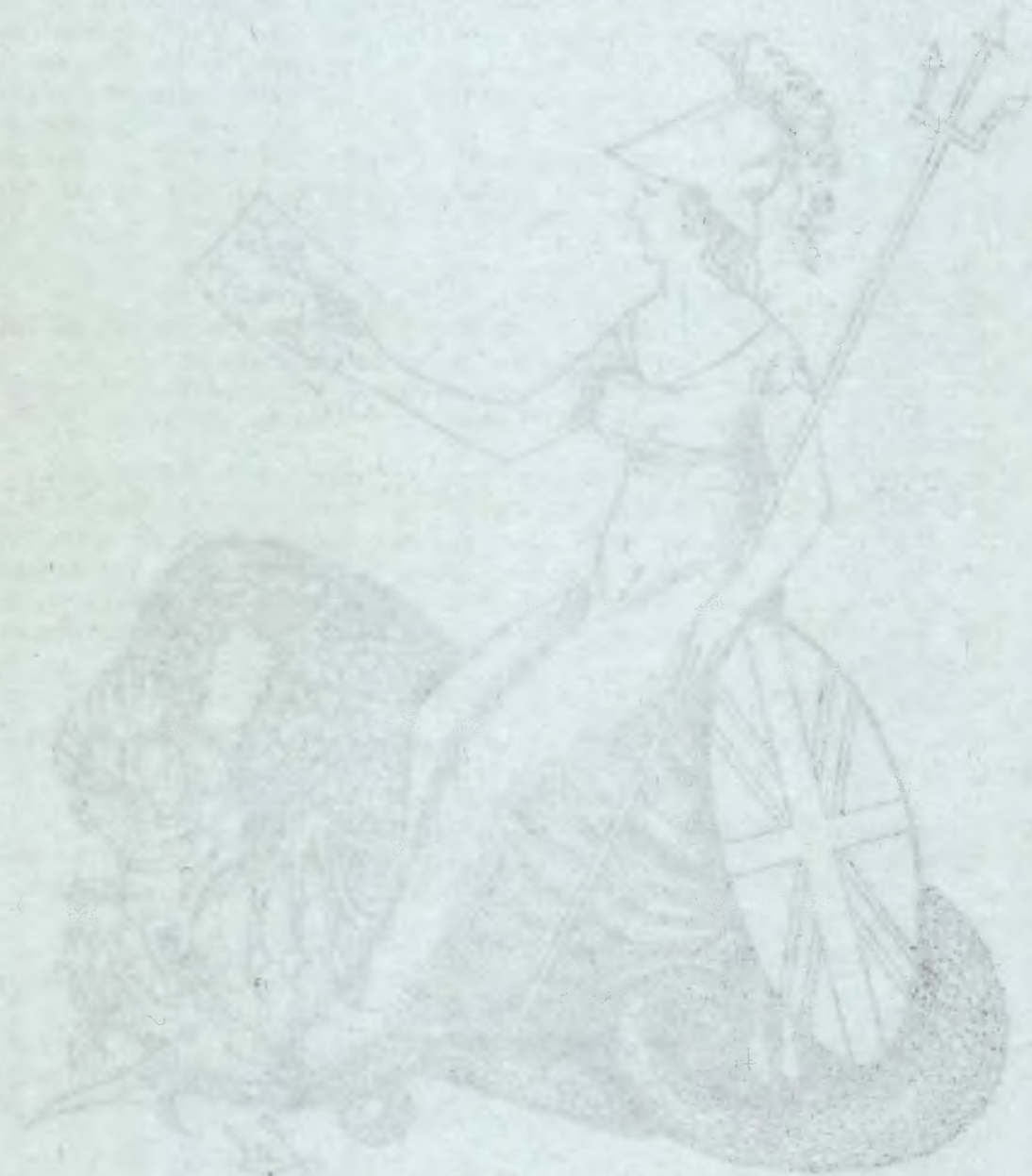


ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS



ALABAMA'S AND
EXCURSIONS



APRIL

104

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

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

1. If you have a contribution for A&E:
 - a. Type it up on a 9"-wide stencil (in America, NINE-hole) and mail to LEE GOLD, 3965 Alla Rd., Los Angeles, CA 90066. Include \$1/stencil. Or use an 8.5"-wide stencil (in America, FOUR-hole) and include \$1.50/stencil. Type 7" horizontally (centered), lines 5-64 vertically.
 - b. Print it yourself; copy counts 500. \$10 handling charge for bulky inclusions. Do not use the word "advertisement" to describe the contribution.
 - c. Send it to Lee Gold, and she will stencil and mimeo it at \$2/page (or fraction of a page). Typing automatically includes improving spelling and grammar (and may include a few new typos). It may also include editorial comments. Those who want their deathless prose left intact should type it themselves or ask for it to be photostencilled at \$2.65/page (or fraction). UNPAID FOR MATERIAL WILL NOT BE MIMEOED NOR INCLUDED IN A&E.
2. The fanzine will cost as follows:
 - a. Non-contributors: POSTAGE PLUS
 - 1) \$1.50, if you contributed to neither the current nor previous issues.
 - 2) Nothing...if you contributed to the previous issue.
 - b. Contributors: Free, no charge for postage. US (non-APO/FPO) sent UPS; extra for First Class; Canada/APO/FPO sent First Class. Other countries sent Air Mail/Printed Matter.
 - c. For trade with other F&SF Gaming fanzines only; mailed BOOK rate.
 - d. No fixed cost subscriptions are possible, since postage rates and contribution credit may vary. But you may send a check or cash (US or foreign currency) to Lee Gold, and she will deduct costs and inform you each issue how much money is left. When there is no longer enough money to send A&E, she will so inform you--and at your specific request return the balance of your account to you.
 - e. Buyers at stores: pay the store whatever it charges.
3. Back issues: check the Table of Contents page for available back issues. Cost is \$1.50 plus postage.

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CANADA: First Class as above--or Book at 83¢.

OTHER COUNTRIES: Book (83¢, 2-3 months) or Air Mail/Printed Matter (3 weeks; Britain/Europe--\$3.98, Australia--\$5.38).

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

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

NINE-hole stencils for sale at 20¢ plus postage. (PLEASE read the next page carefully before trying to type up a stencil.)

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

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

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

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

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

DIAGNOSING PROBLEMS--after seeing how your stencil printed

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

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

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

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

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

Back issues: #68, 70, 76-103. Or check with Balboa Games, 630 N. Willow, Long Beach, CA 90806 at \$3.15/issue including postage. Or with Dragon's Lair, 8316 Blondo, Omaha, Neb., 68134 at the same price (for #58, 60, 63, 65-6, 68, 70+).

TO APPEAR IN #105 (May): Larter, Dansie Wilson, Dansie, Straus, Sadoyama, Brooks, Clarke, Clifford, Keyes, Burchett, McLachlan, Goldberg, Del Grande, Stevens, Plamondon, Bauer, Short, Gilham, Schwall, and Saunders...about 85 pages (3-14-84).

<u>This issue contains</u>	<u>March 14, 1984</u>		
Cover	Lel	1	BL
A Few Paragraphs	Lee Gold	4	WH
Tantivy	Lee Gold	4	PK
Agents of Chaos	Steve Gilham	2	BL
The Other True Way	Quentin Long	6	WH
Leagues Unlit....	Brooks & Flin	4	GR
Death Star on the Horizon	Adrian Bolt	2	YE
The Colgar Chronicles	Jenny Hein	6	WH
The Chronicles of the Ancient Empire	Matt Stevens	4	GD
An Anglo Scottish Chronicle	Peter Clarke	3	BL
Death Stars for Fun and Profit	Adrian Bolt	1	BL
The Dark Ages Pages #8 and #9	Martin Wixted	8	WH
Montmorillonite Man-O-War Bird	Nick Larter	4	PK
Knight Dreams of Coup	Mark Goldberg	2	GR
The Otyugh Obituary	Vincent Foster	5	WH
The Marco Polo Explorers Club	Kate Gehrke	3	WH
The Murderered Master Mage	George Phillies	2	GD
The Least Key of Solomon	Hank Griffin	3	YE
Terra Ferretae	Robert Saunders	1	YE
Vardhuset Tvehovdingen	John Robillard	7	WH
Kzin's Corner	Dana Carson	3	WH
Alabaster Albatross	Simon Cornelius	6	BL
The Sporadic Viking	Torbjorn Ragnesjo	6	WH
FRP Herbalism	Lee Gold	1	GR
The Scribe of the Elfin Kingdom	John Bambach	3	GR
I Was a L9 MU for the CIA	Lew Wolkoff	3	PK
True But Probably Unimportant	Steve Jones	1	PK
Chronicles of Zonka	James Roberts	3	WH
The Price of Power	Richard Schwall	1	WH
The Science of Unreality	Bill Karieva	2	YE
The Golden Dragon	John Sapienza	4	GD
Ephemeral Transactions	Daniel James	5	WH
Sapristi Nockos	Peter da Silva	7	WH
The Zine with No Name	Michael Johnson	2	PK
Tales of Magic	Ronald Pehr	7	WH
The Dark Ages Pages #11 (sic)	Martin Wixted	1	WH
Calacire	David Jacobson	3	GR
Notes from a Bad DM	Brian Lane	1	GR
The Elven Archer	Bruce Danner	2	GD
Golem's Corner	Wilson Heydt	14	WH
The Chaotic Kaskara	Paul Waters	3	BL

We've finally gotten the computer talking to VAXen/nets. Send stuff to: ...ucbvax!decvax!allegra!sdcrcdf!ucla-s!lcc!barry). We haven't yet tried direct transfer through the modem. If YOU want to try, first call us at (213) 306-7456 and verify that we're home. I'll warm up the computer, get VTE running, and turn on the modem--and then ask you to call our modem number, 306-6752. Then again maybe we should establish net.games.frp.a+e. (The current net.games.frp seems chiefly interested in Adventure/Zork.)

PUBLICATIONS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST TO A&E READERS

- ABYSS, ed. David Nalle, bimonthly, 1402 21st St. NW, Wash DC, 20036; \$1.50/sample, \$7/6 issues; \$13/12 issues; offset, digest-sized.
- DIFFERENT WORLDS, pub. Chaosium, Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706. Offset, slick.
- DRAGON LORDS, ed. Ian Marsh, Avalon, Grams Rd., Walmer, Deal, Kent, CT14 7PU, ENGLAND; 60p/issue (checks payable to Mike Lewis); digest-sized, offset.
- THE FANTASY GAMER from Steve Jackson Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760; 3 issues/\$8; 6 issues/\$13; bimonthly.
- THE FANTASY HERALD, pub. Sun Reach Pubs., 44 Candleriggs, Glsagow, Scotland, 3 pounds/6 issues domestic; international rates on request; digest-sized, offset.
- NUTS & BOLTS of Gaming, 3753 W. 80th Pl., Chicago, IL 60652; \$2.25/issue; one year US \$10.20. Prozine.
- WHITE DWARF, pub. Games Worskhop, 27/29 Sunbeam Rd., London NW10 6JP, ENGLAND; 75p or \$3 per issue; slick, offset.
- THE WILD HUNT, ed. Mark Swanson, 40 Bow St., Arlington, MA 02174; \$1.50 plus postage; Boston-based APA, monthly.
- WYRMS CLAW, pub. Original Thought, 95 Norris Rd., Brooklands, SALE, Cheshire, M33 3GS, ENGLAND, 4 pounds or \$15 per year. Offset, digest-sized.

A BRIEF GUIDE TO OCCASIONAL ABBREVIATIONS FOUND IN A&E

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

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

RAEBNC = Read and Enjoyed But No Comment

ct = comment

A&E Alarums & Excursions
TWH The Wild Hunt

DW Different Worlds
TD The Dragon

WD White Dwarf
EGG E. Gary Gygax

PLEASE express all HP or damage ranges as dice instead of numbers.

That is: say 5D10 - or - 5xD10, but NOT 5+50. Thank you.

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

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

TANTIVY

by Lee Gold, (213) 306-7456

LANDS OF ADVENTURE is finally out. A&Eers who placed advance orders should have gotten it by now (except for those overseas who requested it Book Rate). LoA is still available at a discount to A&E subscribers, to be sent out with your A&E. LoA is \$12 (probably plus sales tax) at your local store. For A&Eers, it's:

\$10.00 shipped UPS or Book Rate. (It will not be sent First Class.)

\$14.00 shipped Air to England/Europe.

\$16.00 shipped Air to Australia.

OTHER SUNS will also be available at discount to A&Eers. It sells for \$16 (again probably plus sales tax). Sent out with your A&E, it's:

\$13 shipped UPS or Book Rate.

\$19 shipped Air to England/Europe

\$22 shipped Air to Australia

The LoA G^m screen got omitted on purpose rather than by accident, to keep down the price of the game. If anyone is interested in the G^m tables (one sheet, photo-reduced, all the tables a G^m is likely to need while running LoA), I'll sell them to A&Eers at 10 cents each. (And please feel free to photocopy them.)

LAND OF THE RISING SUN has nearly sold out its first printing of 4,000 copies. Bizar wants a new version, compatible with C&S II. And somewhat shorter.

I've starting thinking about a SF-oriented LoA Culture Pack--at multiple Tech Levels. (And apologies to NICOLAI SHAPERD for misunderstanding him about his offer to collaborate.) Since I plan to base the High Tech Skills not on reality but on science fiction, I think I can handle this myself ~~over~~simplistically.

I've been asked what sort of floppies this computer likes. It takes 5½" double-sided, double-density diskettes (recorded at quad density). The operating system is UNIX. I don't know if stuff written under XENIX or VENIX or such is compatible.

TOKAIDO NO SHIMBUN (Tokaido Newspaper)

Ninth Month, 1st day. A funeral was held for the daimyo's dead mother--and the 13 samurai who had died fighting the fire mage. They were buried in the same plot as the old lady and given spirit-names indicating they were now her guardians.

The bulletin board had an order from the Regent that all travellers must have their passports inspected before leaving town. A number of people asked to be carried as companions under Mebose's passport. Mebose asked his newly hired servant to look into everyone's background. (He already knew that two of his acquaintances were cats; now he found out that a third was a fox.) [And the servant turned out to be the son of a man who had deserted a ninja clan. The entire clan is searching for him to kill him. But Mebose doesn't know that.]

The ward head of the fire-mage's district was dismissed, and Lily's cousin's husband was promoted in his place. And gave a party in honor of the other cousin, the restaurant owner who'd arranged for fall foliage for the daimyo's mother.

Two lovers committed suicide in front of the bulletin board. None of the party recognized them. [The woman had had her hair cut off a few days earlier. She'd turned Buddhist nun in mortification, then realized she couldn't give up her lover. So they killed themselves. The hair cutting had been done by the ikiryō (living spirit) of the girl who was to have been forced to marry the fire-mage. She ended up getting engaged to the brawny sword-collector instead.]

And the medium got possessed again by the ghost of the Eta robber Dirt-Boy. This time the Buddhist priest was there and dealt with the situation, lecturing the ghost on the bad karma it was accumulating--and promising to do something about informing its grandson about where its stolen treasure was. (And also sent a message to the town's magistrate.)

SAPIENZA: I'm going to index the Herbalism data so as to make genuine encounter charts by Month plus Area (e.g. Woods, Gardens, Riverbanks). I'll also include C&S BMR for each herb. And then FGU is going to publish the thing.

HEYDT: Personally I'd let Hawking (or anyone else) make his own decision as on risking his life. Glad to see you did misstate your position when you said you'd "sacrifice" ALS sufferers other than Hawking to improve Hawking's chances.

GALEOTTI: The theory was to have a basic firearms matrix based on Power of the propulsive charge plus weight of the shell--with rifling, shell shape, etc. modifying range, damage, and accuracy. And then probably giving a list of a few sample weapons. In a world with stunners, blasters, neurowhips, etc., I'd expect the standard weapons list for firearms would be highly limited, if only because there were so few customers. And ammunition types would be equally limited.

FRASER: Gamed out NPC stories are writeups. Others are fiction.

FOSTER: I don't have a dictionary with the sources of French words.//Nor a pronunciation guide for 17th century English. I pronounce Alarums in three syllables.//Loutzenheiser's system was for Shock, not Pain. Shock is caused by damage; Pain by nerve stimulation. A paper cut or migraine headache can be as painful as a broken toe. Shock is related to chance of death; Pain to chance of losing morale. In short, there are a lot of differences.//My ct to Shapero was a nitpick at his seeming to have said that no caste knew the others' languages.// "See Previous Month" was used for herbs already described but still flowering in a later month. //I didn't draw the ocover. This comment should have been directed to Wixted.

SAPIENZA (again): I designed A&E to flourish and be profitable. I didn't quite expect the market to last this long. Or that the friendship network it established would get me (and others) elevated to the ranks of Filthy Pro.

SHAPERO: See earlier apology. I am truly sorry I misunderstood you.//I feel that Psi is a Category of which Telepathy is one possible Skill. And that Nega-Psi (which can lower the chance of Psi success) is also a possibility. (Earthlings are probably equally balanced between non-psis, Nega-psis and Psis, which is why so little Psionic stuff seems to be going on.)//See ct thish to Galeotti. //Creating aliens as slightly mutated sentient versions of Earth critters doesn't satisfy me. I liked Butler's aliens in SURVIVOR (with the chameleon-like fur) for their convincing originality. And Asimov's Emotional/Rational/Parental triads for the same reason. One of these days, perhaps, I'll put some of my aliens into A&E.

SHAW: LoA Magic affects minds but not the physical world. LoA Miracles can affect the physical world, because they invoke its source: the deities. LoA Thaumaturgy allows Miracle effects to be achieved by Magic spell skills. Magical control of the elements can be treated as one or more Thaumaturgic spell skills (and the GM could easily rule that in his campaign, the spellcaster would not be aware that a deity was involved.)//My viewpoint is undoubtedly terrocentric. On the other hand, Technological Level's effect on Craft and Talent is labeled an Option. In fact, in one sense all LoA rules are optional, since the opening notes state that "The GM's word is law and overrides any of the game rules."

NATTER

Just got a phone call from Deanna Sue Ray saying that she and Jason have moved to 215 Kim Sue Lane, Buellton, CA 93427; the phone number is still (805) 688-2024.

GUILDS ET AL: I was rereading Suetonius' The Lives of the Twelve Caesars and happened upon this passage (describing the reign of Augustus). "Many pernicious practices...had survived as a result of the lawless habits of the civil wars or had even arisen in time of peace. Gangs of footpads openly went about with swords by their sides, ostensibly to protect themselves, and travelers in the country, freemen and slaves alike, were seized and kept in confinement in the slave-prisons of the landowners. Numerous leagues, too, were formed for the commission of crimes of every kind, assuming the title of some new guild. Therefore to put a stop to brigandage, he [Augustus] stationed guards of soldiers wherever it seemed advisable,...and disbanded all guilds, except such as were of long standing and formed for legitimate purposes."

COMMENTS

TANTIVY: We've got a modem but the software to let the machine use it is still on order. Be patient, hackers.//Psi Ratings: on second thought, a couple of these look too much like Psi versions of Magic. I think I'll rethink how Psi creates Compulsions and Illusions, so as to distinguish the two approaches.

SAPIENZA: Given that the military equivalent of [derogatory term] is the "barracks room lawyer," how about "rule shyster"? To me "rule bender" sounds like someone who plays a variant version of the rules.

As indicated above, I distinguish among Magic, Psi, and Science-beyond-our-Tech-Level. Magic is a craft depending on symbol and ritual--and improved equally through study and experience. Psi is a native ability depending on self-control/willpower--and improved chiefly through experience. Science (whether beyond our Tech level or not) is a craft depending on information-gathering and inductive logic--and improved chiefly through study of experimentation. The results may be similar but the mental attitudes of the practitioners are exceedingly different.

SAUNDERS: As an established adult of 41, I wish to go on record as claiming I can still gain new skills and advance in old ones.//Given the super-natural events the Domesday Era thought occurred, you might need to leave room for some sort of magic, if not the typical spellcaster variety. I'd also suggest infrequent miracles by the saints--and also infrequent coven activity.

WOOLLEY: A good Aging system should start by defining normal lifespan for the species (e.g. 75 for humans, 110 for hobbits, 500 for dwarves, 5000 for elves). It should define puberty range (onset to completion). It should then divide the remaining lifespan into periods (e.g. "young adult"). Each period should have a chance of modifying appropriate stats. (Wisdom/Prudence might well go up with age, as Constitution and Agility decreased.) It should tend to cause natural death by old age at normal lifespan, with maximum lifespan of +50% or so.

ZALK: Agreed that what we actually need not just for Aliens but for all characters is a cultural stereotype PLUS hints for individuating individuals.

TELLER: Your list of Occupational Skills is not well thought out. In some cases, your biases show all too clearly. In many, your unfamiliarity with the job shows pretty clearly too.

LARTER: FLAME WARNING. The phrase "The exception proves the rule" does NOT mean the exception validates the rule; it means that the exception tests the rule. (It's the same sense of the word that survives in the phrase Proving Grounds.)

GALEOTTI: Alternatively, magic talent could be inherited--which would mean the nobility would be mages. Or magic could depend on Self-confidence/Charisma, which would in turn depend at least partially on social standing.

ROBILLARD: Interesting system for designing new weapons. Have you thought of expanding it for missiles? Higher tech weapons?

FOSTER: I suspect that Blackjack is Cardplaying (based on Knowledge Rating), but Poker is Cardplaying/Psychological Manipulation (based on Knowledge & Persuasion Ratings).//I doubt that cats kill out of "(perceived) necessity." Or meanness. (Though the birds and mice might have their own view on that last.)//Modern humans who hunt for sport want a challenging hunt (just like cats). I suspect that humans hunting for food are far less interested in being challenged.

DUNHAM: Storytellers can also pick up on our heroes' exploits, embroider them slightly, and change the names. This is particularly interesting if the story gives new data on what actually was happening during the incident.//I've occasionally used fortune telling cards to stimulate my imagination as to what might happen to the PCs. (There's one nice layout that shows the present problem, two alternate resolutions of it, three as yet unknown factors affecting the situation, and three general warnings.)//I've also used the 2000 basic Japanese ideographs as a random plotline generator.//Okay, this is printed on a Comrex II in 12-pitch, using FORTUNE:WORD (like Wang, I'm told) with a UNIX operating system.

WOOLLEY: So far my favorite inherited stat system was Eclare Hannifen's: record the 3D6 of the D&D character's stats. Choose 1D6 randomly from each parent and roll 1D6 for the child; add them. Alternatively, you can average the parents' stats, with a random modifier, but that's not as elegant. Ideally, the child has a chance of being superior or inferior to both parents.//All stats don't advance equally over the years. Intelligence seems to mature faster than Prudence/Wisdom. Dexterity improves faster than Strength.//One of my PCs once met a Rust Monster who was a humanoid wearing dull red leather armor. He parried weapon attacks with his hands--and the weapons crumbled (at least the ferrous ones did).

MASTERS: Given that (according to my sources) the Romans had sling corps but not bow corps, I suspect the sling was an easier weapon to use at reasonable effectiveness. The same sources say that the staff sling was used chiefly for heavy missiles (about ten times heavier than standard sling "stones"--and at half the effective range).

GALEOTTI: A good way to scare PCs is to have respectable NPCs scared by something. Another is to have the menace frustrate all their attacks, but not have the time to destroy them (yet). Another is to have the seemingly destroyed menace keep popping up again, none the worse for wear. Another is to shake their confidence in their supposed allies. Another is to have a respectable prophet issue a warning of death, doom and destruction--with no visible loopholes.//One of the challenges my campaigns try to meet is to get the players emotionally involved enough with the NPCs, so that losing an NPC friend or relative hurts almost as much as losing a PC.

UNION: One way to get players to realize you're not running the "stock D&D world" is to have highly visible NPCs doing weird things. For instance, you're in a sort of Renaissance era. Have you tried emphasizing the combination of marriage as an alliance of families plus courtly/Platonic love for romance? (Check THE DECAMERON for possible scenarios. Or Cabell's DOMNEI.) How deeply have you visualized the changes that new technology could bring to the established class structure? NPCs talking about the good old days when people honored their feudal obligations might get your point across. Particularly when the princess's ladies-in-waiting go on strike.

ADAMS: Hysterical superhero tale.

Comments 101

It seems that whoever suggested a double issue for 100 spoke truer than he knew - I wonder how long it'll be before we catch up again.

Wes Ives: Welcome back. And welcome to the club, as far as your complaint about wanting systems that work now. . . Old hackin' habits do die hard. As far as I can tell, no system can be used instantly, like that, so no systems becomes the best fashion to run.//Well said in distinguishing ROLEplay and rolePLAY.

Wilson Heydt: Re Asterix - the pirates are apparently a joke at the expense of a popular (in France) set of cartoon characters, whose provenance may very well be different from Asterix'. The UK translation retains the sprit of the original, as far as I can tell.

Mark Galeotti: Thanks for the egoboo on the fiction.//The problem with the current terms once used to denote magical activity, is that without obvious magic, they have become debased.//Re Ellwood - perhaps a price index, using a standard 'shopping basket' of items would be better, which would reflect what the characters usually spend their money on (beer?). The standard that seems most popular is the cost of a pint of beer.

John Patterson: I agree with you on Questworld - I had hoped for the emphasis to be on general culture and geography. As for Gloranthax, it served to put me off RQ for quite a while - the Nomad Gods game had looked rather silly to me. Even when I saw how good the rules were, it took a long time before the world hooked me.

Certainly, I am interested in the myth of Glorantha, but the details of the contemporary world are sometimes a little twee or tacky. I see no real objection to the function of the Runecults as character classes - at least they show a cultural contextd for prohibitions.

Wayne Shaw: Re Champions - too true. Tryin to stat out even quite weak characters under Champions without loading them down with distorting disadvantages is hard enough. Much easier under Superworld: The main reason, I feel, is that there is a separate limit on how much energy blast or STR than simply how many points available to cram in to it, and that skills aren't prohibitive to purchase.

The setting used for the story 'Tiphareth' was inspired by the old SPI game, Sorcerer. The magic is a mix of the game, D&D, and my own ideas on how that sort of magic should work - unfortunately there is no system to fit.

Paul Waters: see above. The great thing about fiction is you don't need a system, you just say what happens, and get the 'right' answer. I viewed the colours as complementary, although kept the cyclic dominance (purple beats blue beats green... beats red beats purple), As far as learning the magics, I used the idea that they were much like different scientific disciplines (geology, biology, astronomy ...) and it was as easy to master many magics as many sciences. (With all this talent in A&E we still don't have a decent learning system. AAAAUGH!)

Steve Jones: a) you defined a Det Gold spell a while back and b) the one in 101 is straight from RQII.

Peter da Silva: re Black hole lat tices. AAAAUGH! Perhaps if the holes were about 10^{**15} gm size - lifetime of 10^{**10} years, radius 10^{**-15} m (nucleon size) with a lattice spacing comparable with nuclear sizes, the problem of intruding particles wouldn't be too bad. Pity the electron is - as far as can be determined - point sized down to 10^{E18} m. // Also have to ensure that the construct as a whole isn't smaller than its gravitational radius, which makes big structures difficult - only 10^{**18} of those small holes allowed in a 1km sphere or it becomes on big hole - compare $6E26$ atoms in a kg-mo le//Thr ead-like structures are safer than planar are safer than globular as far as critical mass goes - limit is Circumference = 4π . mass. G/c^2 in all directions.

For SF gamers, the astronomers bible, Allen's "Astrophysical quantities" may be well worth perusing, containing as it does bits on everything. For example, it resolves the dilemma that Don Del Grande had in 100 - his 395K temperature is the highest possible temperature achieved by an insulated black surface (or grey) facing the sun, thus only radiating through the same area as intercepts the sunlight. For a planet that is rapidly rotating, the radiating area is 4 times the input area, and the temperature reduces to 279K.

Or, for meteorites $\frac{1}{3}$ 1Kton TNT = $1.2E12$ J ; energy for a crater d meters diameter is $1.8E.d^3$ J or roughly d^3 kg TNT.

diameter	1	10	100	1e3	1e4	1e5		
depth	.12	2.7	270	180	1e3	6.7e3	from rim	crater volume = $6e4 \times$ meteor
rim hgt	-	.5	7	70	370	1200	above surrounds	Volume

Mike Dawson: Your question really boils down to this - 'Is there any circumstance in which it is valid to violate artistic integrity?' . In my book, artistic integrity is a fine thing, but little suited to the real world. The most basic problem with purist role-playing - almost to the extent of controlled schizophrenia - is that it only works if everyone in the group agrees to it. The campaign that we find most nostalgic to recall was a primitive thing, no real NPCs, with fairly rudimentary roles - usually facets of the player personality - and eventually the clash of opposed attitudes reached the stage at which it was no longer rewarding to play. This simply because I refused to go along with the way things were. It took about a year, sure, but my refusal to compromise destroyed the game and caused some acrimony between the players, who had a very strong party mentality.

Simply put, if you want to play the game, you need to have other people to play with who mesh with your playing style.

On a related point, the only thing really resembling a PC party in fantasy written before D&D reacted back on the field was the Fellowship of the Ring, which broke up as soon as the strong NPC was killed. Even though everyone wanted to defeat Sauron, their schemes differed. This is why I have spoken against the PC party concept, as a violation of the genre. Only in Superhero gaming can one find support from the literature for the stable group.

Wyne Shaw- see above for one example of campaign crash. The normal circumstances are when the players find that the current situation unrewarding to play in. The Allayne campaign died because there was no motivation to do anything other than enjoy the good life; Ranlyr before that because the PCs were being puppeted by so many gods and demons that their free will was compromised: we quit the game and let Pete design a new one, rather than try and find loopholes in Ranlyr. But then, and this is where

John Sapienza's point (why do we play these games) comes up, we have played RPGs as games. First there was the dungeon, nothing wonderful, but a novelty. Now in our more sophisticated attempts, we have really made a virtue of creativity, designing idiosyncratic backgrounds, until one catches enough peoples' fancy for play to start. The background is then explored until we've very much found out all there is to know, and then play peters out. Superhero gaming is now a return to the less intellectualized dungeon type game, but in a new context, where the participation is fun. The reward is not the cathartic violence of the dungeon, or the adrenalin high that went with all the really memorable dungeon runs, but more the odd ingenuity required to keep the larger than life feel of the genre and the naive charm of powergaming without having to grind ones competitors down for contrast.

Well enough of the heavy philosophy. Instead, Karen's thoughts on female dwarves.

Dwarfish females aren't bearded; but are used to equality of the sexes. Since human society is so thoroughly sexist, female dwarves dress as males, with false beards, when travelling among humans, so as to be treated decently. No need for them to be bearded or marsupial, just intelligent.

THE OTHER TRUE WAY--being a zine from Quentin G. Long
who may be found at 845 LaVerne Way, Los Altos, CA 94022 or (415) 948-6469

MORE WORK FOR THE GM

One hears much about Piety ratings for clerical types and their effect on the PCs' ability to summon up miracles at desirable times. At the risk of being painfully obvious, I have a suggestion. Let the GM keep track of the ruddy number (Piety Rating by any other name) and let him (or her, or it) alter said number as time goes by, using whatever method is accepted, and let NOT the players ever be aware of the value. This wouldn't mean that the players wouldn't know the general magnitude of the Piety Rating, particularly if it has significant game effects (and why bother with all the bookkeeping if it doesn't?), but it would bring to the players more of the (dare I say it?) Sense of Wonder that one associates with religious activities into the roleplaying of religious PCs.

And hey!, what about Hit Points/combat? No reason the players should ever know anything more than, "Well, you got a nasty gash in the thigh, but it's more bloody than painful." And with computer assistance, a GM could (if such be its desire) use any HP/c system it wanted, even one that made AFTERMATH's look like TFT.

Heck, why stop there? One could easily extend this idea to cover virtually all aspects of RPs. I envision a time when a database management system (only extremely user-friendly dbms need apply) is required equipment for GMs, who would have literally every and any possible bit of information related/significant to the campaign at their fingertips, and players' knowledge of their characters is strictly limited to the non-exact, qualitative sort of knowledge all people possess about themselves....

Be damned if I can tell whether such a vision will ever come true. (Maybe some hyper-extension of presently existing spread-sheets would do it?). Or even whether it would be desirable. But it's certainly a neat thought, eh?

CAMPAIGN WRITEUP (What the heck, everyone else seems to be doing them....This is a Traveller campaign, more or less, which happens to be limited in setting to one solar system--or for you pedants, one stellar system. And now, the 5-credit tour of the inhabited system....

VIBROS

1.2 Gs and a dense atmosphere complete with permanent layer of clouds. Rather warm, swampy; much like Venus ought to have been. Underneath its perpetual cloud cover is an ecosystem which has run amok, making Terra', even at its most complex/inexplicable, seem rather simple.

Intelligent life exists: the species called Insectorids. These are semi-humanoid, exoskeletal beings with exceptionally large specimens reaching 6' or more. Though the exoskeleton is quite tough and rigid, its joints provide many of the degrees of freedom of movement possessed by H. sapiens. While knee, elbow and ankle joints are simple hinges and the head can only be swiveled from side to side, the shoulder and hip joints have both pitch and roll (but not yaw), and the wrist is a sort of mutated ball-and-socket. The waist allows the upper torso/head to swivel about independently of the lower body. The feet terminate in two clawlike toes, the larger one on the outside (good for climbing trees and such), and the hands each have three four-jointed fingers and a vestigial thumb.

Respiration is handled through a complex network of internal air passages which supply oxygen to all cells of the body. The "lungs" (two pairs of bellows-like organs located in the shoulders) force air through the air-passages. There is no heart nor blood; air is bubbled and frothed through the digestive track, after which nutrients are carried to the cells in aerosol suspension through the air passages.

Waste products are expelled through microscopic pores in the chitinous exoskeleton, and acoustic communication is accomplished by the "lids" of the air intakes (also in the shoulders; the mouth is used solely for eating), which are rapidly clicked against the exoskeleton, producing a sort of distorting squarewave sound (sort of buzzy).

Sensory apparatus include the large compound eyes, which have a good deal of specialized neural material (either a souped up retina or an underdeveloped brain) all to themselves to organize the visual data into usable form, and are highly light-sensitive; the antennae, which seem to provide some sort of motion-detection capability (only rudimentary in most individuals; the queen's guards are chosen/bred to have this sense in a highly acute state). The hearing organ is the exoskeleton itself--which, like any good sounding board, is rather sensitive to atmospheric vibrations. (Yes, Virginia, an insectoid's hearing is impaired when the insectoid is talking).

The Bugoid (to use the common nickname) social system is something like that of the Terran ant; the queen is the only fertile female and thus absolute matriarch. Bugoids intuitively understand biochemical reactions, albeit only certain of the species' elders have any conscious intellectual comprehension of these matters. Generally low technology outside of biochemical knowledge (for which Bugoids are notorious throughout the system).

D'URRT

The most nearly Terranormal world of the system. Inhabited by humans or close enough not to matter. Rancid atmosphere, the legacy of too much pollution; off-worlders need some sort of breathing apparatus. Religious dictatorship, rumored to possess quasi-magical powers; guns (not to mention other forms of weaponry) controlled to point of nonexistence. Technology is pretty much 1980s Terran, with certain higher-tech leftovers--grav vehicles are not entirely uncommon and can be repaired fairly conveniently, depending on the problem, but no one knows how to build new ones. Interplanetary trade via rockets. Truly obnoxious criminals get thrown off planet, and good luck getting back.

ARES

Small (.6 Gs), cold, thin air. No native life to speak of (i.e. none intelligent). This is where the aforementioned criminals get tossed. Outside of the prison complex, there is a certain amount of civilization (thanks to escaped convicts and descendants of same), something like feudalism, which has an uneasy truce with the prison. "You don't bug me; I don't bug you."

Next time: the campaign begins. WRONG. It would except for some peculiar inter-player interactions too detailed to go into here. End results: one dead campaign, almost before it started. A new one is starting Real Soon Now, set in the 1930s, which should have more staying power than the last one.

GLEN LARSEN DOES IT AGAIN: I refer, of course, to his latest abomination called Automan. The title character is a computer-generated superhero who can only exist at night. Y'see, Automan uses a LOT of power, and so only shows up during periods of low demand....There's also something called Cursor, a glowing geometric shape which bobs around. Oh yeah, it can also create various kinds of vehicles, just like the effect used in certain Datsun commercials, including a supercar capable of right-angle turns and other nifty tricks. Feh! A plague on all Glen's houses; I wonder how soon before Steve Lisberger reaches for a lawyer....

BOOK REVIEW: CHRISTINE by Stevie King.

Christine, in case you didn't know, is a downright EVIL '58 Plymouth Fury in red/white two-tone with arcane and unnatural powers....Damned good book, with unsettling ending. Recommended.

ANOTHER BOOK REVIEW: THE HACKER'S DICTIONARY, authored (well, compiled actually) by Guy L. Steele and five other guys; a prototype of the book was at one time floating about LOTS of ARPANET, and it contains beaucoup hackerspeak, what one might call slang. You too can discover the mysteries of the word bogus (see also bogon, bogosity, bogometer, autobogotify); learn the unbelievable pleasures of bucky bits, not to mention double bucky ("Double Bucky, you're the one; you make my keyboard lots of fun."); and in general become a bit more familiar with certain aspects of hacker culture. Highly recommended. Now if you'll excuse me, I must gronk out, being broken from having changed phase the hard way....

Hmm, my copy of #101 arrived in the same plain manila envelope as #98. No time travel; just that for some arcane reason I'd not received #98 when I should

COMMENTS ON #98

JTS: I ran in that OS scenario a couple cons back! With Nicolai and cassette recorder and all yet....Hope it gets pubbed as an OS scenario sometime, eh?

J BAMBACH: Re collection of literature: BLARGH!//Re Steeleye Span: My first exposure was the Original Masters anthology album, after which I too bought all the Steeleye I could lay hands on (except that anthology--the only song on it not already on some other album, Bonnie Moorhen, I didn't like. For the benefit of non-Steeleye fen, a listing of albums:

Chrysalis label: Below the Salt (1008), Parcel of Rogues (1046), How We Are Six (1053), Commoner's Crown (1071), All Around My Hat (1091), Please to See the King (1119), Hark! The Village Wait (1120), Ten Man Hop or Mr. Reservoir Butler Rides Again (1121), Rocket Cottage (1123), Storm Force Ten (1151), and Live at Last! (1199).

Takoma label, distributed by Chrysalis: Sails of Silver (7097).

S JONES: The uses of Stretch w/o Range you mentioned are in reality covered by the skill Escape Artist (C II).

WH HEYDT: Why not call your Zine "View from a Heydt"?//Re accents: Dear boy, I use an Apple II+ with AppleWriter II feeding into an Epson MX80. Doing as you suggest would seem to indicate tht I twiddle with the guts of the AWriter, a task I lack the intestinal fortitude for. Anyway, Lee retypes everything I write; so a legibly handwritten addition will, if need be, suffice.

Re magic: OK, how about this for a difference between magic and technology? Technology does not depend upon biological factors. Two identical machines under identical conditions in identical situations will presumably act identically. Magic, contrariwise, doesn't. Since I like the two seemingly irreconcilable ideas that 1) magic has laws which govern its workings and 2) magic is mysterious and somewhat irregular, I have an idea. The irregularity of biological entities being as great as it is, one can obtain both goals by decreeing that the mage is him(it)self a significant active portion of every spell cast. This would make magical ability vary widely from mage to mage, which accounts for point two above. But without some rules of magic which are independent of the caster, I doubt that magic could ever exist, so point one gets into the act.

GENERIC COMMENT from an Agnostic to all the Christians Arguing about things: I may get my butt in a sling for saying this, but I am Highly Amused.

R LOUTZENHISER: re Light bulbs: you are wrong. light bulbs have never absorbed darkons; they repel them. Light, you see, is the absence of darkons...

JTS again: re me: Thank for the egoboo but since when has a true statement ever pissed me off? As mentioned earlier, my bile is saved for idiocies-presented-as-fact.

DW DICK: Re magic: see ct to HEYDT. Also the RealWorld is too something to extrapolate from, provided that one regards it as a single data point from the function called Efficacy/Usefulness of Magic. In the typical FRP world, the behavior of magic may be characterized as "common" or "powerful and hard to control," or some such. In the RealWorld, that characterization is "nonexistent."//Re social/technological change: Absobloomin'lutely correct!//Re General Ct on Magic: Grave pardon, sire, but I do serve notice that what I say is an opinion (if it is): as stated, the Magic Phrases are "Here's a suggestion" or "I think that" or some such. If one leaves out any of the Magic Phrases and just says, "Such-and-such is true," one is making a blanket statement rather than communicating an opinion. And really, do the Magic Phrases take up that much room? As to finding a counterexample of your "high cost of magic" notion, I'll pass. If you restrict me to extant FRPGs, that is, most (all?) of which evidently have been built on your notion (probably due to misguided ideas about--gack!--G*M* B*L*NC* on the part of designers). Outside of that limited arena, I think we can both find counterexamples, eh?

R SAUNDERS: Aha, someone else has discovered "Flesh to Stone/Rock to Mud/Reincarnate." Then there was the great Deck of Many Things crock, which involved dealing the Deck out face down, then using Commune for a binary search (If you restrict Commune to yes/no. If not, then just straight-out ask) to locate the good cards....That book by Dole is called HABITABLE PLANETS FOR MAN, if memory serves.

JM BURT: Who says the L3s had dense molecular structures? I thought the L3s just had supergrotty, successor-to-Arisia level psi, but no particularly weird bodily attributes. (Bodies would seem to be pleasant but not necessary for the L3s.)//Re guns: why are there so many gun deaths in the US? Maybe because accurate knowledge of what those things are capable of is comparatively rare. Maybe because the US mass media persist in not portraying violence or its consequences realistically and accurately. Maybe because the US has more cities with high population density. (Put too many rats into a too small enclosure, and they start going insane; you think the same might apply to humans?) Maybe because the crime rate is much higher in the US. (Didja know that the gun-death statistics cited by folks like Handgun Control, Inc. include felons who were shot to death by police officers in the course of their duties? I don't see that a cop shooting a mugger makes a particularly convincing case for gun control, but....)

J HEIN: The Syentifick Creationists out here want the Biblical Creation story (or else one exactly like it with the serial numbers filed off) to be taught in science courses with Darwin, Newton, and like that; now do you understand Burt's comment?

D JOINER: My own objection to murder of sentients is that it's wasteful. Consider: of all the matter known to exist, how much of it is alive? Damned little. Of that miniscule portion, how much is also sentient? Even less. Ergo, one should conserve intelligent life as one would any other scarce resource....

RH PEHR: So Lycanthropes regenerate from the heart, eh? What if someone dices up a werewolf's heart into tiny bits and scatters them?

M GALEOTTI: Anarchy is inherently unstable and in most cases does become "strong prey on weak." Unless all members of an anarchist populace (not to mention its neighbors) are perfectly rational (and if that's so, then you can't be talking about H. sapiens), then some nutbar--generally an overmuscled, underbrained type--or a group of them--will attempt to fill the perceived power vacuum ("Look, there's nobody in charge!") and will probably do so by stomping the living bejesus out of anyone who disagrees. You may not like this scenario, but it has the virtues of being historically and psychologically accurate when applied to H. sapiens.

J PATTERSON: Some of Judge Dredd's points go into that bleeding motorcycle, you know. In addition, some Judges have psionics....

IL STRAUSS: There may be only one role among superheroes, but roleplay in SH games does exist and quite well, thank you. For example, no one would be tempted to confuse the personality of Silicon (tin can, semi-insane computer jock) with that of Firepower (self-built, ex-criminal), to cite two of my PCs.

H ROBERTSON: The rigged-dice-in-glass-of-water trick works on dice that are a) weighted to make one side come up more often or b) made of varying density materials to accomplish the same goal. In both cases, the lighter parts of the die will, during its bobbing, be buoyed up more than the heavier ones, and so end up on top. Dice that have been altered by rounding off corners or filing down edges probably wouldn't be detected by this method.//Re Dredd: an outfit called Eagle Comics has been reprinting the 2000 AD stuff (in color, yet!), and the various paperback collectinos have been available for some time.

COMMENT TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT YET MET ME: You blokes may or may not believe that I am a nasty, arrogant SOB who feeds small animals into JCPenny food processors (without anesthesia), does not shave or perform most other acts of personal hygiene, loves to place landmines in front of the rear wheels of parked cars, performs exotic activities with canned peaches and the contents of an ordinary toolbox, and like that. Well, it's your lucky something or other; I'm going to be at LACON II this year, so you can verify for yourself what I'm truly like. I'm 6' tall, 200 lbs, blond hair and bushy moustache/sideburns, loud bass voice (of, thankfully, fairly high quality). Probably wearing a very dark jacket similar in style to those worn by policemen--and a cap with a front part held onto the visor by a snap. 21 years of age but look older.

COMMENTS ON #101

J HEIN: Nice filk, albeit the song isn't much good a capella.

WD IVES: If you are to continue contributing, please use double impressions or triple printing or whatever else is needed to DARKEN UP THAT PRINTING!

WH HEYDT: I recall that Campbell editorial too....I believe he mentioned that certain primitive peoples would catch four-footed prey by literally running the beasts to death (by exhaustion) and also demonstrated that the Invincible Robot (so loved by producers of Sci Fi flicks) was, to put it bluntly, highly impossible.

V BURCHETT: A D100!? BLARGH!

JTS: My name for 3 on 3D6 (which has been accepted by a surprisingly wide variety of gamers) is Trinocs. Boxcars is the name for a roll of all 6s on any number of D6s, of course. Only the number of cars in the train varies.//Re Pern boardgame: also recommend. Only played one game yet, but it was a doozy!

We got zapped with Unpredictable Threadfall almost before the game started (and the card to neutralize it was at the bottom of the Events deck!). The 18 target Threadfall card came up (Cutthroat? What cutthroat? Nobody here but us Thread fighters), followed closely by the twelver (the two heaviest zaps in the game), and two botched rolls versus burrows lost us all the game....

W SHAW: Your point regarding an excess of disads in CHAMPIONS is right on. A friend attempted to build the Shadow (yes, Lamont Cranston, et al.) and that sucker came out to around 800 points (at least half in the gerasol ring). If one must stick to a 100 pt plus crocks format, why not make the standard superheroc crocks worth something reasonable? 50 pts for Secret ID and similar for Code Versus Killing, for example. The non-standard stuff (berserk, physical limitation, et al) could keep their present values.

Or one could simply tell the point-balance freaks to kiss off and not give a damn if a 300 point character only had 30 in crocks. With that kind of flexibility, one could add or subtract crocks as they became (or ceased being) appropriate to the character, instead of as a bookkeeping expedient.

Having bought Worlds of Wonder, I steadfastly refuse to even look at the TWENTY FLIPPING DOLLAR "Expanded SuperWorld." Ghood Ghod, that's more than WoW itself cost! For that much money, I want more than a mere expansion; I want a whole new system.//Re Astral types: sure the physical body is left behind,...doing a good impression of a sedimentary rock. That being the case, I say it's a special effect. I've covered this in recent OTWs talking to Stukey; he's determined to call anything a new power unless it's exactly and precisely recorded in the Book already, while I'm equally determined to move Heaven and Earth with my Special Effects to avoid having to create new powers. We make one heckuva team, don't we?

M GOLDBERG: So it would be difficult to give emotions to a machine, eh? Would it be any more difficult to give intellect to a machine? Won't it be a kick if it turns out that emotion (=non-rational responses, in this context) is a necessary part of intelligence....Try reading CORRE, BOMBY, BACH: AN ETERNAL GOLDEN BRAID (by Douglas R. Hofstadter; my copy is a paperback from Vintage Books, a division of Random House; cost is \$10 or more for a 7"x10"x1.5" book, but well worth the price. ISBN 0-394-74502-7.

P dSILVA: I teik it iou hav red "Heihem in ce Klasrum"? Cis wuz sumcing riten in 1945, if not erlier (iou kan faind it in "Ce Astounding Siens Fikyion Ancoloje") and wuz an atempt at the veri cing iou just traid.//Re blak holz: Neikid singuleritez meik me nervus. And I red ior sekyion taitlz! Iou, sir. ar ganzo!

RANDOMNESS: I seem to recall that Isaac Asimov once wrote an essay about a curious fact: the total number of heartbeats in any given creature's lifetime is pretty much a constant (something like 5E9, I think it was) for all living things on Earth, except for Homo Sapienza, which lived through about four times too many heartbeats. Interesting thought: does intelligence make us live so long? If so, do further increases in intelligence imply further increases in lifespan? And does the reverse hold true? If so, what about species of extreme longevity (to say nothing of immortality!)?

BEAGUES UNLIT AND FOUNDERED SHORES 9

perpetrated yet again by Alison Brooks, 52 Brent, Tinkers Bridge, Milton Keynes, Bucks, MK6 3DL, UK and with ~~Winderance~~ help from Dave Flin, 69 Frobisher Rd., Bilton, Rugby, CV22 7HS, UK. Typed once again by Lee Gold.

I actually got my first-ever WISH lately, or at least one of my characters did! We found a ring which had, unknown to us, one wish left, on the body of a paladin we'd killed, so I wore it in the hope it would be a ring of protection or such. According to Dave, the GM, I said several times thereafter, "I wish...." and trailed off, while other players kept saying, "I wish we knew what the ring was" and the like. So I can see how these things get wasted.

In the end I had to use it to save our doppleganger. (Our Plan A for taking the town over was to have the D/g impersonate the duke, y'see.) Eventually we had to flee as the good guys started bringing in their Big Guns, but not before witnessing the havoc wrought at full moon by our Plan B. Plan B involved the medusa mage SLEEPing (or similar) a group of townsfolk, and my werewolf giving each a single bite. Under AD&D I had about an equal chance of killing or infecting or wounding but not infecting zero-levels. With captives, of course, I could gnaw away slowly and get a better infection rate. The result was that at full moon something like 20 new werewolves were running amok in the town.

POLL!

We haven't had a poll for ages, so here's a question for you lot out there. What is your favorite real (or if you must, fictional) mythos? And who are your favorite characters from the mythos.

Mine is the Irish Ulster Cycle. I think because it is so good-humoredly exaggerated. My favorites are CuChulain and Medb.

Dave adds: I personally favor the Norse myth, but I couldn't really put a reason on this favoritism. The individuals I favor....Well, it depends on my mood. But not Odin.

VAMPIRE SPECIES

Do players invariably head for the wooden stakes when they see the chap in the opera cape with fangs? (No, stupid, the chap has fangs, not the cape!) According to Gabriel Ronay (The Dracula Myth, Pan), vampires from different areas have different traditional remedies. This would allow for specialist vampire hunters (I've always been a Peter Cushing fan!) or an arduous search by characters for the correct remedies.

Causes are not always supernatural either, though often linked with lycanthropy, genetic abnormalities, or wicked deeds. Presumably the different species would also vary in repellants. The possibilities are endless and allow for a monster with a single remedy, which the players will not already know.

Causes:

Natural causes (?!)	Born with second skin
Born with teeth	Weaned before time
Incest	Born out of wedlock to parents begotten
Killed by werewolf	out of wedlock
Offspring of werewolf or witch	Witchcraft

Remedies:

Stake through heart (sometimes to be done in a single blow or it revives)	Nail through forehead
Stake through heart and nail through temples	Transfixed by hawthorn bough
Take out heart and cut in two; garlic in mouth; nail in head	Cut off toes; nail through neck
Coin in mouth; cut off head with axe	Cut off and burn head
	Cut off head and place between legs
	Pour boiling oil on head; drive nail into navel.

Boil head in vinegar

Chain to grave with wild roses

Pile stones on grave

Bury face downwards--or at crossroads

Poppy seeds in grave

Lemon in mouth

As you see from this list, the causes of vampirism are similar to the traditional causes of lycanthropy; the two are clearly related. The cures seem to fall into four categories:

- a. Wood, usually a stake through the heart
- b. A nail in the head or body. (Cold iron was a traditional remedy against all kinds of ghosts and fairies.)
- c. Destroying or removing the head
- d. Practices that seem related to traditional burial customs--a coin in the mouth (Greek), burial at a crossroads (related to Odin), etc. If this is true, one could easily customize vampires in a campaign by relating destruction methods to the area's burial customs. If bodies are cremated, this might be the only way to destroy a vampire. Etc.

And then there was the vampire type in "Captain Kronos".../.

REAL ZOMBIES

New Scientist (15 Dec 83) reports the case of a man who was declared dead, buried, and later turned up claiming to have been used as zombie slave labor on a sugar plantation. Apparently the "death" was caused by a poison that lowered metabolic rates enough for him to be declared dead but allowed him to remain conscious. The poison was prepared from a toad and puffer fish, among other things.

He was then exhumed and force-fed a paste containing Datura species (known as "Zombie cucumbers" in Haiti), which contain alkaloids which may cause amnesia, hallucinations, and psychotic delirium. People thus drugged were used as slave labor.

GOOD GAME WRITEUPS (by Alison and David)

There have been and will continue to be numerous writeups of games in A&E. I think we all agree this is a Good Thing; they can give ideas for a campaign, insight into others' roleplaying styles; they can be amusing, exciting or saddening according to context.

Another thing they can be is terrible.

Having read a lot of writeups lately and compared them, we have come up with several features we feel help make a writeup interesting.

1. Accidental intrusion of game mechanics is usually enough to wreck suspension of disbelief. Deliberate intrusions can provide an insight into how the game was conducted. Lee Gold and Jenny Hein have used this to good effect. Naturally it should not be overdone, but an example would be, "(The GM didn't believe it but the the reaction dice know best.) Unexpectedly, the orcs decided to befriend the adventurers...." An accidental intrusion might be, "Canine Matic the Cleric made his saving roll against the death spell."

Sometimes intrusions can be more subtle. We would generally say that it should not be possible to tell from the writeup which rule systems is being used. To be constantly reminded that it is only a game is like being reminded in a novel that it is only a book.

2. A good game writeup must have something to offer. There must be something interesting in the writeup. This should be something beyond the obvious "stuff of heroic fantasy," beyond the monsters killed/magic gained/etc. Some examples:

Arachnidae (Sapienza) had some absorbing political maneuvering and the awareness of escalating events.

Tokaido News (Lee Gold) had an excellent feel of a culture that is not widely understood, indicating that there is more to Japan than "Katanas, Ninja, Rice and Seppuku."

The Misadventures of Gor Redfox (Teller) had some marvellously funny confusions. In real life people do make ridiculous mistakes, and it is nice to see them in a game.

By contrast, there have been writeups that could have been entitled, "Another Day, Another Dungeon."

3. Characterization of major personalities. It is much more interesting to read about a person's adventures than about what happened to "David's Cleric." The name of the game is roleplaying.

4. Sense of purpose. One should be able to tell that the characters have a reason for being where they are. Not just the "Let's go down the local dungeon" rationale. It helps if they are doing something relevant to people not directly involved--the citizens of the land, all the hapless victims of the Dark Lord, etc.

The characters' actions should be important: they should be able to influence events occurring around them. I don't enjoy playing or reading about characters who are mere victims of the whims and vagaries of fate. (Unless, of course, the interest lies in the characters' being helplessly adrift on the unpredictable seas of fate. But here it is difficult to keep the interest of the players/readers for long.)

5. A background helps, even if only glimpsed.

6. Other features of a good writeup, such as style, pace, etc. are more a matter of personal taste than anything else; and we are not really qualified to pontificate on them. "We knows what we likes."

A writeup can manage without some of the above attributes; and having them is not a guarantee of success. However, I doubt a writeup could be successful without at least one attribute. And a series probably needs to have a majority of them to work.

WARNING What lies beneath contains gross exaggerations for the purposes of the argument. You Have Been Warned!

Why Are Dwarves So Boring?

Thinking about games I've been in, it seems that while I can remember highly individual and distinctive--dare I say well-roleplayed?--Elves, Humans, etc, the Dwarves were almost all to varying degrees dour, taciturn, stubborn, greedy for gold and magic items, neutral to evil. In other words, stereotyped.

Part of the problem lies in the lack of individualized distinctive dwarves in fiction. No good role models; no incentive to do other than stereotype. Contrast Tolkien's treatment of dwarves with that of elves. Dwarvish culture peeks through only briefly in Gimli's account of Moria.

Another problem is that some people, enamored of the "tank" solution to adventuring ("I hit it") specialize in dwarves because they make such good tanks. They will run a series of n dwarves where n is a large number, tending to infinity, identical apart from magic items and levels. This attitude tends to lead real FRPers away from playing dwarves.

Solution? I have none better than the traditional one of More Roleplaying. It might be worth trying an all-dwarf campaign so that they have to be roleplayed. Or maybe folks don't mind the walking tanks being no more than that?

(Similar arguments could be advanced about hobbits, but I hate them anyway.)

THE TOKEN FEMALE AS A CHARACTER CLASS (by Dave and Alison)

Prime Requisites: CHA low but APPEARANCE 17+

INT, WIS, DTR all 6-

Armor: AC 10 + DEX adjustments if applicable

Move: 1" less than monster

Experience: You must be joking! Optionally they start at Level 0 as virgin, wearing long, concealing robes which get strategically ripped as they get more experienced, until they graduate into silk bikinis.

Special Abilities:

Sprain Ankle	Ignore instructions	Monster may take pity on the TF or (75%)
Faint	Freeze in terror	decide to inflict the fate worse than
Blouse rips	Instant hairdo	death. Humanoid monsters may threaten
Retain makeup	Summon hero (when	to slay the TF but rarely succeed.
Move heedlessly	threatened)	
into danger		

That's about it for this. No comments. 101 hasn't arrived yet, and no LotR writeup due to laziness. Nextish we'll be back with the story of what happened when Aldarin faced a Nazgul alone.

And to finish, a few weird human races for those who find existing ones too similar. Taken from THE MONSTROUS RACES IN MEDIEVAL ART AND THOUGHT by J. B. Friedman, Harvard, 1981.

Aberimon:	Having backwards-turned feet (Scythia)
Albanians:	See better by night than by day; grey-haired from birth.
Amazons:	Warlike women who sear off the right breast to draw bow more powerfully.
Amyctyrae:	Lower (or sometimes upper) lip serves as a parasol. Eat raw meat.
Androgini:	Having genitals of both sexes (Africa)
Astomi:	Mouthless. Hairy all over. Wear soft clothes made from leaves. Live by smell, esp. apples; die if smell bad odor. (India)
Blemmyae:	Having no head or neck, and a face on the chest (Libya)
Crane-heads:	Having the head, back and neck of a crane (Europe)
_____:	A race that conceives at age five and dies at age eight.
Cyclopes:	Having a single eye (India)
Cynocephali:	having dog-heads; communicate by barking (Indian mountains)
Cynodontes:	Having two rows of teeth.
Cynomolgi:	Live by milking dogs. (Hippomolgi live by milking horses.)
Donestre;	Claim to know the language and relatives of the traveller. Will kill the traveller, then mourn over the head.
Garamontes:	Do not practice marriage. (Ethiopia and India)
Hippopodes:	Have horse feet (near Baltic)
Lionheads:	Tricolored, 20' long. If pursued, they flee, sweating blood.
Pandae:	At birth, have white hair which blackens with age. Eight fingers/toes. Ears which cover the body to the elbow. (India)
Panotii:	Ears reach feet and serve as blankets. Fly away using ears as wings. Shy.
Sciopods:	One-legged, very swift. protect their heads from the sun by lying on their backs and shielding with the foot. (India)
Wodewose:	Speechless but good; clothes of leaves or none; hairy. (English woods)
Four-Eyed Maritime Ethiopians:	Not having four eyes but especially keen eyesight when using bows.
Merry Blue Beaks:	????
Shining-Eyed Folk:	Otherwise normal
Speechless Folk:	Communicate by gesture (Ethiopia)
Straw Drinkers:	Noseless and mouthless; breathe through single orifice and drink through straw. (Ethiopia)

DEATH STAR ON THE HORIZON #2, cumulative contribution #2; intended for A&E #102
a commentzine from Adrian Bolt, 87 Lydalls Rd., Didcot, Oxon, OX11 7DT, England.
(c) 1984, Adrian Bolt. A&Es wanted: 20-27. (Anyone got any to sell?)

SOME GENERAL COMMENTS (from at least two years ago!):

C&S: Does armor reduce damage that is being applied to FP?

LRS: 24.13, Miracle #4, Berserker, states, "Defend vs Magic at PMF 100/MKL 20." MKL affects the Targeting Table (14.03) but how does PMF affect it?//26.04, First Month, Calligraphy practice (D20 x normal Skill Points gained): where are normal Skill Points detailed?

RQ: If a Giant is attacking the Crimson Bat, what are the effects when:
the Bat has Flying at 100%- and the Giant has an Attack at 100%?-
the Bat has Flying at 100%- and the Giant has an Attack at 100%+?
the Bat has Flying at 100%+ and the Giant has an Attack at 100%?-
the Bat has Flying at 100%+ and the Giant has an Attack at 100%+?
How does this affect the Giant's attacks?

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: I don't know if you all realize it, but in some of the earlier A&Es of 3-4 years ago, there are actually some of John T. Sapienza's zines with less than the full 16 pages! Bet that shocked one or two of you....

COMMENTS ON 99

LEE GOLD: Nice idea about momentum of attack.//Agreed that one device does not dehumanize a character. Though it does tend to mean you are playing two characters at once (or should be). On the other pseudopod, I've got one character who got split into two bodies with one mind between them. Isn't D&D crazy?

BILL KARIEVA: re Style Snobbery; very good point.//Could you explain yr ct wrto Iron Crown Enterprise's Middle Earth packs more fully, please. I thought they were nicely done.

STEVE GILHAM: Is ths purely fiction? Or do you have a magic system to show us, based on SPI Sorcerer?

DIANA SHORT: Hi.//Interesting zine. Wish I knew what it's all about so I could comment on it though.

DAVID NALLE: I have the phrase "System Exploiter" wrto a comment to you, but can't remember what I was going to say about it, so I guess you get a RAEBNC!

RAEBNCs also to MIKE LEWIS and BRUCE EDWARDS.

ROB HEINSOO: Thanks for the copy of FOES; \$2.76 should now have been transferred to your credit.

JOSEPH TELLER: Additions to your Skill List: history, Meteorology, Linguists/Interpreting, Driving--Train, Driving--automobile, Marksmanship---Bow, Marksmanship--Rifle, Attack and Parry for Maces, Axes, etc.

ALL/JAMES ROBERT/DAN EL JAMES: What computer/printer/word processor set-up do you use. [Fortune 32:16/Comrex/Fortune:Word.--LG]

AMIKE DAWSON: Who is the author/publisher of Mrs. Byrnes Dictionary? Please give full references in future.

ALISDON BROOKS: Nice campaign writeup.//What do you think of the ICE Middle Earth packs?

ALL: What are people's thoughts on Percentage Systems needing grading? That is to stop the silliness of a Master Botanist failing to identify a daisy due to rolling over his skill. This is worst for the skills in CALL OF CTHULHU.

NICOLAI SHAPERO: Some comments/questions on OTHER SUNS. In the planetary characteristics generation sections, you use the phrase "all in appropriate units, of course." Couldn't you have replaced this with an explanation?//Why are human dates given as CE without explanation?//A portable generator produces 125 KW; this seems to be the only place this unit of measurement appears.//Why does blunt object damage subtract from locational END but not total END?//I don't see how some of the fumbles on the fumble table could possibly occur.//

I feel it should have been more generalized; perhaps given purely in game mechanics.//What is the relevance of the various unexplained constants (e.g. 1242 in the use of Charisma in buying training)?//Why are missile weapons trained by type while melee weapons are trained individually?//Why have Molecular Biology and Genetics as separate fields if they are going to be treated so similarly?//Why is Tax Law the only skill with an INT requirement?//The species specific weapons are buried in the text; they should have been on the weapon tables too.//What does "Rd" stand for (as used in normal space communication designation and TSC die rolls)?//What does ND10 mean (10.1, end of paragraph 4, in system use of FTL)?

Despite all the above, I like the game very much. It might even tempt me to Gi/play an SF game. (I've avoided playing all the others as much as possible, because of the poor systems).//Oh yes, it could have also done with less 20th century weapons and more details of equipment, society background, etc. That is, less combat and more background.

PETER DA SILVA: Re characteristics of a being in Cidri 234A. I'm taking Mind to be pure intellect, Spirit as emotion/personality, and Body as the physical attributes. Power seems to be a character's resources, so I'd suggest replacing Strength with Endurance/Stamina, put Strength in for Control, and combine Dexterity/Agility for Body Speed. Piety, I feel, needs a different name, without religious implications; Elan (from StormBringer) is a possibility if you don't mind altering the meaning of the word somewhat to fit. Others were Kismet, Fate and Destiny. Apart from these, I can't think of any other possibilities; anyone else got any idea of a suitable word to replace Piety? I guess I'd better not forget to re-present the table:

	Power	Control	Speed
Mind	Memory	Discipline	Logic/INT (reasoning)
Body	Endurance/Stamina	Strength	Dexterity/Agility
Spirit	Mana	Will	Insight/Wisdom

	Health	Perception	Charisma
Mind	Sanity	Knowledge	Persuasion
Body	Constitution	Awareness	Appearance
Spirit	?Elan?	Intuition	Presence.

Hey, doesn't that look great?...Urr, one question, Peter....What do we do with all those silly characteristics now?!

And since A&E #100 has arrived since I wrote the above but before posting it, it's on to...

COMMENTS ON 100

OLEG ZACHAROV: nice cover.//VAEBNC? (Viewed and etc).

LEE GOLD: Shouldn't EP in "A Brief Guide to Occasional Abbreviations Found in A&E" be Energy Points? XP seems to be used for Experience Points more these days.//Re EGG letter: thanks for reprinting this. It was nice to reread it. It never ceases to amuse me.//Like the ideas for a Chaotic/Evil city. Snigger, snigger.

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: The DM 28 article on Dragons didn't say much about their character. How about giving us some more details. Possibly a follow up article.

ROB ELLWOOD: Re the PBZ Emulator: It gives a delightfully insane vision of hordes of A&Eers going through on motorbike, with everything (including the kitchen sink) strapped to the back! Delightfully silly! (See who can run down the most things?)

HOWARD MAHLEER: Like it! Consider it swiped!

RAEBNCs to William Peschel, Steve Gilham (Tiphareth, Technomagic), Peter Clarke, and Robert Loutzenhiser.

Being the demented ravings of one Jenny Hein, currently of 10/72 George St, Norwood 5067, South Australia, unless an amendment appears elsewhere in this zine (or issue).

SHADOW GAME Part 2 (Part 1 in 101)

They travelled West, following the sun on its downward course. It took them the better part of the Winter and they came to know one another more fully. Colm was constantly surprised by the girl he accompanied - at her liveliness and joy in living. He had become set in his ways and had felt old before his time. In reality he was no older than the girl, but several Winters of yielding the Stone had wearied him, overcome him with its burden of care and responsibility. He felt old with the knowledge of people, their actions and motives, and the recognition that there is nothing new under the sun.

But this slip of a girl with dark, flashing eyes made him feel young again. To her everything was new and fresh. She saw things that he did not and reawakened his appreciation of the world's beauty when she pointed them out.

Sometimes as they rested from the journey she would lie on the ground and laugh at the insects that she found moving beneath the grasses. At night she often danced to the music of the land, music she was now learning to hear. She sang for the pure delight of the sound. She showed him tiny Winter flowers that he had never known existed. He grew to appreciate the delicate curve of a cloud, the shades of colour in a single leaf, the sweetness of a flower's scent.

As they travelled the years dropped from him and he wished they could continue forever.

Ynrë clutched the table, intent on the action. "Soon, Andrë, soon."

Andrë was far more composed as he watched the board. "She has yet to find the cave, Ynrë. It is well hidden and though she has the book to guide her, she may misunderstand the clues in it. And my piece is still with her."

"But she will find it, Andrë. He cannot stop her."

She looked up at him, confident in the game's outcome. "Then she has only to use the cave's power and I have won. Then I will have control of the Stones. I will shape their future."

"You are overconfident, Inrë." came the reply. "You have not won the contest yet."

The travellers reached the foothills of the Lodem Mountains. Colm knew them well. It was here that he has become a Sorcerer, here that he had passed the final test of his apprenticeship. Was the ledge still there? The oaken door, the caves?

They camped for the night and, as the weather was dry enough to allow one, sat around the fire. The girl made final calculations from the book she carried, and then they sat in companionable silence for a time. Colm looked into the fire, watching the play of colours and then asked suddenly, "Don't you think it is time you told me who you really are...milady?"

The girl looked at him, startled, "At...I..."

"Don't try to tell me you are Idele." He spoke without rancor at her deception, merely with quiet acceptance of it. "I met her once. Idele is older than you. And not as fair of face."

She opened her mouth to speak but he forestalled her. "Please, no lies this time. Did you think I would not help you unless you were of noble birth?"

"I'm not sure. I wasn't willing to take the risk. I also wasn't sure you would help me when you knew why I wanted the Stone. Sorcerers are notoriously selfless and expect others to be as well." She took a deep breath, steeling herself. "I want the Stone for myself. I want to use it. I want to be a Sorcerer."

She paused, expecting an outburst from Colm. There was none. "My name is Dale the Ryymer. My father was Kyn the Brave, also a Sorcerer." Colm nodded. He had heard

of him, but had not known he had a daughter.

"Kyn retired from his wanderings after he married and remained in the city of Adelford as the town Sorcerer. He died when I was young, but I remembered his stories and decided to become a Sorcerer like him. However, I am a woman and none would apprentice me. So I became a minstrel instead. I never forgot my dream though and often sought a different path to the same end, Kyn taught me to read and I hunted in what books I could find for some clue to help me.

"Finally I returned to Adelford and was asked to entertain the Baron's court. In his library I found mention of a cave in these mountains which was connected with Alm of the Stone. Someone must have seen me take the book. Perhaps they thought I had stolen something more valuable. The rest you know."

Colm found it difficult to condemn Dale. Besides his own liking for her, had he not himself had the same dreams? What would he have done in the same situation?

She challenged him, "So, will you still come with me?"

Colm considered the situation. Now that he was here, he felt a strange reluctance to continue. He hadn't noticed it on his last visit, but the mountains had an eerie feeling to them. He made his decision. "You do not need to find the cave. A Sorcerer has one apprentice during his lifetime. I have yet to choose mine. I cannot guarantee that it will work, but if you wish, I will apprentice you."

"Apprentice me? Really? How?" Her face mirrored her surprise and delight.

"I will teach you." Colm smiled, pleased at her reaction. "I will have to find a new Stone, or wait until a Sorcerer dies, then I will teach you."

Her face fell. "How long will that take?"

"I don't know."

"It might take forever." She sighed, despondant. They sat for a time in silence, watching their dreams in the flames. Eventually Dale said, determined. "I'm going to find that cave. I've waited too long to wait anymore."

Colm caught her hand, as earnest as her. "Please, don't go. I feel..." He shook his head, unable to explain what he did not know.

Dale covered his hands with her free one. "Don't you understand? I must go!"

"I know." he muttered. "But I am afraid for you."

Dale kissed him gently. "It will be alright, my dear. You'll see."

It was her first sign of affection for him and he looked at her in wonder. Then he held her to him fiercely with a touch of desperation. "Oh Dale," he whispered. "My lady."

They began their climb of the mountains the next morning. As they travelled Colm's delight in their new relationship and fear of the mountains increased. They took a different way than Colm had before. They lost their way several times and it was many days of hard searching before they came to the cave.

In the end it was Colm who found it. They might never have seen it for all the undergrowth and rocks in the way, but Colm caught the flicker of light - the same light as in his Stone and parted the bushes to find the small entrance.

They crawled inside and stood stock still in astonishment. The cave was totally covered in crystal formations. These glowed brightly, almost blinding white. When he had found his voice Colm gasped, "It's a crystal, a giant crystal. This whole cave is the first Stone." He walked cautiously forward. There were no other entrances of any kind. "But where is the energy source?"

He looked back at Dale, whose eyes were tightly closed in concentration. Colm realized what she was doing and shouted, "No!" His voice echoed around the cave and was joined by her scream of pain. He caught her as she fell and carried her back to the entrance, dragging her through it.

He knelt beside her. "Dale! Dale! Can you hear me?"

She opened her eyes. They glowed white like the cave. "Colm?" Her body shuddered violently.

Colm bent over her. "Dale. I'll find help for you. Somehow."

Dale whispered, "No, don't leave. No time." She admitted what they both knew but Colm refused to express. Desperately he placed his Stone on her head, trying to absorb some of the energy that destroyed her.

"Colm... Goodbye... I loved..." Dale's body*shuddered again and was still.

In the cave André sat back from the board and sighed heavily. "I have won," he said, but with little satisfaction.

Ynrë stared at the board, stunned. "You killed her. You increased the power outflow and you killed her." She hit the table with a clenched fist. "So close. So close. Victory in my grasp and you killed her. She would have been my first Sorceress. My first." She looked around the cave at what should have been hers and gasped. In the corners of the cave faint shadows had appeared. Ynrë chuckled. "You cheated André. You killed her and so I have won." She threw back her head and laughed in triumph.

"Not quite, Ynrë" André corrected gently. "Neither of us has won." He pointed to the board. The black figures had a tiny flicker of white light in them. He smiled. "Shall we begin?"

Colm walked into the village reluctantly. It was Summer and he could ignore his duties no longer. The remainder of the Winter and the Spring he had spent in the Lodem Mountains, alone with his grief. He had placed Dale in the cave and sealed firm the entrance. It seemed that his soul was entombed there also.

A child came up to him shyly. She looked at him with Dale's expression of wonder. "Please sir, you've been here before, haven't you? Aren't you the man who does tricks with light?"

Colm looked at her and laughed for the first time since Dale's death. "Go, collect the other children and I will show them to you again."

COMMENTS -AGE 101

J. HEIN: 16 pages! How did you do it? But oh, those spelling and typing mistakes!

J. GOLDSMITH: Goldfinch, Jenny, GoldFINCH! Sorry. Having known her for years as someone different, I can't get used to the new name. (I was also typing from a copy that had her old name on it.) Of course, just to confuse the issue, her original name was Scheerle!//Liked the story, but then, I'm biased.

W. HEYDT: I agree, humans are tough. They are amazingly adaptable and can take astonishing wounds and survive. (I can add tales of a man I met who took 4 machine gun bullets across the stomach, and a cousin who had the main artery to her brain cut...) Just look at how hard Rasputin was to kill. But then again, sometimes a slight tap to the head is fatal. How do you systemize that??? Perhaps we do anyway. NPCs tend to die when the system says they should (unless they're pivotal) and player characters don't! (Of course, they're not always human, but...)

PBE: Take it as read that any messages to family etc, get passed on via my broach. (Braddon owes me a few favours, he can do it.)

J. SAPIENZA: (re me) You're welcome! LD phone calls may be an Aussie trait. A n awful lot of the population has relatives and friends overseas and interstate. (And you thought you were joking!)//I hope you realize that I'm catching up on your Dragonsgold zine count! (Of course, The Golden Dragon is up to 55, but I've got to start somewhere!) Neil and I recently discussed the possibility of going back in time and becoming first issue contributors. Can you imagine it? "Dear Lee, we heard you were going to start an APA zine and we'd like to contribute to it..."//The Chocolate side of the Force??//Enjoyed the "Elements or Roleplaying" essay. Language is a silly thing. I suspect we're stuck with RPG as a term as it is ~~SO PAST BY PAST~~ in wide use now and changing it would be far too difficult. //I heard about the lawsuit you mention. It was interesting to get the full story rather than the sensationalized version we got here.//(re me, again) Peter da Silva told me that some of his friends are planning to annex Australia to keep the America's Cup in America. So maybe moving Oz to CA isn't so far-fetched...What's that

rumbling under my feet? No! Take those chains of the Sydney Harbour Bridge! I don't want to be a Yank! Prepare to repel boarders! Alert! Alert!

L. GILLESPIE: I've got it! The answer to your riddle is a lamppost! (one of the old-fashioned ones, black-painted ones that look like a tree.)//I've always wondered who the Iclander was. Of course, you're not really one at all!// Liked the Dwarf stuff. Consider it swiped.

P. SHAPLEY: Ask Neil about his luck stat. I now have a character who is very lucky in his world but I haven't used it yet so I'm not sure how it works. I think it is exactly what you are after.

P. WATERS: 55 video tapes could make an awful lot of streamers (or tickertape, as I think the yanks call it). Let's have a party!//Certainly I'll practice selfdefense with you, but I warn you, it is basic selfdefense.//'Wes thu hall' is Old English for 'Be thou whole' a greeting and farewell. My elves use it.// What is a Kaskara?

I just failed my save versus starting the promised write-up now (It's New Year, I'm feeling celebratory and besides, I'm still euphoric at seeing 16 pages in print!)

SAM'S STORY

Sam currently alias Katinka Hennessey, an ~~Hylian~~ Turanian Nymph/Thief - Jenny Hein
Damon Hennessey, a Detective/Sarenian Guard (Fighter/Cleric type) - Braddon Giles
Berik, Captain of the Rangers, tall, dark and silent - Neil Fraser (NPC)
Kralnor, Uruk-hai Orc, tall, dark and nasty - Neil Fraser (NPC)
Servius, Cleric of Mitra (See Neil's zine for details of Mitra) - Barry Lenny
Elren, Elven mage, mean hand at fireballs - John Abrahamson
Mathias, human mage, tall silent and also nasty if need be - Craig MacLeod
Shareenar, wife of Berik, Paladin of the Valar (once Mitran) - Megan Dansie
Kifyen, a Leobird (see past issues for description) - Neil Fraser (NPC)
John Wesley Wombat, wombat extraordinaire and Lilli Marlyné, a white mouse with wings, Niri, Kralnor's not-quite-familiar Draconette, Bastillo, the unicorn - M.F.
(Pay attention, I'm not repeating that lot in later issues!)

This is written by Sam two years later. The spelling mistakes are intentional, she learnt to write rather late in life. (That's my story, anyway.)

I'm no writer, it goes against the grain to write things down, it's like writing a confession and I know how fatal that can be. But I'd kinda like to write about the events of the last two years and what's happening now too. I think it's important and I'd rather tell the story myself than have someone else get it all wrong. After all, I was there for most of it and I might get to figure it all out this way, discover the truth, whatever that means.

Damn! I guess I can always destroy it later if things don't work out. Never leave any traces of yourself if you can possibly avoid it, that's my motto. For a thief that's a pretty good idea. Trouble is, it's because I'm a thief that it's hard to figure out what the truth is - I've spent too much time pretending to be someone else. I guess I'll have to write this thing as I saw it at the time and work on the rest later.

I spose I'll have to tell a bit about me first. What I know that is. It's a good bet I was born in Turan. The first 30 years were pretty lousy and anyway, I'll only admit to 25 of them. I don't know who my mother was. Never found out. My father I was pointed to once by Achmed, the bastard who brought me up. Taunted me with the knowledge that my precious father appreciated my existance so much that he's sold me to whoever was willing to pay for a small child. Bloody peasant that wouldn't acknowledge his by-blow. I hope he was punished for his sins, but I doubt it. Noone ever is thank the gods.

I acted as Achmed's lookout, diversion, door-opener, snitch, runner, go-between and the rest for as long back as I can remember. He weren't much of a thief, but I learnt a few tricks from him. Not all of them pleasant either. Once I was old enough to look after myself, I ran away. It wasn't much of a life, but it was better than the beatings. And the rest. I did some pretty crummy things to survive.

Don't get me wrong. I think I'd do them all again to survive, i'd just rather not have to.

I ended up a pretty damn good thief. Never got caught for long. I joined the Nymph's guild in Venice too. These Turanians don't like their women to learn how to control men and outlawed it. But from then on I was set. It's amazing what a smile and a good spell will do to get you out of a tight spot or past a guard or what ever.

I had a good run, got some cash together and decided to try for the big time. Would've made it too but I had one too many in a pub afterwards and got spotted by the soldiers. I wasn't sozzelled enough not to know what cards to play though, and decided to get away from Turan. It was about time I had another trip away, maybe for good this time. I mean, Turan and me don't get along crash hot and I was goin to head for Galparan where they treat you right just cause the Turanians are after you, them not being the best of pals. And the Turanians sure as hell were after me and the Prince's personal guard weren't going to sit and twiddle their thumbs when I'd ripped a bracelet worth a cool quarter mil and a book of golem construction off their master. Some people have no sense of fair play!

So all in all I was leaving the cauntry a bit fast for my liking. It showed too. My horse died under me and I had to push on without it. I was heading through Red Moon Pass, which has a bit of a reputation, bad mostly, but at that stage speed was more important than superstition. It was snowing too. Whatever I tell Damon, I'm not sure I would have lived through the journey with no horse and precious few clothes. Black chiffon isn't exactly the warmest material, even with a cloak. I passed a group of travellers on the way in. I remember thinking them a funny lot. Even then. But I didn't pay them too much mind. I was in too much of a hurry.

The next lot I ran into, I'd rather I didn't. There were about half a dozen tall, black men with red eyes, a few hunting dogs with unusual vultures heads and a white dragonel. (Spot the Dave Margrave black men, and incidentally, one of Braddon's other characters. J.H.) and then there were these things that I didn't like to look at. Naw, it was more like I couldn't look at them, if you get what I mean.

The thing that really hurt was that they took the book and bracelet off me. The rotters took my profit. But at least they didn't take my knife. Good knife that one. A kukri knife they call it. I'd pinched it off someone who'd pinched it off the Gurkhas I guess. It's a dog eat dog world.

Ya know, I think they let me keep the weapon because they were contemptuous of it, like they were sure I couldn't touch them. Well, they took me back in the direction of Turan. Heaven knows why. I wasn't about to be any use to them. I wasn't about to stick around either, if I could help it. So I bided me time and stuck one of the black things in the back and just ran. They chased me of course. One of the dog things got real close and hooked a claw in my cloak and then my shirt. Ripped it open. Man I was scared. I can tell you, I ain't been that scared in all my life. except maybe after the fight with the adementite angel. But that comes later. I don't know how I got away from them, but I did. Maybe they didn't really care if I did or not and boy am I glad of that.

Well, next thing I knew I'd run into that mob again, the ones I'd passed on the way in. A crowd's the safest place when you're being pursued so I reckoned I'd join up with them. They looked like pros too. As I came up they spaced themselves out in case something came on them and a couple came up to talk to me. I remember how I sized them up then. It's something I always do when I meet people. It can help later on.

They were a wierd mob. There was the huge Uruk orc at point, ugly as sin but he oozed machismo. Good in a fight by the look of him and I was right about that. Not someone I'd like to meet in a dark alley. I doubt if I'll ever tell him, but I considered him for a partner. He'd laugh at me anyway. There was this cute little guy in white and gold robes that would put the Queen of Sheba to shame. You could go snow blind just looking at him. Obviously a Cleric type and not much good to me - gods don't like you charming their followers. There was a rather battered and non-descript guy in leather armour and carrying a bow - a fighter? And a gorgeous

hunk in chunky armour. Damon always was impressive. He seemed to be the leader of this motly crew, so I decided to concentrate my efforts on him. Besides, he looked like a fighter, which are always easier to influence. Besides him were a couple of Mages - not worth bothering with, too hard to charm - and a mob of animals.

Their mistress, for the main part, was a rather lustreless lump of a bitch called Sharenar. There was a cat thing with wings like a bat's. I was a bit wary of it. I'm not exactly scared of cats but they're not my favourite animal, if you get my drift. When I clapped eyes on this thing I said, "Shit! What's that?" Then it talked back - answered in a rather silly accent, "I'm not a 'that', I'm a Kifyen." Yeah, sure.

There was also a funny-looking squat animal, furry and wierd. It carried a maul since when it had to be intelligent, but what it was I had no idea. Sitting on one shoulder was a little white mouse with wings. The Bruk had a Dracconette flying round it and last and least was the unicorn. That was Sharenar's. It took me a while to figure out that she was married to Berik. I felt sorry for the sod. Anyone with a unicorn has to be queer and she was married and all.

I wasn't thinking straight and gave them my street name, Sam. I also made up some cock and bull story about how they had to have a guide in Turan and I was at a loose end so I'd do it. Noone naturally believed me. If I'd been in any condition I'd have told a better lie. Trouble was, I wasn't. The Kifyen went to the back of me and pointed out the tear in my clothes. Then they wanted to know the whole story.

The Cleric cast some spell that made me feel better. Something to take away the fog fear causes. Anyway, I told them about the creatures I'd run into. They looked thoughtful and I figured they must know something about them. The gorgeous hunk loaned me a lovely warm cloak which was welcome. It was bloody cold up there.

When they asked me what I was doing up there, I told them I was planning to visit relatives in Galparan. They believed it as much as I did. It was pretty thin but all I could think of at the time.

It was pretty well accepted that I go with them. I thought that being a basicaly nice lot they wouldn't want to leave me to die there in the snow, or to be left to the tender mercies of the creatures. Their real reason I found out later on.

We trooped off. I started to wonder what this mismatched lot were doing here. They sure as hell didn't look like casual traders or tourists. After some trudging we passed a small herd of goats. Goats is goats, I'd always thought, but this lot attacked us. Bloody undead goats they turned out to be! With a bit of quick think I decided to get in good with this lot by taking part in the fight. Good idea, trouble was, I'd been put so I'd be at the back of any fight. There were all these people in front of me and it was all over by the time I got there. I reckon they did it on purpose and I decided that if that was the way they wanted it, that was fine by me!

Some time later we got attacked by the white dragonel. I'd started to think the mob was pretty unusual and this fight settled it. Not that I saw much of it. I was flat on my face in the snow. I'm not stupid. I know my capabilities.

The white Dragonel started to divebomb us. Those that could peppered it with arrows and the like. And Damon and Berik threw javelins at it. I don't know what they were but the damn thing's wing was crippled afterwards. It flew into a cliff and exploded. Bloody impressive. Lralmor went to investigate and came back munchin a hunk of dragonel meat. Revolting stuff.

Later on, we met a Troll that Damon was itching to fight. I know now that they are creatures of darkness and therefore enemies of Saren but at the time I thought he was crazy. Come to think of it, I'm not so sure I still don't think he is sometimes.

We also met some Dwarves that offered Berik their assistance if he needed it. (I was impressed!) and a bunch of Bruks that Lralmor beat up on to get information. Then there was Freya.

More of this later on. The story is told from dear Sam's point of view. Which means it isn't always accurate. Feel free to ask for clarification if you don't understand.

Wes the ball!

A character can choose any profession he wants, as long as he belongs to the proper social class. Thus, knights can only be nobility or royalty, while rangers can be anything but slaves or townsmen. Again, I can't list the professions here, because of the lack of space; there are more than 60 professions, each one having different social class requirements & "available" skills.

Anyway, to get back on track, characters can increase their skill levels in those skills which are "available" to their professions, by spending time in study. All characters, once they have determined their profession, should decide how long they are going to study for each of their "available" skills. (It is O.S. to study only a few of the skills.) For most skills, one may receive a +1 bonus to a skill level per 2 years spent studying it. For spells, and for a few general skills (weapon skills), one may receive a +1 skill level bonus per year spent studying. Finally, for a few general skills, and for a few weapon skills, one may add a point to a given skill level per 3 years spent studying it.

Note that one must spend at least 5 years studying, though this time may be spent studying more than one skill. This 5 years represents the apprenticeship period.

Looking at all of the preceding information, many of you may be saying "Great! With your stupid system, I can study for a million years, get great bonuses, and have nothing happen to me." Well, not really. You see, there are aging effects which must be taken into effect here. Unfortunately, in my system, aging effects are rather harsh. All characters start at age 10, (but remember that they must spend at least 5 years training, so the minimum age is really 15), and all characters must subtract 1 from STRENGTH & AGILITY for every 10 years aged over 15. Thus, age 20 is 5 years over 15, which can be rounded up to 10 years over 15; so a 20-year old must subtract 1 from both STR and AGI. Note that, with aging effects being taken into consideration, one can have a STRENGTH which is below zero. (For AGILITY, however, the minimum is still zero, for the time being.)

Well, that's about it for part II of the character generation procedure. There probably won't be a part III; I want to stop writing about my system and start with some comments.

By the way, I forgot to put something in. A character may receive, before he enters the game, a number of silver pieces equal to 3 x the number of years spent practicing his profession. This money can only be received if the character's profession is one where a frugal lifestyle is not required. (i.e. rangers & most priests cannot receive this money.)

ADVENTURERS FROM EARTH (modern-day Earth, in other words)

It seems to me, when I think of SF & fantasy novels, that a lot of the heroes are from our own world. Dray Prescot, Tomas Covenant, and (to name a more obscure example) Holger Carlsen all came from Earth; one can probably find many other examples in literature. I think that FRP ought to make ammends for these types of characters. If one of them were being used as a player-character, then it should be much easier to roleplay. Think of this situation: George Face was a mild-mannered hardware salesman, who one day found Cthulhu sitting in his bedroom.

Before he knew what was going on, he had been picked up, thrown up in the air, and landed in Greyhawk or something. He is now being chased around the countryside by goblin hordes. Now I think that many of us could understand what he's going through. Therefore, I think we could put ourselves in his position, and predict his reactions much more accurately.

I'm not quite sure how such a character would be played, or in other words, how he would fit into game statistics. He should have skills which are appropriate to his Earthly profession. Of course, accountants and insurance salesmen probably won't be that good in combat; they should receive some magical gift, such as Covenant's ring. Some of these characters would have weapon skills, however. They would include adventurers such as Dray Prescott, who served in the Navy. In any event, characters from Earth should be just as powerful as their native counterparts. An argument could be made to say that Earthly adventurers should be more powerful than their neighbors, because they have to contend with their ignorance of the area.

If anyone in AD&E thinks they could design a system to incorporate these people into RPGs, it would be greatly appreciated.

LOOSEPER ANNUAL II: A REVIEW!

A few days ago, I found *ANNUAL II* at my local bookstore. I decided to buy it, even though I hadn't played AD&D in about a year and a half; I thought that might as well keep up my collection. Well, I might as well start with the real review. The front cover is very good (that's a good place to start). Unlike the last two covers, this one actually has background. Of course, the monster on the front isn't featured anywhere inside, but that's just a technicality. Anyway, the art inside isn't quite as good; some of the pictures look of almost childlike quality (the picture is an example), and, in almost every case, they lack the imagination and effectiveness which marked the *FIELD FOLIO*.

Well, I think it's time to talk about the book itself. (You have to realize that I write this as I go along; I tend to ramble on). My first impression, when I was looking through this book, was that there were a lot of monsters from the outer planes. Not only do we have demons, devils, but we have demodands, daemons, modrons (who look like peaches a two-by-fours with eyes), para-elementals, hordlings, devas, planetars, solars, and hords of other nasties. And this is in addition to the extra demons, devils that they give us! The thing about these ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ monsters from the lower planes is that they all seem the same now. It's as if Gygax & his pals sat together one weekend and churned out as many nasties as they could, saying "all the ones which have tusks will be called 'demodands!'".

"Lack of imagination" is a good phrase to describe this book. A good portion of the monsters are little more than "improvements" of old ones, such as the gorgimera and the "greater basilisk". Others are both unoriginal and ridiculous, such as the "pseudo-undead": they are simply undead which don't have the special powers of their undead counterparts, such as the "pseudo-vampire", who can't drain energy levels.

After I got this book, I decided to hold an "introduction to *ANNUAL II*" game, but there was absolutely no interest by the players; finding these monsters to be the same as all the rest, they treated

the adventure as a typical "monster-bashing" expedition. Really, I think that "monster-bashing" is something that very few of us need; after the first monster, the rest all seem remarkably dull. Maybe that is A.E. II's problem. After the first batch of nasties, the rest can't be all that much different.

MY CAMPAIGN: THE PENARTHER CAMPAIGN (not an original name)
I've been using this campaign for as long as I've been playing RPGs. For it I've designed a language, a number of cults, and a comprehensive history. I might as well tell you something about, because I've got a lot of space to fill here.

Basically, in this campaign, it is assumed that all of the old institutions are falling apart, while the new ones are constantly expanding their influence. The continent was once ruled by the nation of Penarther, until a horde of demons came in and ravaged the Empire. Everyone was almost killed off in this invasion. It wasn't until Andilore, the savior, came along that everyone began to fight back. Andilore collected an army, and marched off through the south, winning territory for the Empire as he went along. Eventually, he ran into the last place which was still occupied by the Hordes; it was here that Percivan, the Horde leader, sent his last troops against Andilore. They both fought, and in the end, both groups had totally demolished each other. So the threat to man had ended.

The cost of the war, however, was tremendous, and none of the involved nations could go away unscathed. Penarther had lost her Empire, and she had a hard time trying to recover from her losses. The tribunes, ~~the~~ elected officials who had ruled the Empire for centuries, were now powerless to do anything, **helpless** before the nobility, who now rule the country. This nobility are always becoming richer, as the Tribune's power declined, he was forced to borrow money from them, thus giving them a chance to manipulate him as they pleased. By this time, the nobles meet together, every month, as the Parliament; this Parliament runs everything, and all adventurers must contend with it. While this Parliament/Tribune conflict may seem trifling, it is very important to the campaign, because adventurers can't do anything without these people breathing down their backs. Anyway, that's the basic situation in my campaign.

Well, that certainly dragged on a bit. I don't think I'll do that adventure write up this issue, (That entire "my campaign section" was necessary for it, by the way; at least I got it over with). As soon as I get my first issue of A.E. in the mail I'll start writing up some comments. Anyway, I've got some extra space, so I might as well sign my name, like all the high muck-a-mucks do it. Then again, I don't think I will. (I told you I wrote this as I go along).

AN ANGLO-SCOTTISH CHRONICLE, issue eight or so. Being the mutterings of Peter A. Clarke of 3 Beddington Grove, Wellington, Surrey, SW6 8LB. Typed by Lee.

Armchair Combat

First a simple combat system, intended as a partial answer to Ellis Simpson (in A&E 100), who was considering the possibilities of a card-based system.

Rather than use a special pack as Ellis suggested, this system uses a normal one (although it could be adapted for use with a Tarot pack). For the moment, let us assume a simple situation, in which two men with spears but no shields are fighting each other. A hand of cards is drawn for each combatant, with the hand's size depending on the fighter's skill but generally 4-5 cards.

Next, determine the initiative. The person with the longest weapon or surprise or whatever slight advantage has the initiative. If no advantage can be seen, cut the cards. The fighter with the initiative is the attacker.

The attacker plays a card, and his opponent replies; then the two cards are compared. There are four possible results:

Defender's card is lower & a different suit: attacker hits defender

Defender's card is higher & a different suit: no effect

Defender's card is lower & the same suit: no effect

Defender's card is higher & the same suit: defender may win initiative

Explanation: If a hit is scored, damage may be calculated using an independent system or may be related to the difference in the cards. This would require a matrix of points scored (attacker's card minus defender's) along the top, with different weapons down the side.

No effect is self-explanatory.

If the defender plays a higher card of the same suit, he may win the initiative. During the first rounds, if the defender does this, he wins the initiative and becomes the attacker. Then for a number of rounds equal to the difference between the two cards, it is not possible for his opponent to regain the initiative, even if this result is achieved. After this required number of rounds, the defender may recover the initiative.

That is the bones of the system. Oh yes, after each card is played, another is picked to replace it.

Now for the additions. First, shields. I am not certain how these should be allowed for. Perhaps one suit could be designated Shield, and if used by a defender with a shield, it would always count as the suit used by the attacker. But this would be very powerful. Perhaps the suit could only be used defensively if the defender had a shield. (Note that this problem only arises when one side is shielded and the other is not.) Use of a shield card by an unshielded defender would count as playing 0 of the wrong suit. Incidentally, the attacker without a shield could use this suit to attack with; this would represent attacks designed to negate the effect of the shield.

Second, the effects of different weapons. Significant differences in weapon length could be accounted for by giving an extra card to the fighter with the more useful weapon. ("More useful" depends on situation: in close, give me a dagger, but in an open space, a larger weapon would probably be more effective.)

You could also differentiate types of weapons by attack mode, once again by suits. An epee might be able to use just one suit; a cut and thrust sword three or even four. An attacker could attack effectively using a suit not specified by his weapon but the result would not be a hit but a successful feint. Such a fighter would have the option of exchanging some or all of his cards for new ones from the deck--or of increasing the length of his initiative (by the difference between attacker's and defender's cards). Or he might be able to take one card from his opponent. (In this case the defender's hand would be reduced permanently by one card, but the attacker would discard one of his own cards so the size of his hand would not be increased. Or he might be allowed to take some tactical advantage (close or open the range or force his opponent into a corner).

Some of you will already have spotted the inspiration for this system: the cardgame called Armchair Cricket. Although my system has not been playtested (I have had no opportunity to do so), the original game plays very well. In Armchair Cricket, the hands are of six cards each, and wickets fall (equivalent to blows being struck) relatively infrequently; the larger the size of hand, the less frequently this occurs, hence the suggestion for a rather smaller hand. Rather than raising the number of cards held by the more skillful fighter, restrictions could be placed on the inferior one: not being allowed to play low cards defensively can be very limiting.

This system is suggested for individual important combats. It is likely to be time-consuming, and the DM could not run many monsters/NPCs at once. It is much more suitable for a single duel than for orc-bashing. But if an important combat occurs at the climax of an adventure, it would be a good idea to take it out of the hands of the dice and give the players a chance to make more decisions in the important situations.

REAL TIME: A REJOINDER

At this point, it might be pertinent to give my views on the real time system. I believe that in attempting an apparently more realistic simulation, the total effect is lost. Certainly, rather more bookkeeping during combat is required. I have tried such systems and usually ended up going back to simple combat rounds.

The real time theory (as I understand it--I have no doubt people will point out any errors) states that since different weapons are faster or slower, they should be allowed a varying number of attacks. This sounds all right in theory but I think it ignores some major points.

First, although you might swing more rapidly at your opponent with a dagger than with a two-handed sword, this does not mean that you will swing more frequently. The knife fighter waits and circles until he sees an opening when he can attack without leaving himself too open to a counter-attack. The quarterstaff fighter can make much more rapid strikes against a similarly armed opponent, but few will get through the defense or even be intended to do so, since once again the defenses must be probed before a major attack may be launched.

So the apparent ease of attacking with one weapon rather than another may not be the case in real combat. There, the more skillful fighter will seize more opportunities and make more of them. So perhaps as well as a higher chance to strike, the veteran warrior should have a greater number of attacks. This was the system used in C&S. Alternatively, a greater number of attacks (or perhaps attacks and active parries) could mark the increase in skill, while the percentage would remain the same.

Second, the system takes no account of the effect of combatants using different weapons. If one man has a short sword and the other a long spear, then in spite of the first one's speed, the spearman will get more attacks, until the swordsman can successfully close the range of the combat.

Religious Relics

Many campaigns are run in worlds which resemble medieval Europe, including a single Christian Church (or equivalent) as the major religion. Miracles performed by living clerics are likely to be all too common, if a system like D&D or C&S is used. (Let's face it; bishops did not go about resurrecting people; and if they had, society would have been very different. If bishops can raise the dead, they will be treated with extreme reverence by everyone, given the average lifespan.) But what about miracles performed by the saints through their relics?

Miracles centering around the relics of saints are frequently recorded by medieval chroniclers. Indeed, they are among the most common types of supernatural events. The thumb of St. Sergius was used in battle by an eastern king, and it put to flight all his enemies. A report of this caused a Frankish king to search for relics of this saint in his own country. When he discovered that a merchant had a fingerbone of the saint, he sent men to seize it. However, when the king's men attempted to take hold of the relic, they began shaking and were unable to move until they put it down. At another time, the same merchant's house remained standing when all about it were burnt down.

St. Sergius's relics seem to have been capable of a number of miraculous effects. Some worked all the time like the thumb's effect in battle; others, like the effect produced on the king's men, worked only once--the king did eventually get hold of a half of the relic he was after. Relics of St. Oswald (particularly the earth from the spot where he was killed) were known to have two effects: they could produce miraculous cures and they had power over fire. This was so well known that fifty or sixty years after the sainted Oswald's killing, a hole six feet deep had been excavated by people wanting a cure.

For the effect of relics to be reproduced in a game, some types of relics should probably have fairly predictable results (like the cases above) so that people seeing someone struck by paralysis (perhaps by a ghoul or similar unnatural creature) would be able to suggest a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Morbidus, where such miraculous cures have often happened in the past.

But more major relics could also have greater effects, mainly centering around the protection of the place where the relic is kept and the people who look after it. When a steward of the Count of Bourges tried to enforce payment of a fine by St. Martin's Church, the steward was deprived of all his strength until prayers were offered to the saint and the steward asked forgiveness for what he had attempted.

Even if the religion(s) of a campaign are not based on Christianity, the relics of clerics who had distinguished themselves are likely to be venerated. If an afterlife exists, then these saints may well be able to act through their relics to produce miraculous effects. Note that, as far as the monks who wrote of these miracles were concerned, the miracles were performed by the saint, and as such were of quite a high order. They did not cure minor wounds; it was the crippled, the deaf and dumb, and the possessed who were affected. Perhaps this might be seen as the bias of chroniclers who only recorded notable events, but given the source of the power it is unlikely that it would be used lightly.

Finally, as well as their religious significance, relics had a high value. The holding of important relics by religious houses gave them prestige on one hand, and the gifts of pilgrims on the other. Moreover, the containers of these objects --which might range from an entire body to a single small bone or a splinter from the True Cross--were often richly adorned with gold and jewels and could be extremely valuable in their own right. Churches and lay people often collected vast numbers of relics, and such a collection could be worth a very great deal.

The references for the relics of St. Sergius and St. Martin (as well as many other similar events) can be found in THE HISTORY OF THE FRANKS by Gregory of Tours. The information on St. Oswald and on many other saints is in Bede's HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH AND PEOPLE. Both are published by Penguin Books.

That's all for this time. Perhaps I'll get round to writing a few comments for the next Chronicle. Cheers till then.

DEATH STARS FOR FUN AND PROFIT 1, cumulative contribution #3; an articlezine from Adrian Bolt, 87 Lydalls Rd., Didcot, Oxon, OX11 7DT, England; (c) 1984, Bolt.

I suppose you want to know who I am?--Introduction

I was born at Exeter in Devon on 4th July 1959 and therefore will be 0.025 millennia old in a few months. I was moved to Didcot at the age of 0.003 (fortunately with my parents), which is near Oxford where JRRT is currently...err, how shall I put this?...um, located, for all you Tolkien fans. I've been living in London for the past three years now; the above address is my parents' and hence permanent and guaranteed to reach me. I currently work as a shift leader in Computer Operations and hope to be back in Programming shortly. (Yes, another one; stop all that groaning, you lot out there!)

Cheating or Rulebending--a short article

Let's start off with one or two amusing/sickening examples, shall we?

Example 1. I'm a Monk moving at 21" so I can run in, hit the monster (which moves at 12") and run away before it can hit me, as I'm moving twice as fast.

Example 2. Two characters are discussing how best to kill a character that had been slowed twice. The player of the slowed character interrupts with "And since I'm a Half-Troll(!), I'll eventually regenerate." When informed that the two were discussing possibilities and not giving actual instructions to the DM, his response was, "But you can't burn the body, as you didn't know I could regenerate until I told you." So the two had to leave the body intact.//On regenerating, his next question to the DM was "How much treasure do I get out of the dungeon?" (Him now being totally nude.)//I asked the DM how many wandering monsters did he meet. So he said, "Oh, forget about the treasure then," expecting this to prevent any wandering monster rolls. (Unfortunately, it did.) When the portal opened after one year, and he could leave the dungeon, he tried to track down the characters who had looted him.

Example 3. Someone was told by the GM not to play a Chaotic or silly character, and he assured the GM that the second character he chose was very sensible and Lawful. (The first choice was a Gremlin!) The character (I am told) had a NG alignment. It was played as the stupidest random CN imaginable.

Example 4. The party found a helm that was changeable from Full/Open/Leather to whichever was required for the class wearing it. It was a Helm of Opposite Alignment and was tried on first by the same player as in Example 3. Player and GM had a word outside. The GM told the player what it was and, since it didn't affect his character (who was already wearing a Cloak of Opposite alignment), he promptly tried it to convince all the others to try it on. (A big grin on his malicious little face all the time.)

The above examples all worked, by the way. What do you do in these sorts of situations? In each case I was a non-involved (but very irritated) player. In Example 1, there is no way the player of the Monk would have allowed it if he'd been the DM; he seems to use bluster to get an advantage for his character. In Example 2, the basis seems to be: you know it as a player but your PCs wouldn't know, and therefore you cannot act on that knowledge, despite the fact that the PCs might have burned the body anyway. In Example 3, the excuse was that the character was very impatient. In Example 4, I asked the GM if he'd told the player what the helm actually was; when he confirmed this, I got him to shut the player up.

So we have four types of cheating not covered by KEYES' term "rulebending": bluster, deliberate manipulation of the difference between a player's knowledge and a PC's knowledge, lying and--well, I suppose #4 is the same as #2.

My solutions? Example 1 cheerfully admitted that as a player he would try to get away with things he wouldn't allow as a DM. Example 2's justification is that

(continued in eight pages--at the end of THE DARK AGES PAGES 8&9)

THE DARK AGES PAGES ..

by Martin Wixted, 105 West St., Danbury, CT 06810; (203) 792-2664.

IN MY OPINION (a public service message)

It seems that as the older contributors turn to essays and think pieces, the new recruits eagerly step up and take their turn on system-tampering.

It does appear that A&E is getting a lot of new people. It would seem that the backlog will increase, and people will be able to get fewer zines in. Lee, how about a limit to zines, huh? I mean, some of the contributions really take up an inconsiderate amount of space, in my opinion. 15 pages seems like a LOT of space and a nice limit. Please consider it? Anyone else?

COMMENTS ON #100 & 99

LEE: You are correct; there is no reason STR should affect Dodging. I goofed in my writeup, using old notes. Dodge = AGI%./Glad you find the idea of Skill level determining speed of the weapon interesting./Defense with the weapon has been changed to 1 second for all weapons. (Large weapons haven't far to move and small ones can be moved faster.)(100)//I like the herbs, but is there any way to find out in what country these herbs can and cannot be found?/Glad you liked the illo. Didn't anyone else attempt anything for the big 100?

DAVID JOHN WEBB: re ct.self: You have misunderstood me, fine sir! The resistance table in no way messes up the probability of Boris helping Cuthbert, because BOTH are using the Resistance table and therefore BOTH are having time condensed IN THE SAME WAY, for the SAME AMOUNT OF TIME. So BOTH are finished at the same time!(100)

PETER DA SILVA: I find your character stats comprehensive and wonderful. I really do like them. (Gosh! Golly! From this end of the room!)(99)

BILL KARIEVA: Intrigued by your campaign setup from Middle Earth. Any chance I could get you to put some of your rules in A&E from your system? I eagerly await news from Moria. How 'bout a PBii? I'll play an MPC dwarf?(99)

MICHAEL JOHNSON: Let's get together and publish our games on our own! Form our own company! (Got any cash? I don't. Sigh.)

WILLIAM PESCHEL: More, please! I find your comments enlightening &/or provoking. (100)

JUSTIN ROLLINSON: Nice writeup of the Cult of Mostal for RQ! (100)

RANDALL S. STUKEY: But you promised STORMBRINGER for #100, you rat! Whatever you do, keep contributing. I like your zines very much.

SAPIENZA: What can I say? Superb as always. (Idolize,...idolize,...idolize.)

Wes thu hal!

Martin Wixted

105 West St., Danbury CT 06810
as retyped by Lee Gold (thank you)

Scot Fritz's address is now
6 Griffith Ave. #2, Danbury, CT 06810
PEZs, take note

OF THE GUARIAN AND OTHER THINGS

--as related in the tales of the Windsor Campaign

"I just went into town for a little entertainment. Honestly! How was I to know that I would soon be entertaining a score or more vagrants and a huge lizardman? Or even stranger, that I would soon leave my hometown (which I've never forsaken) on a quest, ...with these strangers and an intelligent snake? REALLY!

"It is always best to begin at the beginning, so here goes nothing. My name is Heather Fenmarch. Because I make my living at training birds of prey (mostly falcons), I am known as Heather Falcon. I'm 28 years old (give or take) and nearing my age of maturity. (That's 33 years in case any of you Tall Ones didn't know.)

"Enough!"

Chapter 1 (the day my world collapsed)

Not prone to adventuring myself, each time I'd encounter any adventurers in town, I would keep to myself. Being only 3'4", I have little other strategy.

I went to the bulletin board in town to make sure my business notice was still posted. No sooner had I spotted it (it really needed replacing as it had rained last night), then a very tall, wide shadow fell across the board. I spun around and froze.

In front of me was the largest thing I'd ever seen. Green and scaled, it reminded me of the lizards my birds liked. He (at least I supposed it was a he) stood in his dusty clothes and in a nauseating breath, smelling of insects and fruit, said, "Hobbit."

"Yes," I managed to croak.

"You read," he said, pointing over my head to the bulletin board.

Flustered, I searched the board but was unable to focus on much of anything. Conscious of his hot breath on my neck (and head and body), I somehow managed a faint approximation of my real voice as my eyes settled on a legible scrap of paper. "Madame Suscho and her girls. Reasonable rates. Happy hour from 4-6. Merchant Ave." I looked up fearfully.

"More," he boomed. Normally I have my wits about me and I'm able to take care of a situation. Caught off guard like this, I was in a pickle.

"HEY! Leave her alone!" came a voice from off to my right. I sank to the ground. Now I was in trouble. Disturbing the peace! Causing a fight! What would my mother say? Would she put up the bail I knew would be required? Probably not. She and I hadn't gotten along in years.

To my surprise, the lizardthing didn't seem too interested in arguing and, after asking directions to the nearest hotel, I heard him lead a horse away. I opened my eyes to the sight of little hairy feet. No big deal. They were mine. I looked past them to another pair of hairy feet. I looked up from those furry patches to see the rest of this hobbit adventurer. I'd never seen him before, and from the looks of it he hadn't had a homecooked meal in quite awhile. Introducing himself as Baccus, he asked if I was all right. Regaining myself somewhat, I said that I was going to drink. Heavily if I could. In the opposite direction of the lizard.

Alas, this was not to be my last encounter with the lizard which I eventually learned was a Guarian. he would soon lead us on an adventure across the Sunken Lands!

In a tavern, I was trying to drink myself into a pleasant state. (Thinking back, I must have been very out of it to be drinking with two total strangers, Baccus and his rather quiet friend, Corbicus. I obviously did not have my wits about me.)

Then a deathly silence filled the room. It was the Guarian. I slumped in my chair. He spotted our table. I ran for the ladies room. I watched from the doorway as he reached the table. After talking, Baccus and his companion stood as if to give the lizard the table. The Guarian refused, moving to an empty table in a back corner. I regained my seat quietly (quiet as only a Hobbit can be) and resumed drinking. Heavily.

I was getting into drinking when five city guards appeared. They marched briskly towards the lizard, billyclubs in hand. They began arguing and seemed ready to club him into submission. True, he had scared me, but he hadn't done anything wrong! Over the objections of Baccus, I went to the guards and protested his innocence. The guards would not listen.

After consulting with the apologetic tavernkeeper (who appeared to have called the guards), I decided enough was enough. If this town was getting so bad as to beat up on anyone who was different, they were going to have a fight on their hands. I unslung my small (Hobbit-size) crossbow and loaded it, prepared to shoot. I cradled it in my arms. The tavernkeeper was not happy. Baccus looked alarmed. I didn't care. If those two wanted to help the city guards, they'd get it too.

Abruptly an elderly gentleman rose from a small table and spoke to the guards, who immediately abandoned their aggressive attitude. Seeing this, I lowered my bow and walked over to speak with them again. This time, with the coaxing of the Offlander, who seemed to be a judge (although I didn't recognize him), I agreed to escort the Guarian out of town. (Thinking back again, I don't know what had taken hold of me. Was I finally fed up with this seedy town? It had gone down hill in the past ten years. Was I out of my mind? Probably. Nonetheless, I had agreed.) Baccus and Corbicus went with me.

After the Guarian bumped into a rather rough person who attempted a fight (until the guard stopped him), we escorted the Guarian to his hotel and retrieved his things. He saddled up, and we walked out of town and up the hill to my house.

While we walked, a female elf introduced herself as Dorien. She said she had seen the incident in the tavern and wondered if we'd like some help, just in case. Baccus wasn't too keen, but I told him we needed all the Tall Ones we could get on our side. He relented. By the time we got there, it was dinnertime (as opposed to supertime--that comes later), and I cooked.

A knock on the door later revealed a pair of rough characters. It seemed that the one who'd started the fight outside the tavern with the lizard had come to apologize(?) with a keg of ale. Not one to be impolite and turn down an apology, I invited them in. (What was I thinking of? Actually, at that time I believe I had stopped thinking.)

While I did the dishes, another knock at my door produced the gentleman I'd thought was a judge. I was correct. And he had a proposition for the Guarian, whom I had since found out was named Smilely (a cultural trait, no doubt). (I hope.) It seemed the judge, whose name slips my mind, wanted Smilely to return to his native land--the desert. There, said the judge, was a group of leopardlike creatures, the Xithlanths. I remember feeling afraid...and more than a little curious.

The judge said that his daughter had been taken by these creatures. (I later found out that the stealing of young Offlanders was not unusual for the Xithlanths), to be sacrificed as these highly religious creatures were wont to do. The judge then spoke to the Guarian in the Guarian Tongue (I suspect that is what it was anyway) and convinced him to lead an expedition across the wastes. I was impressed.

The rest in the house agreed to go (after some financial coaxing by the judge) and then all eyes turned to me. The judge inquired as to whether I'd be interested. Would I! I thought about it a moment and got very frightened. My birds! My life here! How about just my LIFE? (Heavens only know if I'd come back alive!) I managed to squeak out an, "I don't know." Things were moving too fast.

Later, with some liquor I keep handy (for medicinal purposes) and a full belly from supper, I began making a list and correlating the adventurers to see who could do what and what the group's weak spots were. (They were terribly unorganized for adventurers, although I later found out that some weren't...like Dorien. She was a locksmith in town, just as bored as I was!)

The final list of adventurers was:

Baccus, the other hobbit. Good with his weapon and quick in his thoughts.

Smilely, the Guardian. What he lacked in charm, he made up for in tolerating others' nasty comments.

Dorien the Elf. She was the only other female and seemed to adopt a quiet air. Perhaps to draw attention away from her beauty.

The two fight starters. (I never did catch their names.)

Corbicus, the elf. Baccus' silent partner.

The judge seemed very sleepy. He wasn't going, naturally. With his lack of constitution and age, I doubt he could have survived even if had wanted to go.

I fed my pet falcon and (somehow) found a place for everyone to sleep in my three room home.

They seemed such a rag-tag bunch. Hardly a group to undertake such a dangerous mission. (Just how dangerous I was not to learn until much later.) It was sometime around then that I decided to go. Someone needed to care for them.

I packed my large everything-in-it carpet bag in the quiet house. I cleaned up after the ale and sat in my chair next to the fire, the judge snoring in the chair across from me, and looked over the list of our group again. We had no one with really professional theiving abilities. At least no one with a lot of skill in many different aspects of it, and I resolved to go into town in the morning to take care of that problem by posting a notice.

Satisfied, I drifted off to sleep (having given my bed to Dorien; that Tall One's legs stuck out a bit though).

Chapter Two (it gets worse) or (Out of the frying pan...)

Dawn was nearing when I woke. I hoped it was a dream. No luck. A part of me was glad. The judge was quietly sleeping. I stoked up the fire and (one hefty First-Breakfast and a change of clothes later) had just finished pumping some water to heat for washing up, when I was surprised. Baccus, in his undergarments, abruptly moved past me and went outside. I wondered why he had his hand over his mouth but I soon figured it out. He had drunk too much the night before. I almost giggled. I am not a heavy drinker, but it takes me half a keg to get drunk and another keg to get ill. No matter.

I set about getting things ready for Second-Breakfast (First-Breakfast for everyone else--Tall Ones only eat one breakfast). The last of my bacon (which turned out to be plenty), goose eggs, bread for toast, water for tea, and the necessary pots. I finished as Baccus returned. A little green, but he said he felt much better. I tried not to notice how he was dressed, and I think he appreciated it.

Half an hour later, we were chatting as we left the house to walk to town. Baccus paused. "Did you see the Guardian, he asked in a funny voice.

No," I said, somewhat worried. "I didn't." We checked the house. He had gone.

On the way to town, I was worried that Smiley might have taken it upon himself to fulfill the judge's request so as not to endanger anyone else. It seemed the noble thing to do. (I was later to learn that Guardians just aren't bright enough to do something quite that noble.)

We got to the gates. They were slightly ajar with no guards about. Very strange. We soon heard the sounds of a great battle and moved towards it. It was over by the time we got there. A hideous beast lay dead, its skull blown open (by magic--that I was sure of). The, uh, survivors were standing and lying about. Baccus and I treated them as best we could, making friends with some of them. Two elves (who weren't in good shape themselves) insisted on getting a friend of theirs who was upstairs. I was getting visions of hundreds of people coming and going in my house....I didn't even have a tavern or boarding house permit! Things were getting bizarre.

I heard the march of approaching soldiers. "Things couldn't possibly get worse," I said to myself and turned to face them.

"You can all go home now; we caught the monster," said the first guard.

"Yes," said the second. "Put up a struggle but now he's in prison." I looked puzzled. What were they talking about? Then they spotted the dead thing behind us (it was difficult to miss; big as an elephant, blood everywhere).

"What's that," asked the first guard.

I suddenly realized something. "What did you just say?" I asked.

"What's that," he asked again, pointing to the dead thing.

"Never mind that," I said sternly. "What are you talking about? WHAT monster did you catch?"

"Oh," spoke up the second guard, "a big lizard thing. It's in prison now, though."

Oh boy. Now we had to get the Guardian out of prison! Things were worse.

We all trekked upstairs. After the two Elves had shown their Guild cards (True adventurers! I realized we had just entered the back door of the Adventurers Guild!), with a warning that guests were permitted 15 minutes; we found their companion. He was in a bad way. Knife wound in the back. Bad. Very bad.

One of our new companions, a woman, spoke up, suggesting she use her magic (for money). She did and his back healed! A blue glow seemed to possess his wound. When it faded, the dried blood had been burned away, and the wound closed with nary a blemish.

The woman, empty of magic and full of purse, decided to exit. The boy in the bed sat up. I saw his hand. It too was injured. Mangled beyond use. The nosy doorkeeper called up that our 15 minutes were up. We left.

I went and did some shopping to get more breakfast for everyone while the rest of them headed back to my house. Upon entering my home, I was greeted with the smell of breakfast cooking. Alarmed, I ran over to Orifus who was working in MY kitchen...with MY utensils!

He tut-tutted me and said he could cook very well. I eyed him warily, examining all my pots and pans. More or less satisfied that he wasn't burning or ruining anything, my eyes settled on the shelves above the running board. Directly over the hand pump lies my collection of pewter dishes. There was a stack of plates on the left, a stack of bowls on the right, and a gaping empty space in the middle! My expensive pewter serving bowl was gone! I immediately accused Orifus of using my best dinnerware as breakfast dishes. I was beginning to think nasty thoughts. (More evidence that I was out of my mind) and muttered "nature boy" under my breath.

He vehemently denied my charges, and after searching the kitchen, I was forced to agree with him. I mentally scanned the visitors I had had. Those two who had started the fight with the Guardian! They weren't here! No one had seen them leave. How cruel a thing to do. After housing them overnight! (Naive, wasn't I?)

I also found the judge gone. Baccus told me they had met him on the road and that the judge had agreed to free Smiley and he'd return him tonight--when he'd like us to leave.

Tonight! It suddenly hit me. I WAS going to leave this place. I suddenly realized I hadn't had any Second-Breakfast and wondered if I could eat anything. Despite my shock I was able to eat a little

Four goose eggs later it had been decided that most of the group would be going into town to help try and get the kid's hand healed, while Dorien and Orifus would go with one of the new recruits to help her pack. (And keep her awake. It seems that during her battle with the monster she had suffered a concussion. We had to keep her awake so that she wouldn't die.) She was a performer. Feather fans and a snake, she said....I didn't like that last bit. Feathers and a snake! Now I was going to need a permit to run a massage parlor! Not someone to be shocked (after all this), I decided to deal with it when the time came.

They left, and Baccus stayed behind to help me clean up the place and store the bedding.

(I don't know how or why it happened, but what next occurred changed my feelings towards Baccus considerably.)

I think Baccus and I both realized we were alone at the same instant. We were sitting in the living room. "So," he asked, "what are you planning on doing?"

I giggled nervously (I think) and said, "I have to visit my mother to see if she'll watch the house while I'm gone." (Stammering throughout.)

"Oh," was the reply. "Too bad."

My temples began to throb, and I felt butterflies in my tummy. Was I coming down with a cold. My head hurt. He smiled at me.

"I'm going in the bedroom," I heard myself say, as my body unwillingly took me towards my bedroom. I lay down and closed my eyes. I wished I could've gotten up and gone into the living room. In the back of my mind, I knew what I was doing,...and I was scared. Yet part of me was enjoying this strange new sensation, this thrill of excitement. I was resting my eyes and my straining ears heard the soft patter of Hobbit feet as he entered my room. He slowly sat on the bed and gently took my hand.

I opened my eyes. "But I've never--" I quietly protested, my innocence showing. He silenced me with a kiss.

DAVE NALLE: re "Brownosing": I stand behind my comment. Webster's: "favor or approval...by obsequious behavior." As a reader, I was drawn to RQ by your comments about it. One need not be intentionally brownosing for it to come across. And that is how it is interpreted in the "academic circles" around here.

Having looked over your game again., I think I should qualify some of my criticisms. Ysgarth as a game works. If it didn't it would not still be selling.//I find it is too crowded with rules. Odd rules that one cannot relate to. Attack Rating, Defense Rating, Damage Class, Missile Rating. Strange.//It is structured as a logical extension of D&D. The means by which those classes and ratings are figured make sense. (A lot of arbitrary decisions had to go into the design though.

I really love the Regeneration of Talent and Zeal points (MP and PP) determined by age. It makes sense to me.//Dave, too many extraneous numbers and figuring. That is my major complaint.//Now that you know where I stand on it, what is it about the RULES (NOT THE CULTURE) of RQ! that you don't like? And yes, there is a difference between the RULES and the social structure.

One last thing. Why are there so many errors in YRS? Six grammatical and computation errors in five pages (Book 1). Why? You stress the need for quality in RPs. What about YRS?

Looking through old issues of DRAGON, I came across many familiar names. Such as "Languages" by Lee Gold (1), "Gandalf Was Only a Fifth Level Magic User" by Bill Seligman (5), "Sensible Sorcery" by Ronald Pehr (21), "Keeping the Magic User in His Place" by Ronald Pehr (24), "Rod of Singing" by Robert Plamondon (37), "Psionics Revisited" by Ronald Pehr (24), and "Another Look at Witches and Witchcraft" by Ronald Pehr (20). If I've missed anyone I probably don't have that issue (sorry). //Oh and one last entry. Ponder the implications of "Bag of Wind" by Gyax (27).

REVIEW OF ABYSS 26

Look, Dave, free advertising! (Actually I'm paying to advertise you. How do I get into the business?)

ABYSS, another product from Ragnarok Enterprises, which brought you the Ysgarth Rule System (more on that later. Maybe). It is a digest-sized, 28 page from cover to cover steffantasy fanzine. The cover is impressive. It took work to reproduce.

The first column, "Berserker gang" by Jon Schuller, calls for us to stand on our own two feet and shout out our love of fantasy to all who will listen. He requests us to become more prominent and to come out of the closet. Frankly, with the terminology he uses, I could (with minimal changes) insert the article into a Gay Liberation newsletter and it would fit. "...need a better image and these illusions need to be dispelled if we are to continue as a part of public life while avoiding scorn, harrassment and prejudice." "Honesty is always a good program, and such openness can still save the image of..., if we come out of the closet before too many people accept a false image as true and close their minds to us." "...We need only to teach them to accept us for what we really are." See what I mean?

An excellent promotion for homosexuality, one of the better I've seen. Is it applicable to gaming? I can't see gaming and gamers having any of the deep psychological and social problems gays face. No one will fire you if they find out you play games, for instance.

"In the Speculum" is a review column for books, magazines, games, and aids. Not bad. Dave, I found way too many reviews in your mag. Much too many for the size. Fifteen reviews? Not to my liking. Not when they take up about six pages.

"Influence and Renown": an article detailing a variant for adding Influence Points and Reputation Points. This design uses them like Piety Points but depending on your social class and other things. Used for buying your way into government positions or whathaveyou. Interesting.

"Welcome to the Obsidian Wombat": a mini-scenario. The eight page section describes a local hangout with four pages of character stats and four pages of room description and scenario ideas. Middling to fair. Nothing really inventive, but it could prove fun with a good GM.

An article by Mort Munchkin. Good. Dave, don't lose humor in yuour quest for fantasy.

The last item is "Liabilities" by Carl Jones. It tells of giving characters liabilities and allowing them bonuses to balance out (?) the liabilities. I have a quibble with this. While along the right lines for adding personality, the article refers to YRS as a new generation system and others as "other" or "second" generation, with the stipulation that these suggestions can be altered with work to fit a second generation system. I realize you have the right to say as you wish, but don't adopt a snotty attitude; it could destroy faith in your zine.

My overall view of the issue was 60-70%. Fairly common articles, nothing new, but done well. I would love to say "ABYSS is abysmal" (cause it rhymes), but it simply isn't true. There is a little more than normal of the blowing your own horn bit, but that is to be expected for a game that is out of the mainstream.

Interesting note on the survey results of issue #25 (appearing in this Abyss). In what appears to be fanzine listings, one fanzine is notably absent. Care to guess? Why, Dave?

OPEN QUESTION: I am wondering what games everyone who contributes to A&E owns. I would be interested to see a list by each person as to RPs owned and also those they used to own but don't any more. (Such games need a @ or whatever to note them. Any games they want to own but don't yet have should be marked with a *.) In fact, let's turn this into an opinion poll. If you want to, rate the games you own from 1-5:

- 1 Terrible 2 Below Average 3 Average 4 Good 5 Excellent

My List

- 4 D&D Collectors edition and all supplements (purchased in 1976, at the beginning of my munchkin phase.
- 3 D&D Holmes edition
- 3 D&D Basic
- 4 D&D Basic (Red books, boxed)
- 1 AD&D Handbook, Manual, Guide, Folio, Cyclopedia

After disgust with the above, my knowledge roll worked, and I bought...

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 2 Fantasy Wargaming | 3 Bunnies & Burrows | 4 Tunnels & Trolls |
| 4 Chivalry & Sorcery | 2 ICE Character Law | 2 ICE Arms Law |
| Ysgarth Rules System | 3 Star Frontiers | 3 James Bond 007 |
| 5 Swordbearer | 4 Dragon Quest | 4 Traveller |
| 1 Castle Perilous (ugh!) | 5 Worlds of Wonder | Espionage |
| 4 Stormbringer | 4 Call of Cthulhu | 4 RuneQuest! |
| 5 Arduin Adventure | 2-3 Adventures in Fantasy | 1 Timeship (ugh!) |
| 5 Arduin Trilogy | 1 Pirates & Plunder | 4-5 ERIN |
| 3 Melanda@ | 4 Thieves World (?) | ? Lands of Adventure |

Uh, having just finished rating the games, it seems a bit more difficult that it would at first appear. Oh well. Such is life.

DEATH STARS FOR FUN AND PROFIT--continued by Adrian Bolt

he will try anything he can and--if the DM is fool enough to allow it--tough; the player got an advantage and is quite happy; it is not seen as cheating. Example 3 sticks to his guns and admits nothing. Example 4 shut up as soon as he'd realized he'd been caught trying it on.

Another worrying aspect of this is the way some players (usually wargamers) cannot distinguish between a character's knowledge and a player's. I've tried to explain but always meet a response of, "But I'm playing as the character." meaning "I am the character," which translates into "everything the character knows I know, and everything I know the character knows." Thus if you tell them the NPC they were just talking to was a L10 Fighter with 100HP, they assume that the character has realized this somehow.

I can't help but wonder if we really need to invent a term for this. My inclination is to find some new players and avoid playing with such a bunch of cretins. Worse, I am totally disgusted by the DM/Player attitude shown (antagonists). That is, as a DM one will be very strict and not allow any such arguments to succeed (you are restricted to practically straight AD&D), but as a player one will try every trick possible to get some sort of disadvantage to other characters/advantage to one's own character. I find this attitude quite sickening.

Have any of you come across similar incidents? What were your feelings? What did you do about it? Comments and suggestions would be very welcome.

I sit in my room watching silvery clouds of condensation melt from the window. On the hoary lawn beyond, magpies caper in the first cold rays of the morn. One does not enter into these high spirits though; stiff as clay he sits, a red bib eclipsed by the glinting of his stout black dagger of a beak. A beak which just now holds a small white card printed with the number seven, while over at the swimming pool, a group of divers march to the high-board for some early morning practice.

A&E 100

GYGAX LETTER: What a nice letter. It is the essence of role gaming distilled with a sincere dash of elegance. Moreover the dangers of feuding and bickering are prophetically warned of; times might change, but it seems this sort of thing never does.

A&E 101

WILSON H. HEYDT re ct to DAVE WEBB: That's how I sort out my comments too.// Re tough humans: interesting anecdotes. I tend to take the view with human/animal combat that the animal is hunting for food and looking for a quick kill. If it starts to take punishment, it will break off the encounter and run off, tail between its legs. The best examples are the African big cats which, when chasing prey, prefer to attack by leaping at the neck with the jaws and using their weight to break the neck. If this succeeds, you have one more dead antelope or whatever; if not, then there are numerous cases of the antelope spooking the nasty pussycat with a barrage of well-aimed kicks.

Running this in a campaign means that if the animal has TOTAL SURPRISE, there might well be one more dead PC for the annals. Otherwise, the odds of surviving the encounter, though not of killing the beast, rest firmly with the PC. As far as the PC is concerned, the beast's effective HP are much less than the actual (i.e. needed to kill) HP. There are exceptions to this rule of thumb, of course. One would be particularly mean animals, like your grizzly bear. Another, obvious one is a mother with young, who will stop at nothing to protect them when an unwitting adventurer stumbles on her lair.

Humans can be tough in other ways too. One I always remember is in Arthur Grimble's A PATTERN OF ISLANDS: the Polynesian octopus hunters. They dive down the underwater cliffs where these creatures live and swim close to likely looking cracks. If a crack is inhabited, the octopus within grabs the diver around the head, at which point the diver kicks backwards, pulling the critter from its hole. Said octopus is now mightily peeved and tightens its grip for the kill, bringing the head within easy range--and allowing the diver to finish it off with a neat bite between the eyes.

LAURENCE J. P. GILLESPIE: I enjoyed your piece on old Norse dwarves. I'll admit too that I was rounding a similar sort of piece myself, but I have the disadvantage of having sources limited to those readily available in English translation. I haven't, for instance, come across Gongu-Hrolf's Saga, on which much of your piece was based and which I confess sounds truly wonderful. I will concentrate now on a few later ideas and interpolations if you like. After all, it can be just as important to detail what an ignorant population thinks a dwarf is as on what he actually is up in his little cleft in the crag. Hopefully my thoughts will be ordered enough to make the next ish.

JOHN T. SAPIENZA, JR: role gaming: yes, I could go for that. I don't know why nobody has picked up on it before.// I can't say I "enjoyed" your report on the D&D suicide case but it was a compelling read. I've spotted nothing like it in the British press.

WAYNE SHAW (re Giant Bugs): I for one would be most interested if you can find the info you mentioned and tell us all about it.

JAMES HEIN:(re FRP for purists): I agree; when the chips are down, this is certainly where I stand with my rolegaming. At the same time, however, it can be nice or even a simple display of human nature to rationalize things a bit. The types of article you are griping at would, I concur, certainly include my recent giant arthropod ramblings (of which there are more to come), so how do I come out of this not looking the hypocrite?

The question is really: for whom are the articles as written intended? Are they for us as players--or for characters? The former can certainly say, "It's just fantasy; to hell with it, let's enjoy ourselves," (and quite right too); the latter are less likely to do as it's their world and it (usually) has rules. Whom do I write my articles for then? I'm staying mum on this one, dammit; it's fantasy.

JOHN ABRAHAMSON: I too believe that the time is long overdue for the SAN stat to become an everyday part of rolegaming. My own system had a SAN stat long before CoC came out. My system, being D&D-based, simply used another 3D6 roll as I had decided the quantity was too irrational to be permanently linked to the same existing stat; someone with a high INT might withstand tests of sanity very well, but then again might not.

As far as SAN in CoC goes, I think its coupling with the Cthulhu Mythos skill is an elegant idea, which works well for the game. In the wider world of more standard fantasy rolegaming, though, if one uses the coupled stat, I reckon most adventurers would be driven permanently barmy rather too quickly. In CoC the Investigators tend to spend more time researching and less time in situations where they are liable to be beset by all manner of nasties. In the average fantasy world, the adventurer can often find himself in situations where he is set upon by one mindcurdling thing after another.

To counteract this, I think there are two options. We can either make the penalties for a failed SAN roll less severe (and make increases in our Nasty Beastie Mythos Knowledge skill very hard to obtain) or else uncouple SAN from any other stat and run its mechanics differently (as I have been accustomed to do).

On a more general level, I wonder if anybody has thought of coupling pairs of mutually exclusive stats as a matter of course; it would be theminimaxer's nightmare if nothing else.

* * * * *

Yes, folks! In case you hadn't realized it yet, this is Montmorillonite Man-o-War Bird, installment the seventh by and (c) Nick Larter of Silwood Park, Ascot, BERKS, England...defying conventions and putting the title in the middle of page two, in deference to that stalwart band of reserve troops from the south of England, the Havant Guard (and typed as ever by the wonderful Lee).

CAMPAIGN REPORT

So far: while recovering from an attack of The Swarm at a hotel in Bocon, Zamor; our heroes have some money stolen. They pursue the thieves (nasty ape-things) to their camp and recover it, though Varg dies in a burning tent together with his hound, Fang. In a last pointless and desolate gesture of frustration, Alkar enchants the burning camp so it is utterly consumed by the flames, and the foursome make their getaway together with Alkar's costly spoils.

Back in Bocon, the streets are full of rumors of several other sorties by the vile apes. It is apparently not uncommon for the various chaotic hordes that dwell beyond the Home Wood to get bold and raid the lower villages and towns in the aftermath of a Swarm attack. At such times, of course, the Militia are stretched to the limit mopping up pockets of Swarm resistance, and cannot fully cover raids from the other direction.

At the hotel, the dejected four investigate the spoils more closely; after all, the show must go on. The steel-bound box apparently full of money, that was stolen in the first place is now recovered by Alkar. [They really dragged this thing around quite awhile; when are they going to open it? NJL] In addition, he managed to gather up a large bag of gold shells, a pouch of precious stones, a medallion on a golden chain, three vials, and a big spiky club. Further investigation reveals two of the vials contain highly sticky and inflammable magic oil; the third contains a pinkish liquid which is apparently not insalubrious. Gustavius divines that four of the ten nails in the club have been enchanted, in a crude attempt to create a magic weapon. He takes these, with the intention of converting them into arrowheads.

The group then decides on their further course of action. They remember that the Sage had indicated it would be worth their while to travel north to the Coaching House, and they elect to do this (thus fulfilling the Sage's wish of getting them well and truly off Martha's trail). The map of the land they obtained indicates that the Eldenspoor (who or whatever they might be) once dwelt there, and they conclude that this is something to do with why they have been advised to go there. (Eh? NJL)

More constructively, they decide that in view of recent experiences, they need somebody with them who is more familiar with the ways of Zamor, and so they advertise. Meanwhile, they stock up with items likely to be needed on the journey north, and Gustavius continues to attend his evening classes. Estel spends his spare time becoming more conversant with the new properties of his hand. And Lyra embarks on some long overdue devotions to Freyja.

Eventually their advertisement is answered, and they find themselves presented with Lofty Oluf--an errant but immensely likeable Icelandic thug, who arrived at Port Par on the south coast by ship (via the Cord) not much longer ago than our heroes arrived in the land. The others decide to take him on. Indeed he gets on well with Alkar from the start, as the latter is eager to reminisce about his time spent in Iceland while travelling the Cord. A few days later, the party takes the road north.

For days the journey is uneventful. There are few travellers, and the only interest lies in the roads west to the upper villages and the great fortresses of Shann, Henock and Alvara that ward the Swarming Grounds. During this time, they get to know Lofty better, and he turns out not only to have a fine reputation as a lusty fighter but also to be an adept tracker.

Eventually the road north turns abruptly east. To the north lies a dark and gloomy plain, with in the far distance terrible storm-clad mountains. To the south and east of them, though, a vast flat plain comes into view, all the more startling for the fact that it is dotted with a myriad of brightly colored tents and banners. Just a little way up the road, a gay outpost of tents is stationed, and courtly folk can be seen milling all around.

Our heroes soon reach these and are heartily welcomed and invited to spend a few days on the Jousting Plain as it is called. They accede and are led down from the little outpost to the main body of the plain, where--as the news of the visitors spreads--a feast is prepared, and strangers come up on all sides with warm and chivalrous greetings.

The knights who first met the party at the outpost introduce themselves as Sir Rathmed of the Mark and Stefanius, his cousin. Their standards fly over their part of the plain: the former's is a green bird on a silver ground; the latter's seven gold stars on a green ground.

Preparatory to the feast (and it is looking like a real fatted calf job to our slightly bemused friends), all are invited to partake of the scented tub and to choose the finest clothes to wear at the event. The feast itself is superb; and in addition, news from the north is plentiful. Sharp ears learn of the magical fortress to the north, which is called Skyreach and is the home of Lord Caelin. The northern peaks are the Mountains of Black Fire, inhabited only by the dwarves. One great peak, the Hill of Rathmar, stands out, and there is an observatory atop it. Below the peaks are the Northern Marches, which are warded by the Margrave of Count Rathmar. To the west of the Northern Marches is the dark Skull Plain, with an enormous stone skull at its

center. The road takes a route to the east and then forks: one arm south to the Black Chasm, the other north to the Coaching House.

Thereafter drunken revelry takes the path of useful information, and the banquet ends in suitable high spirits. It even seems that Sir Rathmed has taken a liking to Lyra.

Over the next ten days, our heroes have plenty of time for leisure, and they enjoy watching the joust. Indeed the tournament in progress seems to be never-ending. At the same time, they take the opportunity to get some weapons practice with some very fine tutors, and Lofty demonstrates even more of his skills by availing himself of the facilities--and putting together a very good suit of armor.

Thus attired, he is persuaded to enter a small single combat tournament (on foot). He gets through the early rounds easily, but gets more alarmed as the casualty rate of competitors all around him mounts. In the end, though, Lofty is triumphant in his class and is showered with accolades by all surviving.

Alkar too is making friends and influencing people, culminating in his entering into a pact of blood brotherhood with Matton the Mighty, a warrior of exceedingly noble stock. In addition, it seems that every day there are feasts to celebrate something, and the supply of food is perfectly endless.

Other members of the party are not faring so well though. Lyra is putting on weight enormously quickly and is getting unhappy with this. Moreover, she remains strangely ambivalent to Sir Rathmed's advances, as in fact he is apt to be with her too. Estel takes a dislike to all the fun and complains continuously about all the time they are wasting with respect to the quest.

So it is that after ten days stay, they announce to the knights their intention to leave in the morning. Their hosts are shocked. "Do you not like it here?" and "Tarry, there is a big feast tomorrow" are typical reactions. Our heroes are adamant, however, and cannot be swayed.

The morn arrives, but before they can depart, numerous well-wishers come up to them with tales of foreboding. "Do not travel this day, sirs; there is a Whacker coming up, see," and they point northwards. The dark clouds are rolling south off the Mountains of Black Fire, bolts of lightning darting in all directions, and the terrible din of the storm is audible even at this great distance. They tell the reluctant five that Whackers may last several days. And even as they agree to stay awhile longer, it seems that the whole plain is alive with stories of terrible Whackers they have known, and all the stout folk and true that have been lost therein.

The howling, crashing Whacker does indeed dominate the northern sky for the rest of that day, at times almost touching the road, but leaving the plain beyond as jolly and blissful as ever. Towards evening, preparations for the feast become more in evidence, a fact that the now grossly fat Lyra takes with resignation. Later still the reason for the feast becomes clear as a great line of mounted warriors under blue and green banners breasts the horizon from the south. "The army has returned," people mutter enigmatically.

Another great banquet ensues, surpassing all the others in its excess, such that the Whacker peters out like a damp squib unnoticed by all. It is not for another four days that the party can find a tactful moment to think about leaving; and at the same time they get a great blow to their morale. All the precautionary magic they have employed up to now, as any sensible party would when entering a new environment, has told them that the jousting plain is a fine, good place and does not bode them any harm, and so on. Alkar now finds during one such check that a charm has been put on Lyra. In trying to investigate further, his magic fails completely and shows no signs of returning.

In some terror, as for the first time they perceive something of their true state on the plain, they decide at once to beat a hasty and anonymous departure the next morning, very early.

continued in two pages--at the end of KNIGHT DREAMS OF COUP.

KNIGHT DREAMS OF COUP

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

CAMPAIGN SURVEY: to get some idea of what players might want in a D&D-style game, I made up a survey sheet covering 15 areas.

1. Best Time to Play: our groups don't seem to feel there's enough time on week-nights to play, despite weekends being very busy; sometimes too busy to play.
2. Location: whose place to play at can limit who can/will come, how many can fit into playing area comfortably, and other social intangibles like children, relatives, pets, non/smoking, sleeping space, and even transport--both public and who has to leave with whom.
3. Food: always crucial to long games--who provides what or order in. (The Golds' idea of adjourning to a restaurant has happened to me only once, but can be great if you have a small group or reservations.)
4. Number of PCs: both per player and in the game, and on that day's adventure is very useful data to prevent GM overload, and indicates some of the "scale" a player seeks.
5. Campaign Type: ranging from fully closed (all PCs are born, adventure and die on one world run by one GM) to fully open (multi-campaigns are available, PCs arrive/leave after each game adventure). This area has a huge impact on "scale"/world design--interfacing various campaigns can lead to huge headaches if there are player cliques and different GMing styles, ideas of proper treasure, magic, monsters, etc.
6. Cultures: Here I listed groups of Terran cultures/languages to see what might be considered interesting to play as well as to help formulate size/type of political states, marriage and burial customs, usual diet, and of course what common names of NPCs were.
7. Terrain: from ocean islands to tundra to vast multi-level dungeons. I had the players (as in various other areas) rate their preferences from 0 (not in campaign) to 6 (prime playing area, must be near Game Start location). I bet nobody rated Fens/Marsh a 6! I figure a 0-6 scale would be easier to use than a 0-10 one.
8. Pantheon: preferred Historical (or Fictional) as well as Preferred Patron and ArchFoe Deities. I consider deity structure crucial to a culture, world creation, magic system and more (usually vital to alignment too). So far one player considers Deities to be pretty much interchangeable; the only pantheon specified (by three!) is "Christian." Despite many NOT wanting any Devils in the campaign! Perhaps it's because a major local GM runs a very modern (Anglican) campaign (e.g. Druids worship St. Patrick. St. Dismas helps keep Thieves Guilds going, etc.). I'm tempted to give them the real 1400s and Roman Church--Papal intrigue, excommunications, Crusades, purchased bishoprics, Inquisition et al. I don't think any of them realize that they'd see the Human (male only) "Christian" Paladins, clerics, fighters and peasant militias out to slaughter/convert all other classes (especially Druids!) and sentient species in a Holy War. Oh well, they could've selected Moslem....
9. NPC Magic: especially weapons and armor--both "most often encountered," and "most powerful"--both to indicate "scale" and magic richness, and the level of challenge desired.
10. PC Magic: in particular how many one use and permanent items a PC should have. (Scale again).
11. PCs: classes that should/(not) be available, and PC species too.
12. PCs: here I asked for 3x5 cards for PCs (abilities, magic, etc.) wanted to play. So far I haven't received a single card--despite most having 12+ PCs, everyone wants to know a lot of details about both my new world and game mechanics, how Open it will be, and how much like my old world it will be.

THE OTYUGH OBITUARY #3

being written by the dilettante Ythrian (no, I won't explain that, but I still am an Otyugh at heart), Vincent M. Foster, who resides at 4010 Ashworth Ave. North, Seattle, WA 98103. Phone (206) 633-0283 (if a recording, leave a message, and I'll try to get back to you) or (206) 632-8822 (call either one but do so on weekends or after 6:30 ~~pm~~ pm). Typed by the Honorable Lee Gold (many thanks, Lee).

First, I have a rather off-beat idea (or maybe it should be silly; I don't refer to myself as silly, so I will leave it at rather offbeat): Remember a few years back when "Monty ~~Wally~~ Python" games of D&D were popular? (They may still be.) Remember Hitchhiker games of Traveller and Space Opera? Well, I have another idea, albeit outdated (arrgh--another idea?! Nooo!). Is anyone familiar with the game STRIKER by GDW (based on TRAVELLER in part)? What about the movie "Kelly's Heroes" (starring Clint Eastwood, Telly Savallis, and many others, including Lieutenant Oddball)? My idea is a Kelly's Heroes game of Striker. Anyone interested? No, oh well....So much for that.

I was going to write a folksong, but it did not look too promising after the first line. (It was going to be called "Can You Imagine All the Munchkins," to be sung to the tune of "We Shall All Gather by the River.") I thought of doing one to the tune of "Heaven and Hell" (by Black Sabbath, real religious music), but I couldn't come up with a topic. (Lucky you.)

Falling that, I will do something that assure to get a few people irate at but here goes....

RATIONALIZATION FOR LEVELS IN FRP (surely heresy!)

Awright, I know what a nifty idea RQ has for skills, and that is training in individual skills and no artificial restraints called character classes. Well, sure it's a nifty idea and it seems to sell well, but I intend to poke at it a bit (and see how far it jumps) with my own defense of what it has been trying to replace.

Realistically, one does not improve in only one skill at a time, even if that is the only one actually studied. Take studying mathematics, for instance. You not only learn mathematics but you get a beginners course in geometric proportions, physics, economics, improved literacy, improved vocabulary, logical reasoning--and we're talking about 1st grade level math. True, most of us have enough expertise in the area that the increase is negligible (these courses are first grade level and are referred to by most of us as common sense or common knowledge) but remember, the average first grader reads better than most educated people of the middle ages. (St. Augustine once wrote of a monk who could read without moving his lips and without using his finger to keep his place, almost unheard of at the time.) So any course of this type should take this into consideration. That is where character classes come in handy, particularly for combat skills.

Take RQ, for example. A person might be an accomplished warrior with a spear but no real expertise with a broadsword. This is unrealistic. The man will still be better at using a broadsword than someone without his general combat experience (unless there are extenuating circumstances), because it then becomes "the amount of fight in the dog" as it were that decides which way the fight goes. (If you doubt me, check with an expert martial artist sometime). It is a matter of tactics, both in slight footwork and hand-eye coordination then, which tells which way the fight will go. Therefore there is a reason why a fighter with much general experience but little with the particular weapon used will defeat an opponent who may be quite skilled in a weapon used but without as much combat experience.

The easiest answer to this problem is to take a system with both a level-based system and an independent skills training system (like the new Chivalry & Sorcery, Ysgarth, Tree of Life Worlds, Rolemaster, Bushido, some versions of VD&D, etc.), and add a few rules to reflect this fact. (With the new C&S it is quite easy for combat skill progression, suited to taste.)

The best solution in my *biased* opinion is to adapt some rule in RQ, Aftermath, Traveller, Space Opera (well a little less for the latter two, but even there something could be done) or another skill-based system, to allow such things to be taken into consideration. (For instance, each 5% increase in a skill increases related skills by 1% or whatever.) I believe Rob Ellwood's "Skills of a Higher Order" article in A&E 97 covers this subject well, but primarily for non-combat type skills.

For games like OD&D, AD&D, BD&D, XD&D, MD&D, CD&D, ID&D, JD&D (may be called ND&D); or other types of D&D (including most VD&Ds and MUD&Ds) (whew! they should number them for convenience), there isn't much you can do about it, for they have no individual skill training system of their own. They do have one saving grace, however. They do seem to recognize that general experience is worth something, not just specific experience (one credit to EGGhead, no more). By the way, if you wish an explanation of the various abbreviations, please see the list at the end of the zine. (Some are home grown, but all are things I have heard about or know about.)

I know that some people will take exception to my tirade, but I think that any system that deserves to be called either Realistic or State of the Art should incorporate these ideas. (No, I am not an OTW'er, and I will listen to and respect other ideas on the subject.) I know of no plant which grows in only one direction at a time. (Perhaps in Arduin, Bloody Arduin or in RQIII....)

SOME NOTES ON LOCKPICKING

It seems that whenever adventurers are in a dungeon or similar labyrinth, they tend to bring along a thief or whatever to pick locks, perhaps thinking that it is like having a magic key to open all doors. Actually this isn't the case. In most sets of lockpicking rules, three main points are missed: Tools, Basic Ability, and Time. The following observations are from my experience in practicing the art to see if RPG rules covering the subject are plausible.

Modern Locks

Two tools are used in lockpicking: a torc-bar and a rake (the names I have learned for them). The torc-bar is something that will fit in the lock (bottom of lock is preferable) and can turn over the lock when the tumblers are set. A rake rakes or pushes the tumblers into place. Without the torc-bar, the tumblers would not stay in place, and the lock would not unlock by turning over.

The tools should be made of fairly strong materials. (Stainless steel isn't a bad choice. On modern locks, stainless steel might not last very long with steady use; it bends.) Screwdriver handles might be good for handles for the torc-bar and rake. But for modern padlocks, they are unwieldy, so maybe flattening two sides of the tool about 3" from the end of the pick should be done. For a torc-bar handle, perhaps you should bend both ends: one to stick in the lock to hold the tumblers in place and turn them over, the other to apply a small pressure on the torc-bar.

On modern locks you stick the bent end in the bottom (the tumblers are at the top) and apply a slight pressure. On most locks, do not apply any more pressure than is necessary. Don't worry about the lock not opening; unless there is something wrong with it, it will open (turn over). Putting more pressure than is necessary on it will reduce the tool's life and make your job harder. The tumblers will behave to put in place; and the other problem is discussed in two paragraphs (see below).

Sorry to say, agility and dexterity have little to do with picking locks--a klutz can do it. It depends on leverage (mainly a function of tools and ability, both natural and experience) and the ability to feel the tumblers with the tools. (This shoots the RQ assumption that it all goes under Manipulation all to hell.) Patience may have to do with picking locks, as it can become frustrating if you are not getting it; and the longer it takes you to pick a lock, the less likely you will get it, which leads right into my next paragraph (yes, the one mentioned in the last paragraph.)

Time is an important factor in picking locks. It is said that an expert locksmith can crack a lock in six seconds or less (a realistic estimate, though no less than two seconds would also apply). But if it takes you more than a couple of minutes to do it, it is unlikely that you will. For one thing, you get bored, frustrated, etc. Not much, I grant you, but in some cases it may be a detriment. The biggest factor, though, is desensitization, the inability to feel the tumblers well. This happens when you keep trying to pick the lock and (particularly with tools with no real handles to speak of) the pressure from pushing the rake causes pain. When you are hurt, you tend not to have as much sense of touch as normal. This is because pain is distracting and numbs the nerves a bit. (Like the proverbial alarm shutting off on its own if no one does anything about it.)

Old Fashioned Style Locks

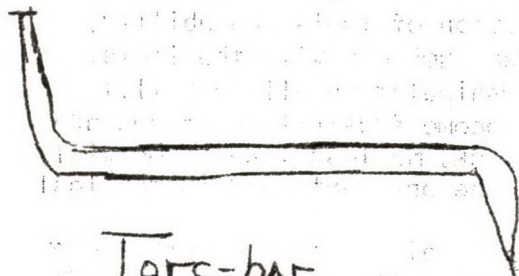
Most locks picked in FRP are this sort (unless you are playing a sci-fi FRP or a modern one; and even then quite a few could be encountered in old houses, 75+ years years). The main difference is that they have no tumblers but are a spring system (usually a leaf spring, but it could be a coiled spring) holding a deadbolt in place (one of two positions: locked or unlocked). They also use a key very different from most of our house keys or car keys. These keys are familiar to most people. They tend to be a shaft (metal) with a flattened disk at one end (may have decorations or may not be round or even there), and the unlocking mechanism (sounds techno) at the other end. The key moves the spring system out of the way first--and then moves the deadbolt, all with a simple turn. The spring mechanism reverts afterwards to its original position (or as close as it can go), without even removing the key, holding the deadbolt in place. The key unlocks the lock exactly the same way. (Well, almost. You have to turn it the other way...)

A good and well thought out system, and the person who developed it probably was a genius. (Our modern tumbler lock works far better but is not as original really. Even though that doesn't matter.)

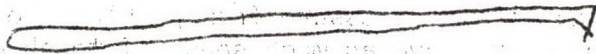
Only one tool, not two, is used to pick this lock. It should have one end bent, and it should function like a key. Its handle could be almost anything that allows the pick to be turned. (A good pick would be a torc-bar for modern locks if it was strong and about the same size as the key that would fit in the lock.) This could function as a normal key or as a skeleton key. (When these locks were mass-produced, probably first in the early 1800s, they produced skeleton keys for them also, because people would keep losing keys. One-size-fits--all arrangement.) A skeleton key is really the professional's pick mass produced. This problem probably led to the development of the tumbler lock, because anyone with a skeleton key could open most standard locks.

Desensitization is not a problem with this kind of lock, because there are no messy tumblers to deal with, and picking one is not really a matter of feel. One could still become somewhat bored and frustrated, but not as much as with modern locks.

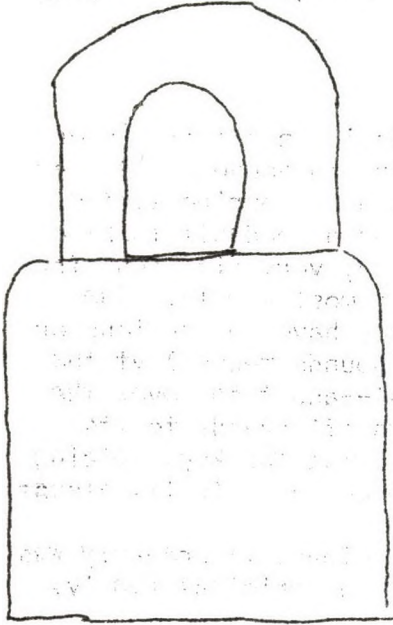
Well, there it is, and you can take it or leave it. I have included no real mechanics. (I have not decided upon rules for my own campaign yet.) I am hoping someone will expand on my ideas here to give me some (a practicing locksmith in the crowd, perhaps?). I would also like some feedback on what is presented here.



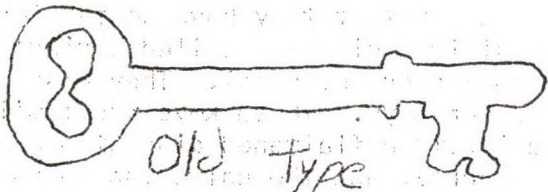
Torc-bar
(Son of Cro-bar')



Simple rake



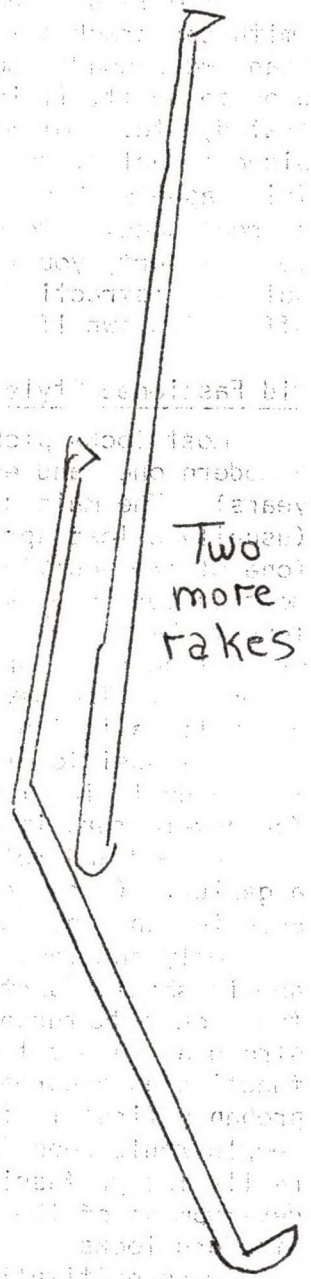
Pad Lock



Old type
Skeleton Key



Modern Key



Two
more
rakes

THE MARCO POLO EXPLORERS CLUB #2
(formerly The Chronicles of Kehei're)
(c) copyright 1984 by Kate Gehrke, 203 Gail St., Hortonville, WI 54944;
typed by Lee Gold

Re-Introduction

Hail and well met. My name is Kate Gehrke (formerly Kate Pfeifer). I last introduced myself in my first zine in A&E #88. I haven't contributed since then, so I thought I'd better do it again. During the period between my first and second zine, I have graduated from college, gotten married, and found a job. I graduated from Lawrence University June, 1983 with degrees in Religion and Computer Science. I married Gary Gehrke September 10, 1983 and have settled down in Hortonville, WI with two cats (and Gary). My job is selling Apple and Hewlett Packard computers, and Gary has been promoted to Systems Analyst. Gary was my co-contributor in Chronicles of Kehei're #1, but he has decided to become a guest contributor instead. He is a very busy man.

The Name's Been Changed....

Why the name change of the zine? The Chronicles of Kehei're was the name I chose for my fantasy game before I was ever exposed to A&E. When Gary and I wrote our first zine, we took its name for lack of anything better. But now there are a number of zines with similar names that have been in A&E longer than Kehei're (Calacire, The Colgar Chronicles), and we don't want to create confusion.

The Marco Polo Explorers Club is the place where my Variet Daredevils game starts. The PCs are hired by a rich explorers club for fact-finding missions, so that millionaires, senators and distinguished persons can present the information as their own. So far no PCs have objected to this injustice; that is for adventures to come.

CORRECTIONS ON A&E 88 ARTICLE: There are two problems with the initial reaction test. First, it is rolled on D20, not D100 or D10. Second, all the modifiers should be reversed: i.e. those with pluses should have minuses and vice versa. The way it stands now, the more threatening and rude a party is, the more they are liked. Hmm, in its present form it might be useful for a satirical adventure.

ABYSS REVIEW: Shortly after our first article we received a review copy of Abyss from Dave Nalle. This was our first exposure to Abyss, and we were impressed enough to subscribe and order a number of back issues. Abyss is a digest-sized bimonthly journal, with over 20 issues. It just expanded to 27 pages. Contents include reviews of recently published books and games, articles on generic gaming concepts and principles, fiction and an occasional scenario. The articles vary in quality but are generally very well written.

All in all, Abyss is an excellent publication, full of many useful and interesting ideas. Sample copies are \$1.50; subscriptions are \$7 for six issues. Write Abyss, 1402 21st St. NW, Wash., DC 20036.

THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR REVIEW

This is a TSR game for the 48K Apple with a Disk Drive. Better programs were on the market years ago. This program did nothing to advance Apple state of the art. I recommend against its purchase.--Gary Gehrke

This program has very slow maze graphics. It redraws the maze every time, even if you are spending a turn standing. The minotaur graphics are quite nice but not animated. The lady minotaur is quite cliché. It shows her facing the adventurer and waving a rolling pin as a weapon.

The goal of the game is to find the princess in the minotaur's maze and safely get out again. There is a witch who walks around and gives clues. It is very easy to figure out which clues are important and which are irrelevant. That is a very limited scope puzzle.

On the whole, this game is limited in the amount of enjoyment it offers. The maze is redesigned every time, yet the formula for solving the game is the same each time. This game is not very game-value effective. After about four hours, we had the game down cold. Yet with a game like WIZARDRY, we played for hundreds of hours for only a few more dollars.

Finally I would like to point out that it is possible to get caught in a room or have situations where it is impossible to finish the scenario. For example, our adventurer entered a room with four hidden doors, one in each wall. Monsters are attracted to the adventurer but cannot pass through secret doors. The adventurers cannot pass through a door a monster is standing behind. Therefore he is stuck, and the game must be turned off.

MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR FOR IBM PC

This is a very well done simulation of a Cessna 182 with reasonable instrumentation. Its graphics are well done and move smoothly. The program has extensive abilities to simulate variable conditions like seasonal weather, cloud layers, wind speed, and turbulence, along with many others. Night flights can be simulated, and a number of airports are included in the simulation. The program includes a WWI dogfight scenario very similar to that included with the Apple program AZ-FS1, but the graphics for terrain and enemy planes are much improved as well as the responsiveness of the plane. (The improved version of this flight simulator for the Apple will be out shortly.)//This program requires an IBM PC with 64K and a disk drive. It uses the keyboard only; no joystick is required.

LOOSE BITS--OUR SUGGESTION SECTION

We enjoy playing ILLUMINATI by Steve Jackson, but find it difficult because of the size of the paper money. These little slips of legal tender are so small that if a player sneezes, they fly everywhere. To solve this problem, we decouped the money onto poker chips. The players seem to like this method because it makes the money more manageable. If the players want, they can declare secret finance rules and hide the amount of money they have by turning the chips over, thus hiding the value. Blank chips can also be added to the players' piles, making it impossible to know how much anyone has. The chips also give a satisfying clink when money is exchanged or arranged, which really adds to the game.

Not long ago, I was playing a 1st level Anti-Paladin who had successfully fooled the party into thinking he was a 3rd level Neutral/Good Thief/Mage. I was just about to lead the party to its doom when a spectator looked over my shoulder and yelled, "You're playing a Chaotic/Evil? I thought you only played Lawful/Goods!" (I have a reputation for playing Lawful/Goods and was using it.)

Of course my plan was ruined, and the adventure lost much of its enjoyment. Though I do not use alignment in my system, I feel there is a need for privacy as to character information. For that reason, I have had cover sheets printed and given one to each player to put over the character sheet.

The cover sheet does more than merely cover the player's information. I also use it as a billboard for my philosophies concerning gaming. When a player is not roleplaying his character, a subtle suggestion to read the cover sheet is all that is needed. It is a good deterrent to GM/player arguments.

My cover sheet reads as follows:

"A hero is not a creature of random impulse who is one minute a knight in shining armor and the next skulking villain. Every person has in some sense a behavior-defining moral code from which he will not deviate. This code could be the ethical system the person was raised with, the moral code he adopted from someone he admired, or an oath or code of honor he swore to uphold. It is impossible for a character to have no moral standards, but it is possible for him to have socially defiant standards. Whatever a character's standards might be, it is good roleplaying that he follow these standards in all applicable situations.

"Note that the code should not be designed by the player to arbitrarily restrict his character's action but should instead result in more interesting characters with consistent and playable personalities. No 'real' penalties are attached to disregarding a character's code, just as no 'real' rewards are given for abiding by it. Remember that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. The character is responsible for his actions and their consequences. The main prize of following the code of your choice is increased enjoyment of play. Of course, gamemasters do tend to be more merciful to consistent, well fleshed-out characters, and perhaps are rougher on ones who don't get into the proper spirit of the game. Please keep in mind that disturbing the gamemaster is not conducive to a character's development or longevity."

(This message was inspired by DAREDEVILS by Bob Charrette and Paul Hume. In fact, the start of each paragraph was taken from page 20 of their rules.)

Gems and jewels are often a way that characters carry around a great deal of wealth without too much space or weight. A talk with a local gemologist revealed that this is not a good idea. She described the system used to determine the value of gems in terms of their hardness, brittleness and cleavage. Hardness measures how hard it is to scratch the gem. It is not true that harder gems may scratch softer ones and remain unharmed. Any gem will scratch any other gem. Brittleness measures whether a gem will shatter if a blow hits it. Cleavage rates the gem's grain pattern (rather like wood) and whether it has weak atom bonding.

If a character walks around with a bag of gems, the jiggling of the bag may reduce his gems to dust and gravel. How about having a blow hit the bag of gems or have the character find a gem so weak that the slightest touch will shatter it?

When I play in a game that has alignment and I play a Chaotic, I occasionally have trouble thinking of random things to do. To solve this problem, I picked up some alignment dice from the RPGA booth last Gencon. These are two six-sided dice. One says Lawful, Chaotic, Neutral; the other says Good, Evil and Neutral. They were originally used to roll alignment like you roll the other D&D stats. But I use them to determine the nature of my next Chaotic action.

STRIKE RANK

This is an alternative system to determine which phase the character reacts in, within the detailed action time of the Daredevils system. The character's reaction phase is determined by a D10 roll as modified by the following factors.

Modifiers

Speed Group 1	+1	Each day haven't eaten	+1
Health Group 1	+1	Each day haven't slept	+1
Down 1/2 HP	+1	Difficult Terrain	+1
Down 3/4 HP	+1	Rough Terrain	+2
Bulletproof Vest	+1	Very Rough Terrain	+3

Bonuses

Speed Group 3	-1	Health Group 3	-1
Speed Group 4	-2	Health Group 4+	-2
Speed Group 5	-3	Surprised Opponent	-2

The die roll plus modifications = the detailed action phase on which the character may do his action. If two characters get the same phase, the one with the highest speed goes first. If both have the same speed, they dice off.

Scores of 0 or -1 go first. Scores of 10+ go last. Characters with scores of -2 or -3 can take one action immediately or roll 2D10 and do two actions, one at each of the phases determined by the roll, unmodified by modifiers or bonuses. If he rolls the same number on both dice, he gets two actions that phase. Characters with scores of -4 or better get the same as for -2 and an immediate action.

This system is designed for use with a mechanical counter or a pegboard, for GMs like me who get so engrossed in combat that they forget what phase it is.

THE MURDERED MASTER PAGE #6

by George Phillis, 1225 Island Dr. #204, Ann Arbor, MI 48105; (313) 995-4126
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FIRE IN THE MORNING--part six

Pam probed Cameron's defenses. There was a psi structure, massively charged, around his head. It felt mechanical in nature. (As you see,) he said, (I had a psi amplifier implanted in my scalp. It leaves me with all the flexibility of my own mind and enormously more power. Indeed I am stronger than any unaided human psi, and I never tire.)

(Is that all?) she sniffed. (My more serious opponents thought humans with the talent were all fragile wallflowers.)

(And they were right, at least about you, little girl.) He followed with a vicious series of probes and blasts, trying to drive a wedge into her shields. She countered hard.

They found themselves on the same channel, locked face to face. Pam drove in against him, finding it like climbing uphill into a fierce gale. She could barely push ahead against his resistance. She could beat him this way, she concluded, but doing it would leave her rather thoroughly drained.

She dropped back and let him work over her screens. The demand on her strength wasn't all that impressive. The difficulty was that his gadget might let him keep up his attacks indefinitely, while her own strength was very definitely finite. It was time for more radical measures. His screens did have flaws, if largely on bands that she didn't want to use. Those approaches did avoid having to take him on directly.

She picked the least noxious band and attacked. Her own psi-bolts struck home, followed by bursts of color. Cameron drew on chaos for his defense. She pushed through it. There were a few moments of confusion inside Cameron's mind. Then she leaned back and took a deep breath.

"So much for him," she said to Mumford. "He talked a good line but his toy didn't help him much."

"Right," he answered. "You don't look so well off yourself."

"Me? I'm fine." Then she noticed she was bathed in sweat and was shaking as though she had downed a whole pot of her father's Turkish coffee in a single gulp. To use the more exotic psi bands, she had paid a price. "But I wouldn't complain if you could dig up some lemonade--and maybe a towel."

Mumford returned to find her on the yacht's bridge. Cameron was handcuffed to an acceleration couch. To Mumford's surprise, he was awake and arguing with Pam.

"Cameron," she snapped, "If I were as nasty as you, I'd throw you out the airlock. Without a pressure suit. If you break the holds I put on you so we have to go one-on-one again, I may do it anyway."

"Pam?" asked Mumford. "I thought he was knocked out."

"I blocked his gadget--and tied him up. It's easier to work on his memories while he's conscious. Note I said easier, not easy." (His shields are full of holes. I don't want him to know that I can get through them.)

(Is it that hard to fly his ship?)

(The controls come with built-in combination locks on them. Start talking. He'll hear me working, and I don't want him to know what I'm doing. Make small talk and prompt me with answers--I'll be too busy to notice what we're saying. Oh, And Mumford, I don't want to notice that I just agreed to one of your more exotic romantic propositions.) She followed with the feel of a grin.

(Your technical level of chastity,) he answered, (for whatever that means to a good telepath, shall remain unblemished. But aren't those the weapons banks?)

(First things first. As I may be about to get killed, I've opened up an escape pod for you. I suggest not landing on Naseby if I don't make it.)

(Get killed? Cameron's a master pilot. With his memories, how can we crash land?)

(We aren't landing. The other side shoots back. Hard.)

(Pam, not that I don't trust you, but what is going on? What other side? Why not just dump it in the lap of the Naseby government? That's why people have governments, after all. I'm part of one now. I found out. They exist so people whose parents happen to stick them with more courage and honesty than is good for health and long life don't have to play vigilante.)

"Mumford," she asked, "do you know what a Nuzeem is?"

"A what?"

"An exceedingly nasty, intelligent, psi-using plant."

"A telepathic tomato? No, never."

"Miss Opalin," intruded Cameron, "they are a state secret. Besides, we convinced them that their war is over."

"Cameron, no one bothered to tell the grove on Naseby. No one knew there was a grove on Naseby. They think that we are the Others. They are about to seed, which will doom Naseby. I might have persuaded them to stop if you hadn't stunned me."

"Of course I stunned you," he murmured. "You've made quite enough trouble. And why should you get credit for contacting the Nuzeem here? I'd done it first, anyway. Besides, any good deeds you did might make it harder for me to get approval for your rehabilitation."

"What the Nuzeem told you can't be trusted. Your attack on me probably convinced them that we are their enemy." Her anger showed in her voice. "If I move quickly, we can still stop them."

"Pam, old girl," asked Mumford, "why not just have the Naseby Space Navy spray them with weed killer until they learn respect?"

"Because," answered Cameron, "if they're hostile, which they're not, and if the NSN attacks them, which it won't, the NSN will lose. Even a few Nuzeem can swamp the psi screens on a normal warship."

"Besides, the Nuzeem probably control Naseby," Pam said. "They're strong enough. And it would explain Kronor's finances. Now, hush. The Nuzeem are rational beings. I can't just kill them without trying to reason with them."

Pam bent her head and pressed her fingertips against a control console. Mumford felt no hint of psionic activity. Then she began to talk under her breath. Her face shifted from a tired smile to a look of horror. "No!" she whispered. "No!" She saw something that he couldn't. She couldn't reach the planet, he thought, not through the ship's screens. He could feel the strain on her but felt no sign of what she was straining against.

She snapped back from the console. Mumford was convinced that she had just broken a link to another mind, but there hadn't been one.

"Cameron." Her voice froze the air. "While you had me tied down, they went to seed. They bounced my message back in my face."

"Mumford," begged Cameron, "can't you see she's lying? We're on a TPC cruiser, behind the toughest psi screens in the Confederation. How could she had gotten down to the surface?"

"You call that junk a screen generator?" she snapped, then told Mumford (Because one of my less human friends taught me how to use psi bands the TPC doesn't know about. Here, I'll lead you to one.) She did. Mumford turned pale.

(That stuff. Not again, please. It can't be good for old men like me.)

(It's just as bad for growing young girls,) she countered. (But sometimes you don't get nice choices.)

THE LEAST KEY OF SCLONON #3

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COMMENTS ON #100

An excellent issue overall (as might be expected)

SELF: The separation between the meta-rules for character creation and my own rules for character creation should have been more distinct.

SAPIENZA: Thank you for the Arachnidae write-ups. I have enjoyed them very much. In addition, I feel they support the argument that a high power campaign can be fun while maintaining play balance in both the short and long term.

GILHAM: I agree that a technomagical revolution is inevitable given certain assumptions about the nature and availability of magic. Note that this does not preclude an interesting FRP campaign. In one high power campaign in which I had a character, various political factions were competing for power and eventual world domination. Outright war was not going on, but the adventurers were the front line in an ongoing cold war. This was encouraged by the gods who headed the largest factions because it led to the development of powerful individuals who would be useful when war did break out. Though not part of formal military forces, the characters had access to "security"-restricted spells such as fireball.

GILHAM (again): More fiction. Please!

MAHLER: Thank you for the info on aging. This is the sort of thing that makes A&E worth reading.

ELLWOOD: I think the strand-end winds on your strand world may not be as severe as you hypothesize. The Negative-Gravity zone will tend to siphon atmosphere away from the strand as it diffuses across the first Zero-G boundary. This wind will make for a very rapid decrease in atmospheric pressure with increasing altitude. The altitude at which strand atmosphere and "space" atmosphere are in equilibrium should be relatively low, limiting the windstorm to immediate surface area only. Also note that air power may not be as powerful as you suggest. Dropping rocks from the Zero-G zone will require giving them enough velocity to get through the wind and G force in the Negative-G zone. Anyhow, I like the basic idea and admire the courage it takes to try something this unusual. Good luck!

STUKEY: I like most of your suggested superpowers for CHAMPIONS. They have led me to an interesting insight on a broad class of powers that involve separation of the superhero into multiple parts. Pets, vehicles, astral travel, clair-senses, fugue, and even the focus disadvantage all involve a division of the superhero into multiple parts, yet each uses a unique mechanism for expressing the effects of separation. While I can see some advantages to having different mechanisms for similar powers, I would prefer a consistent approach to superhero subdivision. I haven't been able to come up with a rule or set of rules to handle this, but my thoughts have led me to develop a new power, which I call Multi-Mind.

MULTI-MIND: The superhero can separate his consciousness into two or more independent consciousnesses. Each shares the superhero's common personality and is aware of the thoughts and actions of the others. Each "mind" acts independently on each phase in which the superhero has an action, but these actions may not exceed the physical capabilities of the hero's body.

For example, a triple mind could use radio sense to scan for transmissions while firing a gun with each hand at separate targets. He could not move more than once in a phase or strike more than two blows (two hands - or one hand and one foot). This power does permit a full move followed by a blow in the same phase. If the hero is attacked by EGO powers, each mind must be overcome separately. A two-mind Multi-mind costs 25, with each additional mind costing 5.

Another inconsistency in CHAMPIONS which I find annoying is the difference in flight power when purchased for heroes and for vehicles. While vehicles are required to purchase acceleration and deceleration, heroes are allowed to reach their max flight speed in a single phase. The same criticism can be applied to super-running. I suggest that some form of the vehicle movement powers be used to purchase ground, water and air movement speed/acceleration for heroes in place of the current flight, super-running, and super-swimming powers.

COMMENTS ON #101

FRASER: I liked Wode's tale and am looking forward to more.

SAPIENZA: I agree with your positive review of DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN and of Robin Wood's artwork in it. My liking of the artwork may affect my opinion of the game. I liked it so much I bought three of the originals at the Constellation art show.

TURNER: I loved "Along a Winding Road." I think it is the best fiction I've seen in A&E and the best short fiction I have seen anywhere in the past few years.

GILLESPIE: Thank you for your essay on Nordic dwarves. I have always been interested in Norse mythology, and your research has given me a number of good ideas for an RQ dwarf cult which I have been attempting to write for many months. If I ever get it to a point where I am satisfied, I may include it in a LKoS.

WARING: I enjoyed your writeup of the vampire hunt. An interesting adventure and a very well written writeup.

HEIN, HEIN, IVES, HEYDT & HEYDT: RAEBNC.

This LkoS has a number of small essays instead of one big one.

YO-YOS

First the promised discussion of yo-yos. Not the toy made from wood and string but a magical construct that--like all good yo-yos--returns whence it came. The simplest form of yo-yo is a wish with a wording like the following: "I wish that if I die during the coming battle, my body and all my possessions thereon be teleported immediately and safely to the courtyard to the temple of XXX in the city of YYY." Previous arrangements would have been made for this temple to do a Raise.

In most campaigns, yo-yos will not be a standard issue item for PCs, although they may become available by divine gift or the like. Powerful NPCs may have yo-yos. This is a nice mechanism for providing evil villain continuity. (He may lose the fight but can return for revenge or to recoup lost possessions.)

In a high power campaign, yo-yos are a major item for PC investment. This requires the GM to determine the duration of yo-yos based on various sorts of wish, miracle, or whatever--and the cost of the complex wordings needed to deal with all the various circumstances that can endanger an adventurer. The wording of yo-yos could constitute an important Sage specialty.

I must admit that this idea is not mine. It was originated by a friend (David Fournier) in a VD&D campaign that ran in E. Lansing 76-81.

SOUL

I was contemplating the concept of soul-draining the other day and trying to decide how to apply it to RQ. The obvious entity to use for soul is POW, but I find myself dissatisfied with the possibility of one person having 10* the "soul" of another (POW ranges 2-21). It occurred to me that MAX POW would make a better candidate. It is uniform among each species and has a definite link to the character's psychic make-up.

Let us take the example of a Wraith that drains 3 points of Soul if it hits and overcomes Power. If it hits a human with POW 16 and overcomes POW, then there is no change in his/her current abilities. The chance of a POW increase has been reduced. It is now 10% $[(18-16)*5]$ instead of 25% $[(21-16)*5]$. If the Wraith drains another 3 points of Soul, the character's POW will be reduced to 15 and cannot be increased until the Soul is restored. The increase of a Rune Priest's MAX POW to 25 (for POW increase purposes) fits in nicely with this, since it makes sense for a god to increase the "soul" strength of a priest.

A NEW TYPE OF DIE ROLL

I would like to provide a new method of getting numbers from dice, along with a nomenclature to describe it. $\%L_n$ would mean that n -sided side should be rolled. Unlike $\%D_n$, however, when these dice are totalled, the smallest single die roll would be taken as the result. For example rolling two D6 for 2L6 yields a 2 and a 4. The result of the roll is a 2. $\%H_n$ calls for the largest roll to be taken as the result.

This type of roll is useful when a result should be kept within a certain range, but the GM wishes to tilt it in a particular direction. I once did a combat system in which increasing skill increased the number of dice rolled for damage with a weapon. This made those with greater skill do higher damage but kept the damage within the range natural to the size and form of weapon. For example, a broadsword would do 2L8 when used by someone unfamiliar with it, D8 with minimal experience or training, and 2H8 after a reasonable degree of competence had been acquired. Additional skill would increase the damage roll to 3H8 or more.

DRAGONS

I am going to share some info on how I run dragons in the hope that some of you might find them interesting/useful. The basic idea comes from the fact that the Chinese have traditionally revered the five-toed dragon as a symbol for the Emperor, reserved for his personal use. Lesser dragons have fewer toes.

I have converted this to a system in which dragons increase in size logarithmically as they age. At certain specific ages, a dragon will moult. As new skin grows, a new toe/claw grows on each leg. The number of toes at each age and approximate size are:

Birth	1 toe	3m	100 years	4 toes	12 m
1 year	2 toes	6m	1000 years	5 toes	15 m
20 years	3 toes	9m	10,000 years	6 toes	18 m

TERRA FERRETAE 7 29/12/83

by Robert Saunders; retyped by Lee, as the photostenciler is unavailable due to the Christmas break. (Combining Xmas and a Scottish New Year near-paralyzes this part of the world.) Anyway, I'm still to be found at 4 Viewforth, Edinburgh, UK.

This is just to be a brief commentzine, as I have little time to spare on anything right now, even the important things in life, such as writing for A&E. My RQ/C&S players are expecting vastly interesting, wonderfully exciting, and lucrative activities in the new year, and who am I to deny them?

Other interesting things FRPwise: my continuing interest in England ca 1086; a wild, wacky and zany TRAV campaign GMed by Harry (our computer, Cliva, makes Eddie seem sane); and CoC is still stumbling along. Incidentally, if anyone thought the writeup in TF5 (still to see print) was any good, part two will be a long time, as the world-famous Peter Worthington has lost his notes (as well as his wits).

Anyway, on to:

FERRET MUMBLES: Comments on #101

HEYDT: Re Asterix: I think the film was called "Asterix the Gaul" (wow!). As far as I remember, it was a pretty basic plot involving the capture of the Druid by the Romans, who wanted the Magic Potion. Beyond that (which may in part be in error), all I can remember is that the film appeared to have done some mileage, judging by the stretched soundtrack. The local filmhouse is showing a film entitled "The 12 Tasks of Asterix" (1975), which I'm intending to view.//I'm actually not so much an Asterix fan as a TINTIN fan.

GILHAM: Thanks for the references. My planned SF gaming (as a GM) is now on indefinite hold, due to other gaming commitments, though I do hope to get it under way later in 1984.

DA SILVA: Wow! Someone liked the library stuff! Wasn't it you that wrote? Hmm, I've lost the letter. Anyway it was nice to hear from you.//SR20? Yaargh!

HEIN: Thanks for devoting so much time at the typewriter. It all looks pretty ace. (I'm looking at your PC background stuff.) I've found the sort of skills listed are rather neglected by the players, as they aren't easily acquired during an average day's getting into trouble and out again in my world. I've been thinking along the same lines for some time now, but I've been too lazy.

ROBERTSON: I used Dock leaves for nettle stings.//Peter never likes anything except alcohol.

LARTER: Re shops in Edinburgh: the Toytub isn't as good as it was unless it's changed recently.//I have been deputized to manufacture a tape for you; if you haven't gotten it by now, phone Harry. It came as a great shock to discover you had such appalling taste as to like POOKIESNACKENTHINGIEBURGER. You may have guessed this is a subject me and Harry differ on.

GILLESPIE: It's good to see you're writing for A&E again. I always enjoyed your zines. Are you back reasonably permanently? I may have written to you regarding your FRP, as I have a brother who was once very fond of sagas. Sounds good in any case.

ROBERTSON (again): Re juniper berries: what better justification can there be for my consumption of GIN? It also feels good. Just you try frying onions in mustard oil, and you'll see (you won't afterwards) what else it's good for.

VÄRDSHuset 'TVEHÖVDINGEN' or the third in a zine series from:
copyright John G Robillard, Flogstav. 41C
S-75263 Uppsala, Sweden

This Vårdshus is rather longer than the preceding two as Torbjörn has written up the run that begins the playtest scenario of my new system. But first, a few comments:

LEIF GOLD: Thanks for the info on protoplasm weight per volume. I always am converting from english measure (which I grew up with) to metric anyway so that's no problem. Just as with RPG, it isn't the system that matters, though of course folks over here don't believe that. That is a nice filk, too. What is the origin of that word?

NICK LARTER: Another fan of E.R.R. Eddison! Your Secretary class is a fine idea for those systems with classes, and for those systems with background instead. Secretaries would have non-royal/noble backgrounds (although their families might be noble), having been vowed to a church or sent away to bureaucrat training academies early in life. The power of the secretary comes from intelligence, curiosity, and finally, a closeness to the seats of power. Why does a Lord need a secretary? The Lord needs an echo to bounce ideas off, an echo who has no loyalty to any societal class and thus will not be horrified or disgusted by any of the dirty work asked of him/her. (When I speak of dirty work I don't mean, (only) baby-murdering or poison, I am speaking of actions which would draw shame onto the Lord, such as the destruction of an enemy by rumour rather than open battle.) This lack of loyalty to the ruling class will cause the Secretary to be that much more loyal to the Lord, the fortunes of both are so intertwined, indeed, that this loyalty must be mutual, unless, like the Vicar, the Lord rules by fear. I got carried away there, but it has been a long time since I had heard of Zimiamvia (my books were destroyed).

WILLIAM R. KEYES: A great deal of interesting material in your Realistic Roleplaying Rules. I assume you have read my meanderings on the ST/(HT/Wt) ratio in 101. You gave me a terrible shock with your 3R title, my rules system is called Robillards Regler för Rollspel Or Robillard's Rules for Rolegaming, which I thought looked and sounded so groovy. If you abbreviate your system as 3R then I'll take R.R.R. and everyone will be happy, except for Robinson. Otherwise, people won't have much trouble differentiating between the two because mine is much less complicated.

SYSTEM IDEAS: Which this issue will concentrate on how a character is started up in my system, as Torbjörn's write-up might benefit from such an explanation. The first thing that the player does is to divide 50 'characteristic points' between the seven characteristics: baseFatigue (bF), Strength (ST), Agility (AG), Dexterity (DX), Alertness (AL), Intelligence (IN), and ArcanePotential (AP). All of these are straight forward except, perhaps, AP, but one can think of it as POW. Tobbe's character looks like this:

bF 6 ST 8 AG 8 DX 6 AL 6 IN 13 AP 3

The next step is to choose height and weight, for this fellow 162 cm and 60 kg. This gives Tor Dunham (the character's name) a Ht/Wt ratio of 2.7. Now Tobbe figures the ST/(Ht/Wt) for each ST, from 8 down to 1. This ratio is added to the damage roll when the character makes an 'all-out attack'. Using the ~~fig~~ character's height, Tobbe then finds the gait speeds to be used. Tor will walk at 1 or 2 meters/sec, run at 5 or 6 meters/sec, whoops, forgot jogging at 3 or 4 m/s, and lastly sprint at 7 to 12 m/s. These gait speeds are also differentiated by the

amount of fatigue which must be spent when using them.

I suppose a short bit on fatigue wouldn't hurt. All actions cost a certain amount of Fatigue points, the sum of these points is called the Fatigue Rate, FR. The FR is subtracted from bF during the 'combat' rounds. As long as the character has bF left, performance does not suffer. These subtracted points are called Fatigue Points or FP and may be 'rested' back at the rate of one per round in which the character takes no action resulting in further FP loss. If the character runs out of bF then any FP are subtracted from the other characteristics, one per characteristic. Example: Tor Dunham expends 12 FP and looks like this, bF 0 ST 7 AG 7 DX 5 AL 5 IN 12 AP 2. If he had expended 13 FP then his ST would have equaled 6 (one counts off in a circle). When resting this sort of FP the rate is thought of as one per characteristic per round, so one round of resting will give Tor back his beginning characteristics except for bF, which will equal 1. Whenever the character has rested, even if only for a second (hmm, I have neglected to say that there are five seconds to the round) then FP are subtracted starting from bF again.

After that little digression we can go on with choosing skills for the new character. All skills are ranked from one to ten, and when a character exercises a skill then the skill base (characteristics in a mathematical expression) is added to the skill rank and the player or the GM tries to roll equal to or under that total on 3D6. Tor was given Literacy 4, Mech 2 (construction engines), Sword 4 (medium, Middle, stab, slash), First Aid 1, and Medium shield (short, Light) 3. AS an example of skill use we can take combat. Tor's sword is based on $AG+(DX/2)$ and he gets 0 for skill base adj. in that class (med Mid) so his skillbase=11. If he attacks an actively defending opponent then the final chance to hit depends on the other character's rank: The formula is skillbase + attacker's rank - defender's rank. All action skills are presumed to have some degree of difficulty, for instance, a lock might have a rank of 7, this 7 being subtracted from the lockpickers skillbase+rank in picking (that sort of) locks. For skills in which the character has Rank 0 the roll is assumed to be a saving roll and, therefore I might not allow certain skills to be attempted.

Critical hits and fumbles are handled by watching for triples on the dice. If the triple rolled is less than or equal to the number necessary for success then one has a critical hit, otherwise one has just fumbled. The total of the triple dice is cross-referenced with the total of the Wound Roll (a 2D6 rolled at the same time as the skill roll, I will detail the wound system in the next Vårdshus) on a chart in order to find out what happened.

Enough of this confusion. Now for a little background information on the Okian (swedish pronunciation- ookian) Empire, in which the play test scenario takes place.

THE EASTERN SHORE of the Middle Sea is a belt of land about 360 miles long by 40 to 70 miles wide. In the north it is bounded by the Flat River delta, where lies the town of Ok, famed for its canal and the long line of conquerors who have cursed (blessed?) the Eastern Shore. To the south lies the Estelina River, at its mouth is that ancient city of merchants, Adamb, here the eastern trade route meets the Middle Sea, which stretches more than a thousand miles westward. On the east the subtropical plain ends at the base of the Escarpment, a

steep slope rising up to the temperate High Plains. The Escarpment turns back away to the east in the south of the Shore, where the Estelina runs. The High Plains rise gently to more than a mile above the Middle Sea, far to the west in Shimbasi, where the Flat River, flowing northwest, from its source in the High Valley, has cut an impassable gorge one thousand feet deep. In the northeast lies Trahaqad, there the eastern trade route crosses the westward-turning Flat River and disappears into the Waste. Below the southern edge of the High Plains, which curves in a great bow of steep hills and cliffs from the docks of Zwit (the transfer point at the head of navigation on the Estelina) to the High Valley, lie the forests of Nor and Upland, where the short men live. It is in Upland that Military Camp 2 was founded at the junction of the Old Road to Nor and the Other Way. The Other Way was a detour built to take the profits of the trade route away from the Prince of Minne Anna, a town on the High Plains. That was many years ago, when the Emperor Party Okian hadn't conquered the High Plains. Now, when there has been peace for many years and the trade route has long since returned to its ancient path, MC 2 has become a sleepy little village. The Commander, a man named Bowen, has long since stopped receiving funds from the Imperial Treasury, and therefore cannot patrol his District as well as he would like to. He has been depressed for many years, watching the respect for the Empire sink down to where his appearance brings a tip of the hat and a smile from all but his own household. But now, at the arrival of the half-yearly orderings, he is suddenly changed. The old emperor, the worthless son of the conquering Party, has decided to abdicate in favor of his heir. A new wind blows through Military Camp 2.

THIS IS THE story of Tor Dunham, raised by his father the master-builder in Military Camp 2. Copyright Torbjörn Ragnesjö Fyrising. 12A S-752 22, Uppsala Swed.

I

I wake up with a burning headache and the taste of blood in my mouth. "What is this? Where am I?", I wonder. Suddenly I realize my legs are halfway down in a shallow creek. I drag myself up on my knees realizing I'm in bad shape. I still have my sword and knife, but my shield is missing, and my purse is open with a few coins gone.

A drop of blood landing on my nose stops me from thinking and starts me acting. I wash my head and face in the creek, brush the worst dirt from my clothes and start to climb the slope I must have fallen down. On the way up I find some silver pennies I had obviously lost when falling down to the creek, and further up I also find my shield. When I get close to the top of the slope I hear voices, and I sneak up and peek towards the road I and my father and my two best friends, the weapons master and the adept of the One, had been traveling on. What I see are two of the Little People, stooping over the bodies of my people. One of them is armed and he suddenly spots me, so I jump up with my sword unsheathed, screaming.

"What are you doing?!"

"Take it easy", he says. "We've sent for help"

"What's happened," I ask, knowing it's out of the question that any of the Little People could or would have done this. (GM's note: Why did he jump out with his sword, then? Answer: He didn't know it then).

"These poor people have obviously been attacked and slain, and on my route, too!" the same shortie cries out in despair. He and the other one are a road patrol. (Probably out looking for a lost cow, GM).

I sheathe my sword and walk quickly to my father, and the shortie asks, "I suppose you were with these people, and if so you are lucky to be alive. Were they close to you?"

"This is my father," I say with tears in my throat, pointing at him. "And the others were my best friends."

"Gee, that's too bad," he says, looking at the ground. "I can't understand who could have done this. Things like this have not happened for many a year in Noelland." (Noelland is the part of Upland occupied by the Noel clan, GM)

"Neither can I," I say, my tears falling. I examine what belongings are still left. The mule and cart are still here, but my father has been robbed of all his belongings, including the Imperial pass and the letter of credit. I wouldn't know what the others had, except for weaponsmaster Daniel's weapons, which are gone. I find only a knife, I will keep it as a memory. In the cart only the clothes chest and the two tents are left.

Since I know that the Little People get uneasy with dead people that are not buried, (because they're afraid they might walk again), I agree to let them put the bodies in the cart. I had to put the Adept's golem there, they wouldn't touch it.

On the way back to Noels Mill, sitting there on the cart, I cannot help starting to think about my life, which I up till now thought was going pretty well, in spite of my mother dying when giving me birth. I had spent all my life back in military camp 2. Most of the time I spent with my dear friend Daniel, who had taught me everything I knew of swordplay. When I think of it, I must have spent more time learning that, than with my father learning the art of building. Now I don't know whether I should regret that or not. I have studied the literary arts, though, as much as swordplay, so I guess my father was kind of content with me anyway, considering I was growing up in a camp with no friends of my own age, and in a man's world. I wonder what I am to do now, with no close friends or kindred in life.

Near Noels Mill, a small village of the little people, we meet a group of them, telling us they are going to track down the people that had done the murder, and would come back and report as soon as they knew anything. When we enter the village lots of the little people walk along with us to the inn, talking about the fearful thing that had happened, and what I was to do with the bodies. We go into the inn and I have a chat with the innkeeper about what to do.

"I'm worried about the people", he says, "because they are worried you might not bury your folk before night, and I don't know what they might do if you don't."

"I'd like to get them back to military camp 2 to bury them where they belong," I say, "Do you think that could be arranged?"

"Is that a custom among you Big People? We have a nice cemetery here, where we bury our people."

"No, it's not a custom. I just feel like it right now."

"Your only chance of doing it would be to start driving right now, because you cannot keep them above ground in the village over night. Also, that's a three day drive, you know. They would smell pretty bad"

"I guess you are right," I say. "Do you have a mound in a clearing where I can bury them?"

He looks happy I've decided to bury them and thinks for awhile.

"I know. Come with me."

We leave the inn and cross the stream at the mill. There is a

slope in the forest on the other side.

"Is this good enough?" he asks.

"Yes"

The innkeeper sees that the graves are dug. I must set the golem in with the adept. After I say a few words they fill in the graves and set white stones on them, four in a row instead of the usual three, because we are so much taller than they are. Their names are cut into the lower face of the head stone (I ask that my father have two stones at his head and they are kind enough to find another one). As the last step, an old crone swings a basket over the graves. To prevent them from rising again, I am told. By this time I begin to feel dizzy, so the innkeeper and I go back to the inn, and I manage to fall down in a bed.

When I wake up, three days later, the commander of MC2 is standing beside the bed.

"Hello, kid," he says. "You're lucky to be alive. We haven't found any trails."

"You have no idea who could have done it?" I ask. He looks around at the little woman who has been attending me, and points at the door. She immediately leaves the room, and he says:

"I have never said this. The thought has not even occurred to me, but it is an open secret that the Duke of Zwit, where your father was to relocate, is no friend of the Emperor or Imperial Servants. Officially, however, I haven't a clue." He pauses and comes closer. "But it would not surprise me if the Emperor did not already know what has happened here, the Imperial Eyes are sharp, nowadays."

"I understand," I say, although I don't, really.

"Here is a new pass for you, kid," he says. "The old one is not valid because of the dead man's thumbprint" (my father, I think to myself) "This gives you the protection of the Emperor, as did your other, but now you have no rank, you are just a commoner, not an Imperial servant. The protection of the emperor does not matter to all people, but at least it matters to those who are still faithful to him. I cannot give you a new letter of credit, but I'll give you 200 silver pennies as a gift from me, in honor of your father's friendship."

"What do you think I should do now?"

"I recommend that you go to Zwit, because if you want to get somewhere in life, that is where to start. And it is in Zwit that you will find your father's murderers."

"Could you give me an escort there?" I ask, afraid of further attempts on my life.

"I could let one man escort you as far as Great Meeting, but no further, I want to sweep the countryside, just in case it was bandits after all."

"I see. I think I'll cut my hair short and get some other clothes as well, so that I'm not so easily recognized."

"That's wise of you."

When I leave the inn the keeper says good luck, and I give him five pennies, I feel so rich with all this money. Outside, a crowd of the little people gives me a round of applause and I thank them, saying goodbye and asking them to remember me and all that has happened here.

END PART ONE. AND NOW the GM, who has to retype this and edit it (but just a little, as Torbjörn would like comments on his style), is going to change tenses on the writer, (and the readers), present tense is too hard on my brain.

Part II Tor Funham's Story

It took us three days to walk to Great Meeting, my escort, David, and I. Along the way we noticed that more people than was normal were armed. At the site of the ambush we looked around a little, but noted nothing of interest. (They failed saving rolls based on AL, GM). At one of the inns on the way I had an extra pocket sewn into my jacket, where I hid my pass. It is made cleverly enough to fool a quick search.

In Great Meeting, so-called because three roads meet there, David asked around after work for me, but found none. It was here that I saw green men for the first time, the traders and merchants of the Empire. After a day, David left, but not before offering to follow me to Estel Falls, the trading town westward towards Zwit.

"Good luck, boy," he said, "but don't try to earn your money gambling, you aren't good enough!" (One of the skills barred to saving rolls type of learning, GM). He was referring to one night when he and I had played dice, and he showed me some tricks to watch out for. "I won't," I yelled back. "Give my regards to Commander Bowen!"

I looked around for awhile, to see if anything special was going on, and I noticed a small mule train, guided by a greeny and two of the darker green men. (Goblins, sort of, GM)

"Good day," I said. "May I follow you on the way towards Zwit? My name is Staras, by the way." I had decided to take on an alias, as Staras Farmer, the farmhand. (He failed an intelligence roll, badly, so) I won't tell him that humans are never farmhands, at least not in the town he says he is from. GM)

"The road is free," answered the green man, looking at one of his servants, who nods back. "Yes, you may follow us, alright." (AP roll)

During the day I learned that he was on his way to Zwit, to sell pelts to his cousin, who in his turn ships them to Adamb, the capital far away west. He also tells me that Duke Parris is giving the green people a hard time in Zwit. I tell him a story about how I'm a farmer boy from Overup, a village at the edge of the High Plains, north of MC 2. I say that I used to live there with my mother, who was left alone by my father right before I was born. Later, a former soldier from MC 1 (This is one of the highly unlikely parts) courted her, and he gave me lessons in sword-play. My mother always refused to tell me about my father or his last name, so we took the name of Farmer.

That evening we arrived in Estel Falls, which is the biggest town I had ever seen. I'm sure there could be thousands of people there. The merchant told me that if I wanted to follow them further, he was going to continue at dawn the next morning.

"I'll probably show up," I said.

(Estel Falls is built beside the Estelina River, at the point where it cuts through the line of the Long Cliffs, the old border between Upland and the Duchy of Zwit. Now these two districts are numbered, Upland is District 6 and the Duchy is District 7. A ferry crosses the river above the Falls, on the other shore is Goblin Docks.) The town had three inns of quality, as far as I could see, but to begin with I wanted to look around the poorer sections a little. I went down to the river banks, to the more shabby quarters of town. I went into a dive, throwing two coppers onto the counter to order a beer. I noticed a man in green clothing staring at me, (A roll of O2 on D100 put the fellow

in just that bar, and I gave Tor a plus on his AL 6 because the man in green was so surprised to see him walk in. GM) but I took no further notice at that time. I heard somebody say, "Farmerr boyy" behind me, so I downed my beer, banged the tankard onto the bar and walked out, not wanting to condescend to an answer.

I went back to the better quarter and got myself a bed for the night at one of the better inns. While standing downstairs, I noticed the man in green clothing (Another AL roll passed, GM) watching me through the street portal. I turned to one of the men behind the bar:

"Do you recognize the man looking in through the door right now?"

"No I don't."

"Are you sure?" I said, holding up a silver penny.

"I can't know everybody in this town," he said, irritated. "Big spender," he added, muttering under his breath. When I turned to the door again the man was gone. I decided to move to another inn, and when I told the innkeeper he gave me back my penny. I went to the new inn after dark, hoping that the greenclothed man wouldn't see me. (Here is a failed AL roll. GM)

Up in the room by myself, I decided to take precautions. I put most of my money in a pocket in my belt. Ten pennies I put in one of my socks, to have there from then on and 25 pennies I put in my purse, for expenses and a could-be robber to be satisfied with. I thought about the greenclothed man, 'I hope he is not one of Duke Parris' men who has recognized me for who I am. I'd better tell the merchant who I really am. I have to trust someone, and I can show him my pass proving I'm under the protection of the Emperor.' And then I fell asleep. (Here followed several failed AL rolls. GM)

END PART TWO. The GM will now say a few parting words.

Well, that was long. Hopefully not boring though. Further parts will be rather shorter. As I was struggling through the typing of it, I remembered something I wanted to ask:

LEE GOLD: We are seeing Shogun on the television over here, without the commercials, and in the latest episode (the second) a hired killer tries to cut Anjin-san into halves. Is (was) that a Min-ja? He was said to be a member of the Amida Tong, but I thought Tongs were chinese family-gangs. And Helena wondered why he had a cloth over the under part of his face, to cover his teeth from reflecting light? That last is my guess, as I breathe through my mouth when I exert myself. Lastly I wonder how good a representation the series is.

HEJ DÅ ADJ VI SES eller som Trazan säger 'GOD BAJJS' JGR

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First introduction of myself and the zine. The reason for the #3 is that there were two earlier editions in TWH several years ago (April 78 but who's counting) and I see no reason to give up a good title. I'm a 26 year old computer programmer at Westinghouse Defense. Started playing D&D in the original version in 1975 and have been playing RPGs ever since. My wife Melinda is also a gamer and will be making occasional appearances in this zine as well. There is also a baby Gwendolyn Nissa Carson born Jan. 19. That also means that this will be somewhat of an irregular zine but I hope to have an issue at least every third month. This zine will be used mainly to discuss system design and rule ideas with some comments.

First topic will be a discussion of stat generation. The three main methods of generating characteristics are: pseudo-bell curve (D&D,RQ), flat curve (old C&S,EPT), and assigned points (new C&S,most superhero games). I prefer method 1 as most abilities in reality tend to follow a bell curve. There is a problem with all the games that I know of in that they leave little or no room for subhuman stats. This is possibly ok with mental stats as animal "IQ" is not the same as human intelligence. However with strength or dexterity stats it makes no sense as the strength or speed of an animal is directly comparable to a human. My possible solution is to roll 3D10 for each stat and then add 84 for a human. This gives an average of 100.5 for stats with min 87, max 114. Also to allow for the really extreme cases I have a D6 rolled if one of the endpoints is rolled; 1-3 the stat stays the same, 4-6 the stat goes up or down 1 depending on which endpoint you are at and you roll again so there is no theoretical limit on a score. Other races can use different adds to account for higher or lower averages for a given stat. For something with really different averages (ex. mice,giants) a different dice range can also be used to widen or narrow the range.

The second topic is related in that it is a discussion of what stats to use. The basic characteristics (stats) consist of 6 physical, 3 mental, 2 appearance, 4 computed, and aptitudes.

The physical stats are STREngth, SIZE and BUIld, DEXterity (fine dexterity), AGIility (gross dexterity), REAction time, and HEALth.

The mental stats are INTelligence, WISdom, and WILLpower.

The appearance stats are APPEARance, and VOIce.

The computed stats are CHARisma, CONstitution, HEIght, and WEIght. CHARisma is based on APPEARance, VOIce, INTelligence, WISdom, and general impressivness (DM's discretion and situation specific). CON is based on HEA, and WIL. HEI, and WEI are based on SIZ, and BUI

The aptitudes are intuition, imagination (mental flexibility), perception, mechanical, logical, musical, military, self presentation, stealth, knowledge (learning speed basically), physical, power. We are still adding to the aptitudes list. The way we are thinking of doing aptitudes is a roll for number of apts. and then rolls to see which ones. Multiple rolls of a given apt. would give multiple bonuses.

This system has not been playtested yet except the generation method using D&D stats.

These stats are the ones we thought were needed the most, and were inherent and hard for an individual that had them to change, without having too many stats to keep track of. They were selected from from a list of all the stats we could think of or had seen in any rules system. For the sake of discussion the full list is given next:

STREngth, DEXterity, AGIility, BUIld, SIZE, CONstitution, REAction time, PERception, PAIn level, HEALth, INTelligence, WISdom, GULLibility, WILLpower, ALIgment, CHARisma, INTuition, EMPathy, LUCK, POWER, WIT, IMAGination, BRAvery, ZEAL, LOYality, LEADership, SOCIAL status, VOIce, COMliness, SHAPeliness.

Any comments on any we missed, any that should be on the list of ones kept, or any on the list that should be removed.

Topic 3 FORTH I am learning to use this language on my home system (Atari 800, ValFORTH) and it looks weird but interesting. If any FORTH users out there would be interested in sending me any programs they have I would be grateful and try to return the favor when I learn the language and have the time to do some coding of my own.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Future topics will include a spell point clerical system, a klutz factor magic system, and skill based combat system.

Has anyone out there ever written a combat system that was not intended to be playable just accurate. I think that this would be a good starting point as it's usually easier to trim a system down as was done with the stats than add into it. Also this would be a start for a computerized system as then a large number of die rolls and calculation will not slow down play.

Does anyone play in or have under construction a SFPPG campaign that is not human centered? A friend of mine intends to start a variant Traveller game where not only is the dominant culture not human but the humans don't even have a homeworld (see Chaotic Kzin, A&E 102 for some background).

Do many people still play C&S. Other than the campaign I'm in I don't recall seeing much if any mention in recent A&Es. If you do I have developed a character record using this word processor that looks useful. If anybody wants a copy tell me and I'll send one to you.

COMMENTS ON 100:

LEE : Nyosaians sound like real good neighbors (for your worst enemy to have). Also I agree with you on the problem of large tables of slightly different whatever's rather than a method to calculate the effect for any reasonable variation. Did you know that Sapienza is going to buy a word processor soon, when he does are you going to let him pull a one man coup d'ezine?

HALSEY (AOF XXX): In your magic system it's easier to blast apart an iron door than unlock or destroy just the lock. It does require less control to destroy than to manipulate but it still seems a little off since there is no factor for size of target. Is there any difference between the difficulty of destroying an entire building compared to just the front door. I like the basic idea and it seems that between you and Scott there is a new class of magic system loose which will take as long to settle as spell point and klutz factor did (forever).

SAPIENZA (Golden Dragon #56): RAEBNC.

WIXTED & FRITZ (RTCS): Did the refrigerator die. How about the time required to free the weapon after a successful hit as opposed to just bouncing off the shield. I'd say that that should add at least one pulse or maybe a percentage of the total for the weapon. Impact weapons would have less of a loss of speed than edged in that regard.

MAHLER (Babyl-On #20): A useful table. The changes in the power structure when the old ruler dies make for a lot of scenarios. Hopefully you will contribute a little sooner next time (I don't have much ground to talk).

PORTER (QI&O #2): Your group sounds better/more schizo than most I've seen. I hope the style spreads.

HINTZ (Defensless Ravings): The weapons policy sounds reasonable to me except for number 5 being too restrictive.

NIALL (Operation: Chaos): Nice alien writeups. They give the sort of background and detail, that to many rules lack, which makes them easier to play right. I naturally like the Silithii best.

C O M M E N T S O N 10:

Lee (Tantivity): re. cmnt. to Nicoli in England after the Norman invasion the nobles spoke French and the people spoke Anglo-Saxon. They both used Latin in legal and other official occasions. It seemed to work out OK.

Melinda wants to know does Barry dislike the insect looking clear on the cover because he feels it doesn't fit the rest of the cover or does he just not like insects.

Did you have the right price when you said \$1000 for the new Bell computer. I've heard that it's supposed to be 32 bit. If that is the right price and we're thinking of the same machine it is a drastic drop from similar machines. We have some brochures from DEC on the MicroVAX here at work and they say \$15K for machine with 1.2M core, 28M Winchester, 2 floppies, and a terminal. This is with VMS and rest of standard operating system.

Hein & Murrey (Psyc. Chron. #1) : Good skill system. I'll follow in your footsteps and steal some of it for my own skill based system. However one comment unless Aus. english is different it's smithing not smithery.

Ives (Unstoned Acolyte) : #100 seems to be triggering a return of the lost (hurray). I hope that all of you stay in again.

Heydt (Golems Corner #16) : If I remember the story about the bear and the trackwalker correctly he used the first two rocks to blind the bear and then used a bigger rock to kill it after it couldn't charge him.

Re ct. to McGregor , in Mote in God's Eye , Niven and Pournelle point out that in days of sail there was a sailing master and a captain on a ship. The captain commanded the ship and fought it, the sailing master had total authority on how to carry out commands on where the ship was to go. All the captain could do was fire him not override him on an individual order.

Burchett (Beyond Styx #14) : Ah yes the joys of FRP "roleplaying" tournaments. Several of us have won the Traveller tournament at Balticon several years in a row by teamwork and knowing how to stretch a system. It's the only time most of us play Traveller but the prize is free memberships to the next Balticon.

Phillies (M3 #3) : A nice story with a very Schmitz like feel. Is it just fiction or is it based on a campaign. If it's based on a game I hope you will publish the rules for the psionic system.

Turner (Yeti are Nigh) : The rules are two pages long however you do win the award for the highest percentage of example to rules.

Shapley (Broken Arrow #9) : In ancient days they didn't believe in luck. Everything was the will of the gods. The things that are considered bad luck now-a-days were originally taboos that would anger some god if they were broken. A list of taboos and which god each would anger would be useful in a campaign.

Waters (Chaotic Kaskara) : I told you the typewriter needed cleaning.

ALABASTER ALBATROSS 14, a UK-based A&E-type zine from the tippe-stained fingers of Simon J. Cornelius and retyped by LEE (thanks). I may be contacted via 84 Glenfield Dr., Great Doddington, Wellingborough, Northants, UK. I don't live at this address very often, so phone calls are fairly pointless. This zine is copyright S. J. Cornelius, 1984.

You may have been aware that this zine was absent from A&E 100, 101, and probably 103. It is apparent that A&E is getting more popular, though the increase in copy is no doubt partly due to the two take-overs we have recently seen. (Congrats to Adelaide for a minor coup de zine.) All this is probably obvious. However, the chance that I may not make the intended issue has caused me to be less enthusiastic about producing my next Albatross. Is this the way in which wild zines naturally regulate their populations, or are different methods used in the wild? (Biological aside there.)

There are other reasons I haven't contributed recently....Christmas and my Lake District holiday (typewriters find no room in my rucksack). Also my typewriter got broken, I moved house, and I got made redundant when the biggest UK chain of games shops (Games Centre) went into liquidation. Incidentally, I'm now looking for a Ph.D. studentship in Applied Entomology, so if anyone out there has one on offer, I'm your man.

I did start an issue of the Albatross some six weeks ago, on a stencil! After this experiment, I ripped it all up and forgot about it. I then had some red-warm news about interesting BBC TV programs. The following series are now funded or about to enter production. 1) A new series of Blake's Seven (Blake is definitely dead, but Avon apparently isn't). 2) A third TV series of Hitch-hiker's Guide. 3) A possible second series of Black Adder. This information is rumor from a friend whose sister is going out with a guy in the BBC. The accuracy of the information may therefore be in doubt. Blake's 7, by the way, is a UK space opera in the true tradition of a new episode, a new planet. Incidentally, there is going to be a new Dr. Who. (Do you get this in the States?) Rumors that a woman had been chosen are untrue. Also the Police box is going, but the tardis it contains is staying. Finally channel 4 has started filming a program/series on FRPgs.

At present, I have got rather interested in 25mm fantasy armies for my campaign and will probably be simplifying the C&S (1st edition) mass battle rules. I didn't think much of the new version found in the new edition of the Sourcebook. The morale rules were a mess (apparently some terms were changed to a Wargames Research Group format) with new rules and old terms intermingling for what seem to be the same things. [What did you think of the LRS version? I rewrote it so you couldn't get moved faster than maximum speed by pushback.--LG]

Enough of this incoherent rambling, now for an article.

BUILDING AND MAPPING A WORLD (a few notes from Slartibartfast) Part I

Even before I discovered FRP, I would draw maps of imaginary islands (please don't ask me why). Once I had Basic D&D clutched in my sweaty little hands, I drew a map of a planet (no lack of ambition here) and this, called "Fleekorn," has been the only real location for my campaign since. Admittedly it has seen various geographical upheavals and changes, usually for the sake of realism. I'd like firstly in this article to suggest some ideas for people who want to set up a campaign in this way. It isn't going to be definitive or complete or anything.

Not everyone will want to place a campaign on a planet. As we are talking fantasy, any shape, topology or whatever is permissible. I do feel that it should be defined at the start. Planets have a lot to recommend them, as one can draw empirical laws about conditions from personal observations. (Here I am thinking of such things as gravity.)

Totally impossible settings can have such things defined without regard to physics, but these pages have seen the difficulties of calculating conditions on such things as ringworlds, where science can be extrapolated.

Once the shape of the surface has been determined, the nature of this surface must be considered. Primarily there is a choice of solid or liquid; and keeping close to our model of Earth, the liquid is going to be water. Fantasy, as opposed to science fantasy, has always copied Earth closely.

The climate on land is partly determined by the distance it is from significant bodies of water. The farther away, the less rain; and therefore deserts tend to be in the center of continents. If you have not already considered what type of conditions you want to prevail in the campaign area, now is the time. The amount of water surface will always be important in determining the climate of the whole world. An idea of the effects of various land/sea ratios can be gotten by looking at SFRPGs like SO under world design. Alternatively, back issues of Scientific American (which has an excellent cumulative index) will have suitable articles. Other physical attributes like gravity, year length, and atmospheric pressure can be set arbitrarily; the science isn't worth going into.

The distribution of land masses will determine ocean currents, and these will affect climate locally. Currents and land masses will also be important determinants of degree of communication between parts of the world. Until quite high technology develops, sea transport is far more efficient and wide-ranging than land travel. Proximity to the sea will be an important factor in culture. It helps to have an idea of what sort of peoples you want in a campaign before designing the land masses.

When drawing continents, be sure to give them interesting shapes and to put in indentations for river mouths. When you have continents, most will not need further detailing, because you will want to concentrate on the campaign area. A new map at a large scale is useful for designing the continent's topography. Decide roughly where you want the main mountains and then how they are to be drained. Rivers cannot be too long; they need a certain gradient. It can be especially embarrassing if you find later that some of your rivers flow uphill.

Once this has been sorted out in rough, it can be filled in for definite. Also at this stage, the vegetation can be determined. There are eight basic types:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1. Ice-cap (no vegetation) | 5. Temperate grassland (low rainfall) |
| 2. Tundra | 6. Rain forest (tropical, high rainfall) |
| 3. Taiga ("Siberian" forest) | 7. Savannah (tropical, low rainfall) |
| 4. Temperate broad-leaved woods
(high rainfall) | 8. Desert (very low rainfall) |

These can be broken down into sub-groups. Note that they are for Earth, and others could be included. One form which is minor here but could be important is scrubland, where for some reason trees don't grow to any large size.

I'll leave off here. I hope I am not being patronizing. I know the average A&E reader is of high intelligence and may have considered these things before. I wish I had originally followed these lines instead of having to carry out massive terraforming later.

Next time: a mapping system for a campaign area, the system I use.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON ADVENTURERS SKILLS

It is not unreasonable to suggest that adventurers as a group are likely to require similar skills in pursuance of their "trade." RQ recognized this and gave a number of skills like Spot Hidden. This was a great improvement on the D&D attitude that only one character class had this type of skill. Having examined the definition of Adventurers Skills in those rules sets, I have concluded that they are inadequate and unrealistic. I therefore suggest the following definitions and groups of skills, which are largely aimed at RQ and derivatives.

Spotting Skills: These are to replace Spot Hidden and Detect Trap. They are Perception skills. To my mind, there is a chance that a particular fact will be noticed without the character particularly looking for it. This chance is doubled when the item is specifically being examined. The referee should know the character's Spot chance and should roll when there is anything relevant about. If the character is specifically trying to detect something, then the player should roll against the Detect %age.

I would not suggest that there be a specific Trap-finding skill. This may be changed for specific characters like trap manufacturers. I would, however, divide this category of skill up in the following way:

- a) Notice Behavior (human, monster, animal)
- b) Notice fact in urban/man-made situation (e.g. trapped door)
- c) Notice fact in natural/wilderness situation (e.g. jungle pit-fall trap)

Understand Mechanism Skills: This covers traps, secret doors, etc. This is probably a Knowledge skill. Understanding a mechanism may allow it to be activated/disarmed or whatever. If this also requires Dexterity, a DEX saving roll could be required. Lock-picking can be looked at in this way, but I would prefer to make Lock Knowledge an alternative to Understand Mechanism. If Lock Knowledge fails, then Understand Mechanism can be used.

Hide in Shadows/Undergrowth Skills. I have always thought this skill has two parts, neither having much to do with Dexterity. 1) The factor of the character's size and appearance (wearing black and being small makes it easier to hide in shadows than being a white elephant). 2) The effect of knowledge of how things are perceived. After that, there is just keeping still. I would divide the skill into two: for urban and wilderness environments. This skill can also be used for hiding items: e.g. traps.

Moving Silently/In Shadows/in Undergrowth: I feel that Moving Silently without trying to reduce one's visibility is a skill used so rarely as to be negligible. Therefore, there are only two skills in this category: Move in Undergrowth and Move in Urban Environment. These are Agility skills.

Pick Pocket/Conceal Small Item. Both Manipulation skills, and with little to be said about them. Concealing an item about the person depends, however, on size, attire, and perhaps on apparent social status.

Disguise Self: Partly a Knowledge skill and partly Manipulation. Perhaps half bonuses for each category.

Tracking: A Knowledge skill. Perhaps divisible by environment into sub-skills.

Map-Making: A Knowledge skill. Understanding topological relations, writing, etc. require intelligence and understanding much more than DEX.

Riding: A Manipulation skill primarily? A problem as it also includes knowledge and agility.

Climbing: An Agility skill, modified by clothing, surface, etc.

First Aid: Primarily a Knowledge skill.

There are a number of Adventurer skills. They have been grouped into the RQ categories of Perception, Manipulation, and Knowledge--with the addition of Agility instead of Stealth. Some skills combine more than one and should have bonuses/minuses in proportion to the skill content. There are many others which might be included in Adventurers skills, e.g. Identify Gem, but these are mainly Knowledge skills. I prefer to determine the scope of Knowledge skills individually: e.g. one character with a yeoman background might get "Identify edible wild plant in temperate forest," whereas an herbalist would not have the qualification of a particular area.

The success of skill use depends both on the quality of the skill and the specific circumstances. Therefore modifiers are always very important, based on the actual situation. Using a resistance table system is a good way of determining such situations.

A few final thoughts. The above ideas are a suggested different way of going about Adventurers skills rather than doing it the old proprietary ways. (I emphasize knowledge and understanding much more, as in lock-picking). I haven't suggested basic chances of success in each skill; there are a matter of personal preference.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE GAMES TRADE IN THE UK

Having just been made redundant after 15 weeks working at Games Centre, I think I am qualified to give my 3 ha'pence worth on this subject. In the UK as anywhere else, the market is dominated by TSR, especially by D&D/AD&D. The kids still hear of D&D first, and most never discover anything else. However, I'm told by people who have been selling for a couple of years that this market is shrinking. Obviously it will eventually consist of the hard core, who may drift away from TSR products to things with a little more variety--and a yearly crop of youngsters, though this will only be a fraction of their age group.

Looking upwards in years, the teenager is now into home computers (the Sinclair ZX Spectrum being the most popular). The RPG boom at its height came between TV video consoles and home computers. This is not to say that there weren't a lot of sales of D&D material before Christmas. The market also contains the new adult market, which isn't very large, and the young (18-23) trendy market, largely the "Sloans ranger" type. These people are upper-middle to upper class and pronounce Clapham as "Clarm" to rhyme with harm. They won't look at a game more than two or three times and may perhaps attempt to play it once. Most will want their money back because the board is missing.

Apart from D&D, RQ goes quite well even with munchkins, but Traveller isn't sold much now. Other SFRPGs do better but only with current roleplayers. I think the RPG market is decreasing. This isn't a bad thing in terms of our reputation and the quality of play and events. However, a smaller market means smaller print-runs and higher prices.

I have another observation on the trade: I am impressed by the number of games being produced by FGU. They seem to have a number of competing games: e.g. SO and OS, at the same level of difficulty and of quite high quality. I'm surprised they don't find themselves cutting their own throats. I believe there are a number of reasons why they are successful. First, they are appealing to the upper end of the market. This allows a slightly higher price, less advertising, and a chance that people will buy duplicating games. Second, they are probably not as greedy as some other companies and probably pay their writers a little less. [They definitely pay their writers at least as well.--LG] It may be that FGU isn't in the most rosy situation like a lot of companies, but I am glad they exist.

SOME OTHER ODD THOUGHTS

The UK's newest TV channel, Channel 4, is apparently doing at least one program on RPGs for future transmission. Also I am now finding that wargaming 25mm figures are cheaper than those from specialist fantasy manufacturers and as well detailed and in great variety. I am particularly thinking of Essex Miniatures, which does fine medievals and feudals amongst others. Of course, these firms don't do figures carrying vast amounts of equipment, and they tend to be primarily suitable for fighter types. Finally these companies only offer humans, horses and the odd elephant and camel.

It is unfortunate that there are virtually no female figures available suitable for incorporating in 25mm fantasy wargaming armies. In general, how common are women adventurers in your campaign? (I am thinking of PCs and also NPC adventurers).

COMMENTS ON A&E #100

OLEG ZACHAROV: Hi, mega cover.

GEOFFREY HALSEY: re magic system: rather useful. May I make a suggestion in the general field of raw force/imagination/flexible magic system? In a scenario, there will be places when the DM believes the best way to proceed involves using magic or miracles. While this should not affect how the DM describes the situation to the characters, such points are good places to jot down possible magical ways out and rate their effectiveness and appropriateness to the situation. This allows consistent treatment of this type of magic. One type of magic may be more appropriate, so that a thaumaturge will find things easier than a cleric.

ROB ELLWOOD: re ribbon worlds: a fine example of what imagination can do, and really enjoyable. The attraction of a campaign in a really unusual setting for me, however, is outweighed by the extra difficulty in deriving realistic physical phenomena like weather--and also realistic social reactions.

DON DEL GRANDE: re ct self: on trap in A&E 93. The blade is pivoted in an oblique plane to avoid the problem of the gap at the bottom of the door. The center of rotation is very close to the door, and this also helps. The door probably never was designed to be opened. There is a slight (but suspicious) gap at its bottom. This can be indicated if the character makes a Spot Trap/Spot Hidden roll. In the original situation where this trap was employed, the trap was reset from the room behind which had another door for access.

On traps in general: I have been trying to think of others which are interesting without being ridiculous and over-complicated. The more parts in a mechanism, the more likely it is to fail. There are many books of traps available, but most of the contents are not credible, and many require magical spells which would have to be specially researched. One magical trap which may have been developed before but isn't in common usage is the Tanglefoot spell.

PETER CLARKE: Excellent. (You obviously apprenticed on a good zine.)

LAURENCE J. P. GILLESPIE: re SCOT FRITZ on building worlds: I see your point about keeping things simple but you'll see from the above that I disagree. Knowing what is happening in the surrounding area is important to allow realistic interaction between the campaign area and the rest of the world.

GENERAL: Overall ct on A&E 100: there didn't seem to be many cts to be made. The fiction was all very good, but it isn't something which generates a lot of comments.

COMMENTS ON A&E 101

JAMES HEIN: "Ah Jeem." (Translation on request)//Re Fantasy Roleplaying for the Purist: people try to explain things in terms of physics for a number of reasons, primarily the pleasure they get from the process and the benefit they get from internal consistency in their campaign. The latter is touched on in your third paragraph; most people find consistency to a set of laws important. Our only example of consistency is our own universe.

PSYCHEDELIC CHRONICLES (by some really mixed up people): re Skills System: an article completely after my own heart. Do you envisage adventurers as jack of all trades types, with a slight skill in many fields? If so, who teaches them these things? Perhaps the status of adventurer will persuade some guilds to part with the simplest of their skills in return for money, service or protection?

An additional page of character sheet with spaces for these skills would be a useful addition to detailing characters and another place in which characters can progress instead of just in combat skills.

Some of the skills would be prerequisites for others. A good example is Coopering, which is impossible without a high degree of Carpentry. Therefore I believe that to give both these skills a basic chance of 5% is wrong.

I must say that there are some good skill definitions here which have inspired me to do something on these, above.

PERILOUS DREAMS (JENNY HEIN AGAIN!): The background table is for quite a strict social structure it seems. Will you tell us more? Particularly the relative sizes of the population strata and the degree of social mobility of adventurers and non-adventurers (I'm trying to steal ideas.)

At present I am working on a new basic civilized human society social class system on which to base three of my nations. I used to use the C&S tables as my basis, but these are for a medieval society and miss out a number of lesser occupations.

It is a shame that few people seem to do much more than use the C&S social class tables as they stand, not adapting them for their own campaign societies. (Of course, I'm not referring to A&E contributors.) However, using some system is better than none.

You do have some interesting constituents within your colleges/guilds. Some I would disagree with, for example, having the College of Horticulture (literally plant growing) include using pieces of dead plant. Possibly what is wrong is the naming of the colleges; Horticulture would be better named Vegetable Product Users. Obviously it's a matter of personal opinion. And anyway College of Vegetable Product Users and Growers is something of a mouthful.

WESLEY D. IVES: re simple working systems: I agree. The days I had time to tinker with systems are gone; and more important, the people who had time to learn the systems no longer have the time. I've gone back to simplified RQ (no strike ranks), but with AGI included. I also have a different magic system based on a number of magic requisites and tailored to individual magic users. When LoA arrives, I might adopt it but unlike other proprietary systems I'm not going to tinker with it (MUCH).

NICK LARTER: re alternative title to MMoWB: I've received no entries to the competition yet. I think the whole thing is a warped product of your warped imagination.

JTS: re ct to ROB ELLWOOD: there's a whole lot more people in the UK, cf. Canada.

WAYNE SHAW: re Giant Arthropods (which won't go away apparently): More details on your paper would be gratefully received.//Re campaign crash: I've been using the same campaign for 5.5 years but the rules system has changed five times. I'm thinking of the campaign going on for many years.

GENERAL: 101 was one of the best A&Es for a very long time.

END COMMENTS

Hopefully this will be in 104. Wishing everyone a great Spring/Summer.

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My first contribution to AGE will be my

TFT-VARIANT

I agree with Halsey that what is lacking in TFT is that you should get EP's for the skill you are using. Still, I want characters to be able to progress in characteristics, since it really is possible to train strength, dexterity in general and even IQ to some extent (at least you can learn how to learn).

With a weapon you have a basic chance. The basic chance is for each weapon as in the weapons chart below, plus or minus for characteristics: (att. & par. bonus)

	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	21+
ST	-2	-1		+1	+2	+1
DX	-2	-1		+1	+2	+1
IQ	-1				+1	+1

You can raise the characters attack and parry value (which are both the same, and from now on called Combat Value; CV) with one for a weapon by using the EP's he gets for using that specific weapon according to this chart:

Weapons present	CV	1-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	etc.
EP needed for raise		125	250	500	1000	etc.

The combat value (CV) you count shall be unmodified by armour and shield. When getting a talent for a weapon, you get the talent for that specific weapon only. It also means that you get +4 on the basic chance listed in the weapons chart, and +2 with all similar weapons. 'Similar weapons' I count like this: 1H swords, 2H swords, Axes, Maces, Hammers, Crossbows, Bows, 1H pole weapons, 2H pole weapons and rifles. Thrown weapons, dagger and peculiar weapons are each and everyone not 'similar' to any other weapon. A character without the talent for a weapon has the basic chance to hit/parry, but cannot get EP's when using it, which simulates that you must first get some basic training. Also, you get -4 on the basic chance for peculiar weapons you don't have the talent for.

You can get any new talent without raising IQ, according to the following chart (the IQ does not go up because you get a talent):

Talents IQ	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	etc.
EP needed/ points of talent	125	250	500	1000	etc.

If you want a talent above your IQ, you must first raise your IQ, and then have the EP's needed for the talent. The way to get EP'S to raise the characteristics is e.g. through saving rolls, jumping over holes and other rolls on the characteristics. You could also play it that you can use your weapons EP's, since you do use your muscles, dexterity and your motory center when fighting.

If you choose e.g. the talent "thrown weapons", an IQ 8 talent, it costs 250EP, because the chart shows you how many EP you need per talent-point. So, knife costs 125 EP, and Alertness costs 750 EP, since it's a 3 point IQ 9 -talent. The maximum number of "talent-points" you can have is 2xIQ, which includes languages and spells.

Learning time for talents (I love charts, if you didn't know it before):

Talents IQ	7-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	etc.
Time (in months)	1	2	3	4	etc.

Exceptions: Remove Traps takes 3 months and Detect Traps at least 6 (ITL p.30).

Learning times for languages: 3 months with a teacher (costs \$75/week), 6 months by self-studies (i.e. with learning books) and living one year permanently where it is spoken. Learning-times for spells as per Advanced Wizard.

IQ:s influence on all learning-times:

Characters IQ	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	etc.
Difference in learning-time	+10%		-10%	-20%	etc.

Miscellaneous on weapons & combat

In a combat-round an engaged character can attack and/or parry. A character with one weapon only may only do either. A character with two weapons may use them both for two attacks, two parries or one attack and one parry, but if using them both he gets -4 on his CV with both weapons. If he has the talent Two Weapons, he gets -4 with one weapon. This also goes for someone with weapon and shield or rapier and main-gauche. All this provided he has the proper talents.

If you parry a successful attack your weapon gets the damage from the attacking weapon, with exception for longhafterd weapons, knife, main-gauche, whip, lasso, flail and fists, that instead gets the parrying weapons damage. (All this as in RQ.) If you parry with a shield it protects a certain amount of points (see weapons chart), so it does not anymore automatically protect you. A shield that in a single blow takes twice as many damage-points as it can protect, it is shattered.

With these modifications for combat, a character who is being attacked always has the chance to parry, should he so choose. If you try to parry a poleweapon-charge from at least three hexes away, you get -2 on your CV because of the great impact in such an attack, which also means that the pole-weapon does not take damage if it is parried.

If you have a sword (not knife or rapier) against a poleweapon-attack, you can choose to attack the poleweapon itself, trying to chop it off by giving it as much damage as it can take. Such an attack is rolled before the poleweapon-attack, and you get -4 on the CV.

If ones weapon gets as much damage as it has hitpoints (HP) in one blow or in one combat round, it is destroyed. If it gets less damage, only four points of damage is recorded (as you can see, this rule is RQ-influenced.).

A tower-shield used at horse-back may only be parried with at left side (if right-handed, i.e.).

As before, you get -1 on the combat value for each ST under the one required, and -1 damage for each 2 ST under. From now on you also get -1 CV for each DX under the required.

MISCELLANIOUS ON MAGIC

As said before, a magician can have as many spells, languages and talent-points as 2xIQ allows. EP needed for a new spell is as for talents. The time needed is as per Advanced Wizard.

The time needed for a Wizard to learn talents and the EP needed is doubled (with the usual exceptions for Literacy etc.). The time needed for a hero to learn spells

as well as the EP needed is three times as for a wizard. This means that an IQ 13-spell costs 1500 EP for a hero, and the talent Silent Movement costs 1000 EP for a wizard.

Fatigue: a wizard (and others, for that matter) has as many Fatigue Points (FP) as ST-points. When a wizard is casting spells (or anyone doing something tiresome) he loses FP only. If all his FP'S are used, he can still continue to cast spells, taking physical damage by it, i.e. he loses ST. This damage is purely magical, and can not be healed by a physicker

IN GENERAL I think that this system makes the EP-rules much better without violating the game-flow. I've used it in a campaign with five PC's for five game-sessions so far, and it works very well. What is still missing is of course the mechanics for skill-levels (Combat Values) for spells and talents, which will show up in the next sporadic viking.

COMMENTS:

LEE GOLD: Thanks for giving us A&E, the best forum for roleplaying.// I'm sorry that I most of the time forgot to let there be two spaces after periods. I'm so very unused to it.

COMMENT ON 96:

John T. Sapienza Jr.: Hello again! No stamps this time, I'm afraid.// On RQ: I totally agree to that a novice who rolls a critical hit succeeds vs. a veteran who makes a normal parry, but to me that's just a detail in the discussion. I see it in the way that if a character with Att.10% rolls 10, and a character with Par.90% rolls 15, then the parrying character has made a better parry compared to his ability than the attacker compared to his ability. I do anyway like the thought that a character has to make a better parry than the attacker's attack. The best way of doing it (as I can think of at the moment) so it suits me would be according to the following example:

A character with Par.50% is trying to parry an attack from a character with Att.60%. To reflect the difference in skill, I'd give the parrying guy +10% on the dice, so if the attacker rolls 45, the parrying guy would have to roll 35 or less ($35+10=45$). So if OTTO with Pr.30% is attacked by Clemens with Att.95%, Otto would get +65 on his roll to parry, which to me reflects that Clemens is a master and Otto is a novice. (Otto still has 5%, no matter what.) This does of course work the other way around as well. If Otto with Att.30% attacks Clemens with Par.90%, then Clemens would get -60% on his parry-roll.

I like the idea of this very much, but it doesn't precisely give the GM less work, nor does it speed up combat, since it requires a chart of its own.

Please keep us updated on what changes are coming into RQ III.

In another issue (I can't find it, I'm afraid) you wrote that Chaosium had made a complex experience-system, but changed it later to a simplified version (this was probably not the way you expressed it, but I can't remember exactly how you wrote or even find the damn issue!). Will the more elaborated (i.e. also more complex) version be published? I'd really love to see it.

COMMENT ON 98:

GEOFFREY HALSEY: Your rules look good, but I prefer mine. One reason is that the players choosing points for the stats works out so nicely in TFT. You can also see my article as a comment to yours (even though the system was worked out before I read A&E 99). // Are you using "Handicaps In TFT"? They are published in two issues of The Space Gamer, and can really add some fun roleplaying. I recommend you to try them.

COMMENTS CONTINUED AFTER THE WEAPONS CHART

This chart does not contain damage, cost or weights, since they are the same as before.

SWORDS

WEAPON	ST	DX	HP	BASIC CHANCE (Combat Value)	
Dagger	-	-	12	8	No talent needed, but'd give +4 CV.
Cutlass	10	9	9	6	
Shortsword	11	-	20	7	
Broadsword	12	7	20	6	
Bastard Sword (1 hand)	13	9	15	6	
Bastard Sword (2 hands)	12	10	15	5	
2-handed Sword	14	12	20	5	
Greatsword	16	12	15	5	

AXES/HAMMERS/MACES

Club*	-	6	15	7	
Hatchet *	9	13	12	5	
Hammer*	10	9	20	7	
Mace *	11	7	20	8	
Small Axe*	11	9	15	7	
Military Pick	12	9	20	7	
Morningstar	14	9	15	5	
Great Hammer	14	9	15	5	
Battle Axe	15	9	15	7	

MISSILE WEAPONS

Sling	-	11	-	6	
Small Bow	9	9	6	6	
Horse Bow	10	11	10	6	
Longbow	11	11	10	6	
Light Crossbow	12	9	6	7	
Heavy Crossbow	15	9	10	7	

THROWN WEAPONS

Hatchet	9	11	15	6	
Dagger	-	11	12	7	
Thrown Rock	-	-	-	8	No talent needed.
Javelin	-	9	8	7	

POLE WEAPONS

1H Short Spear	9	7	15	6	Can be used as javelin; 1.8m.
1H Long Spear	11	9	15	6	2.5m
2H Short Spear	7	7	15	7	1.8m; too short for a 2hex jab
2H Long Spear	9	7	17	7	2.5m or longer.
Halberd	13	11	12	7	
Pike Axe	15	11	12	7	
Trident*	10	7	15	7	Too short for a 2 hex jab.
Naginata	10	9	15	6	
Cavalry Lance	13	9	20	7	
Pike	12	11	12	7	

MORE THROWN WEAPONS (sorry)

Boomerang	11	9	10	6	
Bola	9	13	5	5	
Shuriken	-	9	-	6	

WEAPON	PECULIAR WEAPONS				BASIC CHANCE (Combat Value)	
	ST	DX	HP			
Quarterstaff	11	9	15		7	
Net*	10	11	20		5	
Cestus	-	-	5		8	
Fist	-	-			8	Not peculiar, but fits no other place.
Whip	8	9	12		6	
Lasso	8	13	5		5	
Nunchuks	8	11	8		6	
Spear Thrower			-		-1	
Blowgun	-	7	-		5	
Torch	-	-	15		7	
Scythe(2H)	-	-	15		-	Farmers has autom. talent.

FIRE-ARMS

Molotail*	-	8	-	8
Gasbomb*	-	8	-	8
Arquebuss	-	10	12	5
Blunderbuss	-	8	10	8

ARMOUR

Cloth	DX-8 CV-	TYPE	ARMOUR		SHIELDS		BASIC CHANCE (CV)
			HITS	STOPPED	DX- ST	CV-	
Leather	-2						
Chainmail	-3						
Half Plate	-5	Small Shield	6		0	5	5
Full Plate	-6	Spike Shield	6		0	5	5
Fine Plate	-4	Large Shield	9		-1	9	6
Backpack	-1 or -2	Tower Shield	12		-2	12	7
		Main-Gauche			-4	-	5 (20HitPoints)

*Besides the THROWN WEAPONS these weapons can also be thrown, but lower the BASIC CHANCE by 1 when using them as thrown weapons, and raise the ST and DX-requirements by 1 each.

EOC

(End Of Chart)

COMMENTS ON 99:

PETE TAMLYN: It'd sure be interesting to see what it'd come out like if the players rated each other players efforts, but disputes could arise, I think. Personally, I'd prefer to have an impartial judge (non-player & non-GM) sit and listen to the game the players opinions of each other and proclaim the winner from that.

PETER DA SILVA: "Cross-reference at each intersection, add the values of the row and column to 106." Excuse an INT 3 Swede-being (we vikings are very strong but can be dum as well!), but add what values of row and column to 106.// What does OD&D and QTFT mean?

COMMENT ON 100:

HANK GRIFFIN: It's a good idea that players control their starting stats, but in RQ I'm afraid it could lead to that players give their characters a high INT, since it's the only stat that can't be raised by training or other normal means. So you could have a bunch of PC's that are all over-intelligent, as beginners. Or, you could have a group of 16 year old Priests, who all of them happened to have POW 18. If I'd let the players choose, I'd give them 75 points at most, to spend on an RQ-character. I'd have restrictions like 48 as maximum and 3 as minimum and 8 minimum on SIZ and INT for humans. This means they don't get too good in other stats if

they choose any stat at 18. Others than humans would have another sum of points to spend, of course. A duck e.g. I'd give 65 points to allocate, with min and max as for rolling one up with the rulesbook (e.g. SIZ min. 3 and max. 9). I believe this makes point 4 unnecessary, since the player can choose his minimum stats (perhaps with restrictions like above).

The whole thing looks very interesting. Could you check what the copies and postage would cost to me, sending the lot the cheapest possible way? I'd be very grateful.

COMMENTS ON 101:

PETER SHAPLEY: The way I treat bad luck is simply that if the characters are e.g. being ambushed by two crossbowmen, I randomize who is being shot at of the six PC's in my campaign. Or if they're triggering a corridor trap that makes a rock bash someones head in, I randomize who's being 'attacked'. Applying your thoughts to this would mean that a character is having these things going his way for a while. I do find it interesting with specific events leading to bad luck (or even a curse?) and I'll think more about it.

JOHN T. SAPIENZA Jr.: I like your term rolegaming. Perhaps it's because I'm a Swede I do so. The reason for that would be that in Swedish it is already called that: roll/spel (role/game). We don't have to words for gaming and playing, only the word "spel" which means that if we used exactly the same expression, word-by-word (role/playing/game) it would in Swedish sound like "role/gaming/game" (in Swe. roll/spels/spel).

I wonder though if it should be changed, since RPG is a well-established term, and surely most people know what the term roleplayinggames means and it's differences. (Except for munckins of course, but I don't think it'd make any difference to them what it's called.) It is catchy though, and easier to say. My friend John Robillard (Vårdshuset Snälla Vikingen, remember?) has already caught it in his mouth.

NEIL FRASIER: I love your story. Please continue!

GEORGE PHILLIES: That goes for you too!

END OF COMMENTS

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

NICOLAI SHAPERO: Hello! Where are you? Do you remember that about two years ago I send you money for TLOC, but nothing happened. Since then I have written and reminded you at least three times, but nothing happens. Why? Havn't you received one single letter of mine?

ERIC GUNDERSON: Somewhere in an old AGE I have read that you have a computer-program for RQ. Is the program for Commodore 64 or in basic? I'd be very interested if so.

ANYONE AND EVERYONE: Has anybody thought out rules for big fights in RQ, with more than ten combattants on each side? I think of rules that makes you roll just once for each side. Runequest wargaming-rules, you could say.

More RQ: if a person/being/whatnot is e.g. out swimming, what should the chances be to hit him? I refuse to do it so that if an archer rolls a hit, he then must be so lucky so that he gets 19-20 on a D20. What ways have you other RQ-ers thought of? Are you perhaps just using the aimed shot-rules in the rulesbooks appendix?

I'm sorry I havn't presented myself, but I didn't want to omit anything else, and I don't want to start another page just for that. I'll shape up 'till next time though

FROM ALL OF ME TO ALL OF YOU: A VERY MERRY RAEBNC!

FRP HERBALISM--part eight, by Lee Gold (taken from Culpepper)

NO FLOWERS (continued)

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Ruled by</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Fern (Royal)	Saturn	Found in moors, bogs, and watery places.//Green all summer.//Decoction may be drunk or boiled into an ointment with oil, good for broken or disjointed bones.
Hart's Tongue	Jupiter	Found in shady spots, among rocks, near walls and shady copses.//Green all winter.//Distilled water is good vs the passions of the heart.
Shepherd's Purse	Saturn	A garden weed; common on cultivated ground and found near paths.//Stops bleeding from inward or outward wounds, especially those of the head.. The juice dropped into the ears heals any pains or noise.

ALL YEAR ROUND

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Ruled by</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Chickweed	Moon	Found in moist places and woodsides but seeds readily on cultivated soil.//Juice by itself or with hog's grease helps convulsions and palsy.
Daisy (Little)	Venus, Cancer	Found in lawns, fields and meadows.//Leaves and sometimes roots are used in wound-drinks. The leaves are bitter though not as bad as Colt's Foot.
Dandelion	Jupiter	A troublesome weed, found in pastures and gardens.//The distilled water gives rest and sleep to the fevered.

VARYING FLOWERING TIME

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Ruled by</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Tea	--	Found in China, Japan, Ceylon and India.//A strong solution of the leaves is salutary for hangovers.

ROOTS

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Ruled by</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Alkanet	Venus	Found in weedy places on roadsides and wastelands, esp. dry sandy soil. The root is best in early autumn; it is used for red dye as well as for a medicine. Made into an ointment it helps burns and wounds. Dioscorides says it helps those bitten by venomous beasts, whether drunk or applied to the wound.
Beet (White)	Jupiter	Cultivated.//Its juice is good against venomous creatures. A decoction in water and vinegar is good vs baldness.

TIME FOR BERRIES AND FRUIT AND NUTS

Effects are treated in early installments, under flowering time.

Alder--early autumn	Gooseberry--midsummer
Asparagus--fall	Hawthorne--early autumn
Bilberries--mid-to-late summer	Holly--autumn and winter
Bittersweet--late summer	Ivy--winter
Blackberry--late summer	Mulberry Tree--late summer and early autumn
Butchers Broom--early fall	Oak Tree--autumn
Cherries--late summer, early fall	Peach Tree--autumn
Elder--early fall	Pumpkin--autumn
Elder (Dwarf)--fall	Quince--late autumn
Fig Tree--late summer	Storax Tree--early autumn
Gall Oak--mid-fall	

continued in three pages--at the end of THE SCRIBE OF THE ELFIN KINGDOMS

being John Bambach, 1062 Hastings St., Baldwin, NY 11510; (c) 1984, J. Bambach. Many thanks to Lee Gold for typing this.

Hello again to all. I regret to report that it has been some six months since I wrote to the 189 fanzines or prozines identified for the index, and the response has been disappointing. Therefore, if you will allow me, I would like to use the most powerful resource I am aware of in this hobby: A&E readers. Please respond to me directly, not through A&E.

My reading of British zines leads me to conclude that British fandom is a very close knit society. Everyone seems to know everyone else. Below is a listing of British zines with the editors' names in parentheses. I would appreciate the intercession of any British A&E readers to encourage their friends or acquaintances to send me FRP-related Table of Contents.

Acolyte (Tamlyn)	King Kong Armpits (McKay)
Aerial Servant (Stoner)	Kingdom of Caid (?)
Beholder (Stoner)	News from Bree (Patterson)
Bohemian Rhapsody (Nial Smith)	News from under the Hill (McKay)
Brainstorm (Jewkes)	Perfidious Albion (Vasay)
Celestial Homecare (Armstrong)	Plague Times (Bates)
Chimaera (Booth)	Red Giant (Branfoot)
Compendium (Hopkins)	Ripping Yarns (Gooch)
Delta (Harper)	Saga (Dent)
Dragonlords (Lewis)	Secrets of Koan (Mendham)
DibDib Dib (Twerdy)	Sewards (Baylis)
Drooling God (Segal)	Sodds Law (Kinzett0)
Drunk and Disorderly (Lindsay)	Spectre (Scott)
Factor X (McKay)	Tales from Tanelorn (Williams)
Fantasy Herald (Sun Reach)	Tempestuous Orifice (Norledge)
Fanzine Fanatique (Walker)	Thunderstruck (Kalvis)
Herald (Hood)	Trollcrusher (Miller)
Illusionist Vision (Ferguson)	Twinworld (Straaten)
Jagged Cross (Allen)	War Machine (Costello)
	Zine to be Believed (Kinzett)

If any Americans have maintained contact with the following US editors, I would appreciate their help.

Cruxcible (Crane)	Magnetic Fantasies (?)	Phantasy Network
News.	Deck of Many Things (?)	Midgard Serpent
(?) Quick Quincy Gazette	Nuts and Bolts (?)	Trapdoors (?)
Gamelog (Lurvey)	Pandora (?)	Wyrmfire (Ferris)
The Insider (Barasch)	Phantasy (Skolnick)	Zeppelin (Gillespie)
Lords of Chaos (Shapero)		

Lastly, not to forget our Aussie friends, can anyone help with these:

Charge (Canberra War Game Soc)	Morningstar (McGregor)
Crystal Ball (Wizards Council)	Puff the Magic Dragon (Laird)
Devil's Advocate (Melbourne U)	Rallying Point (S. A. Hist. Soc)
Dungeon Delver (Webb)	

COMMENTS ON #100

DAVE NALLE: Thanks for the info on terminations of various zines. I am aware that many have folded, some of them several years ago, but would still like to include them in the index. If I could locate a former editor or regular contributor for each, perhaps I could get data on contents. Ideally, I would like to give a source for each zine, so if a particular article appealed to a reader, he could contact someone for a photocopy or back issue, at some reasonable fee. This would be done only if the source agreed.

You are correct on the Fantasy Newsletter. Many times I pick up a vague reference to a zine in my research and follow it up by letter. In this case, when I finally obtained a copy, I realized that it was not a gaming zine. I would appreciate any more feedback from anyone on the listing in #98. The list should include only zines that contain FRP material--not science fiction roleplaying, etc. Thus, the exclusion from the list of zines like Journal of Travellers Aid Society. However, a zine like Space Gamer is included because of the numerous FRP articles it contained.

One last thing: in your Table of Contents listing for Abyss, you mentioned reviews of Ogre, Dark Fantasy, Whispers and Weirdbook. Do you have addresses for these?

NICK LARTER: "Flight to Lucifer: A Gnostic Fantasy" was written by Harold Bloom, 1979; pub. Farrar, Straus and Girous (19 Union Square W. New York, NY 10003) at \$9.95.//Re Potocki: This book is not currently in print. I did find a reference to indicate that a US edition of SARAGOSSA MANUSCRIPT appeared in 1960. The reference indicated that the book is an Arabian Nights-type format and that Potocki influenced the writings of Hawthorne and Irving. I will keep looking for additional information.

COMMENTS ON #101

CLARKE & CORNELIUS: Re Gillespie Comment: Lawrence is referring to CLIFF CASTLES AND CAVE DWELLINGS OF EUROPE, pub. in the US by Gale at \$19.00.

MARK GALEOTTI: The FRPG curriculum you requested appears at the end of this zine.

HEYDT & SAPIENZA: Thanks for the welcome.

COMMENTS: GENERAL

J. TELLER: Thank you for the guide. I will be writing you.

E. WOLCOTT: Have sent off info on Worlds of Tekumel.

HARRY ROBERTSON & JON BERNARD: Thank you for the helpful and informative letters.

MARTIN WIXTED: Have delivered your letter. I have nothing handy in my library on Medieval Ireland but will do some research when time is available.

J. T. SAPIENZA: Could you put in a good word for me at Chaosium? I sent off a letter back in June, 1983, asking for copies of the ToC for Different Worlds #1-24 and Wyrms' Footnotes #1-8, 10-12 and 14. The only response I got back was a Chaosium catalog.

To be fair, response from the prozines as a whole was not overwhelming. Adventure Gaming, Ares, Pegasus and Dragon never responded. (Dragon must have thought it was a good idea, because #76 had a complete index of #1-75). White Dwarf sent a few free copies of later issues but did not help with #1-6, 89, 9 and 16. Sorcerer's Apprentice responded with exactly what I had asked for: photocopies of their ToC pages. Space Gamers went beyond my wildest expectations and sent me copies of all the back issues I was missing, about 15.

On the other hand, many fanzine editors have taken pen or typewriter in hand and sent listings of their ToCs: Dave Nalle, Becket Rossett, James McDermott, et al., take a bow.

DENISE GERNETH: The list of fanzines your letter referred to is made up of my notes on 189 different publications, numbering about 50 loose leaf pages. Photocopying them would be expensive. If there is specific information you wish, I would be happy to provide it. When the project is more complete, I will organize the material and have it printed as cheaply as possible and make it available to fellow A&E writers.

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COURSES FOR A DEGREE IN FRP

Languages: Old English Grammar and Readings (NC); Comparative Grammar of Celtic Languages (Wisc), Old Norse Language & Literature (Minn), Old Icelandic (Ind), Old Germanic Languages (Wisc), and Introduction to Old French (Wisc).

Literature: Arthurian Romance (Penn), Beowulf (IL), Old English Literature (IL), Introduction to Celtic Studies (Penn), The Icelandic Saga (Minn), Edda, Saga and Ballad (WI), Middle High German Epic (Rochester, NY), The German Volkslied (NC), Nibelungenlied (Penn), German Heroic Poetry (Yale), The Old French Grail Romances (Penn), Medieval French Epic (Minn), Chansons de Geste (Pitt), Chretien des Troyes (Columbia), Italian Chivalric Poetry (Columbia), Slavic Epic Poetry (Yale), Spanish Medieval Epic Literature (Princeton), Fantasy and Science Fiction (Wisc).

Mythology and Folklore: Introduction to Folklore (NC), Theoretical Aspects of Myth (Penn), Comparative Mythology (Ind), Myth and Motif (Wisc), Interpretations of Classical Mythology (Wisc), History of British Folklore (Ind), Scandinavian Mythology (Minn), Introduction to Finnic Folklore (Ind), European Folklore (Ind), Slavic Folklore (penn), Runic Inscriptions (Minn), Introduction to Runology (Yale), Magic Ritual and Belief Systems (NC), Asian Folklore (Ind), African Folklore (Ind), The Legend (Ind).

Skills: Studies in Acting (Ind), Behavioral Pharmacology (Georgetown), Map Compilation and Construction (Ill), Evolution of Warfare (Ill), Introduction to Tactics (Ill), Fencing (Ill), Archery (Ill), History of the Use and Misuse of Drugs (Wisc).

Historical Background: Medieval Social and Economic History (Yale), The Medieval Town (Columbia), Survey of Ancient and Medieval Science (Ind), History of Pseudo-science and the occult (Wisc).

FRP Herbalism: continued by Lee Gold

TIME FOR SEEDS

Effects are treated in early installments, under flowering time

Alder (Common)	early autumn	Comfrey	late summer
Alexanders	late summer	Dog Rose	early fall
Arssmart	late summer	Elecampane	late summer
Asarabacca	midsummer	Ladys Bedstraw	mid-to-late summer
Avens		midsummer	Lentils midsummer
Betony (Water)	late summer	Maidenhair	late summer
Bistort	midsummer	Rice	mid autumn
Clary		late summer	

I WAS A LEVEL NINE MAGIC USER FOR THE C.I.A.

is an irregularly produced (in several senses of the phrase) zine from Lew Wolkoff; 3300 Union Deposit Road; Apt. G-304; Harrisburg, PA 17109.

As usual, it's been too long since my last issue to do a full set of mailing comments (a few may follow at the end). Instead, I'd like to present the following information from a book called Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion by Joshua Trachtenberg. It's a list of specific effects and the passage(s) from the Bible that one reads or recites in order to cause these effects. In other words, a set of Jewish Clerical spells.

- For protecting a newly circumcised infant: Gen. 48:20
- For protection at night: Gen. 49:18
- To drive off demons and evil spirits (should be recited immediately before retiring or over an infant's cradle): Num. 6:24-7; Deut. 32:10-2
- To counteract magic: Ex. 22:17 and Is. 41:24; Lev. 1:1; Num. 23:21-3; ten verses which begin and end with the letter nun, in the following order: Lev:13:9, Num 32:32, Deut. 18:15, Cant 14:11, Prov. 7:17, Prov. 20:27, I. Chr. 12:2, Jer. 50:18, Ps. 78:12, Ps 77:21
- To win favor: Gen. 46:17 and Num. 26:46; Cant. 6:4-9
- To win credence in a dispute: Deut. 32:1-2
- To have one's prayer answered: Ex. 34:6-7; Ex. 15:2
- For a sweet voice: Ex. 15:1; Cant. 1:1
- To strengthen the voice: Gen. 44:18
- For the leader of prayer: Cant. 6:10-7:11
- To arouse love: Cant. 1:3
- At a betrothal: Cant. 4:1-5:2
- For a newly married couple: Gen. 27:28; Num. 24:5-7; Cant. 3:9-11
- To maintain peace between man and wife: Cant. 8:5
- To cure sterily: Deut. 7:12
- To halt menstrual flow: Lev. 15:28
- For a fever: Num. 12:13; Deut. 7:15
- For consumption: Lev. 5:19
- For success: Gen. 39:2; Ex. 15:11
- For profitable trade: Gen. 31:42; Gen. 44:12
- To fatten fowl: Deut. 22:6 and Is. 10:14
- To make flocks thrive: Ge. 32:15 and Prov. 27:26-7
- On beginning a new piece of work: Ex. 36:8
- On entering a new home: Gen. 37:1; Gen. 47:27; Ex. 40:2
- For safety on a journey: Ex. 15:13; Num. 10:35-6; Cant. 7:12
- To be saved from an impending danger: Ex. 6:6-7
- In a time of trouble: Cant. 2:14; Cant. 5:2
- Against an enemy: Ex. 15:5; 15:6; 15:9; 15:19; Deut. 22:6, Is. 10:14, and Prov. 1:17
- To cause an enemy to die: Num. 14-37
- To be invisible: Gen. 19:11
- To cause an enemy to drown: Ex. 15:10
- To be victorious in war: Ex. 15:3; Deut. 21:10
- To cause the strength of an opposing army to wither away: Deut. 4:24
- Against pursuers: Ex. 15:4
- Against wild beasts: Deut. 18:13
- Against highwaymen: Ex. 15:14
- Against robbers: Ex. 15:15; Deut. 11:25; Cant. 2:15; Gen. 32:2-3
- Against slander: Ex. 15:7
- To cause a man who has sworn falsely to die within a year: Ex. 15:12
- To calm a raging river: Ex. 15:8
- To dissipate a mirage or a hallucination: Ex. 15:16
- For intelligence: Deut. 33:3-4
- To cause a curse to take effect: Lev. 27:29
- For dream divination: Deut. 29:28; Cant. 1:7
- Against the evil eye: Num. 21:17-20
- For good health after a fast: Lev. 26:42

Those verses were not simply read, however. For example, Ex. 22:17, first verse on the list for counteracting magic, is made up of the three Hebrew words that translate into English as "Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live." These words had to be said in each of their six possible paramutations before being followed by the verse Is. 41:24 ("Behold, ye are nothing, and your work a thing of nought; an abomination is he that choseth you.")

In any event, consider that list of effects. There's a great many protection spells; some very specific; dispel demons and evil spirits; counteract magic; two equivalents of the "Friend" spell; two bardic voice spells; love and fertility spells; several curative spells; an invisibility spell; a "Weakness" spell; three separate death spells; an intelligence spell; a divination spell; and a curse spell. (And that's not the whole list.)

Now we shift to game mechanics, the reason that I typed up this list. I'd like to ask two questions for the assembled readership of A&E (and I hope to see some of you answer in future issues).

1. Is this spell list balanced? That is,
 - a. as a player, would you be comfortable to run a character who took his/her magic from this list?
 - b. does this spell list give an unfair advantage to a "Rabbi" PC as opposed to other PC classes or to monsters?
 - c. does this spell list give too much or too little power to a lower level player (in systems with levels)? to a high level player?
2. Appropo to questions 1.b. and 1.c., what requirements in terms of level, INT, spell points, or points of POW would you put on the various spells on the list?
3. What other spells would be needed to balance this list? To suppliment it?

What I'm asking here is that we consider the questions of magic system design. This piece can be considered a follow-up to my material on the "physics" of magic that appeared about ten issues back. Although I used terms from a number of different gaming systems, that article was written in terms that a PC mage would be used to: the force that is manipulated to produce magical effects, how it is manipulated, and some of the practical problems of that manipulation and how they might be overcome in the development of a cohesive system.

This article goes the other way. Magic for DMs, or, rather, magic for magic systems designers. And by magic systems designers, I mean any DM who's had the nerve to tinker with the specific set of rules that came with the game, be it AD&D, RQ, T&T, C&S, or any of the rest of the alphabet soup.

(A little background might be useful to this discussion. The Trachtenberg book deals with the folklore of the Eastern European Jewish community, a highly segregated, often persecuted, rural ethnos that preserved much of medieval mysticism. This explains both the number of protection spells and the ones dealing with prayer and with daily life.)

I look forward to hearing not only from DMs who've had to wrestle with aspects of this problem in designing their own magical systems, but also from the players of non-standard (or even standard) systems? How does this set of spells strike them, and, if they were playtesting it as a new system, what would they want out of it?

SCOTT FITZ PBZ:

Sorry that I didn't respond to the last turn.

First, the Star of David that I wear under my shirt isn't an antique, but it was made in Israel and has a semi-precious gemstone called a Jerusalem stone mounted in it. Have I sensed any magic about it?

Second, as we walked towards the city, I was meditating about (that is, thinking/talking to myself about) things related to Judaism (as I understand the religion). Have I gotten any sense of clerical abilities?

As to both of these points, I realize that I should have asked sooner. If nothing would have resulted from my doing so, please say so. Otherwise consider that I will continue to attempt to try these things (finding out if my Star of David has become magical and trying for Clerical powers) at any opportunity until I get a definite response.

As to what happens now: When we got near the city, I looked for signs of similarities to various historic cultures in terms of the architecture of the city and the garb of the guards. (An Egyptian city doesn't look like a Medieval city doesn't look like a Roman city, etc.) Is there any evidence in terms of either the architecture or the decorative art--if any--on the city walls.

The language of the guards sounded vaguely Slavic when I tried to pronounce it. Is it. I don't speak any Slavic languages, but I grew up in a town with large Slavic populations so I think that I'd recognize the sound of it. (For that matter, I think that I'd also recognize the linguistic family, at least, of any of the Romance languages, Germanic, or Semetic.)

I'm not going to start any fighting by myself. If the rest of the group wants to go with the guard, I'll go as well. My own inclination, if asked is to go with the guards. They, at least, seem peaceable. If we are suspect because of our appearance, it would be better to see about getting cleared of any charges than to risk an attack within the city by a larger group of guards. That will be my suggestion if we get a chance to talk about it.

If the decision is that we fight, I'll attack the nearest guard using my walking stick ("The MacGreggor") as a club. At the same time, I'll be yelling for somebody with a missile weapon to try to take out the guard who was going for the camels. This will also be my strategy in the event that we're attacked.

If we do get the opportunity, though, to talk, I'd like to try and see if the guards can understand English (or whatever Common we are now speaking). During the conversation with the other PBZers, I'd try to say a couple of things along the lines of "At least we can talk openly. They don't speak English here." and "Did you manage to hide that stuff before we came over the last hill?" How do the guards react when I do?

If anybody tries to separate us from our equipment, I'll try to keep my tallis and my prayer book, claiming my status as a cleric. If I think that I can get away with it, I'll try to palm at least the knife. Also, if there hasn't been any fighting up to that point, I'll try to keep my walking stick as well.

by Steve Jones, 307, Gillott Rd, Edgbaston, Birmingham, England.

REVIEW: DRAGONLORDS 19. (48pp, for other info see front of A&E, also available from Dave Nalle, \$1.50)

Once upon a time there was a fanzine which successfully combined conceptual-level articles and mad Pythonesque humour. Detailed reviews campaign design, PB the Munchkin Eternal, Citabout Miniatures, the Giant Centipede and Corpse character classes (Officially Unapproved for A D & D). But after winning the Games Day Award for Best Fanzine and with the editors having less time to work on it it has been swamped by Diddy People and sunk as low as AD&D dungeons and the Great Nipples Debate (don't ask) in DL18.

Fortunately DL19 is a vast improvement. Marc Gascoigne, the one responsible for most of their libel lawsuits, is back. The best article this issue is "I Know Where My Towel Is", the Hitch-Hikers' Guide To The Galaxy role-playing game, which is actually playable even if it is a joke (like recent AD&D character classes). The authors, Chris Eliot and Dick Edwards, have recently had their "Ecology of the Piercer/Land Shark/Catablepas" articles reprinted in the Dragon without anyone at TD realising they were taking the mickey out of silly D&D monsters. The game uses the original idea that PCs can never be killed or seriously injured in any situation, but the player must invent a way out, however improbable, and receives points for improbability and elegance of presentation.

There is also the regular section on new games by Doug Cowie. As it is about games arriving in Britain (up to six months after the US) and gives prices in ~~REAL MONEY~~ sterling, it will be of little interest to foreigners.

New this issue is more attention to F&SF, with a report on Mythcon '83 and a section on British SF fandom and fanzines, by Chuck Connors.

There are 10 pages of letters, unfortunately they do not seem to have recovered from the Great Nipples Debate and do not discuss anything interesting. (Actually I am just complaining because Mike Lewis has never printed any of my letters.) DL has 5 pages devoted to postal Diplomacy and Nuclear War, mostly incomprehensible if you are not involved. Add an article on RQ Befuddle, Harmonize and Dispel Magic, a send-up new releases page (a new post-Holocaust game called Protect and Survive, by Home Office Inc), fanzine reviews, some EGG bashing, a bit on castles, and the generally good VOP and REDFOX cartoons.

DL could do with a Table of Contents. If you order back issues get from before 15 to avoid the rot. All together now:

WE WANT MORE PBTM

LIST OF TOPICS ON BACKBURNER (What do people want to see?)

RQ cults: Great Newt cult (Water, Man) (newtlings)
 Father of Independants, (Magic, Stasis) (outcasts, bandits)
 Black Adder Spirit Cult (Stasis, Beast, Spirit, Chaos)
 Yelmalio (as he is in Balazar)

Gorakiki (cult for insect people of Pamaltela)
 More RQ: Written Darktongue (or How to Read by Sonar)
 New Experience System (Put weapon caddies out of work)

Aftermath! A New Timing System
 Champions Marvel and DC conversions

How to do Power (fill in blank) including "Precognition"
 ATM DTM & DTM Kzinti/Umberhulk crossbreeds as PCs (a StarFleet Battlesjoke)

CHRONICLES OF ZONKA

PHOTOCOPIED BY BARRY GOLD

(c) Copyright James Robert, 112 W. Douglass, Houghton, MI. 49931

THE DUKES OF ALEXANDRIA

SUMMARY: Zonka is a Dwarf Innkeeper played by James Robert in BOB MOORE's V&D world, Tefara. The Chronicles are taken from Zonka's diary and represent his point of view. Wayside, Zonka's mountainside inn, conceals a cave containing a machine which can teleport and/or fire missiles to any place on Tefara's surface. Zonka and his cleric friend, Chester, have taken an oath never to abuse the machine's powers.

At this point in the story, Zonka and his friends sent the Laseasu Ig ahead of the party to the flagship of the Dukes of Alexandria. Ig was supposed to announce the party's intention of purchasing slaves, slaves to run the inn. Ig no sooner arrived on board when he was attacked by something, or someone, the party can't see. They brought Ig back to the cave, inadvertently bringing his assailant with him. Whatever it was, that came with Ig, took the party's items, stacking them in a pile by the machine. It then sealed off the cavern with an iron wall, separating the party from their stuff and from the machine. The entire party is baffled, even the Youth's *see invisible* spell failed to disclose what is in the cave with them.

When I beat on the iron wall, the iron wall which had magically appeared in front of us, separating us from our items and the machine, laughter filled the cavern. What was going on? I didn't know. Neither did anyone else.

I suggested several options. Could Ig use his dimension door to get us past the wall? Ig said no, not through solid metal. I asked if any of the mages could do something, but no, they also said their magic could not traverse metal. The wall would take months to break through with pick and sledge. I considered asking The Youth With The Golden Rings to 'use a wish', but rejected that notion: things weren't that desperate yet. The Youth had never used any of his wishes in the all the time I had known him. Even magic didn't work, spells which were supposed to show *invisible* failed against our opponent. It appeared we had no options.

"What can we do?," I asked Delila. "It isn't our turn, so we wait, and hope that whoever is in there doesn't blow himself, not to mention us, to bits by trying the machine's buttons." We sat down to wait. Whoever, whatever it was that controlled the situation would have to make the next move. All of us were a bit unnerved, though only the Hobbit spoke his mind. Sam was upset he wasn't going to get home the next day like he had planned. "Why did I let you talk me into adventuring again, anyway? Elenore will be furious," he lamented. "Tomorrow is Matthew's third birthday. She has a party planned: I'm supposed to help with the guests. Boy am I in trouble. She may never speak to me again." He hesitated a moment, then shrugged his shoulders and added, "Stupid Dwarf, it's all your fault."

Again laughter filled the cave. For me, for a moment, time stopped. I remembered something Delila had told me, long ago. "When all seems lost, those that despair die. Those that don't, often survive. At such moments one must think. Think! Have you missed a clue? Have you overlooked something subtle, or something so obvious it can't be seen?" Our opponent couldn't be seen, even magic failed to disclose him. He couldn't be seen ... *he couldn't be seen* ... The timeless moment passed.

Laughter. I heard the laughter, and understood what it meant to hear the laughter. Sound doesn't go through iron walls. The thing that had come back with Ig was on our side of the wall, and it wasn't trying to kill us. Perhaps all wasn't lost after all. I started talking about how all I had wanted was to buy some slaves, in particular a Hobbit cook, that I was willing to pay an honest price, and so on. Delila, always the professional, caught on immediately. (Had she already heard?) Delila spoke of the Dukes of Alexandria as 'fine merchants', suppliers of rare and wonderful goods. Delila's a charmer, that's for sure. When she finished speaking, a Voice spoke, a Voice with an Elvish accent. "It seems we have had a misunderstanding. I, er, the Dukes, have had a great deal of trouble lately with Laseasu. When one appeared suddenly on our, er, on the Dukes' flagship, I thought, well, you know ... I thought I should protect the Dukes from the intruder. Now you teleported me here I can only guess, will only guess, since I have no stomach for playing with machines I don't understand."

"Right you are," Delila replied. "A wise decision not to play with the buttons. Three of the eleven, unless they are pressed in exactly the correct order, kill the operator. [This was an exaggeration, but then, Delila has been known to stretch the truth to suit the occasion.] It was so clever of you to remain to our side of the wall, to listen, to make

sure we meant no harm, before letting us know you were here. No wonder the Dukes are respected throughout Tefara. I can see how the Dukes had no trouble besting the likes of Tintangle and King Arthur. No wonder at all, if all the Dukes' people are as clever as you." Soon the Voice agreed to return to the Dukes' flagship. The iron wall went away, and the Voice climbed onto Ig's back. Delila pressed the appropriate keys to teleport them onto the Dukes' flagship. The rest of us, discretely, stayed clear of our weapons until, using the viewing scope on the machine, we saw Ig standing on the ship's deck. Only then did we follow. Delila stayed behind, someone had to remain to control the machine for the return trip.*

Who was the Voice, the Thiz' who had single handedly bested the lot of us? I was never to know. Once, I heard him called 'Danore', I know no more about him. And the Dukes, who are they? The Dukes are superb merchants who tell no one their names. They are quite powerful, I can tell you that: I would not like to be the one to test their power. Never again do I want to confront whatever came to the cave that night.

Once we got to the Dukes' flagship we were personally given a tour of the slave decks by one of the Dukes (I think there are three). This one was a short, powerful man, a cleric, I would guess, one of the ugliest men I have ever met. Well fed was he: his fat jowls sagged beneath a short, black, pointed beard, and around his thick neck, upon a platinum chain, hung a gold candle set in eleven large diamonds. He reeked of wealth. His clothes were made of the finest silk, yet, strangely, his garments were soiled and greasy. I recall the night air aboard ship was quite chilly, and while he was showing us around, he called out to a shiphand to bring him an overgarment. This, too, was made of the finest material, but the moment he put it on, it also became unkept. A curse perhaps: we knew better than to ask.

The Duke showed us many slaves. My heart went out to them: it was clear they were roughly treated, allowed to die at whatever rate afforded the most profit. The Dukes are motivated by but one thing: AVARICE. Show them a way to make a copper, and they will kill for it, or be your friend for it, whatever is required, to make the copper. The Dukes are "amoral". They have no scruples at all, judging from what the slaves I purchased told me later, the "Lawful Evil", the Scum of Tefara.

This Duke was very pleasant, quite the talker. "Now this one here, I should charge you several thousand. Believe me, if it was anyone else the price would be quite high, but you, since you are a personal friend of a Duke ... say, seventeen hundred." I took my time with my selections, tho' it hurt me to see the way the miserable creatures were penned up, underfed, denied even the simplest comforts of hygiene. In all, I bought seven servants for the inn:

ROBERT PUSHBUTTEN: Robert is a Ranger, tho' I'm sure the Dukes thought him only a Warrior. I had no idea of his talents when I bought him, I simply liked him, that's all.

ELMO TALKFARR: Elmo is an excellent Hobbit cook. (Talkfarr was the second Mafing "cook" the Duke showed me. The first claimed to be a master chef, but a few questions showed he was bluffing. For instance, he actually said the secret to making doughnuts was to dip them into a pot of boiling water immediately after removing them from the frying grease. I had no time at all for nonsense such as that.)

GMEUN: This poor girl was a simple servant girl of Bishop Baldwin. She sold herself into slavery as punishment for a small error she had made while on an errand for the good Bishop. She worked for me only a short time; then I gave her back to her previous master.

BANNA: This stout lad I purchased as a bouncer. Alas, the kid had no heart for it, spent his time praying and meditating instead. He was good with figures though, and I assigned him the duties of helping Alice with the books.

THREE OTHERS there were, but for the life of me, I can't remember their names, or if they just waited tables, or what.

When I was done with my buying, I thanked the Duke sincerely for helping me with my selections, telling him I was happy to find a merchant with whom I could deal with no questions asked. Yet, secretly, that night on the deck of the Dukes' ship, I vowed I would live to see the day the flagship was freed of slaves and sank in a Tefara sea. You see, though I respect the Dukes' power, I despise them and their line of work.

* The mistake of teleporting the entire party, I made but once.

Once before I had had a slave, the sage who had thrown the dangerous teleport spell in our escape from Bay de Gree. When he had been killed, I had had to make a tough decision: bury him and endanger the party, or leave his body to the wolves. Sometimes, especially when the moon is full, I have a re-occurring nightmare about him. Always in my dream the wolves eat his eyes. I hate that dream. This time would be different. I planned to do right by the servants at Wayside.

We returned to the inn. There each slave was given a hot meal, a bath, and fresh clothing. Chester and I showed them, each and every one, how to run the teleport machine. I told them of the centipedes who dwelt in the cave entry, beneath the kitchen. "These creatures lived here before I came to the cave. They have my personal guarantee of safety; treat them as pets. I will not have them harmed." The tour of the place finished, we returned to the kitchen, and there, over a bottle of fine wine, I told them my dream of Wayside becoming "world famous". Then, to their surprise, I added, and I meant it, they were free to leave Wayside at any time. I even signed the necessary documents declaring them free and put them away in a safe place where they could easily be obtained. "If you stay you will be expected to work hard. Provided you do, you shall be treated fairly. I want my guests to get the best service possible; I want never to see a customer waiting for service; I want never to see a wine glass, or a water glass, more than half empty. The place is to always be clean. You are to be courteous to the guests. You will be allowed to use the machine to visit friends, loved ones, or simply to spend some time away from here. However, you will take the oath never to abuse the machine's powers, never to knowingly use the machine for evil. Do these things and you will have free run of the place, even share in the profit. This I swear." When I had done with my little speech the seven sat there for several moments: just sat and stared at me. Then, as one, they cheered.

Wayside was on its way. I had my servants. I had my Arena. Nothing could stop me now.

... to be continued ...

COMMENTS A&E 99

LEE GOLD: I appreciate your herb list, will use it.

BILL KAVIEVE: Your comment about social interaction interfering with FRP was accurate, yet painful. I agree with your analysis and 'solution' of separating socializing and FRP, just as I separate work and play.

DAVID MALLY: Re Thieves Guild Fallacy. Granted that thieving is a backstabbing, dishonorable business, then you are correct in concluding thief guilds would rarely last. However, consider a different premise. Suppose the business of lockpicking was dangerous, that spying could only be done by experts, that only a fool would try to remove a trap without knowledge of what he was attempting. With this quite different premise, in certain circles, the circles of Princes and adventurers, for example, thieves would be considered honorable and necessary people. If I understand *modus tollens*, from a false premise one can prove anything. I like to have my thieves apprentice to clockmakers, stone masons, carpenters, and such like. They are desired companions on adventure trips. Many powerful PCs and NPCs want thieves to prosper. So they do.

DANIEL NOTLE: Try counting again. Prince Eric "typed" an even dozen. / Liked your comment about 'saying something' has never been a prerequisite to insulting people in A&E. (Is this compound comment a paradox? Hope not.)

GENERAL: I don't speak acronymise: but, I did finally figure out that Play By Zine is duped PBZ.

by Richard J. Schwall
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ElectroStencil by Barry Gold
with my sincere thanks!

The most obvious uses of power pricing is attempting to balance characters, character classes, powers, and devices. Such concepts have come under a variety of attacks. In a superhero game, the heroes may all start looking much the same. I have yet to see a game in which characters comparable to Batman and Superman are seen working together. Some observers have objected to complete disregard for financial costs in a pure power-pricing system. Thus, over the months, I have developed new concepts for using a power pricing system, and I wish to discuss some of them with you.

I envision a game in which power pricing would be the job of the GM alone. The players would not be informed of the details of the power pricing system. They would be allowed to provide a sketch of each character they wished to run. They might be allowed to choose between running one powerful character or several weaker ones. The GM would edit each character, both to make their total power fit his limits, and to make their backgrounds fit his world. Thus, the players would have partial, but not complete, control over the creation of their characters.

The players would also provide a "wish list" of how they want their characters to develop. Some would like their characters to gradually become more powerful by elimination of some of the limitations (limited uses, time to activate, scarce spell components, etc.) on their abilities. Others would rather wait and add entire complete new abilities. Some would want to wait even longer and introduce whole new characters.

I now introduce the concept of "Deserved" Power Points (DPP). In some games these existed in the form of experience points. However, I am thinking of something a bit more general. DPP could be awarded for good role playing, accomplishing goals, heroic self-sacrifice, entertaining the GM, etc. DPP could be deducted for getting a character killed foolishly, disruptive behavior of the players, playing out of character, dishonestly capitalizing on the GM's poor memory, etc.

I suggest that, for simplicity of accounting, DPP should only change between game sessions, or at major adventure breaks. During the accounting period between adventures or sessions, the GM would recompute each character's Actual Power Points (APP). This calculation would take into account improvements in skills due to training and adventuring, new equipment acquired, etc. The difference DPP-APP is then added into a running total for each character, called the Integrated Power Discrepancy (IPD).

If a character is seen to have an abnormally high IPD, then the GM might award additional power in the form of a gift from a deity, a device awarded by the party's sponsor, a radiation accident causing new mutant powers, or any other gift of power at the GM's disposal. Alternatively, the IPD could be just allowed to pile up until the player has enough to start a new character, or could be saved for resurrections.

If a character's IPD has gone excessively negative, then the GM might take action to restrict the character's powers. Such action could include critical wounds, curses, theft of a powerful device, destruction of a device in combat or by natural disaster, restrictions imposed by a quest, or the simple fade-out of unnatural powers. Alternatively, negative IPD points might just be retained for a while to counteract positive IPD in other characters the player controls. Clearly, some of the power-restricting options require the GM to have a firm control of the game and not feel he has to abdicate his decision-making responsibilities to dice.

One might argue that there is a potential disadvantage here, especially if the players know what is going on. Why should a player have his character take time out from adventuring to train in a skill, when not doing so will cause his IPD to build up faster and he will grow in power anyway? There are several answers to this. By training, the player chooses what new capabilities he develops, instead of leaving that to GM decree. If the GM prefers to have characters train, he can award DPP for it. If the GM thinks that a character who does no training is unnatural in the campaign culture, he can deduct DPP for playing out of character.

I think that the idea of requiring the sacrifice of accumulated IPD from established characters in order to begin a new character puts an interesting new decision into the hands of the players. Clearly, new characters are valuable towards keeping the player in the game if old characters die. The GM will have to keep the characters informed on their cumulative IPD status, so they know when they can start a new character. The players should be allowed some control over whether accumulated IPD piles up for character generation or appears as growth in power of established characters.

In general, I would allow a new character to be created when there is an accumulated IPD equal to the APP of the beginning character. Similarly, a character could be raised if he had an IPD equal to the APP of the character, and the APP would be subtracted from the IPD. Inadequate IPD might cause the character's APP and DPP when raised to be limited to the available IPD excess, representing death-shock memory loss. Thus, a player who deliberately kept the APP of a character 10% below their DPP could raise it completely after 10 sessions of play. Shifting of IPD might be allowed between characters. This could be all done at the temples. Perhaps the gods deduct 10%. Perhaps worshippers sacrifice excess IPD to the gods regularly, and this is what supplies their power for miracles. Some GMs might even keep track of the IPD income and expenses of the gods in the campaign, and thus know when the gods' reserves are getting low, leading to a recruiting drive for worshippers or the inability to perform miracles.

THE SCIENCE OF UNREALITY

A zine coming to you from the recently unearthed mind of Bill Karieva, 553 Prospect Hill Road, Windsor, CT 06095; (203) 688-4418.

Hello! Before I explain what happened to my promised D&D Cartoon review I would like to thank Scot Fritz for the invite into his Sparrowsfield campaign. The man is a great person/GM and has the rare ability to make and keep a game interesting. The campaign includes Martin Wixted (who wishes everybody would stop saying that he modified Scot's Raw Force magic system) and several other strange people. Destiny ~~did~~ dictates that a write-up should come from this...

COMMENTS

SCOT FRITZ (97): Native Intelligence is an excellent attribute, but it is probably better used along side of an I.Q. attribute rather than alone.

VINCENT FOSTER (97): Interesting ~~pe~~ piece on beserking, thanks.

M.T. CHILD & JOE UBERMAN (97): Hello! Remember me? (Wakefield High) Yes, I survived that stunt you pulled at graduation, unlike many others... It's hard to believe that you guys are still alive; how about a letter?

IAN STRAUS (98): The two most harmful things to good role-playing ~~and~~ ^{are} continual combat and the D&D type "Dungeon". Eliminate these and the players will come around. If combat is realistic (ie very dangerous) and adventures are detailed, believable, and challenging mentally then dialogue will replace fireballs. Plentiful conversation will give personalities to the characters. This can be aided by having the players create interesting backgrounds and by forcing them to work for needed information (through social interaction, investigation, etc.) instead of just giving it to them.

DAVID JOINER (98): I like your ideas on Elvish androgyny, they explain Elves' behavior perfectly. Thought: If you accept the idea that the minor personality differences between humans of different sexes are caused by puberty occurring in the teens, imagine when it must occur for Dwarves. (Adolescent Dwarvish toddlers?)

STEVE GILHAM (100): Intriguing ideas on Tolkien. I just happen to run a campaign set in Middle Earth and I just may give some of them a try.

DAVID NALLE (100): I agree that magic-use is usually way out of proportion. The existence of magic as it is defined in most rules would ~~send~~ send the worlds these rules are used with into immediate chaos. Magic can exist in these worlds and PCs can handle it, magic is too good of a thing to be taken away. It should just be more subtle and limited in its power to affect the traditional practices of a world (especially with medieval settings). In some worlds (Arn?) the prevalent use of powerful magic seems to fit in perfectly.

SCOT FRITZ & MARTIN WIXTED (100): Your real-time combat systems are a big improvement (in realism) over those with "rounds". The problem is going to be running combat as fast as it can be done with rounds. It will increase player choice and believability, but it will also force increased attention on mechanics (timekeeping). If this can be overcome, then, like other D&D legacies, rounds will become a thing of the past.

COVER (100): Beautiful.

EVERYONE: Yes, the title of this zine is new, but I am not. My first zine (Infinite Frontiers) was in #99. I tend to move onto new and better (?) ground quite a bit and my zine title is going to keep evolving right along with everything else.

Mundanes & Magic: The reason mundanes are uneasy about magic spells in games may be that they believe in magic. Or so one could infer from the premise of a book by Psychiatry professor Dr. George Serban, the Tyranny of Magical Thinking (\$17.95, E.P. Dutton). I haven't read the book but it got a long and interesting review in the Washington Post recently.

Remember the accusation that AD&D was dangerous because it contained real magical spells, complete with ingredient lists? I don't know who started that one, but it was passed around a lot of religious groups and accepted unquestioningly by some. I laughed off the charge because I do not believe in magic as a real force, and in any case I don't know of any evidence that the spells in the AD&D PLAYER'S HANDBOOK work or were intended to work in the real world.

According to Dr. Serban, surveys indicate that 55% of Americans believe in some form of magic that directly affects their lives, including astrology, tarot, I Ching, fate or predestination, black cats, evil eyes, etc. And 18% apply magical thinking to actual day-to-day decision making. Some 20 million read astrology columns every day, and others depend on elaborate rituals to influence the outcome of a project or trip. How many people do you know who stubbornly cling to a lucky hat or shirt or rabbit's foot? Given this cultural background, it is not surprising that even people who pride themselves on their rational or scientific thinking retain a lurking fear of magic as the unknown menace in the darkness.

Magical thinking, according to Dr. Serban, is the belief that the individual can influence things in his own way. The attempt to TK dice is a good example of this type of thinking (like a lot of this essay, this is my addition and not the doctor's example), since it is an attempt to influence events by direct force of will. This is typical of the thinking of children, says the doctor, who do not understand reality because they do not have the data from experience and instruction to relate what they perceive to what really happened. Thus the mental response of a child is qualitatively different from that of an adult--children are not "little adults." For example, children think of death as a departure with "no particular finality attached to it and without precluding in any way the possibility of return." Note that many adults react to news of a death with denial, as if saying, "No" could negate the reality. And gamers generally like the idea of magic to return the dead to life, which is hardly consistent with realistic thinking.

The title of the book refers to Dr. Serban's argument that a lot of adult neuroses can be traced to magical thinking, the failure to let go of primitive perceptions in favor of more logical appreciation of reality. He warns that many people do not understand the intellectual achievements of our age and regard science as another form of magic--letting their lives be controlled by a technological elite. He suggests that this is happening because while science allows us some control over our environment, neither that control nor our understanding of the universe are complete. This leaves the fear of the unknown that is a basic factor of human nature. Primitive societies adopted magic as a sort of positive thinking approach to handle the unknown and push off that fear. Religion arose from the same instinct. "We cannot live without answers that sometimes cannot be found in the realm of the logical." Thus we need magic and religion to offer us hope in situations we do not understand or cannot otherwise overcome.

I suspect that although fear of the unknown and magical thinking are a major cause of the campaigns against rolegaming by fundamentalist religious groups, a lot of the appeal of rolegaming to us arises out of our own magical thinking. Why else is magic (and the clerical magic subclass) such a prominent aspect in rolegaming?

Isn't it the suppressed desire for personal power over our environment by force of will? And consider that absolutely everyone, in other rolegaming occupations, seeks enrichment in the form of magical widgets that will increase our power over the game world by magically giving us abilities denied ordinary folk. Isn't this magical thinking too? I think gamers tend to project their deepest fears and urges into their characters and significantly use gaming to play out in an imaginary world the success that does not come to us in the real world. This kind of psychodrama is generally disguised, sometimes even from the gamer himself. But you can learn a lot about a person, including his personal stresses and anxieties, from watching how he projects personality into a character. Or so it seems to me.

D&D Suicide Lawsuit Update: I reported in TGD55 on the filing of a civil suit against the principal of a Virginia high school by the parents of a 16-year-old boy who committed suicide in 1982. They alleged that the suicide was caused by stress during a D&D game or series of games, which took place as an organized school activity, and that the principal was therefore responsible. The judge ruled that the principal was immune from lawsuit since a government official cannot be sued for acts that occur in official capacity. The parents' attorney said they will appeal, but I have not seen any report that the appeal has been filed or acted upon. and nothing was said in the Oct. 27, 1983 newspaper report about the parents trying the next logical step and suing the county under the state tort claim act for permitting a hazardous activity to be run under county approval at the school.

The problem is that this resolution doesn't address the issue of interest to us: whether D&D is a dangerous activity. The decision was that regardless of what happened, the school principal was immune to suit. I would have preferred a decision on the merits (even though that would put the burden of the trial time and expense on the unfortunate principal), because I am confident it is most unlikely a jury would be convinced that D&D was the cause of the boy's suicide. Based on what was reported, it seems clear the boy was highly unpopular at school, and the hostility against his character was merely a part of that unpopularity. He killed himself because he was rejected by his contemporaries and couldn't handle it.

If Dr. Serban is correct about the development of human understanding of reality from childhood magical thinking to adult examination and logic, we ought to be aware that the magical thinking embodied in rolegaming may carry some hazard to children. The games are written by adults and assume that the gamer can distinguish between fantasy accepted for entertainment and reality. It has not been demonstrated that children do not take game concepts and cling with them to magical thinking as applied to real life. There is a disturbingly high amount of suicide among high school students, and lesser demonstrations of inability to deal with stress that adults accept as part of their environment. This may be in part a symptom of magical thinking in adolescents, that could be studied to help prevent catastrophic inability to deal with reality (including the nastiness of other people). Note that D&D is aimed mostly at 8-14-year-olds, who are still far from fully adult. Thus there may be a direct connection between the nature of magical thinking and D&D's appeal to this age group.

While rolegaming is not the only spreader of magical thinking--TV is full of it, with commercials promising instant success from the use of widgets or potions, and dramas showing complex problems solved quickly by heroes using simple solutions usually involving violence or intimidation of "bad people"--we are the part getting the bad publicity. If we are to answer criticism, we'd better understand our hobby better than the critics.

Rejection Reaction: The high school suicide was an extreme reaction, but it illustrates a feature of human nature we ought to be aware of: people generally react poorly to rejection. Courtesy and tact are tools developed, not out of an abstract desire to be nice, but from pragmatic recognition that rejecting a person is no way to persuade him to adopt your policy or program. Telling someone he's an idiot because he disagrees with you is likely to elicit resentment at the least, and more often active hostility. Ridiculing someone for using a different rule or having a different attitude does the same thing. I have been writing for rolegaming APAs since 1977, and over the years I have observed many feuds that could have been prevented by courtesy and tolerance.

Historically, not long ago, insulting someone would provoke a duel to the death in this country. Even today, the law will punish someone for attacking someone else, but recognized an exception for "fighting words": situations, in which the insulter is regarded as provoking the fight. Some contributors, particularly Britons, have expressed a liking for fanzines full of personal insults as a form of humor. I hope this discussion will help them understand why this is a bad idea--attempted humor directed towards anyone but a close friend is unlikely to be understood humorously.

The law of defamation is an alternative for the blood feud. Instead of the old system of killing the offender, the law has for quite a long time substituted a trial that can award substantial money damages to the victim of slander or libel. We accept this because we read about it in the papers, but I wonder how many of us understand why the law works that way. Published insults damage the victim's reputation and thus damage the victim personally; they can also cause long-lasting outrage and thus psychological damage. The criminal law punishes murder to discourage killing; the civil law punishes libel to discourage defamation that can lead to killing. It is a pragmatic way to handle the violent side of human nature.

We need these restraints not only because we hate insult or ridicule of ourselves but because we tend to insult/ridicule others with slight provocation. How many times have you thought someone was "crazy," when all he did was disagree with one of your cherished beliefs? You can find examples of this syndrome in any issue of the APAs in people's comments about other people's proposals. And yet this could be prevented by just a little consideration for others, if you are interested in a discussion of issues instead of a fight.

The principle of courtesy in argument is to analyze the subject of the discussion. Reject the other person's arguments with a reasoned rebuttal--don't reject the other person's right to take another approach. Argue for what you prefer by showing how it solves the problem you want solved--don't ridicule the other person for not seeing it your way. There is no monoblock of opinion in rolegaming, but rather a lot of different approaches. Tolerate the right of others to do their own thing, to meet their individual needs in gaming, if you expect to receive the same tolerance and respect yourself.

Some feuds are caused by poor communication. Most are caused by closed minds on one or both sides, and use of language showing personal rejection. Think about it.

What Is A Character? One thing that has emerged from the continuing discussion over courtesy and styles of gaming is that there seem to be as many different points of view on treatment of characters as there are over types of roleplaying style. Or perhaps the view of what a character "is" to the gamer is keyed to the gamer's style preference. I don't yet have a neat structure to peg it to, but I'm going to stick my neck out and attempt to discuss it anyway.

The axis of measurement I am considering here is a gamer's degree of personal involvement with a character. At the low end of the scale is the player who regards the character as a "thing," losing which is annoying only because it is demeaning to lose a contest. At the high end is the player who sees the character as himself in a different set of clothes and views any attack or insult to the character from other PCs or NPCs as directed ultimately towards himself. (Perhaps this is not an accurate definition of the extremes, and I'd be interested in refinements, but I think it will do as a good start.)

One school of thought feels gaming is a contest in which it is expected that people will be good losers when they lose a character. For example, this is often expressed in language suggesting that expressing anger at having a character backstabbed by a companion is evidence of immaturity. This point of view can arise, curiously enough, either from a gamer who really sees a character as cardboard or from a gamer who is so tied into roleplaying as theatre that he is detached from the role--or at least uses the actor's detachment from a character who is fated by the plot to die in the last act as a role model for gaming.

I question the validity of this role model, and I hope to be excused for a bit of amateur psychology in making this argument (since I am not trained in the field professionally). While I enjoy creating alternate personae for my characters to play out in a world other than the one I live in myself, I have never taken the ultimate detachment of regarding a character as someone who lives and dies completely separate from my own participation. To understand why, think back to my discussion of my own gaming style in TGD55--I enjoy gaming for the same reason I enjoy getting involved in a good novel, by identifying with a main character's struggles and achievements. I believe that this identification process is what makes the novel a popular art form. Have you ever put a book down without finishing it because you couldn't get interested in the characters? I suggest that the reason was that you couldn't identify with them personally.

Similarly with a gaming character. A PC is, to me, the person I identify with as my participation in the fictional world in which the action takes place. The excitement of combat lies in the danger to my character-self. The frustration of the game comes from failing to achieve objectives in the game world. The annoyance comes from discovering that I cannot get along with other gamers in the same session. That it takes place on the character level does not totally insulate it from the player level when it appears that part of the planning is taking place on the player level. The two blend and fade and do a sort of dance in which the level of primary importance is sometimes hard to spot.

I have a feeling that few players are as detached as some writers like to urge them to be. I believe that most of us have a piece of ourselves inside the persona we create for a character, because the function of the character is to allow us to play out our personal fantasy in that form. It seems to me that this is why players can become incensed over losing a character while rolegaming, while another player tells them that "it's only a game." Because, to a limited extent, I think we identify heavily with a favorite character who embodies a favorite fantasy of ours, and losing that character is a loss greater than the gaming framework might suggest. This subject might make a dandy master's thesis in psychology.

Ephemeral Transactions #10 - demonstrating for the first time that this 'zine is numbered using the decimal system. Intended for A&E #101, but that came out weeks ago, perhaps #103? Who can tell? (C) 1984 Daniel James, 62, Observatory Street, Oxford, OX2 6EP, England. Photostencilled in the colonies; my thanks to Lee and the stenciller.

It has been a long time since I last put manipulatory appendages to keyboard and concocted anything for A&E. One result of this is that I shall not have commented on many things I thought worthy of comment - RAEBNC (whatever it means) to all of you - and another is that what you read here may seem rather old hat; that's because it is old hat, and I make no apologies.

First, a few comments that seem not to have become too stale....

JENNY HEIN (98) Orroroo? Why not take over SF Worldcon '85 (which is, I gather, to be held in Melbourne) ?

STEVE GILHAM (99) You make it sound as though I should be the one to own a jacket with "Runequest" embroidered on the back. I am not uncritical of RQ, but I do tend to defend it from criticisms of the kind Dave Nalle has recently been treating it to. My RQ probably isn't the same as Dave Nalle's, because I have chosen to build a game which is to my liking on the (I think, very good) foundation provided by RQ, whereas he has chosen to write a different game, from scratch. This is a perfectly sensible thing to do if you can't find a commercially available game that suits you - but it doesn't give the right to be rude about other people's games.

A&E #99 - generally. I enjoyed this issue more than many others of late. It's always nice to see things written by people you know, and to see so much by so many was a treat. By my calculations the "UK takeover" managed to occupy just over 50% of the issue (even without counting April Lee's cover - April lives in California, but she studied at Oxford and I tend to think of her as "one of us" rather than "of the US"), which seems to amount to a modest but successful takeover. RAEBNCs to many, from all contributing continents.

ADELAIDE UNITED (101) I thought some of the fiction in the Aussie bit of this issue was quite good, but that must mean that I thought some of was not-so-good (or it may just be that I'm not a great fan of APA fiction).

SCOTT TURNER One page system looks good - pity you didn't fill the page though!

JOHN PATTERSON (101) Yes, I've noticed that some remarks seem to lose their meaning upon being translated into American - have you ever tried explaining jokes to a German, though? Their concept of humour seems to be totally alien (I mean, even worse than the yanks....). // By the way I've got a copy of YRS that Peter Clarke asked me to return to you - I'll post it to you when I've read it (unless you want it sooner). // In the end, the promised Games Day APA party was rained off due to lack of venue (much to the delight of the landlord of The Albert in Victoria Street). // FREE FORM DOES NOT SUCK! (Proof by blatant assertion).

PETER DA SILVA (101) So, you can draw too!

Games Day, the second of London's two annual games-based exhibitions took place on 5/6th November and was remarkable mainly for its similarity to last year's event. It was nice buying drinks for all the A&Es I met, and nicer still being bought one by Steve Gilham (thanks). I found the event itself rather disappointing - I'm somehow never in the mood for playing games at these shows, I just like to look around and see what's new, indulge in a little commercialism, meet people and go for a drink. The only new things that caught my notice at Games Day were a game called Victorian Adventure and a prozine called Tortured Souls (more of these later). Far more memorable are the dazzling multi-coloured shoelaces of Alison Brooks, and her badge proclaiming "Humourless Manhating Feminist", the enthusiasm with which we all promised to write to Nick Kinzett and make an offer for the old A&Es he was trying to sell (did anyone buy them, in the end?) and the price of the beer.

Perhaps next year we can all arrange to go to the show on the first day and meet elsewhere for a game on the second - or try and take over a table at the show??

'Zine but not forgotten

(a subtitle I've been meaning to use for ages)

New at Games Day was a prozine called "Tortured Souls". Tortured Souls #1 is printed on 40 glossy A4 pages, some with full colour artwork (bits of map and floorplans) and contains three separate scenarios (and a solo) for AD&D. Attention to detail is quite good and the price of £1.95 Sterling (about \$2.75 US) makes it very good value UK, or from Beast Enterprises, Divinity Road, Oxford, OX4 1LR. Beast Entz is run by Basil (who doesn't want me to publish his real name, which is nothing like Basil) who was at college with Dave Webb - my goodness what a small world! Basil tells me that he would like scenarios for RQ and other systems, (and wants me to write one). I'm told there are no dealers in the US "yet" (write to Basil if you'd like to be one), but you can get TS direct from Beast Entz for £3.50 sterling (including airmail carriage).

The world is not so small that I am able to you anything about Stephen Smith, except that he was at Games Day wearing a Sherlock Holmes outfit and selling his new RPG Victorian Adventure. VA is a complete(ish) roleplaying system in a single 48 page A4 rulebook with thin card covers; the standard of production is quite good, though the usual abominable illustrations are to be found in the expected places, and the English grammar wavers between fair and dreadful. There are some nice ideas in VA, and some new jargon, which I rather liked (e.g. OPs = Other People (= NPC)). There are sections on all matters from "what is fantasy role-playing" to "British Empire (map)" covering character generation, skills, combat, and spiritualism; sections on victorian dress, events, inventions, and prices; and several scenarios. The author describes VA as "the first truly British role-playing game", and I think it captures the atmosphere of the period quite well - it isn't just Daredevils minus 50 years on the other side of Atlantic. I strongly recommend this game to anyone with an interest in the period, and at £3.50 (a little less than \$5.00) for a complete system it represents very good value. Its simplicity should make it a

very good introduction to RPGs for beginners, and I think it will be attractive to potential players who do not readily accept the traditional mediaeval/fantasy or future/SF backgrounds of most RPGs.

*** Planets - the saga continues ***

Not much to add yet - thanks for the comments you are all beginning to make on the stuff I threw at you in #99. The first thing to say is that Other Suns appeared in Britain just before Christmas (at least, it appeared in Games Centre, but they've closed down because of a surfeit of creditors; I imagine Games Workshop will have it soon). OS has a really very sensible system for generating planetary systems, though I'm not sure I like the determination of planetary atmospheres - what is the basis for this? Is the stellar luminosity really so major a factor (and why)? The magnetic field surrounding a planet becomes important if the stellar wind affects the atmosphere - does OS assume that all planets (or no planets?) have magnetic poles?

My main grumble about OS is that nearly 12 pages are used to tabulate surface temperatures and year lengths for planets orbiting 30 different spectral types of star at 50 different orbital radii (in OS the mass of a star is linked directly with its spectral type). All I really want is the equation from which all these numbers are derived (which is there) - but surely the tables could have been rearranged to fit on about 3 pages and the space saved used for something more interesting? I think the temperatures and year lengths for 10 spectral types (at all radii) should fit quite nicely on a one page table (with space over). I don't like seeing space wasted like this when I've paid £10.75 (nearly \$15) for a game - even a game as well thought out as OS seems to be (on the first few readings).

Steve Gilham pointed out when I spoke to him that the density of a planet's atmosphere is affected by the gravity of its moon(s), a planet with a large moon should have a thinner atmosphere than it would if there were no moon. Moons also affect tides, which will affect the shape of the shoreline (less erosion) and the seaside ecology as well as a number of aspects of society (the lives of coastal fishermen, for example, reflect the pattern of the tides).

I'm still hoping, by the way, that someone out there is going to point me in the direction of a more complete set of tables of temperatures, masses and densities for stars of different spectral types, both on and off the main sequence, than I've yet been able to find.

*** America ***

I've recently been over to the USA on business, not least the business of attending the 1984 International Symposium on Logic Programming (in Atlantic City, NJ, whose seaside ecology is affected solely by the clatter of the roulette wheel and the gulp of the hungry one-armed bandit - I did manage to fight my way within reach of a Dragon's Lair machine, though). I'd like to thank John T. Sapienza for his hospitality on my spare weekend, when I went to see the sights in Washington D.C., and to say I'm sorry I didn't manage to meet more A&Eers while I was there. It was bad planning on my part that I had to fly back home just a week before Boskone! // I notice there is an eye-

in-the-pyramid on the back of a one dollar banknote - I hadn't realised that the US treasury were an Illuminati group.....

Comments on A&E #102 (maybe I won't make it for #103 after all)....

LEE (Re John Patterson) "Tantivy!" is a hunting cry, as you say, it nevertheless has a meaning. To tantivy, or to ride tantivy, is to ride at full gallop - the word is thought to be onomatopaeic (that is, to sound like the drumming of galloping hooves). A tantivy is a ride at full gallop, but is also used erroneously for the sound of a hunting horn. "Alarums and excursions", in case anyone doesn't know, is a stage direction used by Shakespeare in some of his more bellicose dramas to indicate that a scene should start with a lot of people shouting and ringing bells (alarms) and rushing onto stage and milling around to look like an army (excursion: an issuing forth against an enemy, a sortie, sally or raid (obsolete)). Tantivy is quite an uncommon word, but I'm surprised people don't know the meaning of alarums and excursions. // (Re Mark Galeotti) I find the Mars Bar is as useful a yardstick of the real value of a currency as any - but it's difficult to discover what they cost at a mediaeval confectioner!

DAVID M. UNION I'm afraid your illustrations came out very poorly in my copy of A&E - try to use a simpler drawing style (or stick to writing).

STEVE GILHAM Thanks for your comments on planetary temperatures. Why is your formula for L discontinuous? (Why the cut-off at $M=0.4$??) // Can you give me a reference for Dole's work - or is it something I won't find in the Boldeian?

MARTIN ELLISON Who would teach weapon skills to a Shudra? Nobody who accepted the caste system, but someone with different beliefs might well. Do you think all slaves would necessarily regard themselves as unworthy to bear any arms? It's certainly a belief that would have been convenient for slave-masters. Slaves throughout history have rebelled and overthrown their masters, and I suspect that the threat of losing caste status seems far less real to a slave than his chains - most would fight for their freedom if they saw an opportunity.

HANK GRIFFIN (Re Me!) Oh, come on - it wasn't that good! There will, however, be more. // Nice descriptions of lock types.

SCOTT BAUER I actually find (computer) adventure games rather tedious because of the very limited range of responses the machine can make. The best one I've played was written by a friend of mine, and I think I enjoyed that because I know how his mind works (or doesn't). One day I shall get around to writing the adventure game I've been promising myself for ages (in Prolog, of course, with a proper natural language parser) - it should run quite nicely on a 5th generation Psi machine with a few MB of RAM.

PETER DA SILVA Headings better? I used to do them in Caps a while back, but I seem to have dropped the habit. Thanks for pointing it out. // I don't like hilfer either, but hilf is OK. (Do you agree,

gentlehilfs?) I think perhaps Nick Larter is right about saplings, though.

WILLIAM KEYES Can you give me a reference for Foul Anderson's article on world generation, please. // I like your Realistic Roleplay Rules, but I don't think your use of difficulty dice really gets around the problem of 100%+ skills. What do you do when a character has 2000%+ in some skill?? Can he then always succeed whatever the difficulty of the task in hand?? No, the problem stems from adding fixed amounts to the chance of success for a skill when it is increased, rather than cutting down the chance of failure to some proportion of its former value. What about :

$$\text{Skill}_{\text{new}} = 0.9 * \text{Skill}_{\text{old}} + 0.1$$

which has the effect of reducing the chance of failure by 10% of its old value on each skill increase, rather making a flat-rate addition to the chance of success. This gives an increase of 8 from 20%, of 5 from 50% and of only 0.1 from 99% - nobody ever reaches 100% and the problems all go away. Difficulty dice are a nice idea too, but I don't think they should be used as a way of backing out of the 100% problem, it's just not mathematically nice. OK, it's unlikely that any character would ever get to 2000%+, so your system would work, but I don't like it.

QUENTIN LONG RAEBIHGACTM (read and enjoyed but I have got a comment to make) - that seems a bit unwieldy, but I wanted to get the "RAE" bit across as well as the comment, perhaps I'll use "REABut" in future. // In the UK, at least, the Apple II is rather an expensive solution to a problem better solved by a different machine. It isn't fast and the disks are only 128k (I find 390k restricting) - anyway I abhor the 6502 processor. We used to have an Apple IIe at work, which was much less nice to use than the other micros available - It was amazing how much trouble people would go to to avoid using the Apple (and time is money - I think that particular Apple had negative value!). // Violation of Apple's copyright is theft, but also pretty stupid (unless it's a Lisa you're stealing).

ROBERT PLAMONDON I've always been happy to allow characters to interact directly with magic, as you describe, when the players asked to be allowed to - I've just never felt it was fair to say "No" to questions like "I'm a mage, can I sense any aura about this object? is it dangerous? can I control it?" - and so on. It has often meant making things up as I went along, but it is consistent with my view of what magic ought to be like in the kind of world that has mages (I think this is what John Patterson would call 'free style'). The "foundation" of my system wasn't the same as yours, but the "results" were similar.

Lines : 276; words : 2560; characters about 16725.

Another goonzine of forgotten magnitude and indeterminate frequency by Peter da Silva the Mad Australian, of 9950 Club Creek Drive #602. Houston, Texas, 77036. (713) 776-3984

1. General questions.

Just some questions that have been simmering in the back of my mind for some time: Does anybody have Elves or equivalent that are of faerie extraction: immortal, playful (dangerously so!), afraid of cold iron, and so on? Does anybody use a mediaeval setting, complete with witches, sorcerors, pacts with the devil, and so on? Does anybody use one of the "classic" SF/F stories/series for a setting -- Anderson, E.E. Smith, Howard, McKillip, Niven, Van Vogt, de Camp, for example -- as opposed to just borrowing from them?

2. The last adventure in Cidri 234A: the one which made me decide to dump it.

Not that it didn't work passably well, but it showed me I was depending too much on weird stuff, with too little sanity to paste it together.

Dramatis Personae.
The Revengers.

Character	Nom de Guerre
Weedhopper	Captain Estarcion
Placebo	Blackeye
	Inheritor of the Mystic Doorknob
Don Bwake	Soar, god of Sunder
	Thor with a lisp
Caldwell Pflöck	The W.A.S.P.
Bunter	Bunter
	A gentleman's gentleman
Pylorus Picklegut	The Torch
	Superhero and Arsonist

Anyway, to cut a short story long, our heroes (?) had just been grabbed by professor Charles X. Claremont and inducted as honorary X-persons (see recent Cerebi (pl) of Cerebus) for details.

It seems there was this dragon.

This dragon had set up shop north of Palnu and had started munching on the local peasants and livestock. Lord Julius was incensed. Not because of the depredations, per se, but because the dragon wasn't paying for the peasants and livestock that he consumed.

Luckily the newly United Feldwar States had a solution to this problem. Professor Claremont and his X-persons would make short work of this dragon, and force him to sign the standard contract (peasants and livestock, consumption of, payment in gold) or else go bother someone else.

Right.

Cidrian dragons are slightly non-standard. For one thing they're atomic powered. For another they're on the endangered species list, so the X-persons would have to be damned careful they didn't kill it. Certain important (i.e. rich) people in Eshnosopur

seemed to think they were decorative or something, and would definitely get terribly upset if they did. Not that they would be likely to.

Thus the Avengers were induced (by sufficient bribes: such as a suit of adamantine/spandex chain-mail for Captain E.) to come to the rescue. They are to take over the job of the combined military forces of the UFS in acting as collection agents for Lord J..

Scene: a broad valley. The near side is a sheer cliff, broken by a dark cave mouth: the dragon's lair. Our heroes have just shimmered into existence (courtesy of Suenteus Po) just around the bend (but... they were always around the bend!) from it. A Voice speaks from midair:

"Now, just around the bend is the lair of the dragon. This beast has been killing peasants and livestock without paying for them."

"Without... WHAT?"

Captain E. has acquired more than just Captain America's shield. The next half hour was taken up with an argument between Blackeye, Cap, and Soar over the morality of letting the dragon chomp on peasants and livestock. Blackeye's main argument is that it would hardly be fair to break contract.

"I mean, after all, we've got to uphold the law. You don't want to just ignore everyting we stand for, do you? And besides, how do you expect us to collect enough for the Avengers Mansion without the income from the dragon?"

"Well..."

"And bethideth, dragonth are an endangered tpethieth. Peathanth are quite plenti-ful."

"Look, Thoar..."

"That'th Thoar, mortal."

"Sorry, Soar. They're still human beings..."

"Tho what. There'th plenty of them ath well."

"But we're human as well."

"Thpeak for yourthelf, mortal."

"Look," continues Blackeye, "what say we just put an extortionate price on the peasants. That way he won't eat any."

"Yeth, and even if he doeth, jutht think of the profit! How do you ekthpect uth to fight evil without a bathe."

"Speaking of which," butts in Bunter, "you could do with one."

"A bathe?"

"A bath."

Eventually Captain E. was worn down, and the team assembled at the mouth of the cavern. Blackeye used his mystical doorknob to sneak in behind the dragon with the Torch, Captain E., and Soar, and the W.A.S.P. attacked at the front. After a short battle, in which nobody was hurt (mainly because the dragon kept using its gamma ray breath (suuuure) on Captain E., safe within his adamant (and thus rad-proof) armor), the dragon agreed to the contract.

And since Placebo had now fulfilled his dream (unlimited wealth), and the Avengers were busy enforcing the contract (and collecting taxes from the local peasants, while they were about it... even a superhero's got to eat...), I was able to close down with a minimum of fuss.

3. An A&E rules system???

Here we have a larger collection of would-be (and not-so would-be) game designers than you can count on all hands. There's rarely an issue that doesn't have at least one system or variant. Why not try to make something solid out of it?

One of the things that bugs the Belgium out of me is that every game out uses a different system: why should the basic laws of the universe change when you go from fantasy to modern to science fiction to whatever else you've got floating around in your heads? In addition, why do you have to learn a whole new set of mechanics every time you switch genre?

Now it may be that LOA will satisfy this craving for orthogonality, but until I see it I can't say... and it'll probably be a while: the local game shop (Nan's Games: only 10 miles away) is rather slow in getting new stuff (So is the local comic shop. Houston is next door to GAFIA). In any case no game so far has been particularly xenophilic. TFT is pretty good in that respect, but even I must agree that it has it's faults. Besides which it's dead (until the corpse of Metagaming can be induced to release it), so that leaves... nothing.

OK, the challenge: is it possible for us to come to some sort of agreement on a game. Certainly I find my system fairly easy to fit into various environments, but it could be only familiarity with the system making me say that. Also, it's just the bare bones of a system, without even a standard set of weapons (although there are rules for rating and game-balancing primitive weapons). Now the version I pubbed a few zines ago is pretty old, but it'll do. The only major change is a modified experience system based on fractional stats, care of Geoffrey Halsey in A&E???. I included it a few zines ago, but here it is again, modified for VTFT instead of his system:

When you make a save vs a stat you get EPs equal to: $(2*d)-(S-r)$, where d is the number of dice, S is the stat, and r is the number rolled. Thus if you have INS 15, and you make your normal (3 die) save with a 13 (to cast a spell, perhaps?) you get $(2*3)-(15-13)=4$ fractional INS. This has several good effects: *imprimus*, the higher your stats are, the slower you advance (automatically(!)); *secundus*, a near miss gets you maximum experience; *tertius*, the harder a task, the more experience you get from it. It also feels right, and doesn't need any tables, a big plus to me.

Anybody else have any other suggestions? Of course everybody will suggest their own system, and so they should, but please remember that there's no advantage to a system that's only a slight modification of what already exists. Long live A&Equest!

February 20, 1984

4. Comments.4.1 Biased opinions #101.

Lee Gold: Neat writeup, bizarre game. I've been doing some reading up on Nippon recently, so your world's beginning to make more sense to me.// I wish I could run in one of your games some time... do you run a PBM? You've probably already answered this in an earlier issue or something, but my memory's failing and I can't find it in my back issues.

Thieves Guilds: I'm not sure who this is for... it's just a few thoughts on the subject of ill- and semi- legal guilds. There was a "king of beggars" in Tai-Pan. Don't shoot me... it's a pretty good read, though doubtlessly inaccurate, history-wise. The environment felt real, and it's internally consistent. Secondly, at this time of year, the thieves guild gets a little more blatant than usual... they call themselves the IR"S" these days. Any functioning thieves guild would become the government: there's more money in it.

James Hein (re reality): The trouble with bending reality in a game is that it tends to make it hard for us poor Terrans to anticipate the results of our actions, and the further you get from normal conditions the harder it gets.

As for your other point: what's wrong with seeing elves, etc... You never been to a con???

Chris Hein (another one???) and Jenny Murray: Looks interesting: I'll stick to my system (or A&Equest), but I'll take the skill lists with thanks.

Diana Short: Aha, the plot thickens!

Jenny Hein: Another bloody system... grumble grumble... I must admit I do like the story. I don't know why you need a background system, though. Inventing backgrounds from scratch allows you to be weirder... and also makes the system to society dependant. I guess it's be useful for NPCs.

John Sapienza: I think there is a lot of attraction to playing oneself, if it's explicit. It's also a good way to introduce a new campaign/world/whatever-you-call-it. But then you get people upset when they get killed, and they're reduced to using witchcraft and sorcery and such on the GM. No, it's better if you stick to chess...

Wilson Heydt: And now to add to the list of strange stories about humans doing weird and wonderful things: In a book I recently read; a book purported, furthermore, to be an account of real events; there was an interesting incident. It seems that the author, one R. D. Lawrence, was trying to raise a pair of wolves in such a way that he could release them again into the wild: he had apparently acquired them as cubs to prevent them from being sold as pets. To do this he had effectively socialised them to himself and taken the position of pack leader. One day the male decided that was up to challenging Lawrence and taking over the "pack". Lawrence proceeded to wrestle this by now fully grown (or nearly so) wolf into submission, sustaining only minor injuries himself and not injuring the wolf at all. Tough tough people.

Scott Turner: Excellent story, not the usual fare... it'd be hard to get events like that happening in a game, though, without a lot of co-operation between the players (which does not imply co-operation between the characters). Good quick system, though I don't like the Power Points business. It's too much like a certain experience system.

Mike Dawson: It has been known to happen in stories, and even in real life, that people can't get their act together. There are stories where character faults and internal conflicts destroy co-operation and all is lost. These are called tragedies. In many cases tragedy is more likely, more fitting than success. For example look at Tomoe Gozen and sequels by Jessica Salmonsén. The main character, Tomoe Gozen, spends considerable effort trying to make people take the sane, intelligent, co-operative path. She fails. This failure is the source of most of the books' power. One of the most enjoyable runs I was in was one where most of the party died because a dispute over prisoners. Sure, I lost a good character, but the only purpose of a character being anything but a toy of the DM is to give you an avatar in the world. If you can't believe in the world, then why bother? A world with no conflict, with totally sane people, may be nice but it's generally not very interesting as an environment for a story. It all depends, I guess, on what you want from a game.

Wayne Shaw (re Fritz PBZ): Wow, a comment to me! The first in this zine... Hey, I wish something would happen here. I'm tired of waiting outside this 'ere city gate... You listening, Scott? Even a flood would be a change. // Campaign crash: about once every 1-2 years. It depends on how long it takes for the characters to achieve their main goal. I find it counter-productive to use the same world/characters in more than one (do I dare use the word? (Go on, live dangerously!) Ok.) quest. What do you do after saving the world? Save it again? That way lies Skylark of Valeron.

Mark Goldberg, Lee Gold: What's so difficult about giving a machine emotions? As for volition, what is it really? It could be argued that an alarm clock wants to go off at a certain time. And of course, B. F. Skinner would argue that you don't have volition (or do I maybe mean consciousness)? Does an Asimov robot have emotions? It certainly has volition c/o the three laws.

And that's all for comments on #101...

4.2 Biased Opinions #102.

Lee Gold, leading off again: What about SFRPGs? Here the bread is cheap, and the sword costs quite a bit if you want more than a toy... price ratios differ too much between societies to get more than a rough estimate. And anyway, the different price ratios are what make trade profitable. General question... anybody have characters go into the multiversal trade business? I tried once, but the GM scuttled me... said something about play balance... // (re ct Sapienza) What about energy fields (weapons, etc... that move to follow you... or using a fire wall as a barrier (say in a standard issue dungeon corridor). The longer lasting spell may not be more powerful, but it sure as 'ellfaw's more versatile // Great filksong. Have you heard this one (warning: partial, and from memory. Author unknown)?

Decimal digits in a row,
 Just set 'em up and let 'em go.
 That Eniac was grossly slow --
 I used to code that way.
 But then this FORTRAN came along,
 I danced and sang a happy song,
 So elegant, what could go wrong?
 (I little knew, that day).
 I've looked at FORTRAN both ways now,
 At 2 and IV, and still somehow,
 It's rows of numbers I recall.

I really don't know FORTRAN... at all

But business hackers have it rough,
for them this FORTRAN's not enough...

and so on. Anybody know where (and what) the rest is?// Metric protoplasm's easy. One nice thing about the metric system is that 1 cc (or ml, if you prefer) of water weighs 1 gram, and protoplasm has about the same density as water: 1 g/cc, 1 tonne/cubic metre, and so on. Thus, your standard issue 10' gelatinous cube weighs (uh, masses, please) almost exactly (3m by 3m by 3m=27 m3) 27 tonnes. Not to mention that your friendly local periodic table has the density of things in g/cc, so you can easily find out what your backpack full of gold weighs (18.9g/cc by (look at my pack, oh...) 15 cm by 20 cm by 60 cm...) 340200 grams. Oh, that's assuming it's solid. Coins will take up about 2/3 of that space (spherical close packing and then some because coins pack closer than spheres, minus a smidgen for randomness) giving you still over 200 kg of the stuff. You can carry it, thanks.

Steve Gilham: Hey, I wasn't trying out a new concept, just giving an implementation -- one that happens to make some sort of sense (to me, anyway). I've trashed Cidri 234A by now, anyway. See comment on "Campaign crashes", above.

Rob Heinsoo: Great Undead (Space Ghost!). You could rationalise the gems/coins by saying that part of the vanquished critters life-force was bound up in them, ala Scrooge.

J. Cornelius (re Little Men): This assumes that thermal conductivity of shrunken atoms is the same as normal sized ones. If it was much less then you wouldn't have a problem. Hey, that would make shrunken material a great insulator...// What, you're writing in a 'zine and you don't speak Fannish? What sort of Faan are you?// Humanity (humane-ness?) has unfortunate connotations, too. I've had a lot of trouble with these stat names: at least Piety fits my definition of religion (which includes science).

Nick Larter: Of course!// (re ct Marc Willner) And what's wrong with interplanar trade? See open question in ct Lee Gold above.

Vincent Foster: One possible test is that Gold is one of the few metals dense enough to sink in Mercury. Unfortunately it's also soluble in mercury (picky... it actually forms an amalgam), but that's just a detail. Oh yes, in many periods gold coins were badly debased, sometimes with as little as 1% gold (for coins "washed" in gold), thus your test only works when you have a reasonably pure coinage.

Dana Carson: For the Sahara: how about uplifted Fennecs (just saw some for the first time: neat looking little foxes).

Suspects: Well, I would hate to have to come up against ISPPIC in a fair fight, but they don't apply to me: first of all, dead isn't dead: there's plenty of opportunity to return (but it's not easy... you'd be safer dead).

Hank Griffin: The big problem with Bramah and similar locks is that they are very susceptible to dirt, dust, and chewing gum (as I know to my chagrin after someone put gum in my Kryptonite bike lock).

Scott Bauer: Wizardry is technically a better game, and of course both are hopelessly hackenslash. Though how you can call the graphics of Ultima "Glorious" is beyond me. It also has the most complex copy protection I've ever seen (and is a good argument

against copy protection): it's so good it prevented me from using my original disks after about a week. I now use a bootleg copy wch is quite reliable (with a clean conscience: I did pay for the &%(=&S! thing, after all...). In any case the only non-H&S Adventure program I've seen was one up at Berkeley called Battlestar. It has no fixed goal: there are several ways of "winning". In fact if you just go around shooting everybody you're not going to win anything.// DDL was also a Berkeley job. /usr/games/aardvark on xBSD UNIX is written in DDL (and includes the DDL compiler and interpreter. Unfortunately it's not as good as LISP with a few extra definitions (to handle daemons, which they call 'fuses', and so on), and makes huge gross temp files).// Another good system is SOLO (once again from Berkeley hackers). It's a program that runs TFT solitaire dungeons (some of which, for example City of Terrors, are quite good).// And of course ROGUE is also from Berkeley, care of Ken Arnold (the archetypical Hacker). It's another super-graphics H&S..

Bill Keyes: And of course the realistic system shows why most games are simplified. Lots of good info, though. And if you had a computer as moderator (a more worthwhile goal than computer GM) then it may well be made to work.

Robert Plamondon: Interesting stuff. I myself take the opposite approach, and make things as difficult as possible for mages attempting to form guilds: but I won't go into it just yet: I'll wait until my PBM has progressed to the point that they've figured much of it out on their own.

General: I don't want to get into PBM write-ups just yet... people haven't yet learned enough about the world. Probably by next time I'll have my completed timeline for your perusal.

Peter



THE ZINE WITH NO NAME in "The Seven Samurai and the 47 Ronin Take on the Magnificent Seven and the Denver Broncos--in a two falls out of three tag team match; winner take all"

by Michael A. Johnson, 440 S. Tenth St. #4, San Jose, CA 95112

A Fate-Role Playtest Report

Being the only one of the seven invited A&E writers to actually make it to G. H. and Jonathan Woolley's Fate-Role playtest session, I got an exclusive run through the Woolley-Seven system. Although Mr. Seven couldn't make it, Jonathan's father, G.H. (I never found out what the initials stand for), filled in admirably.

After a lovely session of exchanging bragging about DREAMS OF VISHNU and FATE-ROLE, we got down to the game. To put FATE-ROLE through a stringent playtest, to see just how far its rules would cover all contingencies, I pulled the nasty trick of whipping out my personal character, Mayapur Chandra from DOV, for the scenario when Jonathan was GM--and had G.H. and Jonathan run their characters through the scenario I'm enclosing with DOV. If nothing else, this would playtest my scenario as well as seeing if their game could fit a totally foreign milieu.

Having given some background info on Mayapur and his surroundings, we went right at it. Mayapur Chandra is the only kshatrya (warrior caste) in the village of Valitirtha, population 250 people and 2500 cows. There is one brahman (priestly) family; the rest of the village is vaishya (farmer-merchant) or shudra (laborer) caste. Mayapur got the position of Rajuka (mayor-judge-police) of Valitirtha as reward for saving a Rajah's daughter from drowning. He accidentally knocked her in the pool in the first place, which explains the size of the reward.

Valitirtha is 25 miles from Dwarka, the provincial capitol, 40 miles from the nearest town in the opposite direction, and is bounded by the ocean on the south and the Gujrat hills and forest on the north. These forests are the dwelling place of both bandits and bears, and letters continually arrive asking when Mayapur will do something about both. He is rather unhappy.

The game began with a vaishya coming to Mayapur to complain about some of his cattle dying. Since this is normal for cows sooner or later, Mayapur wasn't too interested. But another vaishya showed up with the same complaint. That many dying cows was a bit less usual, so Mayapur went out with the vaishya to look. The cattle he saw that weren't dead were showing various symptoms.

Not having the slightest knowledge of cattle disease, Mayapur went to Davendra, the local priest, to see if he could find the disease mentioned in the Ayurveda, the medical book. Davendra checked but could find no such disease. This interested Mayapur, so he checked all the cattle owners in the area and found that only the two ranches were affected. The only thing they had in common was using a well they both bordered on.

So Mayapur got a bottle of water from the well and took it to the chemical shop of a Lokayatik in Dwarka. (Lokayatiks are believers in the atomic theory. They believe that all life is just chemical combinations and did most of the chemical experimentation of ancient India, seeking to find this secret formula to create life.)

The Lokayatik found a trace of a poisonous mineral in the water. So Mayapur went back to Valitirtha and had the well filled in and the grass around it fenced off, so any seepage wouldn't get to the cows through the grass.

The Rajah got a letter of aporeciation from the vaishyas for Mayapur's good deed. This has not gotten him transferred to a better position, but at least the Rajah has noticed some good in him now.

The Fate-Selection Method Jonathan chose was that the swamps to the north contain several plants of medical value. If Mayapur had gone to the swamps, he would have failed. Fortunately, Mayapur is the type of guy to leave such things to the experts, and thus went to the brahmin and Lokayatik instead.

In the second scenario, I decided the result would depend on if and how often G.H. and Jonathan looked at each other as I gave the intro. G.H. looked at Jonathan four times, and Jonathan looked at his father once. So I decided G.H. would have four pieces of good fortune, and Jonathan just one. Fortunately, G.H.'s character did almost all the deciding, and Jonathan's only did one thing!

Without giving away my scenario, I can tell you they went for advice rather than barging in. They got a NPC to help them in an important place--and bamboozled a policeman into believing that they were hanging about in a back alley at midnight in the dark looking for a lost chain. They succeeded in the task assigned and were the first playtest group to do it the way (non-violent) that their boss suggested! (I will write up this adventure later, so I don't spoil DOV.)

So what did I think of it? The only flaws I found were in the presentation of the rules (too general, need more detail)--and in the lack of one or two minor adjustments to make it fit all eras and game types (which they assure me they will do). The play of the game goes very smoothly, especially with anyone with any experience with either story-telling or role playing. It was very fun, required no equipment, charts, vast rule sets, preparation or work. In short, I am going to mug Jonathan and Mr. Seven for having the nerve to invent it before I could.

It is, however, not a game for playing with multitudes of people. It worked fine with one or two players with a character or two each at the most. Anything larger than two people would overload the system. Still, I can't think of any other game I could play on the bus to work or walking down the street. Oh yes, it can't be played solo, unless you are a split personality.

All in all, a good idea. (See A&E #100 for the major portion of the rules.)

Contemplations on Commendations and Condemnations on #101

Jenny Hein: I have often wondered why all the Aussies and New Zealanders I have met tended to be a little--well, strange, odd or just unusual. Now I know. In your article on the Bunyip, you mention "a mother's tale to frighten children into going to sleep at night." Aha! This is the source of the difference! All the Aussie mothers scare their kids to sleep instead of singing lullabies. No wonder they are so strange as adults! I can just see an Australian horror movie. Two gents are out in the outback late one night.... Suddenly, one says, "Oh look, Harry! It's a bloomin' Tyrannosaurus Rex! Zzzzzz." Scene 2: a very puzzled T-Rex looks around for an ear doctor to find out why he keeps hearing this Zzzzzz sound everywhere he goes.....Kidding aside, that's a very nice background system.

Boos and Hisses, Hugs and Kisses on #102

Vincent Foster: More for you on Sanskrit. The Sanskrit alphabet is Devanagari, which means "City of the Devas" (angels or saints). The Sanskrit word for an item or deva is considered to be the item or deva. Thus, by pronouncing a god's name (Vishnu), one has him present. Sanskrit is mainly used by Hindus. Buddhists use a Sanskrit-derived language, Pali. Buddha himself spoke Pali, and his direct followers wrote the original sutras in Pali. The Hindu scriptures are in Sanskrit. Any Buddhist book in Sanskrit is a fake, made up centuries later, since in Buddha's time Sanskrit was already a dead language only spoken by the brahmins, just like Latin in the Catholic Church.

Re Aftermath: there is no connection between the FGU Aftermath and Infinity Games' Aftermath Expansion for its own system. It is just a coincidence in title. The Infinity System expansion kits for Post-Holocaust, Wild West, etc. never came out. Infinity Games appears to have died out.

BUSHIDC was originally written for TYR Games. However, before it made a profit (or mailed me my copy), TYR went under. Phoenix bought BUSHIDO, and I finally got a copy from them: then they went under as well. FGU then bought the game and the similar but not yet published games AFTERMATH and DAREDEVILS. These have since come out by FGU. Comprene?

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TALES OF MAGIC From The Temple Of Light #42

HAPPY NEW YEAR DEPARTMENT!: Whatever year it is in your world, may it be truly fantastical.

ADVENTURES IN THE SHATTERED WORLD - Death of a Legend:

For years, the fame and glory of some of the bravest adventurers known since the dawn of history has been an inspiration to the struggling civilizations of the Shattered World. Alas, one of the bravest and the best has fallen! Nariss the Everdying, a Berserker dedicated to Odin, perished in a haunted castle in the Southern Badlands. His doom was as violent and as glorious as the numerous exploits which earned him the awe of all who knew him. This Knight of Odin was second in fame only to Nertz the Goblin, Hero of the Realm. And his closest companion was Nertz, who was there at the end and who avenged him!

Having been guided to an accursed spot in the southern mountains, the two had done battle with a minor demon which owned certain enchanted weapons. These weapons were once of the Druids, and Nariss--more practical than religious--hoped to gain a boon from the Druids in return for them. Their guide, one of Midnight's Rangers, could only stand open-mouthed in amazement as the Goblin and Berserker strove with the demon. His own mithril arrows had bounced harmlessly off the supernatural monster, but the two heroes laid it low.

Flushed with victory, the two decided to investigate a haunted castle on their way back from the Badlands. This castle was at the edge of Midnight's protectorate, said to be inhabited by a ghostly insect-creature of some sort. It was indeed a spirit more terrible than even the Scorpion of Chaos they had defeated the previous year: a monstrous Ghost Crab. The two flung themselves from the castle's battlements, directly onto the great monster. But the Ghost Crab caught Nariss in a mighty pincer, slaying him instantly. Nertz eventually dispatched the monster, but not before Nariss' essence was absorbed.

All the story has not yet been told, however. Nertz later had a final encounter with the mysterious "woman" who has pursued him for two years. She slew him, but was unable to fully take the power of the Orb of Chaos from within him. Though he was left for dead, he was one last time saved by the Orb. Alone, weaponless, he wandered back to the haunted castle. (Also more practical than religious, he was going to take the arms and armor he'd put in a memorial grave to Nariss.)

There Nertz found the enchanted battleaxe that had belonged to Nariss and which he had thought absorbed by the Ghost Crab. It seems that the enchantments of the weapons and Nariss' own indomitable spirit could not be contained! Nariss' soul became one with the weapon as his body vanished, and the battleaxe reappeared in the mortal world. Nertz and Nariss are "united" as comrades once more!

SIMPLE IS GOOD DEPT:

As I've tinkered with my system and then used it in actual gaming, I find I seldom use all the marvelous reality-simulations once the dice rolling begins. Too often, I feel a need to interpret the dice subjectively or just go by what the feeling of the game requires rather than worry about the dice. Therefore, as delightful as it is to invent combat/magic systems I deem superior to published ones, I usually don't use all the mechanics in play. Either they slow down the game, or I don't want a situation to depend on random chance when the players are roleplaying (or both). To that end, I've also thought of ways to tinker systems to make them easier. Others have apparently been thinking along these lines. In A&E #101, SCOTT TURNER published a lovely, simple combat/magic system, and I know a few other contributors have mentioned working on simple systems. Any such system depends on a referee filling in the role-playing/world-building aspects. The one presented herein is the same.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SYSTEM FOR FANTASY ROLEPLAYING

I. This is originally based on D&D and thus uses the concepts of levels and some other terms from that game. However, familiarity with D&D is not necessary.

A. Referee will have to at least understand fantasy roleplaying; otherwise this is just a dice rolling exercise.

B. D6 and D10 are needed. Intent at all times is simplicity, and desired complexities should be added on a subjective basis. (Thus if this system doesn't provide a means to resolve a game contingency, it is something which should not be resolved by random dice but by verbal interaction of characters.)

C. Character Resolution is a situation in which dice are rolled to determine chance a character could do something or avoid having something done unto him. Conflicts are resolved by rolling less than or equal to a certain number on D6. This is called a Saving Throw.

D. Qualities are natural attributes of character. Quality Saving Throws are made when conflict depends on natural ability.

E. Levels are a character's general proficiency and experience. Level Saving Throws are made to exercise an unfamiliar Skill or to resist use of a Skill against you. Level Saving Throws succeed by rolling less than or equal to own level.

1. If a relevant Quality is High, then Level Saving Throw is Level +1.

2. If a relevant Quality is Low, then Level Saving Throw is Level -1.

F. Skills are learned abilities. Skill Saving Throws are less than or equal to Level +1. Relevant Qualities affect these as with Level Saving Throws. You can get a zero, indicating you can't use this skill--or a six, indicating you are always successful. (When you're hot, you're hot!)

II. There are five Qualities. Roll D6 for each; a roll of 2-5 is Average.

A. Roll of 1 is Low; roll again, with another 1 being Very Low.

B. Roll of 6 is High; roll again, with another 6 being Very High.

C. Quality Saving Throws: Very Low Low Average High Very High
1 2 3 4 5

D. The five Qualities are:

1. STrength: such things as Stamina, Constitution, Health.

2. SPeed: such things as Reaction Time, Agility.

3. DeXterity: such things as Marksmanship

4. INTellect: such things as Intelligence, Memory, Magical Aptitude.

5. EGO: such things as Charisma, Wisdom.

III. Levels are gained by general proficiency, practice and adventuring.

A. You gain an Experience Point (EP) each time you make a Saving Throw.

B. You gain EP equal to Level of foe if you defeat a character in combat.

C. It requires 100 x Next Level in EP to reach the next level.

IV. Melee Combat is conducted by each combatant rolling D10.

A. Characters strike in order of SP, simultaneously if SP is the same.

B. Characters with skill in a weapon (instead of another Professional Skill; melee combat is slightly different than other skills) add the weapon's Attack Number (see table below) to their D10 roll. If the opponent has a skill in a weapon, the attacker must subtract opponent's Defense Number from his D10 attack roll.

1. Anyone may hold a shield, but those without Shield Skill gain only 1.

2. Anyone may gain Attack Number 1 from any weapon they can carry.

C. After adding/subtracting weapon numbers, add/subtract advantages and disadvantages if any (from combat table below).

D. Any positive number remaining on the D10 after the additions/subtractions is damage to the victim's HTK, unless armor protects.

E. Armor protects if roll is less than or equal to Armor Grade.

V. Missile Combat uses Skill Saving Throw, modified by combat table below.

A. Armor protects as in Melee Combat.

- B. If Armor fails to protect, missile damage is as follows:
1. SMALL (e.g. darts, shuriken): D3 HTK
 2. MEDIUM (e.g. javelins, boomerangs): D6 HTK (require Low ST)
 3. AVERAGE (e.g. bow): D10 HTK (require Avg ST)
 4. SPECIAL (e.g. English longbow): 2D6 HTK (require High ST)

<u>Weapon</u>	<u>Attack</u>	<u>Defense</u>	<u>SP Mod</u>	<u>Minimum ST</u>	<u>Armor Grades</u>
Unarmed	-	-	-	-	1. Cloth
Knife	1	1	-	-	2. Leather
Whip	1	-	-1	Foe-2 next Attack	3. Ringmail
Club	1	2	-1	Low	4. Chainmail
Short Sword	2	3	-	Low	5. Plate
Short Spear	2	1	+1	Low	
Hatchet	2	2	-2	Low	
Mace	2	2	-1	Average	
Broadsword	3	3	-	Average	
Spear	3	1	+1	Average	
Battleaxe	4	2	-3	Average	
2-H Axe/Sword	4	4	-4	Average	
2-H Polearm	4	1	-	Average: may strike additional space	
Shield	-	3	-	vs 1 foe, Low; vs 2, Average; vs 3, High.	

Advantages

- +1 if above or to side
- +1 if foe 2xSize or larger
- +1 per level higher than foe
- +1 if High/Very High ST
- +2 if behind foe
- +3 if using liquid/gas (e.g. acid, dragonfire)
- +4 if invisible

Disadvantages

- 1 if striking upward or to one side
- 1 if foe half size or smaller
- 1 if on unsure footing
- 1 if foe has High/Very High DX
- 2 if you are on the ground
- 1 per point of unhealed HTK damage
- 3 trying to hit specific location (e.g. weapon arm)
- 4 if foe is invisible

Missile Adjustments:

- +1 for Very High DX
- 1 for Low DX, target with Very High DX, Target in partial cover
- 2 Target in full cover

V. Casting Magic Spells is accomplished by Professional Skill Saving Throw

A. Spell lasts as long as caster concentrates.

B. Spell may continue after concentration lapses, if caster rolls Quality Saying Throw germane to that spell (e.g. ST for firestorm, EGO for charm).

1. Such a spell continues D10 turns.
2. Caster can only keep up to his level number of spells going. (Thus L1 spellcaster can keep a spell going after concentration lapses under this rule, but cannot then cast an additional spell.)

VI. HTK are used up as damage is taken from melee, missiles, etc.

A. People have 10 HTK, gain 2 HTK each level.

1. +1 HTK if have High/Low ST
2. +2 HTK if have Very High/Very Low ST

B. Animals have D6 HTK for each Space of size.

1. Animals are considered to be one Level per two Spaces in size in melee.
2. Multiply damage received by Animal's Level before subtracting the damage for combat purposes. (Thus a L2 animal takes 2 points damage before losing 1 in combat rolls.)

C. Supernatural animals have D10 HTK for each Space of size--and are one Level per each Space in size in melee.

D. Supernatural Sentients (e.g. Undead, Giants) have 10 HTK/Level. Level may depend on size as with a Giant or on Special powers (e.g. "Trolls are L3"). They otherwise conduct melee or cast spells as other characters. Like animals, they gain the benefits of multiplying their level before damage affects their combat ability. (Note this does not apply to normal characters.)

COMMENTARIUM #100

LEE GOLD: For a given explosive, range of a firearm projectile indeed depends on weight, as you suggested to Mike Lewis. However, damage depends on type of projectile as well as inertia; and inertia can be either a heavy projectile moving slowly (usually with less range) or a light one moving quickly. So the ratio between projectile size and damage can't be reduced to a simple formula. Thus games with projectile firearms tend to have long lists of representative firearms. (But between us, I think it's really because the designers enjoy making up such lists.)

Speed of Attack & Defense is definitely related to Skill, as the techniques of combat are learned. Thus a naturally fast person would beat a naturally slow one in a fencing match or gunfight. However, if the latter is a trained fencer or quickdraw artist, he will likely win, even if he's otherwise naturally slower--because those reflexes and skills were trained to be quick. Of course, if you then trained the faster person, he'd ultimately be superior--but then not all people are created equal.//Liked your descriptions of the degradations to be found among the recreational habits of the inhabitants of Nyosa.

RANDALL STUKEY: This should really be addressed to The Heretic. I concur with your analysis of the logic problems with effect-based game systems; probably that's why I've not found CHAMPIONS as intriguing as everybody else seems to. I'd handle your example of balancing the sixgun vs a weapon created by the balancing rules by simply allowing that balancing does not overrule suspension of disbelief. Thus, if a thing is possible in the physical/cultural milieu of the game for NPCs, then it is possible for the heroes. So anybody can buy a sixgun in a world where they're available, and you don't worry about Power Point costs. Similarly, if an NPC can buy a magic item, then a PC with access to the seller (e.g. in the Guild or with a license from the king or some such) and coin of the realm can do so too.

WILLIAM PESCHEL: I wish I were as optimistic about the future of FRPG companies besides TSR. I don't think those who give up AD&D go on to other systems any more; they just stop playing (as opposed to older gamers). Moreover, while TSR grew quickly, it was expanding into a new market; it filled a need many of us had for a unique form of recreation. Well, now the need is filled; the other companies don't have the same territory to expand in. Regrettably, the market for FRPGs is very small. Quality only overcomes the Inertia Factor if there are enough people who want it, and most of the FRPG market simply isn't interested in Quality--they want a game with lots of charts where you can have magic stuff and kill monsters, and that's it. D&D offers this at a level of complexity appropriate to young players.

GEOFFREY HALSEY: Liked the Imagination Magic System. Presume all else is as in TFT.

SCOT FRITZ/MARTIN WIXTED: In the ERIN system, how does Complexity affect weapon use? What sort of HTK do characters have? Must Defense Speed be quicker to block an attack; what if it is the same? Is Basic % for Attack and Defense? What does Dodging do for you vs Defending?

MICHAEL JOHNSON: Interesting review of TCT.//Generally enjoyed your column.

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: I agree that mundane activities add color and variety to the heroic situations. Did I imply otherwise?

CHRIS MURRAY: You've put a lot of thought into your firearm combat system. A few questions:

- 1) What are the actual effects of the different grades of Wounds?
- 2) How does armor affect "Fire Capacity Rating"? What does that mean?
- 3) Is the "To Hit Base" on D100? Even rank amateurs hit more often than 10-15% with a modern handgun.
- 4) What does "Reaction to Draw" mean?

WILSON HEYDT: Technology doesn't lead directly to authoritarian government; it merely (if that's the word) amplifies the government's power and increases its inclination to exercise that power, partly because machines allow citizens to do things outside government control. (Thus cars give freedom of travel; governments register cars to keep track of people.) Also machines which allow freedom also allow governments to work more "efficiently" (e.g. their computer can keep track of your computer). Freedom is a corollary of wealth, although the reverse is not true. (You need to be rich to be free, but a rich country doesn't have to be free.) Low tech countries thus are seldom free. (Of course, most places aren't free. Americans tend to forget that.)

Your lucid, interesting discussion on humans vs animals parallels my own thinking. Humans outfight animals for two reasons: technology and applied skill. Even primitive weapons are harder than skin and bone, and even awesome natural weapons are ineffective if the animal with them lacks the skill or will to employ them. Animals seldom, if ever, fight other types of animals. They use their natural weapons to acquire food, occasionally to prevent becoming food, and generally don't fight if they can run. Thus they really don't defend themselves in a fight; they simply attack until/unless their target fights back, in which case they simply take damage or run away. How could this be simulated?

1. Don't give animals a way of acquiring fighting skills; give them whatever chance of hitting is appropriate for size and natural weapons. Even training doesn't improve this; it just means the animal fights when desired by the owner.
2. Lower most animals' armor or defense rating. Maybe dragon scales are equivalent to plate armor, but ordinary animals should have hides equal to leather armor at best.
3. Give animals fewer HTK in proportion to their size. Thus if you use a straight D&D HD system, roll animal HTK on D6 instead of larger dice.
4. Have animals defend at lower ability than they attack. This is difficult in orthodox D&D but should be easy in other games.
5. Animals don't fight to the death if they can help it. An injured animal is more likely to flee than to redouble its attack.

MARK GALEOTTI: Interesting-but-archaic weaponry is indeed treated differently than state-of-the-art stuff. For instance, wheel lock pistols were outlawed in many cities when they were invented, while bows were not. Now wheel locks often come under special laws related to historical weapons rather than normal gun laws. Your example proves the point: Britain has strict laws against modern firearms, but one can purchase crossbows. (In fact, I did purchase a crossbow in London many years ago--and came close to getting arrested in New York for having it.) Similarly, the spate of kung-fu movies caused the outlawing of martial arts weapons because they were perceived as a new type of weapon, while laws on other non-firearms like knives or bows didn't change.

In a culture with cheap, efficient laser weapons, a heavy, noisy, difficult-to-aim revolver might be merely a historical curiosity, particularly if other conditions restrict the manufacture of ammunition. For example, a character would have to scheme to acquire gunpowder because there weren't any manufacturers, but he would do so because he wanted a weapon he could smuggle through a spaceport "power-detector" which detected the electronic powerpack of a concealed laser

I agree on the need for and usefulness of a multi-universal standard of exchange. Yes, the exact amount of coins required in a given game/fantasy world may be odd, but it's the principle that counts. As a practical matter, I'd allow a bit of fudging (e.g. U in C&S = 3 sp). Of course, it does mean that either all prices are standard, or that we must accept that it takes more or less money, even if expressed in U, to buy certain items in certain cultures. (Thus armor may cost 10U in some worlds and 1000 U in others; somebody from the first world must be aware of that if he's going to buy armor--or just needs to know prices of armor--in the other world.)

JOHN SAPIENZA: Thank you for noticing my ubiquity.//Most energy attack spells would be instantaneous, but an interesting variation is to have duration as a higher version of a given spell. For instance, in the Shattered World, ye olde Fireball is 3rd order, doing three dice of damage (at any proficiency of spell-caster; keeps the spell manageable if proficiency controls casting ability and accuracy but doesn't up damage). Sixth order magic includes Great Ball of Fire (really, that's the name of the spell), which blazes away wherever you cast it for melee rounds equal to the number above what you needed to cast it at all.//I've found a Resistance Table works quite adequately for combat. Actually I ended up doing it the other way around - Resistance/Saves/etc get handled as if they were combat. Be of good cheer, sir; the Universal Combat Matrix yet lives!

HARRY ROBERTSON: Yes, I have read "The Wolfen"; enjoyed it.//Natural Lycanthropes in the Shattered World do indeed change voluntarily, and adult ones never change involuntarily. Created Lycanthropes change involuntarily; however, if they remain Lycanthropes awhile and attempt to do so, they eventually learn how to change voluntarily sometimes and can sometimes avoid involuntary changes. Natural Lycanthropes aren't really afraid of fire, as they aren't mindless in beastform. However, Created Lycanthropes usually do react like other animals.

MIKE DAWSON: I think you're overstating your case for roleplaying being the primary activity of a game session. Yes, it is; that's why we're all here; and a character should do things in an adventure because the scenario calls for such things by him, regardless of what the player would do if he were really there. Moreover, the players are taking delight in what the characters are doing and how they are coming alive as independent entities.

But that doesn't mean the players aren't socializing. It's certainly more social than most mundane recreations (e.g. playing ball). The fact that characters are important and interesting to the players--to the point that we temporarily subordinate our own personalities to the exigencies of the scenario means that decisions should be based on the characters, not the real-world people.

But there are real-world considerations which inevitably occur. Mostly, why are these characters together in the first place? You don't have much of a game if people haven't made real-world decisions to play together and thus achieve some common goals. And there has been usually some behind the scenes activity--actually conducted by the players--to have the characters meet, associate, and cooperate.

PETER SHAPLEY: Even if a monster's "worth" is variable, why can't that worth be divided equally? Why is it appropriate for characters to want to improve their status only if combat is the major ability of status? Surely people want to be admired, regardless of the standards for admiration? Thus, what I said holds true: if you only give out EP for killing stuff, then players won't truly roleplay their PCs because status will only come from killing, and the PCs might not need to or want to kill. As a practical matter, combat proficiency will impress most people most places; moreover, adventurers are ultimately going to get better at fighting than when they started out. I'm not sure why we're disagreeing; we both seem to have the same viewpoint.

PETER DA SILVA: Lycanthrope does technically mean a werewolf. It's just become a term of convenience for me, and most people don't know the word "therianthrope." The death-trauma of being attacked by a lycanthrope creates new ones, due to the beast's supernatural, Chaotic nature. This is like the way those killed by Undead become Undead. However, that's how Chaos operates in the Shattered World, rather than a general rule. Similarly, Shattered World Lycanthropes are Faerie and thus don't age quickly. Created Lycanthropes age slower than normal people--partly because time spent in beastform doesn't count against human-time and partly because, even in humanform, they are exceptionally healthy. Beastform age reflects humanform age. Thus the Created Lycanthrope gets the best of both: animal vitality in humanform and human longevity in beastform. (Of course, there are drawbacks, such as the local citizenry deluging you with silver arrows whenever you so much as bay at the moon!)

JENNY HEIN: Consider your character background system ~~stolen~~ appreciated.

COMMENTARIUM #102

STEVE GILHAM: TSR isn't just trying to get more money for less effort. They're doing it!

WILLIAM KEYES: I agree that reality is a good place to start in quantifying game mechanics. You've definitely accomplished your goal of stimulating thought. Game mechanics with your system could get very unwieldy (no, we don't all have computers), unless people are willing to take the shortcut of fudging numbers in favor of roleplaying. Tiny suggestion: drop having different characteristic ratings for different body parts.

QUENTIN LONG: "Biodaughter" was used deliberately and with care. I was describing gaming with a child. Those who know me know that the person I call "my daughter" is a grown woman. I don't use the word "stepdaughter" to refer to her--unless speaking strictly for legal purposes--as it implies that I'm less closely linked to her than if I'd been biologically involved in her creation. Even less do I like the term "real daughter" to refer to my biodaughter, as if the other were a phantasmal force.

DAVID MALLINAK: You probably are correct that lycanthrope requires a lot of energy, and the animal-form is hungry right after changing. Eating before won't prevent the change though. Possibly it could aid the concentration either way of a lycanthrope sophisticated enough to control the changes.

ERIC SADOYAMA: Nordic Berserkers in the Shattered World are not lycanthropes per se, although there are certain mystic rites by which every old, very religious members of berserker-oriented tribes can become lycanthropes. Anyone else, either born or becoming a lycanthrope, has no necessary reason to take up looting and pillaging while foaming at the mouth in human form.//All lycanthropes seen to date in the Shattered World are mammalian. It is conjectured by sages that the mammalian form has the same evolutionary advantages in Faerie as in the mortal world.

CURLING UP WITH A GOOD BOOK DEPT: Fevre Dream by George R. R. Martin is the story of an unlikely friendship between a vampire and a 19th century Mississippi steamboatman. It presents an interesting alternative view of vampires as living, biological people rather than Undead. This isn't a great book but it is entertaining and will interest you in vampires as people. It is of interest to FRPGers.

SADNESS DEPT: The Arduin Grimoire is soon to become a memory. The company Dave Hargrave sold his rights to tried to sell to a new company, meanwhile extinguishing their stock to lower the price. The new company can't get a loan; the old one no longer has any inventory to sell and now can't afford to republish anything. Dave is unhappy, of course, but will do what he can to bring his creations to life in some form. Meanwhile, he suggests that Arduin Grimoire is about to become a collector's item for those of you who don't have a copy yet.

by Martin Wixted, 105 West St., Danbury, CT 06810; (203) 792-2664; retyped by Lee

LEE: Do you return covers you don't want to use? [Eventually, yes.--LG] Are you overstocked or in short supply for covers? [I could use more of yours.--LG]

STEVE GILHAM: Thank you for the comments on my Roundless combat system. It was interesting to see your breakdown of damage per weapon. But from a roleplaying perspective, I see those "strange things occurring" as perfectly acceptable. Weapons are not perfectly equal, and I did not attempt to make them so. A dagger is not going to be the favored weapon, because roleplayers will realize that running around with daggers is silly. Besides, you cannot parry (in ERIN) against a battleaxe or longsword with a dagger.//You mention that my comment of "rather fast and bloody" is vague. It is not vague at all to me! (The original comment is an opinion and is therefore subjective.)

Your opinion that my 1 second quanta are actually Rounds is interesting. However, since (at least in every game I've seen) a Round is "an exchange of blows," your theory does not hold. [In LRS, a turn is merely a two minute long unit of time, divided into 12 segments each 10 seconds long. In LoA, a round is merely a 12 second unit of time--divided into six phases.--LG] The fastest weapon in ERIN is a Grapple or Dirk--at 2 seconds. No weapon can be faster. If a Round is an exchange of blows, then the 1 second quantum cannot possibly be construed as a Round.//Thanks for the feedback.

SIMON CORNELIUS: Agree that Fritz's PBM seems to be taking up a lot of space... Suggestions?

VINCENT FOSTER: Thanks for the egoboo. Please put in your zine whatever you come up with from my system. I'd love to see it.

RONALD PEHR: RAEBNC

PAUL WATERS/DANA CARSON: Saurians in Ireland! Egad! Really, people, this must stop!

SCOTT BAUER; Hmm....

DAWNTIME: Boy, do you people have the right idea! CULTURE, CULTURE, CULTURE!

DAVID M. UNION: Liked your quotes. Whole zine was interesting. As to writing out POW, I'd have it affect Stealth negatively and charismatic abilities/skills positively.

Heather and Baccus have retired from adventuring and are living happily ever after. (Orifus, however, will always be remembered fondly. May he rest in peace.)

#####

M. T. Child is currently vacationing in Bermuda after spending a week in Florida. He writes:

JENNY HEIN: M. T. Child is pronounced as it looks ("empty child"). Seriously though, it stands for Thunderchild, an ironclad that got destroyed by the Martians in the Moody Blues' musical version of "The War of the Worlds." The M was added because I thought that it would look good.

The previous response in #102 to your question was authored by Joe Uberman without my knowledge or consent, so please ignore it.

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: Volkswagens are also useful as decorative planters (especially when the engine dies). They tend to look Christmasy without being festive.

CALACIRE 38

written, directed and preformed by David Jacobson.
Hate Mail: 5805 Eldergardens St., San Diego, C 92120

This marks the first issue of Calacire in which I did not type the stencils. This also marks the first issue of Calacire in a long time. (Welcome back, David.)

I liked the basic format of A&E 100. There were still a lot of comments, but there were also a lot of interesting articles. Thank you for the Champions ideas. For those who do not like humor, read no further.

The rest of "Those CHAMPIONS characters you wouldn't want in your neighborhood" (mini/max characters for 225 points to show the futility of mini/maxing) because someone will always be able to make a character who can stomp your butt.

Blockhead by Nick Goffeny (origin: David Jacobson)

			<u>Power</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>	
235	STR	225	--	2D	100+
10	DEX	--		Unusual Look (11/less)	2
10	CON	--		Public ID	10
10	BOD	--		Hunted: Police (8/less)	20
10	INT	--		2 x Stun Gas	20
10	EGO	--		Distrust Authority Figures (15+5)	20
10	PRE	--		Ignorant (of City Ways) (15+0)	15
10	COM	--		Hunted: Wrecking Crew (8/less)	30
47	PD	--			
2	ED	--			
2	SPD	--			
49	REC	--			
20	END	--			
133	STN	--			
		<u>225</u>	<u>0</u>		

Richard Micheal's grandfather was exposed to a nerve gas prototype during WWII. Dick's father agreed to have gas tested on him in exchange for a reduced prison sentence. These events led to Dick Micheal's latent mutant abilities.

His tremendous strength was released while he was working in an auto dismantling yard. His head was caught in the auto blocking and pressed into a cube before the safety switch could be thrown. Not being terribly bright to begin with, he was easily duped into becoming a bag-man for Florida drug merchants. His police record is so long (it takes two people to lift it) that he can never hope to enter non-criminal society, but he keeps trying.

BIFF the Wonder Dog (campaign ender) by DJ

				<u>Powers</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>	
4	STR	-6	234	33D6 Energy Killing. Area	Animal INT (15+5)	20
11	DEX	3		effect radius, explosion.	AFRAID of own woof	
5	CON	-10		1 use *cont*, 8x END BAT,	(15+10)	25
5	BOD	-10		IAF - collar, no range	Secret ID (looks like	
2	INT	-8		must say Woof (- 1/2)	normal mutt)	15
2	EGO	-16		2 Levels Shrinking	Cannot pick up things	
10	PRE	--	28	always on	(15+5)	20
14	COM	2		+2" Running	Can only say Woof	
1	PD	--	4	+10 Presence Defense	(15+5)	20
1	ED	--	5		Hunted: Dog Catcher	
2	SPD	-1			(15+5+5, 11/less)	25
2	REC	--				
10	END	--				
10	STN	--				
		<u>-46</u>	<u>271</u>			

No one knows Biff's true origin. His first owner, Mr. Offenheimer, did extensive tests on him in Nevada during WWII. When the U.S. government found out, they wanted to use Biff for his offensive capabilities. Biff first "woofed" in Hiroshima and then again several days later in Nagasaki. The two horrific explosions were attributed to U.S. research of nuclear weaponry, but actually it was Biff who had been lost while in the care of a U.S. spy in Japan. Biff's lifespan is not known, but we can only hope that it ends soon. We also hope that Biff's offspring do not gain the same abilities as their father.

MASTERMIND by Phil Galloway & DJ (origin: DJ)

		<u>Powers</u>		<u>Disadvantages</u>	
1	STR	-9	210	Ego Killing Attack	Unusual Looks (11) 10
2	DEX	-24		(42 END)	2x Stun Ego Attack 20
5	CON	-10	26	+13 Ego Attack	Berserk: confronted with
4	BOD	-12		OCV only	"Smiley"; store/center
5	INT	-5			(11 less); recover (14/less) 15
5	EGO	-10			Hunted: Blockhead (9/less) 22
10	PRES	--			Sign on Back: "Kick Me" 15
4	COM	-3			Hatred--"Smiley" Button (10+5) 8
--	PD	--			Hatred--"Smiley" Creator (10+5) 15
1	ED				Child-like Emotions (15+5) 20
2	SPD	8			
1	REC				
120	END	55			
7	STN	-1			
		-11	236		

Mastermind evolved out of Malcolm Vasivus' insane hatred of the "Smiley" face. In 1973 Malcolm was working for Viper as a research scientist. After years of mental strain and while working with genetic decoding material, Malcolm cracked. He started taking his experimental chemicals home and fed them to his son.

One night Malcolm could take it no more. When a fellow worker pinned a "Smiley" button to his arm, he leapt out of the window and died after falling 15 floors. (The co-worker was later brainwashed and goes around yelling "Jump!" to people hanging out of windows.)

When Malcolm's 9-year-old son was informed of his father's death, he had to be committed to an institution. Ten years later, Malcolm, Jr. was pronounced "cured" and released. It was recommended that he have plastic surgery to correct the bizarre grimace his face had acquired. "What grimace," he asked. Upon seeing his face for the first time in ten years--and the "Smiley" face permanently etched upon it, he lashed out with a mental bolt that killed everyone in the room.

He now spends every waking moment looking for the man who created the "Smiley" face button so he can extract his revenge.

Smegmaward #1: Presented by the master of filth.

This month's award goes to David Jacobson who about two years ago callously subjected several pages of A&E to a ridiculous and pointless spell table. Not only is it terribly confusing, but it incorporates no new ideas and lists spells which he refused to explain. For this willful act of monotony, we give a grand and rousing RAZZZZZ.

Smegmaward #2: Special this month

Since it's my first (be gentle), it's a multi-boredom award. The second such atrocity came from Mike Urban. He wasted not only space but Lee's time typing and his money to print another Name Generation table. Jacobson was ridiculous. I don't know what Urban is. Urban's work deserves this award because even Lee was glad to finish typing it. RAZZZZ.

NOTES FROM A BAD D.M.

by Brian Lane, 1550 So. Santa Fe Ave. #11, Vista, CA 92083

I've been reading and listening to gripes concerning Alignment and how inapplicable they (it?) are to True Role-Playing. Well, fine, and good. The reason alignments were originally used was to emulate the great struggle between two forces in a number of books by Moorcock. D&D stole reams of ideas from many literary sources and got slapped with a number of legal actions for it. Witness halflings instead of the ever popular Hobbits, and the rewrite of DEITIES AND DEMIGODS. Alignments were added to a war game to stimulate roleplaying and give a clear cut "enemy."

Most of the gripes I have encountered are concerned with the idea that a culture wouldn't consider itself evil or, more appropriately, the "bad guy." Most of those that do are usually sub-cultures like motorcycle gangs. And they don't take it too much to heart.

Alignment is a tool just like dice or charts, nothing more. It is used by most DMs to measure a player's actions through his or her character against a standard the DM has set up for the campaign. If you as DM are unhappy with alignments, chuck the whole mess. You will have to come up with a number of cultures with conflicting views on right and wrong, and let the players choose among the offered morals.

I'm lazy and like an "absolute" standard to judge all the cultures in my campaign. You may think it's terrible to rip someone's arm out of his socket, but a troll might think it was all in good fun, so I use alignments to give an idea of expected reactions without having to explain each culture's attitudes toward Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. I'd rather note the exceptions to the rule than make new ground rules for each case.

I've been rereading THE MONSTER MANUAL on character races to refresh my memory. I found an old typo that is still funny. Elves, in Gygax's Wisdom, have a weaponless attack of 1D10. Thinking out the ramifications of this odd fact and considering an elf's long lifespan, I decided with the help of John Kingsbury that elves are: a) nasty in a brawl, b) carnivorous, c) cranky sometimes.

Elves must have a mouth set up like a shark's. Otherwise they would be toothless inside of two centuries. What with all the hard food generally available and just occasionally grinding their teeth (no, not as in filing them), the teeth would wear out. Since they have shark-like teeth, meat would be a "natural" diet. (Besides, plants are such wonderful creations you just couldn't eat them.) When a goodly number of teeth are being replaced, the poor elf must be suffering an awful tooth or jaw ache. This would be enough to make anyone grouchy.

I'm through for this zine. Anyone for pot shots; no broadsides please.

Brian sent this zine with a note saying I should say if I prefer money orders or personal checks. I will happily take either. Also traveller checks endorsed by you and made out to me. One of my part-time jobs involves working Fridays for my father-in-law as a check casher. As long as your negotiable instrument is backed by cash, I'll happily take it. (And I've also got an account with a bank which happily cashes checks/cheques/currency from foreign lands.) --Lee Gold

THE ELVEN ARCHER #10

Bruce D. Danner 228 Melbourne Blvd., Elkton, MD 21921
(c) copyright 1984 Bruce D. Danner

It has been quite a long time since I last contributed, in fact, I had certain doubts that I would ever reach double-figures. Through lack of funds, the cost of purchasing and contributing to A&E was just too much to deal with. Now, although I still do not have much money, I can again make a decent effort at writing for this esteemed publication.

Having received 100, 101 and 102 in February, I'm quite out of touch. The Elven Archer #10 will serve as a transition between these issues and the new ones that are to follow. I considered switching to the photostencil, or Lee typing my zine, but typing myself is still cheaper. Also, I am switching to a "stream of conscious" style (as David Nalle put it), but hopefully not paralleling James Joyce and the like. The paragraph format will allow me to utilize the most space possible. Comments, therefore, will be in a different format, but they will continue. And, of course, since my six month absence, my style has improved at least somewhat. And hopefully, a store of creativity is within my brain somewhere. That is the story. I celebrate #100 belatedly, but with a certain satisfaction (a satisfaction we can all share) that A&E has lasted over eight years and that in some small way I have contributed to it. And it continues -- as this zine does...

A&E #100 is truly splendid. Of course, what first caught my eye was the cover which has to be Oleg's best. Undoubtedly, he is one of the best artists (in my opinion, as good as V. Olson) A&E has had. A fantastic piece, worthy of the 100th issue. The Bacover was appealing too, but I would've liked to have seen more interpretations of zine titles.

Turning a few pages inside, I analyzed the famous Gygax letter. As with most of his writing, it takes on one of two different views. His tone is either enthusiastic, proclaiming that D&D is the game of the players (his earlier material, like the letter), or his tone is bitter, bellowing that D&D is his game (which comprises most of his present material). In his letter here, he sounds so supportive, encouraging and excited. Ah, well, such was the past. We need not mention what the situation is today. It is all too clear.

Several more pages turn before Steve Gilham's "Technomagic" piece, where he believes that magic benefits the trend toward increased technology. I disagree. While it will certainly increase the technology of magic itself, the other "sciences" will decline, simply because they will not be needed. With magic doing the work, the practical sciences will become totally obsolete. I can see Gilham's reasons for his belief, but technology (at least, as we know the term) wouldn't exist.

A bit later, I was intrigued by Peschel's "Future Schlocks". I love that term, but I'm even more partial to "schlock" as an adjective. The TSR product that seems the most inane to me is the set of "AD&D", solo-play, adventure books, where the reader determines the actions of a character. These things are next to useless. They mislead because the books don't have anything to do with AD&D. Also, the most green meophyte can make the necessary decisions very

easily. I recommend these books to no one. Buy a good novel instead. It will certainly challenge the mind more than these things. Maybe that's what TSR stands for: Tactical Schlock Rules.

Fate-Role, the story-telling game was quite interesting, but not entirely new. In the Lion and Lamb Chronicles (fanzine of A&E's erstwhile contributor Ragnar Fyri), there was a game mentioned called "Talking Game" (or something like that) which is very similar to Fate-Role, but even on a more basic level. It seems like an interesting method of play, though I've never actually participated. I have, however, tried to incorporate not using rules when playing rule systems. Often, instead of rolling to hit every attack, I calculate a logical number of the times a monster would ~~xxxx~~ hit out of a certain number of attacks. This eliminates a lot of ~~x~~chart consultations and speeds up play, too. If there is a large scale melee, I often use the same technique with actual player attacks (they, of course don't know this).

Still another interesting piece was the Play-by-Zine move. As a non-participant observer, perhaps I can see the situation in a better light; then again, I may not, but I have an opinion anyway. I believe it's just too massive a project to be done effectively. If Scot has the time, he may be able to do an adequate job, but I don't know how all of the participants of the game can be satisfied with the small turn I just read. In any case, I hope that they will be satisfied, not just the few people that were mentioned.

Rob Ellwood said that most A&Eers (and probably other gamers as well) are locked into one exclusive system. I see this often, too, particularly with RQ players (perhaps the system is good at developing fanatics), but I seem to suffer from the opposite: I'm not attached to any system. This may not seem that bad at first, but the method really doesn't allow me a great familiarity with any system. I can play most of them adequately, but I like to be comfortable and confident with rules when I DM. Thus, I can not DM effectively (to my standards) with most systems. Rule familiarity. Something to be thought about.

Before I end this short come-back issue, I would like to bring a set of books to your attention (if you don't know about them already). For those interested in historical background to their campaigns, they may read Will Durant's series on civilizations, specifically the first four: Our Oriental Heritage, THE Life of Greece, Caesar and Christ and The Age of Faith. These are well-written, informative works, and can give an excellent account of early life. Read them.

Well, that is about it. My apologies to those in 100, 101 and 102 that I did not comment on. Your work has been read and appreciated. Let me know what you think about the format change, and any random thoughts you may have about me. Till next, game well.

Golem's Corner #18

A contribution for *Alarums and Excursions*, by Wilson H. Heydt,
1125 Neilson St., Albany, Ca. 94706, (415) 524-8321.
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By the time this sees print *DunDraCon* will be long over. Since I'm writing this less than a week before the con, I may try to include a con report before finishing it off. (I know that sounds confusing, but that is one advantage of using a computer to compose on.)

Not much general news to present at the moment except that my sister has broken down and purchased a computer for the household—a Cadmus 9730. The machine uses a MC68010 processor, has 512k (soon to be 1MB), a 70MB disk drive with a 2MB floppy for backup, 8 RS-232C ports and runs BSD 4.2 UNIX. Since her apartment is over our garage, it will be easy to run cables from one to the other. I will be using the system on a project to develop a multi-user, partially machine moderated (i.e., the computer will do the record-keeping while a human GM does the thinking and planning) FRP system. This project is in concert with Harry Henderson and Ray Turney. I will discuss progress on this project as it seems appropriate.

In *Golem's Corner 17* I gave the minimum temperature on the Earth's surface as 200°K. One a recent *Nova* program (the PBS science series) on Antarctica, the lowest recorded temperature was given as -126°F. which my calculator runs to 185°K. I think that figure may be taken as authoritative.

Comments — A&E 101.

James Fraser. *What?* Wodē and Daya without benefit of clergy? Just wait until the Moral Majority hears about it—immorality in FRPs!

James Hein. Welcome to A&E.

I prefer my fantasy along the lines of Poul Anderson's *Three Hearts and Three Lions*. In that story physics as we know it works, with a few changes that are readily apparent. I would accept—for example—a universe based on the impulse physics of Ptolemy, but only if it were made quite plain that that was what was being used.

Jennifer Goldfinch. Welcome to A&E.

Those who are stranded could always hunt for chocolate covered manhole covers to eat.

John Abrahamson. Welcome to A&E.

I have liked the SAN characteristic since I saw it in *Call of Cthulhu* because of the way in which it limits characters. It sets up an end point for each PC that is set up and in this way means that no character goes on forever.

Hein & Murray. I can see that you have put a great deal of work into your skills table. After a lead in like that you are expecting me to apply a few *caveats*. I will try not to disappoint you. One of the techniques that has been developed for *Legends* by Henderson and Turney is the use of the difficulty die to use related but not exactly applicable skills. The most common use is in environmental skills. A character who knows woodcraft can use that skill in mountains as mountaineering since there would be an overlap between the two disciplines. Using a skill this way imposes a penalty on the difficulty die, the magnitude of which depends on how close the skill are to each other. Therefore, I suggest amending the table to provide these overlap factors.

I am sure that you realize that no table of skills can be complete. New skills will be developed, old skills may need to be split apart, or some skills may be regarded as near enough to be considered one skill. Various referees will disagree on where dividing lines fall, and thus need different tables. I would like to suggest a few emendations along these lines:

Separate *Tanning*—the skill of making leather from *Fur Dressing*—the skill of preserving pelts with fur intact.

Add *Drive (War) Chariot* as distinct from handling nonmilitary vehicles.

Split *Engineering* into *Civil Engineering* and *Architecture*.

Split *Navigation* among—*Celestial Navigation*—the use of the stars to find your way about on open ocean, *Terrestrial*

Navigation—the use of visible landmarks and navigation aids to travel near land, and **Piloting**—the use of detailed knowledge of a specific locality to navigate a vessel.

Split **Spinning** between the *Drop Spindle* and the *Spinning Wheel*—both the Walking wheel and the Flyer Wheel are also quite distinct.

Let's see how many fibers I can name off the top of my head— You got wool (presumably, sheep's), linen (from flax), and cotton. There are also ramie, cashmere, alpaca, angora, camel hair, camel down, hemp,

and silk (both Chinese and Tussah) just to name a few.

Consider **Weaving**. Were you thinking of the warp weight loom, the draw loom, the Jaquard loom, card weaving, the back-strap loom, inkle loom or some other type of loom or technique?

Add **Whitesmith**—a worker in tin.

Add **Felting**—especially if you have any hatters about.

Add **Shipwright**—you do want your vessels to be seaworthy, don't you?

Add **Farming** before everyone starves.

Add **Plowing**—if animal husbandry is separate. . . .

Since you have **Wheelwright** by itself you will need to have **Harness Making**.

Add **Saddler** to go with the above.

Add **Banking** and probably—**Bookkeeping**.

Add **Hunting** and maybe **Stalking**.

I have one minor quibble with your story. Why did the characters fight with kitchen implements when they had a well-equipped armory?

Diana Short. Welcome to *A&E*.

Jenny Hein. (re *Dum-Dum Arrows*). I seem to recall a Druid spell for explosive seeds. Now, if you made some with a contact-type trigger condition and then used them as arrow heads, I think you would get the desired effect.

John T. Sapienza, Jr. (re *The Golden Dragon 55*). Please keep us posted on the outcome of the suicide lawsuit.

Wesley D. Ives (re "A system that works"). I suggest that you write to **Harry Henderson** About *Legends*.

Myself. Oh, this is so embarrassing. In my last 'zine I made reference to some fiction to be put in *A&E*. Due to various circumstances (like length—maybe 100,000 words?), it won't be. If you wish to read any of Dorothy's fiction, she has a short story in *The Sword of Chaos* a Darkover anthology edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley. She has a short-short in the upcoming

anthology *Swords and Sorceress*, edited by Bradley which (as you might suspect) consists of sword-and-sorcery fiction with female protagonists. Due out this April.

Mark Galeotti. (re *Myself*). Crossbows can make really nasty holes in people just as well as guns—better than many. However, there is no outcry to ban crossbows or even to license them. Current firearms could fall by the wayside if a *practical* defense were to be developed or a really superior hand weapon came along. "Archaic" doesn't mean that it won't work—just that it has been superceded by something else that does the same thing, only "better."

John T. Sapienza, Jr. (re *Myself*, *Dragonsgold 20*). Your method of using the difficulty die in *Runequest!* looks very reasonable. It would appear that as the integrated circuit was the watershed that created the third generation computer, the difficulty die may create third generation FRPs.

I like the *Legends* system, but then I got to help it along in playtest. I hope someone will publish it and let others try it out.

Mike Dawson. (re *Myself*). Your point is well taken. The type of player you describe could well decide that having characters with heaps of treasure and untold power constitutes winning an FRP. They are also the type of players that will most likely abandon FRPs because the game becomes boring. Still, if that is what they enjoy doing, why should I try to stop them? Clearly, you and I do not get the same things from gaming, but I fail to see that either approach is "wrong," merely different.

I assure you that my characters will do many things differently than I would. If that were not the case, I would be something other than a computer programmer for a living. That the characters do not act as I would does not give them independence. The decisions taken are my decisions, however arrived at. I may make those decisions deliberately, either with or without checking any noted on the character sheet, or the decision may be arrived at through the use of dice, but it is still *my* decision. I have been known to have a character take actions that I know are abysmally stupid, but I chose that course of action for reasons of my own. I have even publicly stated what I felt were the tradeoffs. A case in point was when I put it to my colleagues whether a cavalry unit my character was leading should do the smart thing or the medieval thing. It was decided to do the medieval thing, and they proceeded to ride down a unit of their own infantry from behind to get at the enemy—certainly an action I would do my best to avoid.

Within the game I feel that characters should be shown to rise above their cultural biases and become the superior people they are usually supposed to be. This gives the player through the character more options to use the available

skills in ways that others who stayed immersed in the same culture would not. An entity that has a great amount of experience of places and things not related to what he grew up with should be able to take actions that transcend those roots. If the fate of the world hung in the balance, what compromises would you make with *your* background?

Laurence P. Gillespie The literacy rate was given at a symposium at the University of California at Berkeley about ten or twelve years ago. I don't recall exactly who gave the figure. As soon as I have a chance I will research the question a report back in *A&E*.

Clarke & Cornelius. I believe the book you are referring to is *Cliff Castles and Cave Dwellings of Europe* by S. Baring-Gould, Seelly and Co., London, 1911. It looks very interesting and time willing I will review it in a future 'zine.

John B. Robillard. Welcome to *A&E*!!

Peter Shapeley. (re Illness). My extreme sympathies. A couple of years ago I was laid out for a week with walking pneumonia. That's where you're too dumb to lie down and take it easy.

(re Myself). There seems to be a small consensus (*i.e.*, someone agrees with me) that a D100 roll—consisting of two dice—is a single die roll.

I like the extra die as it adds to the richness of the mathematics and as **John T. Sapienza, Jr.** points out it eliminates the need to record or memorize yet more tabular data.

Peter daSilva. (re Spelling Test). Just who gave you a copy of *Meihem in ce Klasrum*?

Comments — *A&E* 102

Lee Gold. (re Myself). I never had much direct experience using the two-handed sword. That weapon does leave one somewhat more vulnerable to body hits and of course exposes the arm that would normally be behind the shield. Other than that, there aren't many differences. Some of the exposure comes at the advantage of slightly better head protection.

I assume the examples you mean are the ones on how hard humans are to kill. I find it quite amazing that our species is considered so weak. We did not come to dominate our environs by bemoaning our fate and giving up.

John T. Sapienza, Jr. (re *The Runelord Writes*). The basic difficulty die system that you've outlined is similar the one **Henderson** and **Turney** developed for legends, and why do I have the feeling I've said that before?

Laurence J. P. Gillespie. Please do translated write-ups. It should be interesting to see how the games are perceived by your Icelandic gamers.

Peter Murray. The store is Games of Berkeley, the mat manufacturer is Berkeley Game Co. There is a connection between them, but I don't know the details.

David M. Union. Welcome to *A&E*.

Jonathan Aird. Welcome to *A&E*.

Eric Sadoyama. Welcome to *A&E*.

Carson & Waters. Welcome to *A&E*. How about Frank Herbert sandworms in the Sahara. They would probably be happier in the Gobi desert, or the Namib, as those are even drier than the Sahara. Still, there are plenty of desert planets in the SF literature. Then of course there is *Star Wars* . . .

Scott Bauer. (re The Big Frame Up). Please permit me a quibble. Henry V is most emphatically not "the Black Prince." That title goes to Edward Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall (the first duke created in England), one of the original Knights of the Garter, also known as Edward of Woodstock. He was the son of Edward III, and under his father commanded the right wing at Crècy (1349) and commanded at Poitiers. His son was Richard II. Henry V (I assume you mean the English one, not—say—the Holy Roman Emperor) was the son of Henry IV was the commander at Agincourt in 1415 and was succeeded by his son Henry VI. He is also the "Prince Hal" of Shakespeare's *Henry IV*. As to how what I would do to find out what Henry's court looked like, I would go through the French connection and get down my copy of the Hours of the Duke de Berry. [*Which is exactly what the producers of the Laurence Olivier Henry V did.* —djh]

Now that the trivia are taken care of, let me address the meat of your remarks. I agree with you. However, I think a first step may be a computer system where the machine is used as a tool and recordkeeping device.

To that end please see my remarks at the beginning of this *GC*. As to languages—C seems to me to be the logical choice with the system being written and tested under UNIX. The developed system could then be ported to other machines. The current trend for UNIX and lookalike systems may well lift that requirement altogether. Another language possibility would be to use YACC (Yet Another Compiler Compiler) to develop a language specifically targeted to the task at hand. This approach permits one to write a multi-player system without initially investing in multiple systems, as well might be done in the final implementations.

If you have given any thought to the actual means of designing such systems? If so, I would appreciate seeing what direction your design is taking.

Bill Keyes. You have (as usual) done a masterful piece of analysis. Your 'zine provides a wealth

of numbers to complement Scott Bauer's work.

There is one slight problem with your math, however. Please, Bill, don't be over-precise. You equate 6' with 1.829 m. This implies that you are figuring height to the nearest millimeter! If you wish to do so, please specify the length of time since the individual has been out of bed. Height varies more than that during the course of the day. A similar problem occurs with your value for weight. Given what you do for a living you should not fall into this trap. Haven't you ever seen news reports of the press being kept back "331 feet?" clearly the original dispatch specified "100 meters" and someone calculated the value to a degree of precision not warranted by the data supplied. I suggest that height be figured to the nearest centimeter and mass no finer than the kilogram.

(Aside to Lee Gold. I think if you check, you will find that John T. Sapienza, Jr. got the difficulty die from Turney and Henderson).

SPACECRAFT DESIGN for the TRAVELLER UNIVERSE

The following was originally started as an article for publication, but since I haven't done that with it, I thought I might offer it here for comment first. If it meets with general understanding—or even approval—I may yet try it on one of the prozines in the field.

The *Traveller* universe incorporates an extensive theory of spacecraft design, notably in *High Guard*. As an engineer, programmer, and longtime spacecraft buff, I found several features within the design system that did not "feel" right.

First and most disturbing is that all of the factors and components scale in a linear fashion: that is, if the mass of the ship doubles, any ship component also doubles, with no regard to any scaling effects except for an occasional minimum.

The universe does not work like that. For example, all living things are constrained by the *square-cube law* which simply states that if you double the size of an object without changing any of its proportions, all areas increase by a factor of 4 (the square of the change) and all volumes increase by a factor of 8 (the cube of the change factor). Since the strength of muscles, bones, or tree trunks are determined by the cross section area while the mass follows the volume, large animals (or plants) need proportionally larger supports--as seen in comparing an elephant and a mouse. This, by the way, is one reason that giant insects don't work. Similar arguments on the square-cube law show why a insect doesn't notice being dropped from an airplane while an elephant will *splash*.

Many factors in the universe, rather than scaling geometrically as above, scale logarithmically. Human senses respond to stimuli this way. As for

instance the *bel* scale of sound intensity matches the response of human hearing. This scale is usually expressed in tenths of units--*decibels*.

Second, the fuel requirements given in the *Traveller* documentation seem to me to preclude any wide-scale commercial or military activity. The only saving grace in this regard is the great ease and low cost with which fuel is obtained wherever you happen to need it. However, if you examine the values for range and the probability of finding fuel in an unexplored system, it quickly becomes apparent that the scout corps is a suicide organization.

The third factor is that technological level has almost nothing to do with ship performance. The only significant nodes in this direction are the fuel consumption rate (per ton of engine), which is related to tech level, and the minimum tech level required by jump capability, as described in the revised edition of *High Guard*. Neither of these allowances produces believable numbers.

Fourth, the *Traveler* ship design assumes that all components of a ship have the same density (that of liquid hydrogen), and imply that these values are treated as displacement tons, after the use of marine architecture. What, in the hard vacuum of interstellar space, is being displaced?

Fifth, related to the scaling argument above, there is no incentive to build large cargo ships—they buy you nothing. Terrestrial experience is that the larger a ship is—within the structural limits of the materials from which it built—the more fuel efficient it is. *Traveller* has no such economy of scale effects.

In producing a new set of parameters for designing spacecraft, I have attempted to maintain the overall game feel of *Traveler* by making really fast communication effectively impossible, and at the same time to produce reasons for various tradeoffs in ship design. I think this system will allow a ship to be set up with almost any configuration desired, but it will be very difficult to build ships that do *everything* well. To do so would be akin to the player character who has all maximum statistics--he's possible, but it strains your credibility when you see him on your living room table.

Table 1 shows the meaning of the various abbreviations that will be used in the formulae for the various components of a ship. Table 2 has samples of a number of typical ships using the overall physical configuration as given in *Traders and Gunboats*. The components will be developed in the order shown in this table.

I. The Hull.

$$\begin{aligned} H_m \\ H_v \sim 15 \times H_m \text{ m}^3 \end{aligned}$$

The overall design mass of the hull can be either selected at the start or derived from all of the other factors at the end. I prefer to start with hull mass as a design point. This approach is particularly useful for a spherical ship, since it is possible to get a rough size for the ship at the outset.

The base cost of the hull is

$$H_c = C_f \times \log H_m \text{ kCr}$$

The C_f ($10^{(Tf/10)}$) describes the high cost of labor and sophisticated materials in the more advanced planets. The $\log H_m$ factor reflects the increased work involved in building a larger ship.

Note that tech level 10 is the nominal design point that gives easy-to-use whole numbers. If the tech level is ignored, and the cost factor is set to 10, these values are the ones that would be generated.

II. Bridge and Computer.

$$B_m = 0.01 \times \frac{H_m}{Tf}$$

$$B_c = [100 \times H_m + (1000/\text{seat})] \times C_f$$

$$C_c = \frac{(\text{model})^2 (1000 + \text{modif} + 500) \times Tl}{Tf}$$

$$B_v = 12.5 \times Tf \text{ m}^3 \text{ per seat}$$

$$B_e = \frac{0.05}{Tf} \text{ Ep per ton}$$

The mass of the bridge is a composite of three things:

1. The bridge proper.
2. The control and power wiring throughout the ship.
3. The ship's computer. I personally do not believe in multiton computers in spacecraft. Therefore, the bridge mass includes a (small) allowance for the computer.

The minimum mass of the bridge is 10 tons, and provides for a bridge crew of two. This is two seats in cost calculation. This minimum is sufficient for any ship of no more than 200 tons. The maximum *required* bridge will mass 40 tons. Commercial vessels will almost never exceed this value, regardless of how large the ship may be, since merchantmen do not use large crews for economic reasons. Military ships will allow the bridge to increase in size and mass to provide for additional crew positions and the bridge. The volume of the bridge allows for 12.5 m³ for each crew member that may be on the bridge on duty. There is a minimum value of 30 m³ for a two-man bridge. This volume is subject to variation with tech level, since those from higher-level cultures will demand more personal space. Power consumption varies with the actual tonnage involved, since more equipment takes more power, and also by tech level, as the more sophisticated gear will be more efficient. The cost of the bridge depends on the size of the ship, because the bridge systems connect throughout the ship, and the number of crew seats provided on the bridge to run the ship also varies by size.

The cost of the computer component depends on the model of computer, with an additional 50% addition for the modified models--that is, those computers specified as *bis* or *fib*.

III. Engines

There are three engines on a ship: they are for ship's power systems, maneuver drive, and jump drive. All engine components have the same density, $v = 6 \text{ m}^3/\text{t}$, with a minimum of $v = 15 \text{ m}^3 + 2 \text{ m}^3/\text{t}$ for engines of not more than five tons. These volumes comprise both the equipment itself and the work spaces and watch-stations associated with it.

A. Power Plant

$$P_m = 0.01 \times \frac{H_m}{Tf}$$

$$P_e = 0.5 \times Tf \text{ Ep per ton}$$

$$P_f = \frac{0.5}{P_m} \times Tf \text{ per month}$$

+ 10% if unrefined

fuel is usable

+ 20% on unrefined fuel,

but not designed that way

The mass is the minimum required for a ship, but it may not be sufficient for a ship with high energy consumption.

Power generated depends on the amount of engine present and efficiency.

Fuel consumption goes by total engine mass and the ever present technological efficiency factor. In a ship whose engines are intended to use unrefined fuels, the engines will use an additional 10% over the normal value. So if you want to be able to use such fuel, you had better prepare for a loss of endurance.

The cost of power systems is

$$P_c = 0.3 \times C_f \text{ MCr per ton.}$$

If the ships were to be run on unrefined fuel without having been designed for it they would use 20% more fuel than nominal.

B. Maneuver Drive

$$M_m = \frac{0.02 \times H_m \times A_{max}}{Tf}$$

$$M_f = \frac{0.25}{M_m \times Tf} \text{ t per month}$$

+ 10% for unrefined fuel

+ 20% for refined fuel engines

running on unrefined fuel

The mass of the maneuver drive depends on the mass to be moved and the desired peak acceleration in gravities, where one gravity is 10 m/s².

Fuel consumption is based on the assumption that the ship will average one-half its peak acceleration. There is the usual 10% penalty for the ability to use unrefined fuel and the 20% penalty for running an engine designed for refined fuel on unrefined fuel.

The maneuver drive does not draw power from the power plant, since it contains its own integral power generation systems.

The cost for the maneuver drive is

$$M_c = 0.2 \times Cf \text{ MCr per ton.}$$

C. The Jump Drive

$$J_m = \frac{r \times J_{\max} \times \log H_m}{5 \times Tf}$$

$$J_r = \frac{0.02 \times H_m \times J^2}{Tf}$$

$$J_r(\text{rate}) = 1 \text{ t per ton engine per min.}$$

$$J_t = 1 + J_r/J_r(\text{rate}) \text{ minutes}$$

The jump drive is the critical component in a starship. The minimum tech level to produce a jump engine is 9. The formulas are based on the theory that the engine creates a field that causes the hyper-light jump to occur. The engine size is determined by the radius of action of the engine, the maximum possible jump range (in parsecs) that can be produced, with a small modification for the mass being moved, and the time needed to build up enough energy in the field to effect the desired jump. I hold no belief in a theoretical maximum limit to jump range, but the fuel consumption climbs more rapidly than the range of the jump--so rapidly, in fact, that there are no extant examples of a jump drive with a range greater than six parsecs (J6).

Drives are manufactured at standard costs with integral multiples of 5 meters radius of action, standard ship tonnage mass ratings, and unit parsec jump distances. Which is to say that before applying the Tf divisor and the $\log H_m$ factor, the jump drives come in unit ton masses.

While the formula gives the engine mass necessary to produce a given performance figure, large military ships will generally use significantly larger engines than this in order to cut down the time needed to complete the jump once the engine procedures are started. Jump engines do not consume power plant energy, since part of their mass comprises its own power units. Fuel consumption is determined by the actual mass being moved and the square of the jump used.

Again, there is a 10% fuel-consumption penalty if the engine is designed to use unrefined fuel. If unrefined fuel is used in an engine not designed to use it, however, this is not only a 20% fuel consumption penalty as described above, but also the chance of a misjump, as specified in *Traveller Book 2*. The rate of fuel consumption will control how long it takes to establish a stable jump field (J_t).

The cost of a jump drive is a function of its mass.

IV. Accommodations

Staterooms and Quarters

$$Q_m = 4.0 \text{ t each}$$

$$Q_v = 50 \times Tf \text{ m}^3 \text{ each}$$

$$Q_e = 0.1 \text{ Ep each}$$

$$Q_c = 50 \times Cf \text{ kCr each}$$

Low Berths

$$BL_m = \frac{0.5}{Tf} \text{ t each}$$

$$BL_v = 20 \text{ m}^3 \text{ each}$$

$$BL_c = 5 \times Cf \text{ kCr each}$$

$$BL_e = \frac{0.1}{Tf} \text{ Ep each}$$

Emergency Low Berths

These come as modules for four people per module.

$$BE_m = \frac{1.0}{Tf} \text{ t each}$$

$$BE_v = 25 \text{ m}^3 \text{ each}$$

$$BE_c = 10 \times Cf \text{ kCr each}$$

$$BE_e = \frac{0.05}{Tf} \text{ Ep each}$$

A. Staterooms

The data for the stateroom include the prorated share of corridors, common areas, and galley facilities necessary for living aboard a spacecraft.

The mass for each stateroom is constant: although the mass for the subcomponents represented by the stateroom decreases with tech level in the usual fashion, higher-level cultures will put more equipment in for increased comfort and convenience.

In the 100-ton Scout there are four staterooms for a maximum crew of eight with double occupancy. At all tech levels of this ship,

$$Q_m = 16.0 \text{ t}$$

The volume represented for the stateroom varies with tech level in the opposite way to that shown for bridge volume; that is, it grows larger with increasing tech level, as the personnel demand more privacy and personal space. A sidelight to this factor will be that crew members on ships built at less than their home planet's tech level will demand higher wages for working in "cramped" quarters on "primitive" ships. Passengers for such ships will similarly try to drive down the cost of passage. For the same reasons that the mass for staterooms remains constant for varying tech level, so does the energy expenditure for their mass. The cost of staterooms varies simply with the tech level.

The mass of a low berth decreases with improved equipment: at higher tech level, the volume of a low berth is determined by the amount of space required by the person occupying the berth

and the needed workspace around the berth. Cost follows the usual pattern. There are no low berths specified in the sample ships.

The mass of emergency low berths decreases as tech level increases, while the volume is again determined by human factors. Cost uses the usual pattern. Not only do high-tech crews show dissatisfaction with a ship whose emergency equipment does not seem adequate to them, but low-tech ships visiting less-than-friendly high-tech worlds may have their operating certification lifted until all such equipment is replaced (at high cost!) with the local high-tech equivalents, or be forbidden to leave the system. There are no emergency low berths specified for the sample ships.

V. Environmental Conditioning

This is the first of three ship components that I will introduce that is not included in the *Traveller* ship design system. This equipment is the ship's life-support system. Without it, the ship will have a very short "staying" time for its operation.

$$N_m = 0.01 \times \frac{H_m}{Tf} \text{ tons}$$

$$N_v = \frac{15}{Tf} \text{ m}^3 \text{ per ton}$$

$$N_e = \frac{0.1}{Tf} \text{ Ep per ton}$$

$$N_c = 50 \times Cf \text{ kCr per ton}$$

$$E_d = (0.01 \times R_m \times Tf)^3 \text{ weeks}$$

where R_m is the mass
being conditioned

The mass is a "legal" requirement to obtain the papers needed by an operating spacecraft. The actual figures may be higher for reasons not related to the legal requirements, such as the ability to function in a nonemergency mode with a partially disabled system or a desire for long-duration trips where full shipyard facilities at a suitable tech level are not expected to be available--such as voyages of discovery or exploration. I will show how to compute the duration of stability of the plant later, as this depends on data that have not yet been generated. The volume of the system depends on the actual tonnage modified by the tech factor, since most of the actual plant consists of gene-tailored organisms. For the sample ships, The energy requirement is a tech-modified value of the actual tonnage in use. The cost is my old friend, a constant times the technological cost factor times the tonnage in use. The stable lifetime of an environmental plant does not depend on the mass of the ship but on the mass that is being conditioned. This mass *excludes* weapon turrets, armor, structural members, cargo space (if possible in a given case), and fuel tankage. In short, if crew members have to go into a section routinely, then it must be included in the controlled volume. The total is figured in tons and this total is given as M_c . M_c will almost always be a good deal larger for military and passenger ships than

for cargo vessels of comparable size. Regardless of any indications to the contrary, no environmental system is stable without maintenance for longer than one year. The total mass, however, can be divided into two or more independent systems and alternately operated and serviced to give the ship extremely long endurance. At a shipyard, lifsystem servicing costs $1 \times Cf$ kCr per ton of plant, where the representative tech level of the yard determines the cost. Note that a world with a tech level lower than that of the equipment will not have the parts, filters, and "seed" organisms for a given system. Refit parts (etc.) \times be purchased for $100 \times Cf$ per ton, and a full refit requires one ton of such parts per 100 tons of environmental equipment. Refits will require four man-weeks per 10 tons of equipment, at a minimum of one week.

VI. Emergency Air Equipment

$$EA_m = 1 \text{ t per } 1,000 \text{ m}^3 \text{ per week}$$

$$EA_v = 2 \text{ m}^3 \text{ per ton}$$

$$EA_c = 2.0 \text{ kCr per ton}$$

This is an optional, though desirable, part of the ship. Since it consists chiefly of compressed gas and simple filters, its mass, volume, and cost are independent of tech level.

VII. Ship's Vehicles

The mass, cost, and volume of ships' vehicles, from groundcars up to possible auxiliary interstellar craft, is not subject to simple formulae. Any such craft will add their volume and mass to those of the ship proper; in addition, on ships over 1,000 tons, they will mean an extra 30% of both mass and volume for vehicles below 100 tons, or 10% for vehicles of 100 tons or more. This add-on covers access ways, hold-down clamps, launch facilities, power connections, and any other auxiliary services required. The cost will be:

$$V_m = 200 \times Cf \text{ Cr per ton.}$$

for the shipside connections, the vehicle is extra. At this point a partial total of the data is needed.

VIII. Subtotal

The sum of items I through VII covers all of the mass, but not all of the volume that is to be handled by the environmental conditioning and the emergency air systems.

The additional volume comes from all those little out-of-the-way places that are either useless for anything practical--and hence cannot be classified under any functional category--or are taken up by cable conduits, power leads, plumbing lines, fuel feed lines, and so forth. This space is dependent in part on the shape of the hull. Long graceful ships lose a lot of space. For wedge- or needle-shaped ships, this comes to an extra $\frac{20}{Tf}$ % volume of the total volume so far. For cones and cylinders, the loss is $\frac{15}{Tf}$ %, and for other hull shapes the loss is

$\frac{10}{Tf}$ %. There is now enough data to compute the stable duration of the environmental control system as:

$$E_d = (0.01 \times R_m \times Tf)^3 \text{ weeks.}$$

IX. Weaponry

I have not redesigned the weapon systems. The data in *High Guard* can be used by assigning an appropriate density to the equipment or simply defaulting to the *Traveller* density of 14 m³ per ton. Weapon turret sizes can be derived from the plans for the *Broadsword* class cruiser published in the *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society*, No. 8. This turret is 6 meter in diameter, one-half of which is "inside" the ship. There will also be mounting and aiming equipment in the ship. The totals for the ship are:

$$W_m = \frac{3}{Tf} + \text{weapons tons}$$

$$W_v = \frac{70}{Tf} \text{ m}^3 \text{ inside ship}$$

i.e., 1/2 of 110 m³ turret

+ 15 m³ machinery, etc.

$$W_e = \frac{1.0}{Tf} + \text{weapon } E_p$$

$$W_c = 10 \times Cf + (\text{weapons cost}) \text{ kCr}$$

Two things should be noted about these turrets. (1) Placement of the turret *may* increase the maximum dimension of the ship, thereby affecting the radius of action for the jump drive. (2) In order to have room for clear fields of fire and other necessary outside mounted equipment, there is a limit of one turret for each 500 m³ of surface of the ship. The cost of weapons will be 0.1 × Cf times the cost given in *Higl. Guard*, plus the cost of the turret itself, amounting to 50 × Cf kCr. The energy requirements for this weapon systems are the principle reason for the oversize power plants on military ships.

X. Armour.

$$D_m = \frac{50 \times (1 + \log af)}{Tf} \text{ kg/m}_2$$

$$D_v = 0.1 \text{ af m}^3/\text{m}^2\text{-covered}$$

$$D_c = 40 \times Cf \text{ kCr per ton}$$

Armour is a strictly area effect. It has nothing to do with the mass or volume of the ship it is applied to (except insofar as mass influences volume and volume influences surface area), and may be used selectively both inside and outside a ship.

XI. Structure.

$$S_m = \frac{0.01 \times A_{\max} H_m \log H_m}{Tf} \text{ tons}$$

$$S_v = 1 \text{ m}^3 \text{ per ton}$$

$$S_c = Cf \text{ kCr per ton}$$

This component is included to account for the fact that the ship must hold together under acceleration. There must be something there to keep the ship in one piece. It is possible to install sufficiently powerful maneuver drive engines to exceed the designed structural limits. If such accelerations are actually used, there is an immediate chance of wrecking the ship—1 in 6 for each gravity over the structural A_{\max} per turn, and a residual chance of 1 in 6 for each A_{\max} gravity over structural A_{\max} used times the current average acceleration each week. E.g., if a ship designed to take two gravities accelerates at four gravities, each turn this is applied there is a 2 in 6 chance of structural failure; if after the over-acceleration has ceased there is a (2g above A_{\max}) × (1g average), or 2 in 6, chance that the structure will fail anyway each week. Increases in the cost of structure reflect the cost of improved materials and better fabrication techniques, as well as the higher cost of labor on high-tech worlds.

XII. Cargo

$$L_v = 15 \text{ m}^3/\text{t}$$

Cargo mass will be as wanted. For arbitrary cargo I suggest an allowance of 15 m³ per ton of cargo hold. If a ship is built to carry a specific cargo or type of cargo, such as oil tankers or automobile carriers now, and the cargo is known to pack to a particular density, that figure should be used. Cargos such as bulk liquids (wine, oils, water-based solutions) or grains (or other human foodstuffs) will pack to about 1 m³ per ton.

XIII. Fuel

$$F_v = 20 \text{ m}^3 \text{ per ton}$$

$$F_e = \frac{0.01}{Tf} \text{ per ton}$$

Fuel used by starships in *Traveller* is liquid hydrogen. One could, however, design a ship to run using water and an electrolysis plant to extract the hydrogen on the fly. The density of water is 1 ton per cubic meter, making the effective ratio 10 m³/ton of hydrogen. The energy requirement is twice that required for liquid hydrogen to power the electrolysis. The mass of the fuel will be the balance of the ship. The volume is the fuel itself plus fuel lines, pumps, and insulation. The energy requirement for the fuel is that required to keep it cold for extended periods of time, against insolation from the outside and conductive heating from the rest of the ship. The cost is included in the basic hull cost.

In order to calculate the fuel load, an updated subtotal is needed.

The difference in mass between H_m and the subtotal can be used for fuel capacity to bring the ship up to its nominal mass. This will also enable one to calculate the volume and energy requirements for the fuel supply. The fuel consumption figures

given earlier now allow a calculation of the range of a ship, assuming that one jump is taken each week.

Performance, as shown in table 3, correlates very well with both tech level and realistic expectations of an exploratory vessel, and make the high price of a high tech level ship worthwhile. This type of performance also shows that merchant vessels will probably travel at low speed, especially on long runs (cargo permitting), and that there will be a premium on high speed cargo and passenger service. The fuel requirements of high speed interstellar movement will also tend to adversely impact the radius of action of fast military strike forces, much as among the surface navies of World War II.

XIV. Other Considerations

For those who wish to add a little extra spice to their game, I would like to mention the following additional enhancements:

1. A planet may construct craft that exceed the planet's tech level for experimental or military purposes. This is one way to increase their technological expertise. The cost of such procurement will be $4^{\delta Tl}$ times as great as the nominal cost of the target tech level unit, (where δTl is the difference in tech levels) since such construction involves massive research development. For the same reason, it will take $2^{\delta Tl}$ times as long as normal to complete the project. Such equipment will be notoriously cranky and unreliable, and spare parts will have to be custom-made. On the other hand, below-tech-level equipment can be made from archived data at a cost of $2^{-\delta Tl}$ of the nominal cost—although, probably with personnel spaces at the space that would normally be used at the planet's actual tech level. All R&D has been written off, and smaller firms may be hired to do the work routinely.

2. The major military forces of a planet will always try to have the latest possible models for their front-line forces. Thus 20% to 30% of the military forces of a planet will have equipment at least one tech level better than the rating of the planet.

3. Under normal conditions, the jump field extends slightly beyond a ship—almost always less than ten meters, often less than five meters. If the field extends very far out past the ship, two interesting possibilities could occur if there is a massive objective partially within the field. These alternatives may be termed "capture" and "anchor."

- a. Capture--that portion of the external object will be taken along on a jump, all of it if it is wholly within the field. If this is true, merchant vessels will be extremely wary of any ship that wants to approach too closely and cannot be immediately and positively identified.

- b. Anchor--the object partially within the field will "anchor" the ship in space, probably wrecking the jump engines of the ship when it tries to jump. In this case, military ships winning a battle will attempt to get part of their ships' struc-

ture inside the jump fields of their opposition, to try to prevent their escape. Merchant ships will be wary about ships encountered at remote locales where there is no help nearby.

4. Jump drives may be retuned to alter their mass-range-radius limits. This would tend to promote the development of relatively few models of drives to be tuned for a broad range of characteristics. This would cause a drop in the price of such drives, and a lively used-drive market. The retuning would take one man-week of labor for each five tons of drive, for a proper job. A minimum of one week would be required to do this. An emergency retune could be done in one man-day per ten tons of drive, in a minimum of two days. Emergency retuning would lead to a 10% increase in fuel consumption and a chance of misjumping on 11+ on 2D6. Risky, of course, but if you're that desperate. . . .

5. During major wars it is sometimes necessary to produce vast numbers of ships quickly and cheaply. Under these circumstances, mass-production shipyards are set up using prefabricated subassemblies. It takes three years to put the procedure into full operation, but when it is going, a shipyard in this mode can build ships at a peak rate of one *day* per 1,000 tons of ship from keel-laying to "launch." These ships will be of one single standard design, and they will each require one month of fitting out and flight trials. *The ships will be produced at 10% of normal cost and they will be built at an effective tech-level one less than normal for the shipyard involved.* This idea is based on the production of the Liberty ships of World War II. They were 10,000-ton steamships, and the record time from keel-laying to launch was 80 hours.

6. If you want to cope with the bookkeeping involved, you can calculate the fuel requirement for a jump just prior to making the jump based on the ship's actual current mass. This will produce slightly better performance in terms of jump range or permit less fuel to be carried. If this technique is used, the referee would do well to have planetary governments have regulations (and the resultant port authority inspections) requiring commercial vessels to maintain a minimum fuel reserve of arrival—most likely enough to travel one or two parsecs at jump 1. If this reserve is not present, the local authorities will probably hold an inquiry into the emergency that required the use of the reserve.

If any of these design features seem unduly complex, I point out that I can lay out the specs for a ship in about one hour, doing all of the calculations with only the aid of a set of log tables. It is always possible, of course, to design at tech level 10, in which case log Tl equals 1 and drops out of the equations, and the cost factor Cf equals 10, making cost calculations very simple.

Table 1.**A. Ship Components**

- E = Engine. This may be any type of "engine"--usually either power plant or maneuver drive engines.
 F = Fuel. Used in fuel consumption and storage calculations.
 D = Armor factor.
 H = Ships hull.
 B = Bridge.
 C = Computer.
 P = Power plant.
 M = Maneuver drive.
 J = Jump drive engine.
 L = Cargo.
 R = Occupied portion of the ship. See the *Environmental Conditioning* section.
 Q = Crew and passenger quarters.
 S = Ship structure, that is, what hold the ship together.
 BL = Low berth.
 BE = Emergency low berth--holds four.
 EA = Emergency air supply.
 N = Environmental conditioning equipment.

B. Factors

- X_m = Mass of component X. Expressed in metric tons.
 X_v = Volume of component X. Expressed in cubic meters.
 X_c = Cost of component X. Expressed in Credits, Kilocredits, Megacredits, etc.
 X_t = Time to use component X. Expressed in common units.
 X_r = Radius of component X or its radius of action. Expressed in meters or parsecs, depending on the reference.
 Tl = Technological level. This is a measure of the capabilities of the planet that constructed the ship. Most components can be built at Tl = 7, but jump drive engines require Tl = 9. Increasing tech level will tend to make equipment smaller, lighter, and more efficient--and more expensive.
 Tf = $\log_{10} Tl$. Technological Factor. This is the relative factor by which mass and efficiency vary according to tech level.
 Cf = $10^{(Tl/10)}$ or antilog (Tl/10). Cost Factor. This gives the relative change in cost for the same equipment built by installations at various tech levels.
 δTl = [Tl1 - Tl2]. Change in tech level. This is the absolute value of the difference between a planet's tech level and the effective tech level of any item of construction.
 a = Acceleration. Expressed in gravities (g). See g as a unit of measure.
 a_{max} = Maximum design acceleration.
 j = Jump distance. Expressed in parsecs.
 j_{max} = Maximum design jump distance.
 X_e = Energy used in running component X. Power production and consumption are expressed in energy points.
 X_A = The area of component X, expressed in square meters.

C. Units of Measurement

- t = Metric ton, 1,000 kilograms, equivalent to 2,208 pounds.
 m^3 = Cubic meter. The volume of a sphere is $4/3 \pi r^3$.
 Cr = Credit, base monetary unit.
 kCr = Kilocredit, 1,000 Cr.

MCr = Megacredit, 1,000 kCr or 1,000,000 Cr.

m^2 = Square meter.

m = Meter.

g = Acceleration expressed in *gravities*. 1 g. equals "10 m/s²". The acceleration due to the Earth's gravity at the surface is 0.98 g.

s = Seconds.

Ep = Energy point. A measure of relative energy production or consumption as used in *High Guard*.

Table 2.

To start the ongoing example:

$H_m = 100$ t. This is the same at all tech levels, since it is a design point. It will, however, determine such things as fuel capacity and nominal fuel consumption.

$v = 1,500$ m³ Again, there is no Tl dependency. If I were designing the shape of the ship, I could use the figure to determine the necessary dimensions--especially easy in the case of a sphere.

length = 38 meters Since I am using the design in *Traders and Gunboats*,

radius = 20 meters the length of the ship is the only dimension I need to worry about. An even number greater than half this value will be used as the radius of the jump field.

These numbers allow me to establish the values of recurring factors for the balance of the design:

$$\log H_m = 2.0$$

and for the various tech levels of the sample ships:

1. For Tl = 7, Cf = 5.012 and Tf = 0.845.
2. For Tl = 10, Cf = 10.000 and Tf = 1.000.
3. For Tl = 15, Cf = 31.62 and Tf = 1.204.

at Tl = 7 $H_c = 10,024,000$ Cr;

at Tl = 10 (the level that gives nominal values)

$H_c = 20,000,000$ Cr;

at Tl = 15 $H_c = 62,240,000$ Cr.

For the sample ship, the minimum value is the appropriate one, and gives

at Tl = 7, $B_m = 11.8$ tons

at Tl = 10, $B_m = 10$ tons

at Tl = 15, $B_m = 8.5$ tons

On the sample ships, the minimum applies, yielding

at Tl = 7, $B_m^m = 24$ m³

at Tl = 10, $B_m^m = 30$ m³

at Tl = 15, $B_m^m = 35$ m³

So:

at Tl = 7, $B_c = 0.6$ Ep

at Tl = 10, $B_c = 0.5$ Ep

at Tl = 15, $B_c = 0.43$ Ep

For the ship in question, the computer is a model 1-bis.

At Tl = 7, $B_c = 60$ kCr
 $C_c = 215$ kCr

at Tl = 10, $B_c = 120$ kCr
 $C_c = 150$ kCr

at Tl = 15, $CB_c = 379$ kCr
 $C_c = 100$ kCr

The sample ship design will require significantly more power than the minimum indicated.

At Tl = 7, $M_p = 9.6$ t $v = 57$ m³
Tl = 10, $M_p = 7.0$ t $v = 42$ m³
Tl = 15, $M_p = 5.1$ t $v = 31$ m³

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{At Tl} = 7, \quad E_p = 4.0 \\ \text{Tl} = 10, \quad E_p = 3.5 \\ \text{Tl} = 15, \quad E_p = 3.0 \end{array}$$

The sample design falls into this category.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{At Tl} = 7, \quad P_t = 6.2 \text{ t/mo.} \\ \text{Tl} = 10, \quad P_t = 3.85 \text{ t/mo.} \\ \text{Tl} = 15, \quad P_t = 2.4 \text{ t/mo.} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{At Tl} = 7, \quad P_c = 14.4 \text{ MCr} \\ \text{Tl} = 10, \quad P_c = 21.0 \text{ MCr} \\ \text{Tl} = 15, \quad P_c = 48.4 \text{ MCr} \end{array}$$

The sample ships are to have a peak acceleration of two gs. Therefore:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{at Tl} = 7, \quad M_m = 6.0 \text{ tons} \quad M_v = 36 \text{ m}^3 \\ \text{at Tl} = 10, \quad M_m = 4.0 \text{ tons} \quad M_v = 23 \text{ m}^3 \\ \text{at Tl} = 15, \quad M_m = 3.4 \text{ tons} \quad M_v = 22 \text{ m}^3 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{At Tl} = 7, \quad M_f = 2.0 \text{ t/mo.} \\ \text{Tl} = 10, \quad M_f = 1.1 \text{ t/mo.} \\ \text{Tl} = 15, \quad M_f = 0.8 \text{ t/mo.} \end{array}$$

For the sample designs:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{at Tl} = 7, \quad M_c = 6.0 \text{ MCr} \\ \text{at Tl} = 10, \quad M_c = 8.0 \text{ MCr} \\ \text{at Tl} = 15, \quad M_c = 21.5 \text{ MCr} \end{array}$$

The sample ship has a design point of J2.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{At Tl} = 9, \quad J_m = 16.8 \text{ t} \quad J_v = 101 \text{ m}^3 \\ \text{Tl} = 10, \quad J_m = 16.0 \text{ t} \quad J_v = 96 \text{ m}^3 \\ \text{Tl} = 15, \quad J_m = 13.6 \text{ t} \quad J_v = 82 \text{ m}^3 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{At Tl} = 9, \quad J_f \text{ (rate)} = 16.8 \text{ t/min} \\ \text{for J1 } J_f = 2.6 \text{ t}, \quad J_t = 1.0 \text{ min} \\ \text{for J2 } J_f = 10.8 \text{ t}, \quad J_t = 1.7 \text{ min} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Tl} = 10, \quad J_f \text{ (rate)} = 16.0 \text{ t/min} \\ \text{for J1 } J_f = 2.2 \text{ t}, \quad J_t = 1.2 \text{ min} \\ \text{for J2 } J_f = 8.8 \text{ t}, \quad J_t = 1.6 \text{ min} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Tl} = 15, \quad J_f \text{ (rate)} = 13.6 \text{ t/min} \\ \text{for J1 } J_f = 1.9 \text{ t}, \quad J_t = 1.1 \text{ min} \\ \text{for J2 } J_f = 7.6 \text{ t}, \quad J_t = 1.6 \text{ min} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{At Tl} = 9, \quad J_c = 8.4 \text{ MCr} \\ \text{Tl} = 10, \quad J_c = 16.0 \text{ MCr} \\ \text{Tl} = 15, \quad J_c = 43.0 \text{ MCr} \end{array}$$

In the 100-ton Scout there are four staterooms for a maximum crew of eight with double occupancy. At all tech levels of this ship,

$$Q_m = 16.0 \text{ t}$$

For the samples:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{At Tl} = 7, \quad Q_v = 169 \text{ m}^3 \\ \text{Tl} = 10, \quad Q_v = 200 \text{ m}^3 \\ \text{Tl} = 15, \quad Q_v = 235 \text{ m}^3 \end{array}$$

$$Q_e = 0.4 \text{ for all of the sample ships.}$$

For four staterooms:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{at Tl} = 7, \quad Q_c = 1.0 \text{ MCr} \\ \text{Tl} = 10, \quad Q_c = 2.0 \text{ MCr} \\ \text{Tl} = 15, \quad Q_c = 6.3 \text{ MCr} \end{array}$$

In order to keep the ships being test-designed in space for an extended period, I have chosen to use twice the required environmental tonnage (before applying the T_f factor), which yields:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{at } Tl = 7, & \quad N_{\text{Ep}} = 2.4 \text{ t} \\ Tl = 10, & \quad N_{\text{Ep}} = 2.0 \text{ t} \\ Tl = 15, & \quad N_{\text{Ep}} = 1.7 \text{ t} \end{aligned}$$

For the sample ships,

$$\begin{aligned} \text{at } Tl = 7, & \quad N_v = 43 \text{ m}^3 \\ Tl = 10, & \quad N_v = 30 \text{ m}^3 \\ Tl = 15, & \quad N_v = 22 \text{ m}^3 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{At } Tl = 7, & \quad N_e = 0.3 \\ Tl = 10, & \quad N_e = 0.2 \\ Tl = 15, & \quad N_e = 0.15 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{At } Tl = 7, & \quad N_c = 0.5 \text{ MCr} \\ Tl = 10, & \quad N_c = 1.0 \text{ MCr} \\ Tl = 15, & \quad N_c = 2.7 \text{ MCr} \end{aligned}$$

Among the sample ships, only the tech-level 15 ship carries emergency air.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{At } Tl = 15, & \quad EA_m = 1 \text{ ton} \\ & \quad EA_v = 2 \text{ m}^3 \\ & \quad EA_c = 2.0 \text{ kCr} \end{aligned}$$

The 100t Scout carries an air raft at 4.0 tons, requiring 60 m^3 of stowage space, at a nominal cost of 600 kCr for the vehicle. For this ship portion of this:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{At } Tl = 7, & \quad V_c = 4.0 \text{ kCr} \\ Tl = 10, & \quad V_c = 8.0 \text{ kCr} \\ Tl = 15, & \quad V_c = 25.3 \text{ kCr} \end{aligned}$$

At this point I will tabulate a partial total of the data for the three sample ships (the same ship at three different tech levels).

	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Volume</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Tl = 7	66.6 t	490 m^3	41,303 kCr
Tl = 10	59.0 t	481 m^3	68,878 kCr
Tl = 15	53.3 t	489 m^3	185,246 kCr

The sample ships are wedges, so the losses are:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{at } Tl = 7 & \quad 116 \text{ m}^3 \\ Tl = 10 & \quad 96 \text{ m}^3 \\ Tl = 15 & \quad 83 \text{ m}^3 \end{aligned}$$

This makes the revised subtotals read:

	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Volume</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Tl = 7	66.6 t	606 m^3	41,303 kCr
Tl = 10	59.0 t	577 m^3	68,878 kCr
Tl = 15	53.3 t	572 m^3	185,246 kCr

$$\begin{aligned} \text{At } Tl = 7, & \quad d = 27 \text{ weeks} \\ Tl = 10, & \quad d = 39 \text{ weeks} \\ Tl = 15, & \quad d = 53 \text{ weeks or one year--the maximum allowed} \\ & \quad \text{emergency air is enough for 1.75 weeks.} \end{aligned}$$

On the sample ship there is one turret, mounting one missile rack (0 Ep-nominal, 1.0 ton-nominal) and one laser (1.0 Ep-nominal, 1.0 ton-nominal). So:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{at } Tl = 7, & \quad W_m = 5.9 \text{ t} \quad W_c = 927 \text{ kCr} \\ & \quad W_v^m = 83 \text{ m}^3 \\ & \quad W_e^v = 2.5 \\ Tl = 10, & \quad W_m = 5.0 \text{ t} \quad W_c = 1,850 \text{ kCr} \\ & \quad W_v^m = 70 \text{ m}^3 \\ & \quad W_e^v = 2.0 \\ Tl = 15, & \quad W_m = 4.3 \text{ t} \quad W_c = 5,850 \text{ kCr} \\ & \quad W_v^m = 60 \text{ m}^3 \end{aligned}$$

$$W_e = 1.7$$

The 100t Scout is not armored. The model design will have a structure designed to withstand two-gravity accelerations.

At Tl = 7,	$S_m = 6.0 \text{ t}$ $S_v = 6 \text{ m}^3$	$S_c = 30 \text{ kCr}$
Tl = 10,	$S_m = 4.0 \text{ t}$ $S_v = 4 \text{ m}^3$	$S_c = 40 \text{ kCr}$
Tl = 15,	$S_m = 3.4 \text{ t}$ $S_v = 4 \text{ m}^3$	$S_c = 108 \text{ kCr}$

The sample ships can carry three tons of cargo of unspecified type. At any tech level this gives

$$v_c = 45 \text{ m}^3.$$

A new subtotal gives:

	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Volume</i>	<i>Available Mass</i>
Tl = 7	81.5 t	740 m ³	18.5 t
Tl = 10	71.0 t	696 m ³	29.0 t
Tl = 15	64.0 t	681 m ³	36.0 t

At	
Tl = 7,	$F_m = 18.5 \text{ t}$ $F_v = 370 \text{ m}^3$ $F_e = 0.2$
Tl = 10,	$F_m = 29.0 \text{ t}$ $F_v = 580 \text{ m}^3$ $F_e = 0.3$
Tl = 15,	$F_m = 36.0 \text{ t}$ $F_v = 770 \text{ m}^3$ $F_e = 0.2$

The totals for the three ships are:

	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Volume</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Tl = 7	100.0 t	1,110 m ³	42,260 kCr
Tl = 10	100.0 t	1,276 m ³	80,768 kCr
Tl = 15	100.0 t	1,401 m ³	191,204 kCr

Table 3.

	<i>t/wk</i>	<i>Jump 1</i> <i>range</i>	<i>fuel balance</i>
Tl = 7	4.65 t	3 ps	4.55 t
Tl = 10	3.45 t	8 ps	1.10 t
Tl = 15	2.70 t	13 ps	0.90 t

	<i>t/wk</i>	<i>range</i>	<i>Jump 2</i> <i>fuel balance</i>
Tl = 7	12.45 t	2 ps	6.05 t (1 ps at J1 + 1.40 t _r)
Tl = 10	10.05 t	4 ps	8.90 t (2 ps at J1 + 2 t _r)
Tl = 15	8.40 t	8 ps	2.40 t

AS you may remember, we left our (alleged) heroes about entertain some guest off the Irish coast:

Earl Geoffery, at the sound of "Everybody to arms!", grabbed his 2h sword and ran to the starboard rail. So did most of his party, and Captain Cole. For a experienced captain, the appearance of two probable hostile ships would have only one option; run. However, he usually did not have on board so many powerful warriors. A strategy was worked in only a minute; lord Geoffery and his party to defend the starboard side while the ships normal complement of marines to hold the port side.

Lord Geoffery quickly organized his party. He and his two Kzin guards would launch a attack the moment the irish boat came alongside, while Gliss, Fenora and Claude attacked from the far end of the ship. While giving orders (something Geoffery was naturally good at), he struggled to don his breastplate, brought up from below by Klith-Sargent, and hoped that these boats full of armed warriors (apparently) trying to be friendly. He'd hate to start a incident while on a supposedly simple mission. Thoughts of starting a incident were soon replaced with concern over trying to duck a volly of javilns as the first boat pulled alongside. The charge of the lightly armored Irish, was met by a much better armed and armored force, itself charging from a height advantage. Geoffery and the two kzin easily pushed back the small line before them, and proceded to hacking their way back along the enemy ship. Those that did not go down under their greatswords were bashed overboard. Meanwhile, Gliss, Fenora and Claude started in on the other side of the boat, with nearly the same results. Seeing how easily all this was, Charlette jumped into the middle of the melle, and was promptly knocked off her feet. Further harm was prevented by the arrival of 1200 pounds of unicorn, who came to her rescue, mush to the suprise of a warrior who found himself inspecting the base of a unicorn horn at very close range. Those few Irish who were still standing decided at this point to take the most useful part of valor and go swimming.

While this was going on, the marines, with help from the ships crew, were holding their own on the port side. The sudden arrival of Drager and Gomer tilted the odds in their favor. With the arrivel of the bloodied rest of the party (including unicorn), the Irish lost heart and cut their grappeling ropes, and rowed strongly for shore. As shore was into the wind, the Albatross could not gain on it, and the swimmers avoided the ropes cast them. After a few minutes of this, both Captain Cole and Geoffery gave up and proceded to the Saurian settlement in Southern Ireland. After taking on supplies (and two Saurian ambassadors), the Albatross sailed south, avoiding the french coast, and just keeping in sight of the spanish coast, she soon came to the Mediterranean.

Some thoughts on Lycanthropy:

In stories/legends ect. there seems to be 3 types of shape changers. The first type are those that change by magic. Often this involves the use of a skin of the animal type to be changed into. In almost all cases, the changer retains controll of his/her mental abilities; although staying too long in were-shape, in some stories, can result in loosing your identity in

that of the animal shape. In some cases, the skin used to change with has to be that of a true were-animal, in which one takes the chance of possession by the spirit of the original were. This type of shape changer seems to be more common in either primitive or mobile cultures. A variation of this is the Earthsea Trilogy, where a skin is not needed to shape-change but one risks losing one's identity the longer you stay changed.

The second, and least covered, type of shape-changer is the animal that can take on human form (a were-person?). This is represented by the oriental were-fox, who usually comes across more as a trickster than a danger. I also view the (old, A, B&C) D&D were-rat as such. These may be the most dangerous type of were. First, they almost always work with packs of normal creatures (rats, wolves, ect) or with packs of other weres. Second, unlike many views of normal lycanthropes, these keep all of their cunning and intelligence in both animal and human form. Fortunatley, these seem to be rare. The only store I have ever read with one of these was by Karl Eduard Wagner.

Finally, there are the true lycanthropes (actually, theranthropes, lycanthopes actually are only were-wolves). These are humans who, under the influence of the full moon (probably influenced by polarized light, according to Poul Anderson, since they seem to, in most stories to change when the moonlight is present, not just when the moon rises; although I expect that tidal forces are a strong influence. The full moon does influence crime rates.) Important factors to remember are, one, that the conservation of mass holds, so that a 180 pound man becomes a 180 pound wolf (that makes one big wolf), and, in all the were-stories, they become another mammal. Usually they change into a large predator comon to the area that the story takes place in. This second tendency makes sense, it's hard to have a story about a were-tiger when there are no tigers to base the animal on. The conservation of mass is interesting, in that the stories that have things such as were-bears, the were in man form tends to be big. Also, were-ability seems to often run in families (thus families of were-wolves are often encountered). This makes me wonder if there might be a genetic predisposition to lycanthropy. If so, this might make the problem of were-bites easier to understand. If, as the legend says, a lycanthope bite can cause the victim to become were-like, howcome the area that the beast roams isn't full of weres. Well, even if you are bitten and survive, if you do not have the gene (a recessive) you still can't change.

Then there is the problem of intelligence. In almost all stories the were, when it changes, loses it's intelligence and takes on the mental characteristics of whatever creature they become. Only in stories set in semi-modern cultures are there found stories with weres who retain their mentalities. In all of these cases the explanation is than psychiatry to overcome primitive beliefs. Only player-characters seem to retain this in a primitive society. Finally, in all the stories, the were can heal almost instantaneously, and can be killed by silver. A interesting aspect of this is a case of a couple of biochemists who played with a hypothetical were metabolism. It works out that silver works as a poison in the necessary semi-fluid metabolism needed. Most stories (especially by Poul

