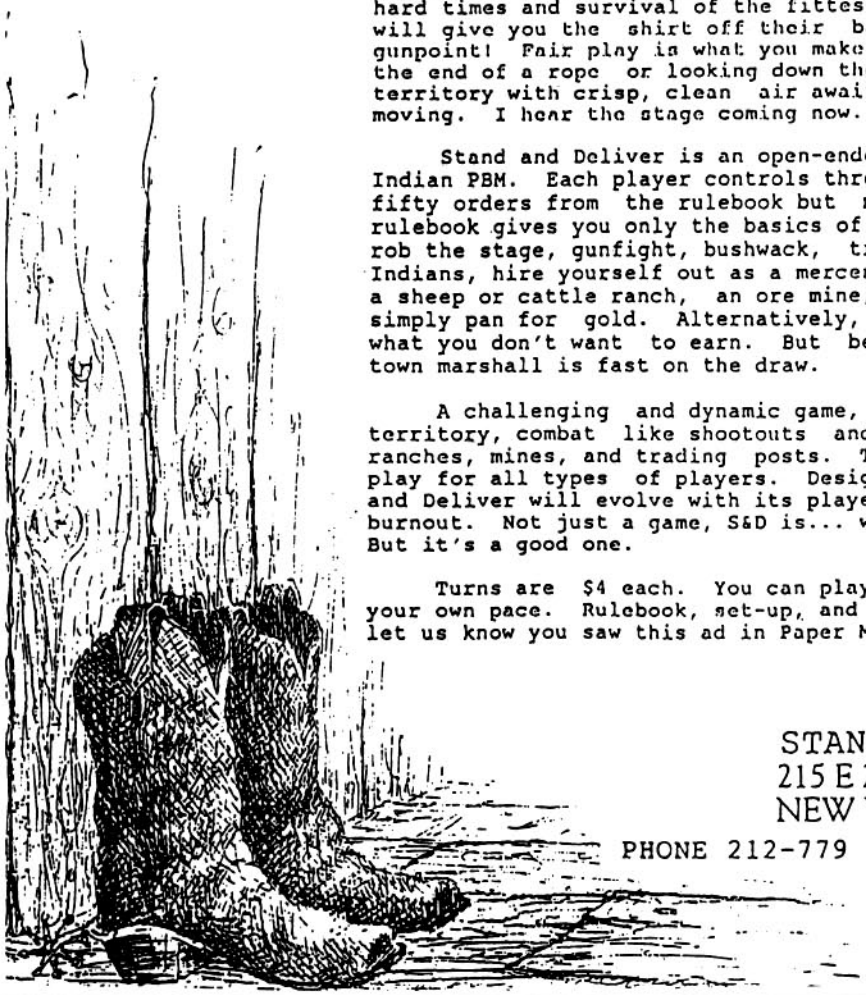
Stand and DeliveR

A PLAY BY MAIL ADVENTURE

Adventure in the Old West

Stand and Deliver, a game of strategy and conquest set in the Old West, begins with an untamed range and for most ends at tombstone. Surrounded by unknown lands and hostile Indians, you will learn about hard times and survival of the fittest. Some of your fellow pioneers will give you the shirt off their back. Others will take yours at gunpoint! Fair play is what you make it. Justice is to be found at the end of a rope or looking down the barrel of a shotgun. An open territory with crisp, clean air awaits you. Let's mount up and get moving. I hear the stage coming now.

Stand and Deliver is an open-ended computer moderated Cowboy and Indian PBM. Each player controls three separate characters. You know fifty orders from the rulebook but many more await discovery. The rulebook gives you only the basics of the game. You can bounty hunt, rob the stage, gunfight, bushwack, trade rifles and alcohol with the Indians, hire yourself out as a mercenary, and much more. You can run a sheep or cattle ranch, an ore mine, or a trading post, or you can simply pan for gold. Alternatively, you can just take at gunpoint what you don't want to earn. But be careful, buckeroo, because the town marshall is fast on the draw.



A challenging and dynamic game, S&D balances exploration of the territory, combat like shootouts and gunfights, and economics like ranches, mines, and trading posts. There is a successful avenue of play for all types of players. Designed with change in mind, Stand and Deliver will evolve with its player base to avoid open-ended game burnout. Not just a game, S&D is... well, I guess it is just a game. But it's a good one.

Turns are $4 each. You can play as often as once a week or at your own pace. Rulebook, set-up, and three free turns cost $10. Just let us know you saw this ad in Paper Mayhem.

STAND AND DELIVER
215 E 24TH ST. (620)
NEW YORK, NY 10010

PHONE 212-779 3585 FAX 212-598 4688

MY NAME AIN'T PARD!

A review of the
Old West Play-by-Mail Game:

STAND AND DELIVER

By Patrick Rodgers

"As you stare into the now setting sun, leaning on a hitching post and relaxing, you suddenly look up to find Pam, the local saloon wench, running around a corner, moving in your direction. She's obviously shaken, and very afraid of something. Then, from around that same corner, you see the cause of her fright. A mountain man who looks like a cross between an anvil and the Colorado Territory is following her. The very ground rumbles under his feet! Pam pleads for your help. Do you:

1) Forget chivalry and run like hell?

2) Throw caution to the wind and engage this mountain of a man in a fight?

3) Pull your gun and demand to be told what's going on?

The preceding encounter comes from Stand & Deliver, the (as far as we know) first (and only) computer-moderated, open-ended PBM set in the Old West. It is one of many Random Character encounters (RCs) that can happen, in addition to whatever occurs on a normal turn.

Stand & Deliver has all the elements of a classic Western film. There are currently 70 orders available in the game, including ambushes, shootouts, gunfights, bushwhacks, gambling, mining, trapping, goldpanning, ranching, buffalo hunting, trading with Indians, bounty hunting, and everything else that you'd expect. You'll find the equipment you need at the general store - ropes, horses, war wagons, gatling guns, prospector's gear, mules, harmonicas, chewing tobacco, and ten different types of guns, from carbines to derringers to long-barrel revolvers. The flavor of the West shows up in the turn results, the game newsletter (published about every six weeks), and the communications sent by players. Rumor has it that the GM's answering machine even has some (gasp) COUNTRY MUSIC on it (which isn't really Western music, but that's irrelevant here.)

The current price of Stand & Deliver is $4.00 per turn. This is almost ludicrously low, in light of the fact that a position consists of three separate characters, AND an economic base! The three characters are three totally separate, independent individuals, free to go their own way and do their own thing. The only connection between the three is that they utilize the same Attack and Non-Attack lists, and if one of them joins an alliance, the other two automatically join the same alliance.

Each of the three characters has traits that define who he is. These traits range in value from zero to ten, and consist of: Speed, Agility, Intelligence, Charisma, Stamina, Bravery, and Luck. Each character also has an Experience rating, which automatically increases by one every turn. No experience points are gained for killing people. Traits can be raised with certain orders. They can also be lowered when a character is the lucky recipient of a hot lead present.

Each character also has a profession. Originally, players could choose from a dozen available professions, but the game was later expanded to allow players to create their own professions. Each of the original professions had a special skill or bonus of some sort - for example, gunfighters receive a bonus to their combat values, and cattlemen will experience

more rapid growth on their cattle ranches than non-cattlemen. "New" character professions created by the players may be given new bonuses or advantages, depending on the creativity of the new profession, and the demand for it amongst the players.

Characters are not limited in action by their professions. Anyone can start a cattle ranch, regardless of whether or not they are a Cattleman. One need not be a Bandit to rob a train. There are only four character professions in the game that have "exclusive" actions available to them. The Cavalry Officer and Sheriff are the only character types that can lead war parties into Sioux territory, for the purpose of rescuing hostages, or attacking Sioux settlements. The Sheriff and Mayor have orders related to law and order, regarding the placing and removing of bounties and similar matters, which are exclusive to them. Each town in the game has a Sheriff and a Mayor, and these positions are elected by the players.

The Sheriff and Mayor receive a small salary and a few bodyguards. "Territories," the game newsletter, becomes a study in the modern political process whenever an election occurs.

The final character type with an exclusive order is the Travelin' Salesman. This is the only character profession which can use the Start Trading Post order. A trading post is a type of economic base which will be discussed later; unlike all other economic bases, only a Travelin' Salesman may operate one.

Of special interest to role-players is the character description that may be added to each character. A line of text (approximately 80 spaces in length) will be printed whenever a character is met by another character on the range, and players may customize this line of text. Examples include:

"His hand hovers near his iron as he glares at you suspiciously."

"He's a smiling graybeard who looks like he'll talk your ear off."

"She's a tall blonde gunslinger with sparkling blue eyes and a crooked smile."

Many things can happen in the course of a single turn. Each character is allowed to perform six buys, six sells, six transfers (each character may only transfer to a single target), move six regions, and perform a Primary and a Secondary Action. Any action in the game may be performed as a Primary Action; only relatively "simpler" actions may be performed as Secondary Actions. Examples of allowable Secondary Actions include Partying, Gambling, Searching for Stray Animals, Target Practice, Attending Church Socials, and Scouting Territory.

Considering that each position consists of three characters, and an economic base, it is easy to see how much activity can occur during a turn. Printout lengths vary dramatically, and depend in large part on whether or not any combat is involved. An average printout runs approximately six pages, but some heavy combat turns can run up to sixteen pages in length!

Each position is also allowed a Character Attack, Character Non-Attack, Alliance Attack, and Alliance Non-Attack list. If any characters in a position encounters a character who is on their attack list (or is a member of an alliance that is on their attack list), he will interrupt whatever action he was performing, and attack the character in question. Non-attack lists prevent a position from accidentally attacking a character or alliance on said list. It is important to remember that all three characters on a position will make use of the same Attack/Non-attack lists.

Stand & Deliver is not a combat-oriented game, but like the Old West, it can be brutally violent at times. There are several types of combat in S&D, the first of which is the Bar Room Brawl. This is a knock-down, drag-out saloon fight, one on one, described blow-by-blow. Loss of health usually results, although never a fatality, which makes it a popular form of "release" for players who don't wish to risk the other, more permanent forms of combat.

Bushwhacking is the equivalent of a sniper attack. None of the victim's hired guns or mercenaries can assist him. The bushwhacker takes a single shot at him, and if it hits, the victim will lose health. It is possible to kill with a bushwhack. Bushwhackers do not automatically hit their targets; in fact, sometimes an attempt will fail before the shot is even fired

. The Ambush is a form of combat that is beginning to receive recognition in S&D as a powerful tool. A character that is using the Ambush order may select a single target by name, or simply target "any." The ambush is then set in the region where that character ends his turn. If/when the target passes through the region, the ambushing character will open fire, causing a shootout. The ambushing character is the defender for combat purposes, which gives him a bonus to his combat value, and allows him to make use of any bodyguards or war wagons at his disposal. Of course, if the victim never passes through the region, no ambush occurs.

Shootouts are the most involved combat in the game. Shootouts can involve mercenaries, hired guns, war wagons, bodyguards, and the like. All parties involved face the risk of being wounded or killed. The victorious party will loot the bodies of anyone killed on the opposing side. Shootouts can be large, messy affairs, and are usually much sought-after by "blood and guts" gamers.

Gunfights are the quintessential Western showdown. Two men face off against each other, one on one. All Gunfights take place in the town of Tombstone, where both parties are automatically transported when the challenge is made and accepted. Each character has his own set of standing orders that determines how he will respond to Gunfight challenges. The first option allows the character to refuse all challenges, which means that nobody can use the Gunfight action against him. If that option is not selected, then the character will automatically accept all Gunfight challenges. The remaining Gunfight standing orders will allow the character to select tactics, weapons used, target areas, etc. There is ample opportunity to create a unique Gunfighting "style" for each character.

If a character issues a Gunfight challenge, and if the target is accepting challenges, the two combatants are transported to Tombstone for the fight, which is described shot-by-shot. If a fatality results, the victor does NOT loot the loser's corpse; the loser's inventory goes to pay his burial expenses. The victor (and the loser, if he survives) are then transported back to their original locations. As previously mentioned, now that the Sioux have broken their treaty with the US Government, one option available to some characters is to lead war parties against the Sioux. Little is known about this form of combat, but as it is only usable against NPC Sioux villages, most players need not concern themselves with it.

There are other actions that can provoke combat (usually a shootout). These actions include Claim Jumping a Mine, Raiding a Ranch, a failed Robbery attempt, and others. Actions such as the Stampede order and the Rustle Cattle order do not generally provoke a standard combat; rather they are used to damage an economic base, either by damaging defensive weaponry in the case of the former, or removing property in the case of the latter.

There are many other actions in the game which do not involve combat. Some of the "small-time" economic orders include Goldpanning, Trapping, Gambling, Buffalo Hunting, Trading with Indians (which is illegal), and robbery (also illegal). Characters seeking a more stable form of income have orders at their disposal to set up economic bases.

There are currently four economic bases available in S&D. Cattle Ranches and Sheep ranches are the first two. These economic bases may exist in multiple regions of the map, since the livestock need land to graze upon. Each region will only sustain a certain number of animals, so it is necessary for ranch owners to expand on a fairly regular basis, since the livestock reproduce. This need for expansion can occasionally lead to range wars, as characters fight to control the Grassland that their livestock need. Another interesting factor is that sheep can graze on cattle land, but cattle may not graze on land that sheep have used. This creates additional conflict between cattle and sheep ranchers.

Ranches will not produce a profit for some time, since ranchers will be interested in having as many cattle available as possible, for reproduction purposes. Once the rancher has a satisfactory number of cattle at his ranch, he may begin selling off a number of them on every turn. Ranches can be exceptionally profitable in the long run, and players should note that the "cattle barons" of Western film are very much a part of Stand & Deliver.

The third type of economic base is a mine. A mine may only be placed in a mountainous region. Once the mine is laid, a number of shafts may be dug, depending on how high the Ore Yield is in that region. When all the shafts are dug, the mine will produce a certain amount of ore every turn. This is the easiest form of economic base to operate, and provides the most profit in the short run.

Trading Posts are the fourth type of economic base. Only a Travelin' Salesman may start a Trading Post. A Post maintains an inventory of items available for sale, and has specific prices which it will buy and sell items for. Since Travelin' Salesmen receive a discount on their purchases in town, they can sell goods at their post for less than the town does. By way of example, a Travelin' Salesman can purchase a shotgun in town, which normally sells for $120, for as little as $72. He can then offer the shotgun for sale at his post for the price of $95. The Salesman makes a profit, and characters who shop at his Post save money. Trading Posts have the potential to be extremely profitable. As with real-world businesses, the three most important factors in starting a Post are location, location, and location.

Stand & Deliver is played on a 70x70 game map, which is divided into four Territories. As the territories become relatively equal in population, power, experience, etc., the barriers are lowered, and characters may travel freely between territories. At present, Territory Three is nearly full, and it seems likely that new players will soon be exploring Territory Four. The division between Territories One and Two have been lowered for some time now, but Three and Four will join together before they join with One and Two, giving new players every chance to become competitive with existing players.

Each region in the game has a terrain type, and a corresponding movement value. Grassland, for example, has a movement value of one, and Mountains have a movement value of three.

A character on foot has one movement point to expend per turn; however, horseback is the usual method of transportation, and this allows six movement points of travel per turn. Some regions have a stage route or railroad line passing through them, and for the price of $25 and one movement point, a character can move from such a region to any other region that the stage or railroad passes through. However, the railroad and stage lines generally do not run far from towns, which leaves a sufficient area of land for explorers to chart without the benefit of mass transit.

Stand & Deliver lends itself well to exploration. There are many things to discover in the game - items, actions, and locations among them. Some games are billed as "games of discovery," but in reality, any new player can usually obtain detailed printouts of all information from any number of established players. This is not the case with Stand & Deliver. While almost any player in the game knows that a gold watch will occasionally take a slug for you, very few players know that it is possible to.....whoops, can't give that away. Sorry.

The GM is constantly adding to and improving the game. Naturally, this means that an occasional bug will creep into the program, but most of the new additions have been playtested previously, and so far there have been no real mishaps. The fact that the game changes will also cause people to reevaluate their styles of play. It doesn't mean that months of effort expended on a project will be destroyed by a rules change - the GM is very conscious of such things. However, when the Ambush order was introduced, it changed the face of combat in the game. Methods of play that had been taken for granted as "safe" were reconsidered.

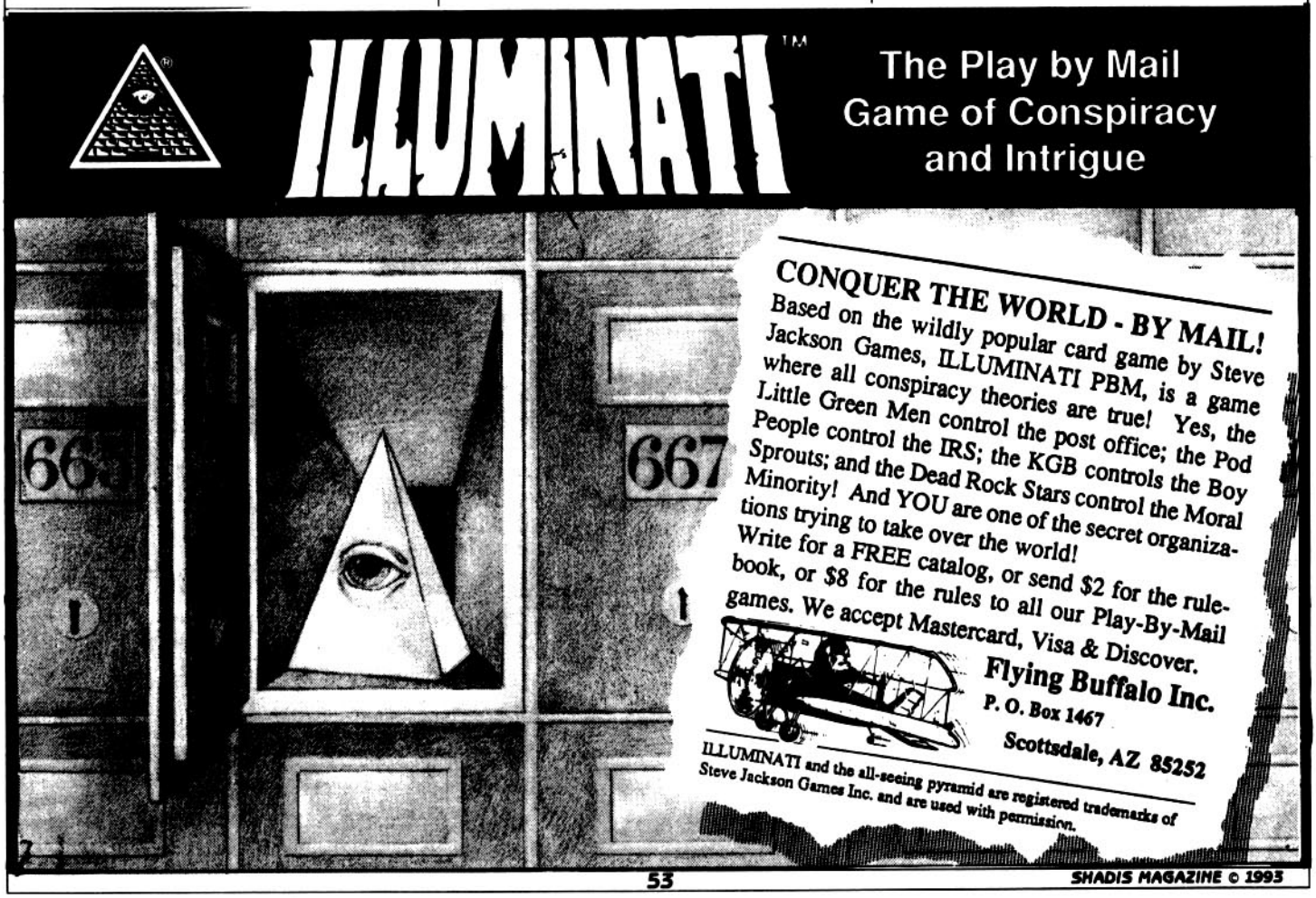
The Gamesmaster is Frank Pompillio, a veteran PBM gamer (some of his allies/enemies may recognize him as Mephistopheles). He is very friendly and easy to get along with, and obviously enjoys the game as much as the players (if not more). He is still active in PBM, which gives him a "player's perspective" that some GMs lack. Comments, suggestions, and criticisms from players are always welcome, and more importantly, are considered seriously.

The only difficulties with this game occurred during the Spring. A hectic schedule at the GMs day job caused a slight delay in turnaround, which of course is more noticeable in a weekly game than in a biweekly game. However, the game has a mechanism for submission of makeup turns, so the effect was mostly negligible. Additionally, the game's hardware was upgraded several times during this period, to allow for faster processing time, and greater data security. Additionally, Frank believes that he may begin moderating PBM as a full-time job by the end of the year (but no promises).

Frank is usually available by telephone in the evenings (East Coast time), but those who have trouble reaching him will be pleasantly surprised to find that he returns phone calls, which is a novel concept in PBM. Phoned in turns are accepted by the GM or his machine at no additional charge, as are FAXed turns.

Stand & Deliver has been operating since January of 1992. Because of the "territory" system upon which the game is built, it is still extremely possible for a brand-new player to become a serious power in the game. Turns are processed on a weekly basis, and players are limited to a maximum of two positions per territory. Each and every position in the game has the potential to be a major force in the game.

Since this reviewer's enthusiasm must be obvious at this point to all but the blind, let it be stated that this is the best open-ended PBM I've ever played. $6.00 per turn would be a fair price, but at $4.00 per turn, it's simply a steal. I've been playing S&D since it began, and have yet to be disappointed. More information on Stand & Deliver is available by writing to Frank Pompillio, 215 East 24th St. #620, New York, NY 10010, or by FAXing 212-598-4688. ❑



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Special Play-By-Mail Section

BITS N' PIECES

Rumors, New Products, Etc.

BEDTIME STORIES VERBOTEN?

Snow White caught up in another scandal? What's the Jezebell done now? Well, according to school officials in Jacksonville, Florida the wench is just too violent and she's been banned from little junior's reading list without written parental permission. That's right kids, ya gotta have a note from Mom and Dad if you want to read *Snow White*.

The school district superintendent, Larry Zenke, was cited in April by an anti-censorship group, the *Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression*, for caving in to a committee of *Crown Point Elementary School* parents and teachers who wanted the book restricted because of scenes of violence.

Don't worry, *Snow White* wasn't singled out for harrassment. Navy Admiral Leonard Oden announced that *Playboy* and other risque magazines would be banned from naval recruiting centers. It's only fair. If Junior can't have his dose of *Snow White* than Davy Jones shouldn't have his centerfolds.

Now that *Snow White* has been vanquished maybe we can turn our attention to the real crud that fills our schools' libraries, like *"Cinderella"* (tramp), *"Mother Goose"* and *"Dick and Jane."* Really now, doesn't it make you wonder what book will be targeted next?

Why do you think they call them "Bedtime Stories" anyway? Thank goodness we have intelligent, thoughtful officials to protect us from this trash.

B.A. Felton

READERS IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE!!

The following readers have apparently disappeared from the face of the earth. At least that's what the post office keeps telling us. We either have bad or incomplete addresses on these individuals. If anyone knows their where-abouts, please have them contact us:

Josh Rose, Portland, Oregon
Phil Cherry, Ohio
Rhonda Young, St. Louis, Missouri.

B.A. FELTON BLAMED FOR FIRE AT RITZY-HOTEL

This report just came in at press time. Apparently, a large fire broke out in a Hotel in the Aleutian Isles where Berg Con '93 was being held. Local police have issued a warrant for B.A. Felton's arrest and are charging him with starting the fire.

A frantic B.A. called the home office in the early hours of the morning to explain that he had been demonstrating his line of REP products (Realism Enhancement Props) to a group of enthused gamers when his Fireball Generator ran amok and began casting golf-ball sized projectiles of flaming sulphur into the crowd. One witness, obviously in tears reported, "It was horrible! It was like a dozen Roman candles going off in unison at random directions. I'll never go to a gaming convention again."

There were no injuries reported, though B.A. commented he cut his forehead when he lept through a plate glass window to make his escape. Fortunately, only the ground floor of the Aleutian Hilton was gutted. The biggest casualty of the day were several armies of lead minatures which were liquified.

When asked what his plans were, B.A. flatly commented, "I think I'll check out the gaming action in Juarez, Mexico for a few months."

The REP line of products has been temporarily put on hold.

Rumor Mill

Rumor has it that *Gary Gygax* and *Runaway Graphics* (Creators of Bright Future) may be working on a comic book series based on a popular role-playing game. Hmmmm.

NEW PRODUCTS:

Atlas Games: August releases include a unique storytelling card game, *Once Upon a Time*. The game plays with one player attempting to create a story and plot line that follows his/her whim while other players attempt to alter the story and outcome. ($17.95)

Avalon Hill: August releases include *Breakthru Normandy* ($30.00) and *The book Gamers Guide to Diplomacy* ($10.00). In September comes the long awaited computer version of Avalon Hill's classic war game *3rd Reich*. ($59.95). In October keep an eye out for *Assassin* ($30.00).

Chaosium: Chaosium has released the RPG - Elric!. Add to this the 4th edition of The Spectre King (Pendragon 4th Edition) and Stormbringer: Sea Kings of the Purple Towns and you can see the wonderboys at Chaosium have been very busy lately.

Flying Buffalo: Just in, *MAPS: The Book of Cities* ($11.95) Usable with any RPG system, this book contains maps of entire cities (over 20) which can be used to create new places to adventure. Also in - *The Rune Dice Book:* explains how Flying Buffalo's *Rune Dice* might be used for fortune telling in RPGs. *When the Cat's Away* ($8.95) is the latest Tunnels & Trolls solo adventures book.

GDW: Although they have just released *Traveller the New Era*, fans should expect a horde of Traviler products later this summer. Look for *Traveller Starship Combat* ($26.00), *Deluxe Traveller* ($35.00) and *Technical Architecture* ($14.00) to round out the new Traveller line.

Mayfair Games: *Underground*, Mayfair's new RPG system ($24.95), allows players to portray genetically enhanced soldiers from the year 2021 as they struggle to carve out a place for themselves in an annhilated world. *Streets Tell Stories*, the first supplement for Underground, gives the GM a campaign setting to drop his players into ($25.00).

Palladium: Palladium expanded its market in June with the release of *Wormwood* based on the company's popular *Rifts Role-Playing Game*. Artists Timothy Truman and Flint Henry teamed up to do this limited run comic (at last word only 20,000 copies were distributed).

The folks at Palladium can also take pride in the fact that their *Rifts 1993 Calendar* took fourth place in the category of *Best Contemporary Art* at the *Calendar Marketing Association's Fourth Annual National & World Calendar Awards Competition*. (If you haven't seen the Rifts - calendar it's a beaut- someone snagged mine off the wall).

Some August releases include, *The Compendium of Contemporary Weapons* and *Island at the End of the World*. Also, Rifts fans will be glad to learn that the first five blister packs of Rifts miniatures are scheduled to be shipped in August.

West End Games: Everyone seems to be waiting to get a glimpse of the new role-playing game, *Shatterzone*. This system is based on West End Game's series of novels (*The River of God, Beyond the Zone and Sole Survivor)* which are set a harsh world of wars and strange races.

THE FLOODGATES OPEN: NEW RPGS HIT THE STORES!!

As we go to press many companies are releasing new RPG systems. These releases came to late to get quality reviews in this issue. To ease the suspense here are some overviews and initial impressions;

TRAVELLER THE NEW ERA (GDW)

Yea, yea, I know: "Oh look, it's another Traveller game..." Just when you thought you bought the last book to complete your MegaTraveller library, someone up and re-invents the game! Well, it's not quite that bad.

The crux of the system is very similar to GDW's *Twilight 2000 2nd edition*. So if you know that system, you should ease into TNE without much trouble. Your dice bag needs only a few D6, one or two D10 and a D20, and most of your rolling will be determined by x number of D6. Character generation is simpler and faster, after some practice, than its two predecessors.

As for the storyline in the game, ho-boy is it a doozy! Forget a good percentage of what you learned in MegaTraveller, and erase everything from memory if your last game was Classic Traveller. After the Hard Times, some systems are deserted or barren of all life. Picture that while the economic and social status of the known universe was in turmoil, somebody let loose a highly destructive techno-virus. This creation was so foul, that its effect spread as fast as unknowing carrier ships could go.

For many star systems, there was the solace of oblivion, others were thrown into such chaos that they have in 70 years been cast back to the Stone Age, and still others have been able to eek out existence without too much damage. The Imperium as you knew it is gone. Replacing it are the Wilds, a section of space that only the brave go - to die. Hivers have been the saviors of many a Humani world

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- liberating descendants of the post-Virus generation from a future of technological stagnancy via extensive schooling programs. But there are others out there who have not been saved, and still others who, through technological superiority, are becoming overlords at the expense of those not blessed with their advantages. Plus, that isn't even really scratching the surface of what's new in the Traveller universe.

With this in mind, the folks at GDW have taken the calculated risk of throwing away MegaTraveller to return us to days akin to those of Classic Traveller. The political structure has been altered, worlds have changed, there are new cultures and settings to explore, and players are free to unravel new mysteries in their travels. In fact, as a sort of bennie, there are some pre-generated adventures included within the middle of the book structured to help GMs guide players new to TNE into the game and its storyline.

Theresa Verity

EARTH DAWN (FASA)

FASA really wanted to do a good job with this one. It's evident in the number of testers listed in the credits and the time they spent on the game while it was in the playtesting phase - OVER a year. This is the fatality of today's games, not enough testing before print.

Adventurers are born into a world several hundred years after the second known Scourge. In the first, only the dragons seemed to have survived. All that is know about the Scourge is that it happens when the world is inhabited by a certain amount of ambient magical essence; then, other beings known as the Horrors appear. Can you remember the creepy-crawlies from your most horrific nightmares? They probably are a good similarity to what a Horror is like. Now just think of how it might be if all these Horrors appear to consume every resource, whether on a physical, mental or magical level. Well, luckily everyone had forewarning of what was to come and the various nations and cities constructed their fortress-like kaers. Think of a kaer as a sort of Noah's Ark. One day, after several hundred years of isolation, the Elders pronounce that the "outside" is to be explored despite fears that it is yet too soon to leave. Magics inside the kaer have determined that the Horrors are disappearing, but disappearing hundreds of years before they were predicted to.

Horrors still inhabit certain areas according to some scout reports, others tell of kaers that either refuse to open, or are only inhabited by the wind - their peoples savaged by an unknown force leaving only the mystery of their passing. Some races have forged strong ties forming new nations in the wake of the Scourge, others have taken up arms over bitter memories of the past.

At this point players are introduced to the world of Earth Dawn. Write-ups on the history, religion and overall makeup of the storyline, plus a good short story, are excellent. They tell the players and GMs all they need to know and to start gaming immediately. Plus the gamemaster section holds some good general information that every aspiring GM should read.

I am fairly impressed with the whole book, and am happy that new dimensions were added to the non-human races. Dwarves finally take a place as a major political power; humans, trolls, orks and even elves seem to coexist to some degree; plus there are some new races available for players to try out, each with real qualities about them.

As with Traveller: The New Era and Earth Dawn, both will make an excellent addition to any gaming collection. My hope is that with the release of new support material that GMs will still be able keep some flexibility and creativity alive with the developing storylines.

Theresa Verity

SHATTERZONE (West End Games)

Space is Big! The adventure in the Shatterzone universe does not begin or end in the zone itself. The *Shatterzone* is only one part of the larger universe. The Armagons, the Fleet, the colonies, the aliens, the bolters, the technology, the MegaCorporations, and all the other fascinating and exciting dangers and treasures are all just parts of the next great age of exploration.

This is the universe of *Shatterzone RPG* by *West End Games,* Based on their paperback series of the same name.

The Player's Guide to Shatterzone: A 96 page book that contains complete details and information on creating characters for the Shatterzone RPG. This system is said to be quick and flexible. The point system allows each character to "build" a character which is unique and exciting but still balanced and playable.

The Universe Guide details the Shatterzone universe including the main alien races.

The Gamemaster's Guide to Shatterzone contains all the information needed to run the Shatterzone system. Included are rules for creating starships.

UNDERGROUND (MAYFAIR)

Underground takes the player to earth in the year 2021. Genetically enhanced soldiers use their incredible abilities to carve out new nations and rework the corrupt world as they see fit. Will the players join the underground movement or do they hold an altogether different set of values? The future is entirely in their hands.

DARKURTHE LEGENDS FRPG (Black Dragon Press)

Darkurthe Legends is a new FRPG from *Black Dragon Press.* This fantasy game focuses on the story and the characters, stressing character individuality. In the game, Wizards create their own spells, and Fighters create special combat moves to compliment combat styles. Also includes new race/monster creation and everything needed to play in one book.

METASCAPE RPG: Guild Space (Game Lords Ltd)

This innovative new roleplaying game incorporates unique die mechanics, an exciting super-science setting, and rules geared toward playability and instant, ad-lib gaming.

In the *Guild Space Setting,* your characters may explore a new galaxy filled with dangers, wonders, and heroic adventure.

You may play an Anthropos - the genetically-advanced descendant of modern humans; a Draca Warrior, cybernetically enhanced for battle; or a catlike member of the Zin-Shee species, whose females command the secrets of psionic power, and whose males are agile, tough fighters. Other player races include the insectoid Kryll, masters of biotechnology: the Calemora, the finesse warriors in the galaxy; and the mysterious Shanask, who wield the ancient power known only as The Sorce.

As new members of the House of Dha, your characters are the elite of the galaxy, members of the most advanced fighting force in history! Their opponents are the totalitarian forces of The Empire, raiders of the Dark Alliance, and the mysterious alien Horde. These enemies are fierce and ruthless, and the House of Dha is still small and untested. your characters will decide, one and for all, whether the forces of violence and destruction will defeat civilization or not.

Comes with Rulebook, Setting Guide, Equipment Manual, Character Manual, a complete adventure, 16-sided die, six metal miniatures, counter sheet and information on Metascape's national ranking system.

AMAZING ENGINE (TSR)

BUGHUNTERS
& FOR FAERIE, QUEEN, & COUNTRY

From the company that started it all comes a new multi-genre RPG system. With the core rules (System Guide) you create a character that can easily be adapted to any genre. You can create wizards, mercenaries, alien technologists, xenoform thieves - virtually any kind of character from any genera. All you need is the core rules and the appropriate Universe Book for the genre you are playing. BUGHUNTERS (a thinly veiled Aliens Setting - minus the licensing agreement) is the sci-fi rules for Amazing Engine. Players seek out and battle inimitable alien creatures while trying to piece together the secret of a horrifying galactic threat!

FAERIE, QUEEN & COUNTRY is a fantasy setting for the AMAZING ENGINE. The setting is Victorian England.

JOURNEYMAN (Infinity Games):

Journeyman is a highly workable merging of hard science and role-playing. The rules and background of the game show the extensive research that went into the product, yet the game is very simple to play and understand, and no extensive scientific knowledge is required. In fact, Journeyman can support any amount of science and campaigns can range from "pure" science fiction to space opera or science fantasy.

Journeyman's scope goes far beyond mere action and adventure. The scientist and engineer professions are actually viable characters. Campaigns can revolve around corporate intrigue, exploration and discovery, or even political strife.

Journeyman technology is fantastic and yet utterly believable. Some of the things allowed by Journeyman technology include: computer chips implanted in the brain, sentient robots, cloning, genetic engineering, "true" cyborgs where a living brain is placed in a custom-built robotic body, supercomputers the size of a paperback and cybernetic limbs and organs.

Spacecraft construction- finally, a system where you don't need a degree in math to build a spacecraft. No keeping track of megawatts produced by power plants and consumed by components; no messing with mass vs. displacement; and, at last, no need to take square or cube roots to find out how much computer you need. All these variables are built into the straightforward and simple formulas used to put together very believable spacecraft. The ship generation rules let you construct everything from chemically fueled space shuttles to the slick gravitic-driven vessels of more modern Journeyman societies.

If you're a serious gamer, love science fiction, or just want to try something new and exciting, take a look at Journeyman.

RIFTS: AFRICA (PALLADIUM BOOKS)

Although RIFTS is not a new system, the AFRICA source book expands the RIFTS universe. If you are wondering why a book on AFRICA - Kevin Siembieda's introduction to the book does an outstanding job of answering that question. In fact, it leaves one pondering on why no one ever thought to do it sooner.

That's it for the new releases - my apologies to those game companies that were missed. Either I didn't receive a copy of the game or I didn't get a press release. No one was intentionally dropped from the list. JRB

RPG SHAREWARE!!

In case you didn't know it there are thousands of Computer RPG aids and games out there FREE for the asking. Being SHAREWARE, you only need pay if you find the program useful. You can get a catalog of available SHAREWARE from DISQUIRX, Rt. 4 Lot 315, Lake Piomingo, Tupelo, MS 38802. Tell them SHADIS sent you!!

BARCODE BATTLES: Here's a novel gaming concept! Irwin Toy, Ltd has just released an electronic game called "Barcode Battler" that builds monsters, warriors and wizards by scanning the bar codes on standard commercial products. The game works by basing character attributes on the bar code data off of packaging and translating the data into the electronic game where the newly created creatures slug it out. The machine might translate the code of a bar of soap into a super-human hero or a can of soda might become a powerful wizard. What makes the game unique is that no one knows what products will produce the best characters. In Japan, where the game is very popular a certain brand of soap sold out through word of mouth when it was learned its barcode would create an extremely powerful dragon. Irwin Toys will release the product in the U.S. for Christmas ($54.99)

For information call (800) 268-1733.

❑

JOURNEYMAN

Adventures in the 25th century...and beyond.

Flaming blasters, exotic aliens, strange worlds, speeding ships, political intrigue, corporate wars, mad scientists, noble engineers (and not so noble engineers), high tech societies, intelligent robots, cybernetic organisms, all this and more belongs to the universe of Journeyman, one of the most sophisticated SF role-playing games on the market. Be a part of the action and experience the greatest adventure of all time.

Infinity Games

SEVEN HEROES SEVEN DREAMS

LUCKY 7

ONE DESTINY

Available Now from Runaway Graphics

The Market Platz

The MARKET PLATZ is a meeting place where readers pass along information, barter, trade and gossip. Readers are invited to place classified ads, announce group meetings, seek out other players etc.

Subscribers may place classified ads free of charge with a limit of one ad per issue and a maximum of 25 words. Non-subscribers can place ads for 25¢ per word with a limit of 25 words.

Convention announcements, group meetings and public service notices can be placed free of charge.

Ads will be placed on a first-come-first-serve basis with Subscribers having priority.

CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED
The board game Frontier Six! or information on how to obtain a copy.
Write c/o this magazine.

WANTED
A copy of SHADIS #6 with rare yellow cover.
Will pay $25. Must have map and worksheet inserts.
Please contact
Gary Mueller, 126 Hatchmore
El Paso, TX

The Drexel Coalition has annexed the Bannister League and has put a stop to this classified bickering. Alfredo's head shall be placed on a spit and the Bannister League's women will work our wheat fields. As always, an iron will prevails over the meek.

I never dated Janet Brady in my life! I always had a thing for Cindy - so cease with the rumors.

Never order the Gourmet Burger on the Parched Frog Menu! Remember Hans the dwarf? Well, the Gourmet Burger was added to the menu the night he dissapeared

Hey, that three meat hoagie at the Parched Frog always smacked of tainted meat anyway - what's the prob?

Muffin - best of friends. Thank you for being there. Ain't life great?
Pooh

PBM CONTACTS

Hey Drexel - that 'four rings of varying hue' clue was a line of B.S.. I got nothing for my troubles but chiggers and a bad rash. Real funny! Get a life bud.

BROKEN LANCE
This alliance will meet on turn 12 in the Gallery. Watch your back - ensure you are not followed. Lives are at stake. We make our move soon.

GRAND FORGE
Members should dump all Influence points toward eradicating the Grevan Menace. This proposal will be issued on turn 13 so save those favors.

The Horn Crest Isle Fleet will not make it's scheduled rendezvous with the Iron Fleet at Raga. I have it on good authority that the meeting is an ambush.

OVERTHROW SAGEEM!
The Magistrates have issued no orders for meetings from turn 6 thru 12. Any rumors to the contrary are just that. Avoid traps - stick to the plan.

Dustbucket,
Your butt is mine! I found out it was you who set up that little party at Four Rocks.
Gart

Whoever made that mess in the entrance to Foliers Dungeon had better get a shovel and clean it up. I ruined a good pair of boots.

ORGANIZATIONS

Have you heard the senseless accusations?

"Gaming is Satanic",
"Gaming causes drug & alcohol abuse"
"Gaming causes violent crime"
"Gamers are a secret cult which dabbles in the occult and make unholy sacrifices"?

WE SAY IT'S A BUNCH OF HOOEY!

If you are tired of right-wing fundamentalist disinformation slandering you and your hobby, maybe it's time you joined CARP-Ga.

The Committee for the Advancement of Role Playing -Games is an international nonprofit organization of gamers like you who want to advocate the hobby to the public as fun, healthy family entertainment.

SAY NO TO CENSORSHIP!!

There are many organizations working hard to outlaw RPGs, live role-play, paintball games, video games and other innocuous hobbies. Their aim is to control the "acceptable" forms of entertainment in the world, and consequently, you!

We need your help; we need researchers, talented individuals, and professionals (such as police, educators, clergy, and doctors) to assist us in our efforts. We need *YOU*. For more information, please send 52¢ US postage or an IRC for our free information kit & application for membership; write to:

CAR-PGa Inc. International HQ
Attn: Free Information Request
111 E. 5th, Bonham, TX 75418
(903) 583-3218 (Hrs 9-5 Central)

OTHER RAGS

ABA PROCEEDINGS
P.O. Box 119
Limon, CO 80828
Traveller Fanzine

ALARUMS & EXCURSIONS
3965 Alla Road
Los Angeles, CA 90066
APA 100+ pages

ALL OF THE ABOVE
9071 Dallas St. #D-8
La Mesa, CA 91942
GURPS fanzine. 5$ for sample copy

ALLIANCE
P.O. Box 10142
Pittsburgh PA 15232-0142
Star Wars RPG fanzine

ARGHazine
(Assn. of Role-Playng Gamers of Houston)
11818 Palmsprings Drive
Houston TX 77072
Club Newsletter

BLACK MOLE
69 Atherley Rd. Shirley
Southhampton SO1
5DT ENGLAND
Multi-Genre

CARP-Ga NEWSLETTER
11 E. 5th Bonham
TX 75418
Organizational newsletter

Character Chronicles, The
417 Adams S.E.
Alburquerque NM 87108
AD&D Fanzine

SELF PUBLISHER
Dimestore Stories Productions
P.O. Box 360041
Strongsville OH 44136
Reviews self-published material

DRAGON
P.O. Box 111
Lake Geneva WI 53147
The granddaddy of RPG zines

DUNGEON
P.O. Box 111
Lake Geneva WI 53147
TSR's Adventure Magazine

E.G.G.
725 Wooddale Terrace #12
Greenwood IN 46142
Matrix Gaming EGG

ETHER ILLUSTRATED NEWS
101 Hackberry Apt. #1503
Clute TX 77531
Space: 1889 Fanzine

FLAGSHIP
113 Gable Hill Road
Levittown PA 19057
International PBM magazine

GAME ORACLE, THE
1851 N. Ivar #208
Hollywood CA 90028
bi monthly

GAMER'S CONNECTION, THE
P.O. Box 278331
Sacramento CA 95827
bi-monthly

GAMER'S FORUM
P.O. Box 373
Ewa Beach HI 96862-0373
Covers all RPG's

GAMER, THE
1879 E. Orange Grove Blvd.
Pasadena CA 91104
Tabloid gaming magazine monthly 10 000 circ.

GREY WORLDS
1008 Hillwood Drive
Lewisville TX 75067-5020
I.C.E. RPG Magazine

GUARDSMAN, THE
21611 Park Green Dr.
Katy TX 77450
AD&D Fanzine

HAYMAKER!
1502 S. 32nd Ave.
Omaha NE 68105
Champions fanzine

HEXAGONE
C.P. 63 succ "M"
Montreal QC HIV 3L6; CANADA
French/English

HIT POINTS
P.O. Box 2752
Chapel Hill NC 27515-2752
NAARP's Newsletter
(This publication may be out of circulation - will keep you posted.)

IMPERIAL DISPATCHES
919C Santa Clara Ave.
Alameda CA 94501-3429
Quarterly $17 sub Sci-Fi Miniat. circ 3 000

INQUISITOR
P.O. Box 14485
Santa Rosa CA 95402-6485
Warhammer 40K

JOURNAL OF THE BRITTANIC TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY
21W127 Tee Lane #3
Itasca IL 60143
Space 1999 Fanzine

KARMA LAPEL
P.O. Box 5467
Evanston IL 60204-5267
Newsletter - humor some game related

LILLIPUT GAZETTE, THE
1200 W. 40th St. #238
Austin TX 78756
House Organ for Crunchy Frog Ent.

MELBOURNE TIMES
2800 NASA Road One #514
Seabrook TX 77586
Newsletter: Earth Colonies Development League

MINI MOON COMICS
P.O. Box 647
Westfield IN 46074
mini-comics company

MOTIVE
190 Reed St.
Athens GA 30605
Multi-Genre

OTHER HANDS
address ??
(I had it but misplaced it.)
H.P. Lovecraft/Horror games zine

PAPER MAYHEM
1518 Adams Street
Ottawa IL 61350-4770
Play By Mail Magazine

PAPYRUS
2815 Lund Ave. #6
Rockford Il 61109
RPGS BBS files

PORTABLE GAMEPLAY
1000 East State Street
Lehi UT 84043
2.75 1 issue monthly.

RE:QUESTS!
4030 Valley View Lane #233
Farmers Branch TX 75244
Newsletter of the RPG SIG of American MENSA Ltd.

REVELATIONS
P.O. Box 341136
Los Angeles CA 90034
House organ for Fat Messiah Games

ROLEPLAYER, THE
Box 18957
Austin TX 78760
GURPS Magazine

SAN JOSE STRATEGIC GAMING SOCIETY MONTHLY
1234 Canary Lane
San Jose CA 95117
Club Newsletter

SCAVENGERS
519 Ellinwood
Osage City SD 66523-1329
Small Press Magazine

SCRAWLS FROM THE SPRAWLS
P.O. Box 10097
Glendale CA 91209-0097
Shadowrun /Cyberpunk APA'sine

SCROLL, THE
P.O. Box 14616
Portland OR 97214
multi-genre

SIGNAL-GK
45 Fairfield Hebden Bridge
West Yorks UK 4X7 6JD Mega
Traveller fanzine

SILVER GRIFFIN
P.O. Box 1751
St. Paul MN 55101
Covers all RPGS.

SILVER SWORDS & SORCERY
11685 SR 691
Nelsonville OH 45764
Fantasy RPGs

SPACE GAMER-FANTASY GAMER
P.O. Box 11424
Burbank CA 91519-1424
Covers Freestyle RPG's

SPINWARD TIMES
823 Ponsard St. Brossard Quebec
Canada J4W 1W1
Mega Traveller fanzine

STARSHIPS STARPORTS & VEHICLES
3890 50th St.
San Diego CA 92105-3005
Mega Traveller fanzine

STARSONG
Route 2 Box 260-B
St. Matthews SC 29135
sci-fi/fantasy anthology

STROKE AND DAGGER
9800 D Topanga Cyn Blvd. Suite 145
Chatsworth CA 91311
Miniatures Magazine

SWORD & BLASTER
2102-B Wexford Dr.
Norcross GA 30071
Fanzine of Atlanta Gaming clubs.

WARPfactor
SU 3213 Williams College
Williamstown MA 01267
Newsletter Mostly GURPS.

WORLD BUILDER, THE
P.O. Box 576
Milton, WA 98354
a newsletter centered around world creation and fantasy settings.

RENEGADE RAGS
• addresses needed •

Here is a list of gaming rags, that for one reason or another we do not have addresses for. WE DO KNOW THEY EXIST! If you can help us with the addresses, please contact this magazine.

Adventurer's Club
Amberzine
Banner Newsletter, The
Battleplan
Battle Technology
Boardgame Journal
Breakout
C3I
Challenge
Command
Command Post Quarterly
Courier
Empires, Eagles & Lions
Europa News
Fire & Movement
Future Wars
Games Magazine
Gatekeeper
Grenadier
Harnlore
Historical Gamer
Infiniverse
Interface
Mecha Press
Megatraveller Journal
Military Illustrated
Miniature Wargames
Moves
Operations
Practical Wargamer
Protoculture Addicts
Pyramid
Savage & Soldier
Strategy & Tactics
T.R.M.G.S.
Vortext
Voyages
Wargamer
Wargames Illustrated
White Dwarf
White Wolf

SHADIS MAGAZINE © 1993

To **Boldly Go** Where **Only You** Have Been
The Realm of **Your**
IMAGINATION

Together we can **create** the **original work of art** that will bring **your character to life.**

8½ x 11 or 14 x 17
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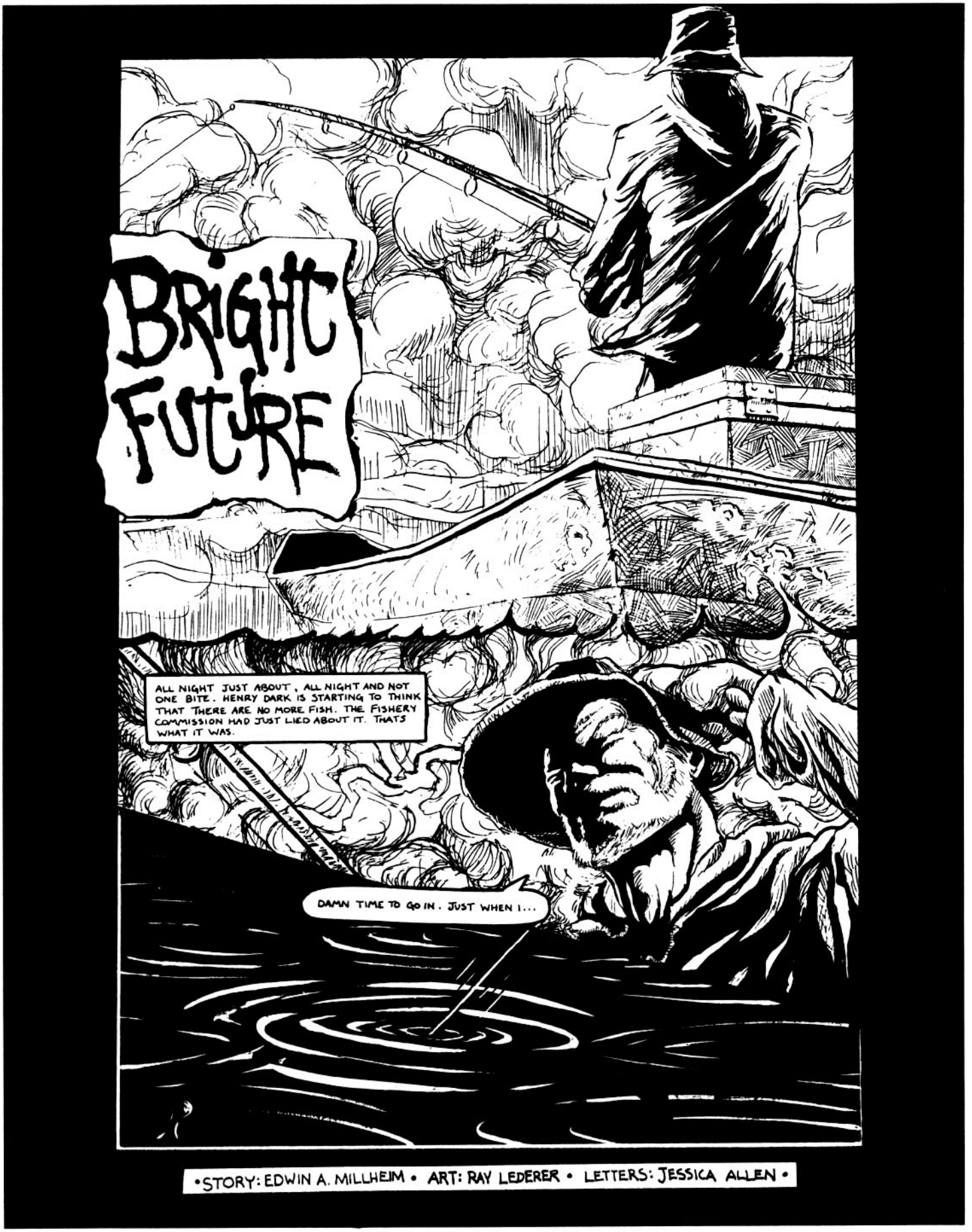
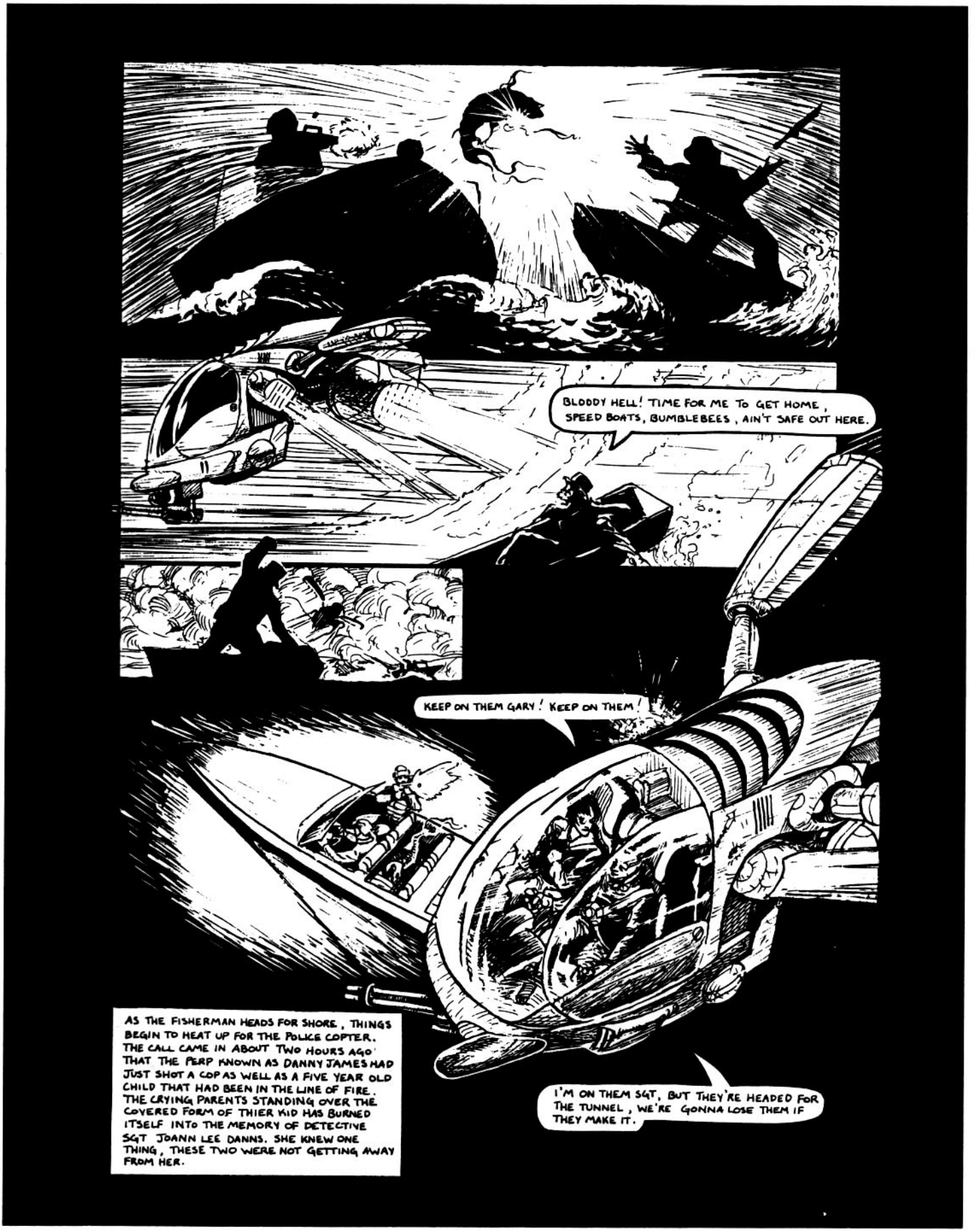
FOR AN INFORMATIVE PAMPHLET SEND TWO POSTAGE STAMPS TO:

Infinite Images
PO Box 528
New Alexandria, PA 15670


BRIGHT FUTURE
ALL NIGHT JUST ABOUT, ALL NIGHT AND NOT ONE BITE. HENRY DARK IS STARTING TO THINK THAT THERE ARE NO MORE FISH. THE FISHERY COMMISSION HAD JUST LIED ABOUT IT. THATS WHAT IT WAS.
DAMN TIME TO GO IN. JUST WHEN I...
•STORY: EDWIN A. MILLHEIM • ART: RAY LEDERER • LETTERS: JESSICA ALLEN •

AWWWWW JUST A SKULLBY, OH WELL. ONE FLIP OF THE KNIFE AND YOUR POISON SAC WON'T BE A PROBLEM.


BLOODY HELL! TIME FOR ME TO GET HOME, SPEED BOATS, BUMBLEBEES, AIN'T SAFE OUT HERE.
KEEP ON THEM GARY! KEEP ON THEM!
AS THE FISHERMAN HEADS FOR SHORE, THINGS BEGIN TO HEAT UP FOR THE POLICE COPTER. THE CALL CAME IN ABOUT TWO HOURS AGO THAT THE PERP KNOWN AS DANNY JAMES HAD JUST SHOT A COP AS WELL AS A FIVE YEAR OLD CHILD THAT HAD BEEN IN THE LINE OF FIRE. THE CRYING PARENTS STANDING OVER THE COVERED FORM OF THIER KID HAS BURNED ITSELF INTO THE MEMORY OF DETECTIVE SGT JOANN LEE DANNS. SHE KNEW ONE THING, THESE TWO WERE NOT GETTING AWAY FROM HER.
I'M ON THEM SGT, BUT THEY'RE HEADED FOR THE TUNNEL, WE'RE GONNA LOSE THEM IF THEY MAKE IT.

THE HECK WE ARE! GET OVER THEM!
SGT! WE'RE GETTING CLOSE TO THE TUNNEL! I'VE GOTTA PULL UP!
NO! DON'T!
CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

The Magic Primer

Lesson 1: Anatomy of the Card

Name of Card: Each card has a unique name used to identify it in gaming and collecting circles.

Illustration: High-quality color art from over two dozen artists nationwide. Each artist's style broadens the set's diversity without destroying the overall unity of the series.

Card Type: Cards are grouped by color for easy identification during play.

Card Description: Provides special rules for each card, or adds descriptive elements to enhance game play.

Playing Cost: Lists the price to bring this card into play.

Graphic Design: The visual effect of the cards has been designed very carefully. Each of the seven card types has a unique design, though they all share a similar three-dimensional appearance.

Power and Toughness: Only creature cards have these stats. The numbers describe the offensive and defensive strengths of the creatures.

Coming This Summer!

It's a fantasy card game

It's a collectable trading card set

It's *Magic: The Gathering*, the first in the **Deckmaster** series of collectable trading card games from Wizards of the Coast and Garfield Games. *Magic: The Gathering* is a fantasy game of epic proportions, featuring over 280 different cards. Some are fairly common, some uncommon, and some very rare. You'll have your own unique deck, but so will your opponent! Challenge your friends, build up a reputation, or participate in tournaments. Whatever you do, though, don't get complacent. There is always more to explore in *Magic: The Gathering*, and your opponents will never be defeated until you've taken their last life points.

THE CHOICE IS SIMPLE.

Wizards of the Coast

PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, Phone: (206) 624-0933

STAR WARS

DARK EMPIRE SOURCEBOOK