

# ALARUMS and EXCURSIONS

# 105

# MAY



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BAUER





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 ste fantasy 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 count is 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 photostenciled 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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US (non APO/FPO): First Class (\$2.58, 4 days); UPS (\$1.59, 1 week); or Book (63¢, 3 weeks). FPO/APO: only First Class and Book options are available. UPS cannot be sent directly to a PO Box.

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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, 76-104. Or check with Balboa Games, 630 N. Willow, Long Beach, CA 90806 at \$3.15/issue (including postage). Or with Dragon's Lair, 8316 Blondo, Omaha, Neb., 68124 at the same price (#58, 60, 63, 65-6, 68, 70+).

TO APPEAR IN #106: Brooks & Flir, Woolley & Seven, Lane, Straus, Towlson, Gerneth, Galeotti, Mclachlan, the Pettingers & Pearson, Heydt, Shapero, Sapienza, Long, Wixted, Saunders, Walters, Fritz, and Wilson--about 79 pages in all.

This issue contains

	<u>April 18, 1984</u>		
Cover	Scott Bauer	1	WH
A Few Paragraphs	Lee Gold	4	WH
Tantivy	Lee Gold	3	PK
Different Words 1A	Ivan Towlson	3	PK
The Chronicles of the Ancient Empire	Matt Stevens	2	GR
The Montmorillonite Man-o-War Bird	Nick Larter	8	WH
Ouroboros	Robert Plamondon	4	BL
Notes from the Realm Fantastic	Richard Schwall	2	YE
Yunshan Shanlu	Edward Wilson	3	WH
The Wol Fanciers' Irregular	Megan Dansie	3	WH
The Colgar Chronicles	Jenny Hein	4	GD
3D6	Don Del Grande	4	GR
Heresy & Blasphemy	Ian Straus	3	WH
Mome Rath	Eric Sadoyama	3	WH
An Anglo-Scottish Chronicle	Peter Clarke	2	BL
Terra Ferretae	Robert Saunders	1	YE
Quartz, Ink and Onyx	Matthew Porter	3	YE
Vizzionz	Diane Short	3	WH
Agents of Fortune	Steve Gilham	7	WH
The Murdered Master Mage	George Phillies	2	GD
Shards of Time	Wayne Shaw	4	PK
From the Rusty Pittsburgh Gate	Scott Bauer	7	WH
Vardhuset Dodsstoten	John Robillard	3	WH
Yunshan Shanlu	Edward Wilson	6	GR
Leagues Unlit and Foundered Shores	Brooks & Flin	5	WH
Azmadian Tales	Bill Keyes	5	WH
Fnord	Mark Galeotti	2	BL
From Beyond the River Styx	Vincent Burchett	2	YE
The Dark Ages Pages	Martin Wixted	5	WH
Fighters, Mages & Sages	Sean Mclachlan	1	WH
Zine with No Name	Michael Johnson	2	GD
I CHING, YOU CLAUDIUS	Harry Robertson	3	GR
Notes from a Bad DM	Brian Lane	1	GR
Starships and Sorcery	David Union	9	WH
Filler Prince Mumbles	Mark Goldberg	3	WH
The Second Sporadic Viking	Torbjorn Ragnesjo	4	PK
The Ebon Unicorn	Dave Nalle	4	YE
BEWARE	Loutzenhiser & Guer	5	WH
Carr's Tomb	Christopher Pesl	3	WH
Tales of Magic	Ronald Pehr	2	GD
Different Worlds 1B	Ivan Towlson	3	BL
The Scribe of the Elfin Kingdoms	John Bambach	1	BL
The Senile Sage	The Cliffords	5	WH

Printer Barry Gold wishes it announced that at Nalle's request the reducing xerox was not used this month on "The Ebon Unicorn." You'll see the results; Barry disclaims all responsibility. PLEASE, don't type more than 10" (60 lines) vertically or 7" (70 letters 10-pitch, 84 letters 12-pitch) horizontally.

PUBLICATIONS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST TO A&E READERS

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

A BRIEF GUIDE TO OCCASIONAL ABBREVIATIONS FOUND IN A&E

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

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

RAEBNC = Read and Enjoyed But No Comment

ct = comment

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

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

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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

SPELLING: About half of the stuff I typed thish was proofread by the computer. Any typos on such pages are due to my laziness/ignorance or the computer's inability to notice that the word may be legitimate but doesn't belong where it is.

WARNING: I have spent the last month working about 30 more hours a week than usual. Comments will be short (and I'll try to keep them sweet).

#### TALES OF SCIATHOS

The crowd went back to the Bee Goddess's Temple, where the surviving priestess thanked Brimus and gave him the dove cote for his "adopted son." They went back to the Centaur school to wait for Thera. She eventually returned from her outing with the Maenads, her face blood-flecked. She happily told her husband that they might soon be blessed with Dionysus's child. He tried to look thrilled.

The next day they bade the Centaurs farewell. The school head told Brimus he could send his first human son to them. They got back to their ship in the harbor on the afternoon of the following day.

The captain turned the ship towards their new home of Sciathos, but the dove suddenly flew far out to sea. Brimus instructed the captain to follow him. There was a rumble. Thunder? An earthquake? Brimus, a priest of Poseidon, called on his god for protection, but some of the other Hellenes prayed to Zeus.

A mountain on the shore began to belch smoke, and people turned their prayers to Poseidon, Shaker of the Earth. Brimus asked the deity to protect Sciathos - and (for his friends' sakes) the boat. A gentle swell lifted up the boat a moment, then flowed smoothly under it and away. The dove headed back towards Sciathos, and the ship followed it.

They landed to find the island's fishing fleet in dry dock (usual for that time of day) and the harbor deserted (unusual). They headed for the palace, with Brimus planning a special service of thanks to Poseidon for protecting the island from earthquake and tidal wave. And one of his friends reminded him they were trying to raise Athene's prestige on the island (as a goddess who was loyal to the gods); he might do well to thank Athene too - perhaps for inspiring him to ask Poseidon for help.

They were met at the palace by Linus, who had been adviser to the previous king of Sciathos. He ushered them to a guest chamber, and asked how they had come to know his name; he'd never seen them before.

Surprised, they asked him who ruled here. Linus told them that the Queen was Helike, who was married to King Pleisthenes (the old queen's brother and the war leader). What had happened to Philomena (Brimus's wife)? Oh, she'd died of a sudden fever four days ago. So had Crottus, her brother (the Hellene's candidate for replacement war leader) and a number of other high ranking people (who turned out to be most of people the Hellenes trusted).

And what about Philomena's other sisters? Linus said they were all dead but Helike. And her sister Thera? Linus said he didn't recognize the name (and Thera had to be pulled off him before she injured him).

Linus told them their guest baths were ready. They thanked him but said they'd take them later. They wanted to mourn their dead friends. He asked in surprise how they could know these people when they'd just gotten to the island.

They checked the Temple and found it guarded by the warleader's band. The guards told them the funeral games for the dead Queen and other plague victims would be held soon.



They went off to the seashore where Brimus had fought Crassus for the kingship. (The altar he had built there was gone). They went down the beach to the cove where they had beaten back the invaders and set up a shrine to Athene. The shrine was demolished, and the boat full of stoned invaders had been dragged back into the water. (And then someone noticed they were being spied on.)

With the aid of magic, they went invisible and sneaked out into the water, to the far side of the stoned boat. Brimus invoked Poseidon and asked for help. And was answered, "They have murdered no one yet, but I can help you a little. Not the whole island is against you, nor has forgotten you." Thera broke in to demand the god tell her where her sister Philomena, the true Queen, was? And the dove suddenly flew off along the shore. Mel followed him. (As the son of a naiad, he could breathe water.)

One of the Hellene wizards cast Illusory Blindness on the watchers, as Brimus and the others went back to the beach and followed the dove to a path that lead inland. They spotted an ambush ahead, and called on the men to surrender to the True King. Then they followed the dove on to the tanning vats. And found a vat with a hidden door. Inside they found Crottos, tied up with ropes. He told them that Philomena and her sisters (all but one of whom had loyally refused to support Helike and Pleisthenes) were in the granary.

At the granary, Hieros cast a more complex illusion. First the granary began to smoke, then flames of fire were visible. Only the watcher's distant senses (sight/smell) were affected, but they didn't think things out; they panicked and went to rescue the captives, rather than let them die without orders. While they were gone, their weapons were stolen. When they returned with Phileomena and her sisters, Brimus called on them to surrender. They fled.

Brimus and Philomena then toured the island, calling for people to join them for the festival of thanks they would be holding to Poseidon and Athene. Crowds came out to cheer them. They returned at last to the Temple, followed by a thousand peasants (armed) and a train of animals to sacrifice. And found that Pleisthenes and his friends had left the island.

They found Helike at the Temple--alive and dressed as a princess once more instead of as the queen. Thera and another sister took her aside. (When she returned, she still had some of her hair left.)

And Brimus announced they would now hold an impromptu celebration in honor of the returned queen and for Poseidon's protection. "We also have a shrine to restore," said Philomena. "and I need a bath."

RESPONSES TO A&E #104

ME: Still haven't tried getting this computer to accept files directly modem-to-modem rather than over usenet. Once we've checked out that it's possible, I'll give full details on how to send zines that way.//Have worked out a character stat inheritance system (for the Asteroid Belt). Basic system is to split each parent's stat in half, then add D6 to one half and minus the same amount to the other. Children represent random combination of parents' haplo-stats (except for fetuses bred in bio-tanks).//SEAN CLEARY says that Elves who can't use ferrous weapons often keep Rust Monster pets.

WIXTED: The herbal was primarily for England. Assume these herbs grow in the northern area of the temperate zone.

CARSON: The only insects Barry likes are butterflies.//Our information on the ATT computer was ALL wrong, and the source won't be trusted again.

DA SILVA: No, I don't run a PBM.//Agreed that duration adds something to an energy spell's power (and therefore raises its level). And certainly energy spells that move about are more powerful (and should be higher level) than those that stay put.



ROBILLARD: Filk is used in Science Fiction fandom to mean a song with a SF or fantasy theme. Originally such songs were usually folk songs with new words (mutated folk song, therefore filk song). Nowadays people sometimes write them to rock tunes. And some people even write their own music.//If the assassin wore robes and had a shaved head, he was a militant Buddhist priest. If he wore a kimono with bound up sleeves and hakama "pants," he was a ninja. Tongs are indeed a Chinese institution, not a Japanese one.//The series is a fairly good representation of that era's Japanese culture. BUT it is not history nor even reasonably accurate historical fiction.

BOOK REVIEW: I recently bought the first three books of the True Game series by Sherri Tepper (Kings Blood Four, Necromancer Nine, and Wizards Eleven). This is not only a well-written, original, and interesting fantasy series, but also has lots of ideas for a GM running a fantasy or SF/Psi campaign.

I've found one area in the LoA rules that needs clarification: the integrated MOV Attack System. But first a little background....LoA allows a limited number of Specialized Skills. PCs begin with an average of 11 - and then add one more at the end of each gaming session until they reach an average of 22. Each type of MOV Attack is normally a Specialized Skill (e.g. Kick, Punch, Head Butt). All this seemed to make the martial artist-type almost impossible in LoA. So...

I wrote in the integrated MOV Attack System (9.5). This allowed combining several MOV Attacks (depending on MOV Rating) into ONE Specialized Skill. (The Skill is HARD, not Normal like a usual MOV Skill.) Thus a martial artist type with Agility, Prudence, and Strength averaging around 15 would have a MOV Rating of around 40%, allowing him to combine four MOV Attacks (e.g. Punch, Kick, Head Butt, Grapple) and treat them as one Specialized Skill. That would mean:

1. Less Prior Experience Pts Needed: Raising four Normal MOV Attacks from 40% to 75% requires 1160 PEP; raising one Hard MOV Att Sys requires 435. The beginning PC has 900 PEP to allot among ALL Specialized Skills.
2. More Specialized Skills (in this case, three more).
3. Faster but more expensive Skill training. Training four Normal MOV Attacks from 40% to 52% (for a person of INT 11) takes 12 sessions of nine days each at 10 credits a day (108 days, 1080 Cr); training one Hard MOV Attack as high would take four sessions of fourteen days at 25 credits a day (56 days, 1400 Cr).
4. Faster Skill improvement by experience, since ANY such improvement caused by use of ANY of the four skills helps improve all three others.

#### A FEW COMMENTS ON A&E #104

BROOKS: You can also get to be a vampire through bad luck. Back in the Middle Ages, merely having a cat jump over your coffin before you were buried would make you a vampire. (Given such beliefs, I'd bury any corpse with a wooden stake appropriately placed, just to be on the safe side.)//I've known LOTS of non-boring Dwarves. In our initial crowd, they tended to be stolid/phlegmatic types (often Highly Lawful but undemonstrative about it until push came to shove). They weren't greedy for gold, but they did assume they knew more about it than others.

The Engrand campaign placed Dwarves living in Scotland (with the Hobbits living on Shetland Island). The Dwarflands were under the nominal English supervision of the Lord of the Northern Marches, who was held responsible by Her Majesty for the behavior of any Dwarf in the southlands. He in turn had compacts with the Dwarf Council.

This campaign had two notable dwarves. One was Kha: low verbal skills but S\*T\*R\*O\*N\*G. He was a good Weaponsmith, with a talent for Spot Hidden Item. He spoke little to non-dwarves except in emergencies, and then they learned to listen to his harsh but sensible words. The other was Aurick son of Barron the Mighty (who had fathered an incredible number of children). He rode a war-pony and used to have jousting matches with this guy who guarded a ford. Both were Lawful.



DIFFERENT WORDS (SAID IN DIFFERENT WAYS): Glorious Issue #1A

(c) Ivan Towlson, 1 Christchurch Crescent, Radlett, Herts., England. Retyped by Lee Gold from stencil backing sheet. (I wrote Ivan asking for stencils (not merely the backing sheets) or for enough money to retype his zine - and got no reply. So Instead I'll print parts of it - as long as Ivan's money holds out.)

I'm age 16, mathematician, classicist, Vic-20, anything by Charrette & Hume, Stephen Donaldson Is the Greatest Writer This Century, Yes, Even Better than Robert Anton Wilson, oh, Vienna, the power and the glory/till my kingdom come, DEX 3, Typing BCS 7+1 finger. Well, here goes....

Elemental Systems: TANURYL (my proto-game system) uses a seven-element system, but I have seen (and invented) several others. To begin my *brief* apahacking career, a summary of FRP elements:

"REAL" (4): Air, Earth, Fire, Water  
RQ (5): AEFW + Darkness  
CHINESE (5): Fire, Metal, Soil, Water, Wood  
SWORDBEARER (7): Crystal, Fire, Light, Metal, Water, Wind, Wood  
TANURYL (7): AEFW + Darkness, Metal, Wood  
DUODECIMAL: Tanuryl + Attitudes (Good, Evil, Law, Chaos) + the Underlying Principle (Time)

DD is a rather invented system. It was my first attempt at something original and preceded Tanuryl. Am I the only one to have noticed that no "real" system uses Light/Darkness?

I suppose I flatter myself when I claim that my Tripartite system does a good impression of the real thing, but I'll mention it anyway. E3 uses only Earth, Fire and Water; Air is viewed as "cold fire." Since three is often a mystic number, it seems aesthetically pleasing to use the E3 system,...but I don't....Of course, there are also three primary colors: Fire=yellow, Water=blue, Earth=red: the color-coded elemental mage is now possible.

E13 = DD + Electricity. Actually this could fit nearly any elemental system (E3 would view it as part of Fire).//If I make acid a sub-element of Water, where do I put alkali? I don't like grouping two mutually opposed substances together, even if they do combine to give "water."//

In the Tanuryl system, Air=Ag, Darkness=Pt, Fire=Na, Earth=Fe, Metal=mithril, Water=Hg (thanks to JTS for that one); Wood has no element because it is opposed to metal. Opposed pairs are air/earth, fire/water, metal/wood; allied pairs are air/fire, earth/metal, water/wood; DARKNESS has nothing.

SKILL VS SKILL: BUSHIDO players have a solution built into the game: Effect Numbers. (Effect # = how easily you made the roll = # Required minus # Rolled #.) The arithmetic is no hassle because BCS is on D20.) AFTERMATH/DAREDEVILS also uses "effect dice", based on the Governing Attribute. (Of course, the RQ skills system is so mind-numbingly simpleton-biased you couldn't develop a similar system for Rq in the time it takes to convert effect dice to BUSHIDO...oops, have I said something wrong?).

#### COMMENTS FROM THE DISTANT PAST

WOOLLEY (95): Re armor proficiency in VD&D: How about letting someone proficient in Brand X armor use magical armor up to 3 ACs different? Or having proficiency in an armor bulk class (DMG)--e.g. fairly bulky. Doesn't AC get penalized for using armor you aren't proficient in?

WOLKOFF (96): Your  $\frac{1}{2}$ PRPG fails to give monster DEX, or the cost of items, or how many power points you get.

YSGARTH QUERY TO DFN: When a spell has 2 TYPs (e.g. Fireball JC), which do you use for fumbles/interactions?

SHORT (96): Absolutely! I agree entirely.

MURRAY (96): ASTRADYNE on Ultravox: VIENNA (Chrysalis Records).



SHAPLEY (96): Dispel Orc: Congratulations! You have just provoked...

Campaigns I have Obliterated #1

Starring me as a L1 Bard (F7, Tf7--yep, one of Those Campaigns) and Nick (evil grin) G\*\*\*a\*t as a L7 cleric, and with peripheral mention of The Big M, playing in a parallel campaign and providing us with a convenient way to kill a god....(The DM, or Dreaded Munchkin, wanted to give us the god Poleaxe as an associate, but we declined: I already had a self-recharging RING OF WISHES...).

We started off by wishing the golden doors to the dungeon were teleported home as GP, for a respectable level bonus. Then we met a ki-rin that gave us each a Book of Infinite Spells and let us take all the GP in a room (literally) full of them. The DM guessed about 10K GP, but my calculator guessed about 7m, each.

The DM: Ah,...er,..oh.

Nick (grinning evilly): Is there an Artifact and Relic Shoppe nearby?

The DM (recovering, since he is ready for this): Yes.

So we bought just about every useful magic item in the DMG. Meanwhile, the Big M reported that in the parallel campaign the neutral good Poleaxe had been zapping poor dumb animals, so we Plane Shifted there (having ruled that Poleaxe had turned CE and been stripped of his godhood - by inverted roleplaying, eh, NJL?). There, hiding in our new tank, we burned him up with a Staff of Withering. (Polar bears, even INT 24 ones like P., don't have very long lifespans.) Then we emigrated to the 666th plane of the Abyss and dispelled everywhere else. Then, in the afternoon....

Pehr (94): ct PESCHEL: I found Covenant 2 as good as 1, if not better. ILLEARTH WAR was the least impressive of the six books (but that could be due to omitting Gilden-Fire (now separately available), which told of the journey to Seareach). WGW is the best, and I don't see how anyone could write Covenant 3 after the last chapter of that. (WGW is "incomplete" because it was written from the points of view of Covenant and Linden Avery: what they don't know, the reader doesn't know. What's more, rebuilding the Land would be difficult to turn into a story. SRD writes about people, not politics.)

TELLER (96): WGW: starring a corpse? I doubt it. (See above).

P. PETTINGER ct MURRAY (94): TSR products are generally well-known and well presented (except sometimes for artwork). But D&D is the third worst game system I've used. I feel D&D is a well-known and simplistic game, and so it's the best way to introduce someone to gaming. (Tell them about RQ and they'll say, "?"; while if they love D&D, you just say, "Of course, there are much better games than that," and switch to C&S.)

A. PETTINGER: minimaxing: In the words of the poet, right on.

JOSEPH: I'll go for the loud raucous laughter. Anyone who wastes time trying to make RQ work deserves it. (Rats! I must apologize to anyone who has the misfortune to like Q. I hate it more than even AD&D.) ...eoc

A COMBAT SYSTEM

The Extended-Attack-Sequence Combat Resolution Module (who thinks up these names?)

This is a prototype combat system based on the philosophy that if you try to wallop someone, he tries to stop you. Meanwhile, you have fooled him and carved up a different bit,...but he executed a superb maneuver and dodged nimbly out of the way, into the path of your secondary strike (etc.).

In game terms, you wait for your ~~attack/phase~~ strike rank to arrive, spend a few action points, and pray. The defender then tries to react to your attack. If he fails, he receives the attack. If he succeeds, move on to the next SR. Now you as attacker must react to his tactics. Make your roll. He tries to avoid you again. Next, SR you react and so on. Every time you react, it costs you another Action Pt), but you can break off the attack sequence at any time to conserve AP.



The defender has more flexibility. He reacts on a 1/2 Defensive Reaction save. If he takes the Defend action (a AP/SR), he gets the full DefR ST. Defend may be combined with many other actions (e.g. Attack, Move, Defend with Parry factors in your weapon skill), but prevents most combinations and costs more AP.

Let's say you got past his defenses. (I'll ignore the effects of critically successful or fumbled reactions for now.) You now try your weapon BCS (like the "to hit" roll of D&D/C&S/RQ/etc). Blam! You hit him. Ahem. yes. The bad news is that your weapon might--just might--bounce off his armor. (Don't worry; this only happens when lightweight wimps attack tanks with daggers.) If it does, you still Bash him. (Or, if you're using a point weapon, get to try to cut off some of his armor.)

Got past his armor? (This is beginning to sound like BASIC ROLEPLAYING.) Good. Now just resolve your damage, subtract his absorption value, and YAHOO! You've injured him. Ahem. Well, you might have fatigued him instead. It depends on the weapon. Anyway, you now get a chance to Bash him. This is a die roll by weapon weight and can have dire consequences if used against weaklings.

A final point: at many stages of the attack sequence, you can convert APs to +s on your side (e.g. armor penetration), normally on a one-to-one basis. As for crit/fumble reaction rolls, they stop the other person's chance of reaction/let him into the exchange AND get a little extra...

VISIONS IN BLUE (comments on A&E 97)

SHAPLEY (filler), Rosset: ct Burchett: Few people find knowing the ending of a novel too conducive to intellectual stimulation. I agree with everything said in the filler, but I'd rather not see plot summaries at all, unless necessary to my understanding something (e.g. Donaldson's "What Has Gone Before" pieces).

LEE ct A Pettinger: Seconded

GILHAM: illusions: TANURYL uses an ultra-complexified (?) YRS variant.

LARTER: I don't think QUINTET is appropriate to A&E, but I'd be intested in it (though I haven't seen the film). Roleplaying boardgame? Wow.

DIEN: It's a bit long, isn't it? (But then with four people taking 47 pages, maybe that's not worthy of comment.)

PATTERSON: On the BALTIC? (Is this an aside reference to "The Prisoner"?)

BURT: Gee, I thought it meant 5.5-sided die.//Ct Hein: RAEBNC = Ray-bink? Absolutely not. AE is the vowel sound in "high" as any Latin scholar will tell you. As for the rest,...//Arcane sigils incomprehensible; what are they?//CO2 more plentiful than oxygen? I thought it was about 80/20/not a lot.

DA SILVA: Computer networks are not intelligent part of the time. "None" is more like it/

D S RAY: Korik was a Bloodguard (see LORD FOUL'S BANE, ILLEARTH WAR, GILDEN-FIRE)

BURCHETT: Good stuff. I must try to adapt it for BUSHIDO.

PATIO BLOCKS: Will STNF become available in the UK in awhile? I realize you probably don't know,...but could you tell me the price anyway.//I like Spiders, but I don't think they'll fit SWC. There was very little "conventional" warfare during the Ruin (20 Days War).

DAWSON: maths wiz (ahem) replies: Let %Hit be H, %Def D. The first method (Hit = H-D) means the chance to hit can go negative; with HxD, it can't. They aren't the same, because H-D≠HxD (except occasionally).

NEXT (possibly): New career(s) for advanced character generation (CG). I have nothing more to say on the matter except

e\*\*i.pi +1 = 0      Take that, you fiend!      +++tin vere terminatur+++

Or, in the immortal words of Aristophanes, "Err, can I go to Hell?"



THE CRONICLES OF THE ANCIENT EMPIRE #3      January 11, 1983  
by Matt Stevens  
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Well, this is my third contribution. I recently got AGE #101 in the mail, so this 'zine will feature a few comments in it. So, I guess I'll forego any more introduction.

COMMENTS ON AGE #101

JOHN ABRAHAMSON: Actually, I think that combat tends to be the slowest at the begining of PC development, when everyone has 20% or so with each weapon. Then there's only about a 15% chance of an attack having any effect. When both participants have 60% skill, the chance is more like 25%.//I agree that sanity rolls would be useful in ERP. Sanity rolls make these monsters seem more horroffing than they are presented in the rules. Besides, how many people does one know that can keep their cool when faced with a Neo-Otyugh?

CHRIS HEIN & JENNY MURRAY (Psychadelic Cronicles): The skill list certainly is extensive. Some of the skills, however, don't look all that important to PCs. I don't know too many adventurers who'd rush out to get training in Basket Weaving or Cheese Making. Oh, well. Each campaign to its own.

JENNY HEIN: Background system is interesting. I do think that there should be a greater chance of rolling a noble PC. As I think I have said before, most of the heroes in Earth's old legends were great kings or nobles. Also, I think that a 1% skill increase is pretty negligent. These are just some of my ideas; I'm not demanding that you listen to them.// I do like the fact that most of your skill bonuses were determined by only 1 particular attribute, so that manipulation bonuses are determined by DEX only. I always thought it was silly how, for instance, manipulation bonuses were determined by STR, DEX, INT and POW, while, in practice, only DEX should have any effect.

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: Like all of your material, your essay on the suicide lawsuit was very intelligently done. I know two D&D players who have attempted suicide; both of them, however, didn't start playing until after they tried to kill themselves. I think that the suicide rate among D&Ders is so high only because it attracts an intellectual audience. Intellectuals, who are often shunned from society, tend to kill themselves more often than other people do.//Actually, I don't see why RQ combat skills aren't translated into D20 levels all-together. It would make it easier to translate from D&D to RQ, in some ways. See my article later on. (I forgot to tell you; this comment reflects your ct to STEVE JONES).

MARK GALEOTTI: Re your ct to BOB ELLOOD: Steve Gilham did something like this in AGE #76. Using a fairly complex formula, he resoned that 75L=200(CGS)s.p.=50(D&D)g.p.//Re ct to ALAS-DAIR MCINTOSH: I, also, will rarely kill off PCs. This attitude is a reflection of my earlier D&D days; back then, I would get heated arguments whenever I killed off a player character



I think that will be it for comments. Now, on with what I promised.

### THE D20 RUNEQUEST COMBAT SYSTEM

One complaint that I've heard a lot lately is that RQ slows down a bit once PCs reach high skill levels. Indeed, ~~xx~~ when both combatants have skill levels of 80% in their weapons, then there is only about a 16% chance of a blow actually doing damage. It is for these reasons that I made up the groundworks for the below combat system. Please comment on it; this is only experimental.

For this system to work, all skills must be translated from pages to D20 format. This shouldn't be too hard; in Runequest, all skills are grouped in 5% increments, so that each 5% can be translated to 1 point on the D20 scale. There might be some problems with games such as Stormbringer, ~~xxxx~~ in which skills run the entire range from 1 to 100.

Anyway, on to the combat system. For the purposes of this article, Strike rank remains unchanged, as is the damage system. The only real change would be in the process of hit determination. When someone attacks someone else, the attacker should roll 2D10, add his skill level with the weapon he is using, and subtract his opponent's skill level with the parrying weapon. If the total is 11 or more, then the attack is successful, and it will do damage. If the total is 10 or less, then the blow was parried and/or simply missed the target.

There is ~~xx~~ a chance, in this system, to roll fumbles, criticals, or special hits (i.e. impalements, slashes, or crushes.) Whether or not one rolls a critical, fumble, or special hit depends on the dice rolls and the skill level of the attacker. (Note that I'm ignoring criticals & fumbles for parries at the moment.) See the below table.

Skill Level	Special Roll on	Critical on	Fumble on
1	202	20	2,3,4
2	19,20	20	2,3,4
3	19,20	20	2,3,4
4	19,20	20	2,3,4
5	18,19,20	20	2,3,4
6	18,19,20	20	2,3
7	18,19,20	19,20	2,3
8	18,19,20	19,20	2,3
9	17,18,19,20	19,20	2,3
10	17,18,19,20	19,20	2,3
11	17,18,19,20	19,20	2,3
12	17,18,19,20	19,20	2
13	16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
14	16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
15	16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
16	16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
17	16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
18	15,16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
19	15,16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
20	15,16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
21	15,16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
22	15,16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
23	15,16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
24	14,15,16,17,18,19,20	18,19,20	2
25+	14,15,16,17,18,19,20	17,18,19,20	2

Remember that the above numbers refer to the die rolls themselves; not to the final total.



The dim alley ended in a seedy door, lit above with cheap neon uncertainly proclaiming, "The MONTMORILLONITE Club." Spade pushed the door, and it swung freely open. The chamber beyond was empty save for a large knobbed bludgeon, resting lightly cobwebbed in one corner. He went over and picked it up; the fine dry clay felt perversely moisty in his sweaty palm.

"I'll take that!" rasping from behind him broke his reverie, and the Fat Man waddled in from an unseen door, glowing profusely and wagging a .45 menacingly in Spade's direction.

Quick as a flash, Spade flung the club at his adversary, but it flew wide and, crashing into the wall, shattered into a myriad shards; a heavy object contained within its center fell unharmed to the floor with a solid clunk.

The Fat Man shot twice, hearing the satisfying rending as lead bit into flesh. Then he awkwardly stooped down to retrieve the statuette; the Maltese MAN-O-WAR BIRD was finally his.

Installment the Eighth actually, for A&E #105; compiled 11/2/84 by and (c) Nick Larter of Silwood Park, Ascot, BERKS, England. Metamorphosis courtesy of Lee.

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### A&E 102

VINCENT FOSTER: Your remote TV channel changer didn't harm my infravision, but my funnybone will never be the same again.

DOUGLAS R. LOSS: Your piece, "The Last Role-Playing System," succinctly sums up the dialogue several advocates of free-form rolegaming and myself have been having in these pages in recent issues.

STEVE GILHAM (re ct to QUENTIN LONG): I couldn't agree more with your observations on old Lemuel and his sonic whatnot.

SIMON: Your comment reiterates my suggestion that alchemists might often be found in association with giant arthropods. Sound-producing types might make formidable adversaries at these high atmospheric pressures.//Whilst on the subject, did your giant Embioptera bit ever appear. I had a quick look just now and couldn't find it, but some of my A&Es are currently out. After their mega-successful debut Friday, I think I will cobble together a few notes on giant Ant-lions for a future ish.

ERIC SADOYAMA (re magic and the tactics of war): the first bit of Lyndon Hardy's Master of the Five Magics has what I think are some neat ideas on this.// A couple of lines on the book itself. Its magic system is well thought out, and the tale is well plotted. However, the style is totally without suspense and at times glaringly predictable. Worth reading for information only.

QUENTIN LONG (re agnostics): In my system, I think I would tend to discourage these from being played, although I certainly wouldn't forbid if someone really wanted to. There are several ways I could rationalize one of such a persuasion. 1) By making the character a wanderer from some backwater across the planes that had never quite woken up to the idea of "supreme being(s)." 2) To have the errant soul within the existing religious framework but having slipped through the net and thus escaped the wrath of his protector in some way. It is easy to imagine a very busy god like Odin overlouking the odd one or two. Moreover, there are precedents for Odin going out of his way to create mortals not bound to the gods in any way, as in some versions of the story of the Volsungs. He will do this as only these totally free agents are capable of fulfilling certain acts, as they are--in a sense--outside Fate.

I can well imagine a mischievous god like Loki letting the agnostics that he has been charged with live just for the hell of it. In some pantheons, there might also be the option of one of the more compassionate deities being unable to do in his/her charges, despite their wicked ways. This is probably less likely in the Norse pantheon, with the possible exception of the Vanir.

## THE THIEVES GUILDS DEBATE

STEVE JONES (re ct to DAVID NALLE): nice to see somebody else in approximate agreement as to how these bodies should operate. As for what we should call these people, perhaps I should start pushing the term Secretary a bit more.

An opening comment to bring the term Secretary into the fray then and to deal with the feedback my little piece on them had. Harry Robertson thought they looked interesting (you're right, Harry; they are). Peter Clarke was worried about my concept of them as a new class, and Ronald Mark Pehr would prefer an explanation without reference to Eddison (chiz).

First, I will do the exact opposite and elaborate on the explanation according to Eddison. In his Zimiamvian trilogy, there are two Secretaries. One is Dr. Vandermast; he fills the post first to King Mezentius and, after the King's death, to his bastard son Barganax. The venerable and verbose Vandermast is something of a seer and mystic, has a lifespan approaching immortality, and a penchant for nubile female lycanthropes. He acts chiefly as an adviser and confidante (at least for Barganax), and if there is any dirty work to be done, one suspects he will dispatch one of his more than capable females to do it. The second Secretary is the insidious Gabriel Flores, who fills the post to the evil Vicar of Rerek. Much of the time he is merely a batman and dogsbody, but he also proves his worth as an accomplished assassin and con-man par excellence.

All this builds up the role of the Secretary as a right hand man (or woman) to a person of some status. It is clear that the Secretary should be versed in a wide range of skills and highly proficient in at least one sphere, though what this sphere should be will depend on the requirements of the person served. I would regard the advisor/confidante role as particularly important, as aspirants to power will usually need somebody to lean on but could well do without a whole gaggle of bickering aides.

The above thus lays out a useful first definition for the "class" Secretary: i.e. a jack of all trades cum right hand man. This brings me on to some of Peter Clarke's reservations on my description of the Secretary as a class, many of which I hope have been resolved by my excursion into character generation in A&E 100. I think he and I employ a slight difference in terminology, which is regrettable. I have now pointed out that the four classes I use (Magic User, Fighter, Cleric and Secretary) are in the main only convenient labels, describing people who deal with matters magical, physical, spiritual or a little bit of each, respectively. There is probably also room here for a label for someone who deals predominantly with matters mental.

I do not mean, however, to suggest that the classes are interchangeable. To illustrate this, a few lines on my concept of how an adventurer develops. At the outset, all adventurers can do a little bit of everything; they are, if you like, Generalists. Many will eventually show a preference for one of the disciplines outlined above and start to channel the majority of their energies in one direction; they will become Specialists, and of course their degree of specialization may far exceed the four rather wide classes that I describe. The people of whom Secretaries are made, though, remain Generalists. Hence a rather incomplete but accurate description of most Secretaries would be Magic-user, but to describe most Magic-users as Secretaries would be wholly inappropriate.

To ascribe the background I have to Secretaries raises a rather ugly dilemma, however. By definition, they are all quite strong individuals, and one might often think also loners, but I have been implying that a Secretaries Guild is a rather powerful, dedicated team. This is a situation which must be resolved, and I consider that the solution I now postulate deals with it well.

In the early days of adventuring, it was customary for budding heroes to attach themselves to an established party and thus obtain training for their



particular vocation from others of that ilk within the party, at least in the case of Magic-Users and Fighters. It might be more usual for Clerics to attach themselves to the local seat of spiritual learning than to pick up their trade on the road. In any case, looking after newcomers means a lot of time and effort for the trainer, and so a trainer will want to be fairly sure that a protege is going to stay in the business. A promising young Fighter who announces to his mentor that he intends to go off and learn magic for a few seasons had better be prepared to try out all the things he has just learnt! Similarly, any adventurer who announces to his prospective trainer beforehand his intention of picking up a little bit of everything is unlikely to be taken on.

Nevertheless, these jacks of all trades will turn up from time to time. And once trained across the board, the tables are turned somewhat, as these people become eagerly sought and highly paid by leaders with enough ambition and power to require the services of the very best kind of Secretary. Most Secretaries will have had a hard long slog to get to this position, meeting a lot of resentment on the way, in the form of disillusioned trainers. A particularly enlightened party of adventurers might pool their training to set newcomers up for this type of post, but in general potential Secretaries were rare in the early days and the corollary is that somewhere, sooner or later, a group of people are going to get into Secretary production in a big way--satisfying a demand at a healthy profit. The archetypal Secretaries Guild has hence arrived.

These early Guilds could function in three ways. Firstly, young aspirants who had come into money could pay for their own training, perhaps with a view to hiring themselves out afterwards. Secondly, the local bigwigs might send likely candidates to the Guild to be trained at their expense--and add the new Secretary to their own staff (normally for life) on completion of training. Thirdly, the Guild could train up likely candidates at its own expense and then try to find a "buyer" afterwards. In all these cases, the Secretary's loyalty should be totally to his employer, after leaving the Guild. In fact, future contact with the Guild would be very limited. Perhaps there might be refresher or advanced training courses available, or perhaps Secretaries employed near the Guild might be called in to help train newcomers on an occasional basis.

The next step in the Guild's development occurs when its elders realize that their little concern is now large enough, rich enough, and respected enough to start doing things for its own ends. Whether this includes underhanded things will depend on the circumstances of the individual guild, but in general two things now happen. First, the Guild starts to retain Secretaries as employees. Secondly, Secretaries in the employ of others will be expected to provide intelligence on things that might be of interest to the Guild; perhaps concerned with the employer, perhaps not. In the latter case, the question of the Secretary's loyalty comes up: is he loyal to his master or the Guild? The answer is not simple and will depend on the motives of the Guild, but in general, my premise will hold that close to home the Guild is benevolent, with shady deals going on at a nice safe distance.

Close to home then, the Secretaries in the employ of local dignitaries will gather intelligence on their travels; while useful to the Guild, this is not calculated as being harmful to the employer. Secretaries newly insinuated into domiciles farther from the Guild will be expected to gather intelligence on their boss, possibly for trading deals that the Guild can bend to its favor, possibly blackmail or worse.

Meanwhile back at the Guild, there has been a subtle shift in the doctrines being taught, with absolute loyalty and obedience to the Guild demanded. Thus the new Secretaries will keep the Guild's interests at heart wherever they are employed. At the same time, the number of Secretaries working at the Guild will continue to increase, and the Guild will be in an increasingly strong position in local affairs, eventually supplanting any existing police force with its own superior brand of militia, objections to this long since swept away by the local dignitaries whom the Guild carries more and more influence with.

Finally, in this rambling discourse, a few words on my own Military Secretariate at Bocon in Zamor, which has now reached a position of influence and power far exceeding that described above. Regular readers will have encountered this body in some of my campaign writeups, and it will feature even more in future ones.

Constitution: this comprises two concisely stated aims and a warning to members.

(i) The Guild undertakes to preserve the freedom of the state of Zamor from all foreign invasion or subversive influence, and to govern well within this aegis. (This indicates that the Guild is the true ruler of Zamor. Zamor's various knights and lords are present merely for show, and though capable of free action with the blessing of the Guild, particularly with respect to the warding of the marches and defense against the Swarm, they remain subservient to the heads of the Guild.)

(ii) The Guild undertakes to subvert foreign powers and to reach a position where the gainful exploitation of such powers, to bring revenue and prosperity to Zamor, can be practised. (Such subversion can range from assassination and extortion, through thievery, to semi-legitimate trade, especially the smuggling of "sensitive" items.)

(iii) Members are reminded that any act which may be construed as treason towards the Guild is punishable by death.

#### Ranks at the Guild

1. Novitiate: no uniform

2. Ordinary Guildsman: awarded after completing Novitiate's training. Receives uniform of a plain sky-blue belted tunic.

3. Full Guildsman: awarded after having successfully performed a specific task that will further the ends of the Guild. To uniform is added a red sash, fastened with a buckle showing Guild insignia (crossed spears on shield).

4. Lieutenant: awarded on merit after a minimum of five years as a Full Guildsman. Two silver stripes added to shoulder of tunic.

5. Higher Ranks.

For the time being, I think it only remains for me to say that the Zamor Guild is, in my scheme of things, the most powerful body of its kind in the whole of the Known Universe.

#### CAMPAIGN REPORT

In which Alkar goes away, and the others meet the warrior Skidthane and embark on a strange journey into the abstract....

Our heroes hurry away from the Jousting Plain, apparently straight for the impending Whacker, but the terrible storm never materializes where they are. They eventually reach the Coaching House safely, though the journey has taken its toll on the vastly huge Lyra. The landlady takes them in, and they arrange the hire of rooms over some food and a pint, though Lyra is put on a crash diet immediately.

(On a Point of Terminology: look, guys, you're at the Coaching House. The what house? How many coaches have you seen since you started on this little trip? How many coaches have you seen ever, come to think of it? Do you even know what a coach is? Frankly, I doubt it. Doesn't the name arouse any burning curiosity at all? Oh well....--NJL)

Over the next few days, the party rests at the Coaching House. Lyra slims, Alkar copes with his magic coming back, and they all feel a lot older and wiser than the short stay of 15 days at the Jousting Plain ought to have left them. (is that a grey hair, Estel, at your age?) The only visitors at the Coaching House during this time are a party of blue-liveried militiamen, with whom Gustavius disappears for a short while.

One day, however, a stout fighter by the name of Skidthane arrives. He seems a decent sort of chap and falls in with the party. He is well known to the



landlady. It seems that he does a lot of work with the dwarves in the Mountain of Black Fire (known to the dwarves as the Peaks of a Thousand Mines), and it is from there that he has just come. He tells too of a magical subterranean working to the south-east, deep under one knoll of the precipices of the Black Chasm. He periodically goes there, seeking his fortune, and is accustomed to invite along any hale and stout travellers he meets on the way.

Nothing exciting has happened to the party since they arrived at the Coaching House, so they assume that the information of which the Sage spoke may well lie at this excavation. All agree to go with Skidthane except Alkar. The latter now tells of a tranquil lake in the lowlands between the Coaching House and the Northern Marches, which the landlady has told him about. Herbs grow there which he must get, he says enigmatically, and will proffer nothing further when quizzed on it. The others can only assume it is something he needs to rectify his recent loss of magic. Anyway, the next day Alkar sets off to his lake, and the others take the road to the Black Chasm with Skidthane.

Early on the second day out, the great rift finally comes into sight, and they reach it by midday. A great bridge takes the road across the chasm, but before they reach this Skidthane heads off down a rough track that soon begins to wind giddily into the precipitous murk, eventually transforming itself into a rudely-cut set of stairs. The stairs lead quickly out onto a knife-edged ridge decked in swirling fog, and it is all the party can do to spot where to put their next step. Faintly scuttling sounds come and go all around.

With alarming suddenness, the fog clears; and they find themselves at the far end of the ridge, facing a stout-looking door. Skidthane opens it with a push, however, and they head in down more stairs, which in the eerie glow emanating from the walls can be seen to be of excellent workmanship.

The stairs soon lead out into a room dominated by a raised-up shield motif set in the middle of the floor. It depicts a black cross on a white ground, and Skidthane says that it is a travelling device; at any rate he is very careful to walk around it as they cross the floor. (Actually, the shield is only the standard of Mevrien the Mighty, the original builder of the place, but...NJL)

The glow from the walls has now stopped, so on the far side of the room the party lights up, and at once perceives a circular construction set in the wall, which Skidthane says is the next door. It consists of a number of metal segments arranged like an iris, each segment hinged to the wall at the far end, with an elaborate catch in its center. The construction is held rigid by an appropriately sized metal ring that slips into the recess of each catch. After a lot of tinkering, Estel eventually fusses this out and opens the door.

The next room is another bare affair, but there is a door leading out of it that is soon determined to be magically shut. Estel gets to work on the lock, but a beam of energy shoots at him, and a rune momentarily glows on the face of the door. Lofty, fed up with this, goes up to the door and kicks it in (so it was a one-charge rune); and the group emerges in somebody's bedroom, dominated (shock, horror probe) by a large bed. The room is in good repair but does not appear to have been used in the last few days, nor do the living quarters attached to it.

Skidthane sets about rifling the mattress. After pulling out a bag of gold, he is latched onto by a great big-fanged worm. This he dispatches, though not without becoming envenomed by the beast, a state of affairs swiftly rectified by the expertise of Lyra, fortunately for him.

Just then the sound of marching becomes faintly audible, and the rhythmic clatter of iron-shod feet waxes steadily louder, until the lighter items in the room rattle up and down where they lie. As suddenly as it came, the marching drifts away, and all is quiet once more.



Eventually our heroes leave the quarters they have just ransacked by the back door, and soon find themselves in an open area with several cages, the ceiling supported at intervals by large pillars. Two cages contain a couple of very disheveled-looking lowlife cutpurses, whom the party releases in response to their entreaties. Resting in one corner, under a large blanket, is a heavy amphora which Gustavius and Estel just manage to determine is magical, when the iron-shod marching returns, and a team of hobgoblins on patrol bursts in and lays into them.

The party just manages to defeat them without fatality, when another of the doors to this hall bursts open, and a party of adventurers piles in. They are not hostile, however, having merely been attracted by the sounds of melee. Having exchanged recent information on the movements of forces within the earthwork, the two groups depart their separate ways.

Estel and Gustavius now return their attention to the amphora. A little magical good fortune enables Gustavius to communicate with a sea captain sailing upon the icy waters of the domain of Harragon, who is apparently in some way within the amphora.

Lofty and Skidthane express a desire to take the amphora, but the others think it best not to. The two persist, but the vessel quickly becomes very heavy, and the pair resign themselves to the fact that they cannot carry it. (Another neat bit of successful conjuring by the two secretaries.)

By now they have all taken a number of passages leading away from the hall of cages and pillars, and have discovered they have been through one or more dimensional inconsistencies, as their map does not tally, even though they have been most careful along the way.

The passage eventually winds into a dead end, blocked across by a great mirror. In a flash of inspiration, Estel elects to try and walk through it. It smashes, and he gets cut. Behind the mirror is an alcove with a ladder leading upwards--and a small lever which activates a mechanism that slides the mirror out of the way for anyone standing in the alcove. Examination of the fragments of glass reveals that the mirror was functioning as a one-way mirror. Lofty and Estel cut partially through the bottom rungs of the ladder, and the group gathers in the alcove and waits.

Sure enough, it is not long before footsteps are heard coming down the ladder, and a religious-looking type lands at Skidthane's feet. The latter quickly advises the former not to try anything, but the cleric does not appear unduly put out at the tampering with his ladder or mirror. He introduces himself as Yefta, a cleric of Tyr; being a charismatic soul, he soon gains the party's confidence.

Yefta invites them up to his abode and proceeds to explain something of the organization of the part of the complex they have so far explored and what lies farther on. Thus they learn that they are near a victualling place. Yefta tells them the way there is simple; his ladder carries on beneath the alcove, with access via a secret trapdoor. The passages beneath lead to a damp marshy area, and the party should follow the way to this.

So they prepare to set off again. Gustavius returns the astrology tests that Yefta had passed him for quick perusal, and they head for the ladder. As they leave, Yefta makes a couple of predictions: firstly that Lyra will shortly break an arm, and secondly that Skidthane will be bitten by a spider and lose the sight in one eye as a consequence.

On the way back down Yefta's ladder, Lyra steps on one of the sawn-through rungs that had not been broken. She falls and breaks her arm. Fortunately she is quite capable of administering to her immediate needs with respect to this.

They find the trapdoor and carry on down a second ladder which emerges into an open area with three cages. In one is a small flask made of blue glass, with a fish design engrave on it. Between all their efforts, the party manages to retrieve this.

Meanwhile, Skidthane is sulking as he has just seen one of Yefta's predictions come true and has remembered the other one. After a little concentrated thought, they decide that maybe those weren't really predictions at all, but some sort of disguised curse conjured up by the double-dealing acolyte. Lyra elects to try and remove the curse. The ritual is in due course performed, but in view of the lack of information as to the nature of the curse, Lyra cannot be sure whether she has succeeded. With mixed feelings, the party carries on towards the tea-room, the way to which they had been told by Yefta.

to be continued

MONTMORILLONITE MAN-O-WAR BIRD, OCCASIONAL ARTS SUPPLEMENT

LOVECRAFT AND CTHULHU ON FILM

The Shattered Room: dir. David Greene;  
with Gig Young, Carol Lynley, Oliver Reed and Flora Robson.

Not having read the original tale by Derleth and Lovecraft, I'm not in a position to compare it with the plot of the film, which develops as follows....

Susannah Whately lived as a small child in a mill house on Dunwich Island off the New England coast. Her parents keep some "horror" locked away in the shuttered room at the top of the house. Her parents die, and she is sent away, only to return years later with her new husband, intending to turn the now derelict mill into a summer home. They find that none of the locals will go near the place on account of the tales of the "curse of the Whatelys," which the enigmatic aunt Agatha has been spreading. The couple nevertheless defy local advice and begin to clean up the mill....

At a guess, there is considerable cinematic license in the story. Apart from updating it to the 60s, there is the introduction of the obligatory gang of local ruffians with their quota of loose female hangers-on, developing into the equally obligatory attempt at terrorizing Susannah which, when foiled by her husband, leads us on to their revenge on him, clearing the stage for the preferred pulp finale of the young wife trapped in the mill house with the chief thug and the horror.

All this is pretty well done, however, except for the needlessly long drawn-out episodes involving the gang of thugs, and I'd consider this film one of the best examples of the 60s British horror movie, with locations in Cornwall deputizing nicely for New England. Even though the film carries the spirit of Lovecraftian horror well, the tale (in the film anyway) is hardly central to the Cthulhu mythos. What is, though at times hardly good Lovecraft, is the next film..

The Dunwich Horror: dir. Daniel Haller; with Sandra Dee and Dean Stockwell.

Once more an updated version (late 60s at a guess). This one I can compare with the original, and the liberties it takes are not few. The standard vulnerable blonde heroine is added. Wilbur Whately is transformed into a charismatic, dashing and erudite Svengali from the simpler, uglier form that the story suggests, and the grimly determined Dr. Armitage becomes a rather unsuitable, homely bumbling type. The film also changes the denouement, so that Wilbur (who in the story expires before the horror really starts) is there at the end, putting the final touches to the ritual that will unfetter his brother on the hilltop, as Armitage closes in for the final confrontation. I'd concede, however, that this makes good cinema.

The opening of the film is unbelievably lame and risible, with Wilbur conning a dumb blonde returning the Necronomicon to its display case (goodness knows why Armitage entrusted her with it) into letting him have a quick read. Armitage eventually appears and stops him. Wilbur then gets a lift home from the blonde to the Whately house in Dunwich and by various means gets her to stay the weekend, during which time she falls under his spell (literally and metamorphically). Wilbur plans to use her as a sacrifice to let the Great Old Ones in.





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February 28, 1984

My old Selectric printer died a month ago, so I went out and bought a Smith-Corona TP-1 daisy-wheel printer, which has fully as few features as the Selectric did. It was cheap, though, and it works. I hope it does stencils well. [1]

CONTENTS:

1. Yet more on my magic system.
2. My campaign lives!
3. Comments.

1. YET MORE ON MY MAGIC SYSTEM

This is not, alas, going to be the last installment of my magic system. I intend to do a full-blown force-based magic system, but I have yet to work out a system that isn't needlessly complex. Recent progress is discussed below.

The source of magical power. As you may recall (these 'zines are spaced too far apart, so you probably don't), there are two main sources of magical power, (or "mana"). These are the Aether, which is characterized as a field or wind of magical force, and mana contained in persons or objects.

Normal spell-casting goes something like this: with an expenditure of physical and psychic energy, a mage bends the mana to his will. He uses the power from the mana source to power the spell. Result: one successful spell, and one tired mage.

Efficiency. Magic wastes mana. Most spells are far less than 50% efficient, which means that if you had a spell that moved mana from one place to another, less than half would reach its destination; the rest would be wasted.

Mages are also inefficient. Ideally, the mage would only use the mana around him, and use none of his own vital force to power his spells. In practice, it doesn't work that way. For instance, a run-of-the-mill mage will be providing 15%-25% of the power

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1. For those who care, I'm double-striking lower-case letters, and triple-striking capitals and numerals.



himself; the rest will come from external mana sources. A really top-notch mage (Merlin, for instance) will expend only about 1% himself.

Anyone who crosses the boundary from losing power with each spell to gaining power is called a "god."

Spells are fatiguing in proportion to the amount of energy the mage himself must put into them. A mage who contributes 20% of a lifting spell's energy can lift five times as much weight as he can without magic. Mages don't like this kind of sharp limitation, so most spells use tricks to get around this kind of massive physical effort.

## TYPES OF SPELLS

There are several broad categories of spells, listed according to the general method used to get things done. The ones I've come up with so far are:

Hypnotic/Suggestive spells. These spells work on the subconscious, and are very cheap in terms of mana (since they aren't energy-intensive) [3], though they often require a great deal of skill. A typical hypnotic spell would be used to put someone to sleep, make someone afraid, or create simple illusions.

Organic spells. These are very tricky spells, but easy on the spell points. These spells alter organic reactions slightly -- usually by working on hormones or enzymes. When you take biological spells into the realm of genetic engineering, you see how monsters are created.

Maxwell's demon. Another cheap way of doing things is to affect the outcome of random events. In addition to obvious applications with dice, energy can be channeled by the use "Maxwell's demon," a hypothetical field that is permeable to high-energy air molecules, but not low-energy ones (or vice versa). The result would be a sharp rise in temperature in the inside of the field. You can get any temperature you want this way, though it takes time to capture enough high-energy molecules to achieve really high temperatures. This is the preferred way of producing flames, ice cubes, and fireballs.

Elemental spells take advantage of adjacent planes of existence that have a low energy barrier for transporting matter, energy, or spirits. For instance, gating in a few thousand cubic feet of 1500 degree air from the fire plane is much cheaper than heating it up yourself.

Transportational spells move objects from one place to another. The cheap kind allows the transported mass to be scrambled in transit,

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3. All references to spells being "cheap" or "expensive" are referring to their cost in terms of spell points.



which is no problem with water or sand but is embarrassing with people. Much more costly are the spells that inhibit the homogenizing effect. Distance is not a factor, but control is.

Mass spells such as religious rites allow the mage (or god) to draw on the vitality of the participants to provide power. Deities burn up a lot of mana, and need their congregations if they want to remain powerful. They dwindle in power as their support dwindles, sometimes to the point of becoming mortal and dying of old age.

Human and animal sacrifices drain the vitality of a creature to fuel spells. Draining a creature completely (by killing it) generates a great deal of power.

Brute force spells convert mana and the caster's own strength directly into useful work. Levitation spells are usually of this sort. They are simple, easy to control, but fatiguing.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

The actual mechanics of the spell system will be based on assigning metarules for the point cost of various classes of spells, and the actual methods of performing different kinds of spells. For example, a fireball can be done by brute force (using magical energy to heat up air), Maxwell's demon, elemental magic, or teleporting air in from the inside of an active volcano. All of these methods have their good and bad points.

This means that I finally have a spell system where people can reasonably expect to design their own spells from knowledge of the way magic works, rather than dumb luck and die rolls.

Before I'm done I'll need to work out a way around requiring engineering calculations for each spell. I want to keep it simple.

## 2. MY CAMPAIGN LIVES!

I re-started my Camelot campaign a month ago, with two people who had played in it back in Oregon (Karen Black and Lance Murray), and a newcomer, the ineffable Quentin C. Long. Marc Willner put in an appearance once, as well.

(I'm not going to do a campaign writeup, partly because the whole thing has gotten pretty convoluted, and partly because I don't feel like it.)

My campaign is, of course, based on my own modified-beyond-recognition HIGH FANTASY variant. The unfinished state of my magic system is neatly sidestepped by having no spell-casting player characters. I improvise constantly, anyway, so if my rules were complete I'd just ignore them.

As usual, I can't keep up with my own campaign, so I have other players run THEIR campaigns some of the time. Lance has an AD&D



campaign, and I'm trying to get Quentin to put his mummery where his mouth is and start a CHAMPIONS campaign.

We run every Thursday at 6:00 pm, and everyone is welcome (just drop in: I'm chaotic and I don't care). Coffee, soft drinks, and food of some sort are provided, unless we forget.

We ran Lance's campaign last week, which was the first time I got to play (rather than GM) in about a year -- a welcome change. Karen and I ran old familiar characters, which was fun, and Quentin rolled up a new one with my AD&D character generation program.

The run was interesting, nasty, and somewhat profitable. While I enjoyed it, it also reminded me of why I gave up on AD&D: crazy rules, and too many of them. Still, I can exploit them, and I can role-play at the same time, so what the hell.

### 3. COMMENTS

(#102)

LEE: Pain points? A Pain table? Pain points lost per hour? It seems awfully cumbersome. Telling a player that his character is writhing and screaming has always seemed much more effective than telling him to check off six pain points.

SIMON J. CORNELIUS: You didn't like SILVERLOCK? So far as I know, you're the only one. As for it being perhaps too American a work, I suppose it's possible. I've heard that the English were bewildered by American humor during WWII (Q: What's the similarity between elephants and milk? A: They both come in quarts.).

(#103)

LEE (re your comment to me): no, I wouldn't really want any beginners to just jump into the formless void of my rules system, but HIGH FANTASY is structured enough to get people started, but still sparse enough to keep them from being fettered by bloated rules systems.

Speaking of bloated rules systems -- I think that AD&D was the worst thing to happen to the hobby, ever. When the three campaigns I was involved in were all based on the original three books plus GREYHAWK, the rules were few enough to memorize, and weren't anywhere near as unplayable and bloated as AD&D. The DUNGEON MASTERS GUIDE and even the PLAYERS MANUAL made a fairly simple game incomprehensible.

DENISE GERNETH: If you haven't yet received my APPLESOFT D&D programs, pester me until you get them. I have a character generator, a wandering monster generator, a character sheet printer, and a bunch of miscellaneous stuff.



by Richard J. Schwall  
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Electrostencil by Barry Gold  
with my sincere thanks!

## CONTINUATION OF THE TALE OF THE SECRET SERVICE TEAM

When I suspended the tale last, the team had arrived on yet another planet by way of a misjump of the Grom spaceship they currently controlled. A large farming combine approached the ship and came to a halt. The occupant of the machine turned out to be a tri-symmetric metallic "robot". Several attempts on the part of the PCs to communicate with it produced no results for almost a full day.

The PCs called on the immaterial Taadaak to help, but recieved no answers from any of them, and decided they must have been left behind in the jump.

Then, a small 1-engine airplane arrived and landed in the grain field near the ship. A very human-looking figure emerged in a black business suit, and addressed them in some eastern European language, then in English! He identified himself as Zeel Sadovnik. He wanted to know where they were from, and when the PCs said "Earth", he wanted to know what country. He then asked why they were here and where they thought they were going. The PCs said they were trying to go to Arizona, but got lost. The PCs said, "...if we're not on Earth, then where are we?" Sadovnik said they were on Mirzakhanian, then returned to his plane for further orders.

At this point 7 Tolkatar flew in and landed. These appear to be 20-meter long red dragons with a fan jet engine on their backs, as an integral part of them. Conversation became strange, as Sadovnik could speak both Tolkatar and English, but the humans and Tolkatar could not communicate directly. Meghann could understand the Tolkatar through her special psychic power, but not speak their language, and she kept these facts secret. She could not understand Sadovnik when he spoke in Tolkatar, and she gradually figured out that he was unliving, like the Kayrotal (the metallic robots).

Meanwhile, Billy, Valerie, and Ed had come down with a mysterious disease (which was really the one the Poppers infected Billy with). For a while this was thought to be due to Billy's addictive plant, but Neil (the medic) deduced it was not, though it was a complicating factor in Billy's case. They were quarantined in the Grom specimen room, and the plant was frozen in one of the ship's cold-sleep units.

In order to facilitate communication, 3 of the Tolkatar built a large blue glowing disc by a process that appeared to be magic (complete with chanting and gestures). This disc translated the speech of two sentients on opposite sides of it. At some point it is revealed that the Tolkatar believe the Kayrotal know how to go to and from Earth. Meghann and Kassandra (the only humans that Sadovnik and the Tolkatar have seen) promptly screamed and collapsed. Sadovnik tried to get to his airplane, while warning the Tolkatar that the humans must have a deadly contagious disease. The Tolkatar detained and questioned him, so they saw Neil rush out of the Grom ship, backed up by 2 heavily-armed PCs. He examined the fallen, and quickly extracted a small poisoned dart from each of them. He confronted the aliens with these, demanding to know who is responsible (while Tom and Carl manned the ship's guns, ready for a fight).

Confronted with the evidence of Sadovnik's perfidy, the Tolkatar became willing to risk some damage to their long-standing relationship with the Kayrotal in order to forge a new relationship with the new visitors. They cast a "spell" that linked Sadovnik, Meghann, Kassandra, and a Tolkatar named Khalsnt with glowing beams. Thus they healed the humans of the poison, but Sadovnik exploded, revealing lots of plastic parts.

The 7 Tolkatar got into a considerable squabble that turned into an aerial brawl. [Unknown to the PCs, they siblings, all of one litter. Khalsnt, Saltaa, Nilsst, and Talsekh wanted to secretly assist the humans in finding their way home, intending to discover that route in the process. They hoped to corner the market on travel to a new world for trading or hunting purposes. Sakhat, Tulstakh, and Lakh disagreed, and thought that their parents should be consulted and given the humans. Khalsnt eventually intimidated the opposition into reluctant cooperation.]

At this point, Lokar and the other Taadaak were heard from again. [Actually, unknown to the humans, the Taadaak have not been heard from lately because they have been dragged aside by another race of non-material beings native to the local universe, who explained to the Taadaak why they must keep knowledge of their existence limited to only a very few material beings. They should also bind those who know so that they won't tell others. The reasons for this may never be clear to us mere material beings]. They wanted each human to undergo a hypnotic-like treatment to insure they would not reveal the Taadaaks' existence to anyone else. The PCs negotiated for terms, and were granted various super-human powers:

- \* Thomas gained strength (4 times human) and combat reflexes.
- \* Kassandra gained stamina and endurance
- \* CJ Downs gained the beginning of an ability to project images of himself.
- \* Neil could perform miracle cures by laying on hands.
- \* Billy's pain resistance improved.
- \* Meghann held out for later assistance getting home.
- \* Sam gained the power to improve other's psychic powers.
- \* Carl got many weak pychic powers.
- \* William got weak mind-control.
- \* Steve developed dispassionate thinking and full self control.
- \* Jim learned to self-develop super-powers (slowly), and began with fire.
- \* Ed could detect lies, and gained a psychic leadership bonus.
- \* Bill could improve his strength or endurance, and reject shock effects.

Note: Billy, William, and Bill are 3 different characters.



Billy, still concerned with his [imagined] need to frequently practice his interstellar teleport, wanted to go to the mountains, the only place he could teleport from. He used his "resist pain" power to fight off the disease symptoms so he could argue for being let out of quarantine. This request was denied by Meghann. He managed to sneak out during a lapse in player vigilance, and arrived at the air lock just in time to be asked by a Tolkatar: "Are you of Kaskiy or Hodar?" When he said no, the Tolkatar bellowed, "Blasphemy!", and a new fight broke out among the Tolkatar. When that settled down, the Tolkatar presented a whole bunch of questions concerning the humans' creator and boss.

There was some discussion among the players as to whether they wanted to tell them of current Christianity, or something else. They were worried about the prospect of having to discuss the Crusades.

Meanwhile, Neil used his new curative and damage-detecting powers to heal the diseases that had been afflicting some of the PCs, and had been incubating in the others. Two of the PCs had to be put into cold sleep (this was related to the fact that their players had dropped out of the game). Also, Sam used his engineering skill and psychic improvement power to repair the engines, and to help them adapt to the alien physics of the universe they were now in.

The PCs had left the air lock standing full open for a while, and were suddenly startled to see a group of Steron run out of the ship! They were stowaways, and the PCs had been unable to capture them. Some of the PCs managed to persuade two of the Tolkatar to chase the Steron.

A deal was finally struck for Nilsst to take Billy to the mountains, and for him to tell Nilsst about human religions during the trips to and fro. When he got there, he discovered that his interstellar sense now showed stars as little circles instead of the dots he used to see in the Grom's universe. Also, one star appeared as a fuzzy circle. He decided to pop to that one, and arrived in a really weird place. He found himself standing on a narrow ribbon in space, with strange uninterpretable objects floating all about him. There was nothing that looked like ground, a sun, or stars. He wandered on the ribbon a bit, then returned to Mirzakanian, and found himself in a new mountainous area, with no sign of Nilsst. (He already knew that points near each other on an origin world are not near each other on a destination world).

Billy was not even sure he was on the same world until he encountered a Kayrotal forestry worker. Here, he again encountered the Kayrotal tendency to stand still and watch, when confronted with the unknown. Time passed up to its transmission and reception time slots, and it then proceeded to question him, and got enough information to verify he belongs to the other group of humans.

Meanwhile, the PCs have queried the Taadaak on the Steron plans. They learned that the Steron that stowed aboard are hoping to find a world they can "colonize", in symbiotic relationship with the local sentients. The PCs were deeply suspicious of that "symbiotic" claim.

The Kayrotal in the farming combine climbed out of it, walked up to the ship, and asked the humans to stop transmitting the radio-frequency noise. As soon as they verified that they understood his message, he quietly walked back to his machine. This made some of the players worried, so they now began deliberately trying to jam the radio transmissions to and from the satellite. [I never did figure out quite what the players thought they were going to achieve thereby].

Neil studied a Grom in cold sleep, and discovered that there was some artificial device surgically imbedded in him that Neil's medical super-sense perceived as harmful. He thawed out the Grom, and discovered that the alien doesn't know anything about the device. [Unknown to anybody else, the Poppers planted it in him when they gave him teleport training. It is a shock device designed to hurt but not kill the Groms on the ship. It was to give them an alternate explanation for their strange symptoms, so they wouldn't discover that they were infected with a long-incubation debilitating disease until they were on their home-world. The Poppers are really sadistic!]. Neil surgically removed the device and then performed the "miracle cure" to speed post-operative recovery.

Meanwhile, more Kayrotal had arrived in airplanes, offloaded a great pile of metal struts, and began building a framework around the ship. The PCs, very bothered, discussed this with the Kayrotal, and discovered they were building a Faraday cage to keep the radio-frequency noise in. The PCs then turned off the jamming, but the Kayrotal just kept on building the cage. (Kayrotal have a very high persistence rating. Once a program gets started in their electronic brains, it won't be shut down unless it becomes actively detrimental to their welfare).

Lakh, one of the Tolkatar, then invited the humans to come to his home. At first they were reluctant, but then decided it would be a good first test of the engine repairs and would take them away from the incomplete Faraday cage.

TO BE CONTINUED...

For those of you who have wondered what rules this game has been run under, the answer is: almost none. I have been handling everything by referee decree. For example, if a Secret Service agent shoots at something, he hits it, unless the size-distance-speed situation is just ridiculous (Secret Service agents are good with handguns). The only formal system I used was the system for alien psychologies that I wrote up in NFRF II-3. I had to do that because it seemed that all my aliens had entirely too much of my own personality in them.

Yunshan Shanlu

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This is being retyped by our favorite editor, Lee Gold. As I've been unable to contribute regularly, I'll be keeping the comments to a minimum. Deserving persons will get at least a RAEBNC.

#### COMMENTS ON #101

DIANA SHORT: "CHARCOAL DOVE" was very good. It's one of the better bits of fiction I've read in A&E. The characterization was particularly well handled.

PETER SHAPLEY: re SR20: Spelling reform is a terrible idea. An Alabaman, Maine Yankee, Cockney, Scot, Irishman, Australian and BBC announcer would all spell differently in a system based on spelling by pronunciation. Everyone would spell in his or her native dialect rather than in a mutually comprehensible standard form. I have seen the problems this sort of system can cause, because I did up a rather nice (if I say so myself) alphabet for my world with one symbol for each sound. I gave a copy to a friend (with the same sort of accent) so he could write me notes in it. Often I couldn't figure out words in his notes, or he words in mine.//Actually I'm just mad that you called my favorite letter, y, redundant.

CHRIS MURRAY: Your weapons system looks interesting, but you seem to have left out a lot of explanation. Before I can evaluate it, I'll need the answers to a few questions. Is the To Hit Base on D100 or D20? What does Fire Capacity Rating (in m)" mean? What does Range Effect modify? (The to Hit Base on D100, I'd guess). I can't figure out the Category to Strike numbers. Both pike (very long and heavy) and dagger (very short and light) are 4; this confuses me.

RAEBNCs: Wilson Heydt (tough humans), Vincent Burchett (GENCON report), Scott Turner (story, rule system), Laurence J. P. Gillespie (Norse Dwarves), Peter Shapley (filk), Wes Ives (intro, gaming discussion).

#### COMMENTS ON #102

ROBERT SAUNDERS: I liked the way the CoC writeup was done, but I noticed a major discrepancy in one of the accounts. Oliver W. Caerlion is described as an ex-cop from the south but begins his account with "around teatime"! We colonials don't have teatime. Now if it had begun "Jist a spell before Miller Time,...."

DAVID M. UNION: Hello to a new A&Eer. I must say you have an exceptionally chaotic and disjointed format. The heavy use of illustration was a nice change.

SIMON J. CORNELIUS: re the dearth of C&S stuff: I still use C&S. In fact, it's the only set of rules I've ever used (though I am in the throes of a major campaign reconstruction which may bring great changes). C&S doesn't appear in my zine much because I try to keep my articles general. I bought C&S II a little while ago, but have waited until I had time to test it in play before reviewing it. Do you have C&S II? If not, I'll do a review of it. If you do, I would be more than happy to do a review/airing of views on it for discussion. The new edition has major revisions: some terrific, some terrible.

JONATHAN AIRD: Hi, welcome to A&E. I like your shep legend. Every time I try to write up something like that, it seems to come out sounding corny rather than eerie.

ERIC SADOYAMA: #102 seems to have ushered in quite a few new contributors; glad to have you aboard. As for the effects of magic-using on warfare, one must first decide how many mages there are and of what levels and types. Also one must decide how available magic items are. These decisions will be much influenced by the rules used. The capabilities of mages varies considerably from game to game.

As a wargamer from way back, I've been wanting to figure out what changes would occur due to magic. Some other questions to be considered are how many mages would want to participate in combat on the battlefield. In small skirmishes, mages can be devastating, but in a mass battle they might easily be overwhelmed.



And would honor-conscious, glory-seeking knights or samurai want mages coming in and spoiling their heroic, man-to-man contests of arms? Look how knights reacted to the first musketeers; they considered such weapons cowardly and unchivalric. There's much more to the problem than a straightforward analysis of firepower. After I get my new magic system thrashed out, I plan to work on this.

#### MY TWO CENTS ON WHAT FRP GAMES ARE ALL ABOUT

Lately, quite a few A&Eers have been giving their opinions, sometimes too heatedly, on just what roleplaying games are all about. In certain quarters, OTWism (in the guise of style snobbery) has reared its ugly head. Now, brandishing my typewriter, I shall make my own modest foray into the arena. The ideas presented herein are my personal opinions, not dictates.

I have generally favored the story-telling style of game, both as GM and as player. To my mind, the whole point of roleplaying games is to let you go on an Adventure. I would never ask my players, "Are you going to be roleplaying with us this weekend?" but rather, "Are you going to come adventuring with us?" In FRP games, one gets to do things one never could possibly do in the here-and-now: battle monsters, do magic, explore fabulous places, etc. The ref gets to ham it up and entertain his friends with an exciting, wonder-inspiring story set in a fabulous far-off land fairly bursting with strange and exotic things. The players get to participate in the story: i.e. to be characters in it. To do so, they roll up an individual persona who is an inhabitant of this fantasy world.

Like most of the players I've known, I am mostly interested in being part of the excitement, challenge and adventure which the GM generates--and am not all that interested in crafting three-dimensional, in depth characters. Either they are what I call "sleepers" who sit off to the side and just listen in on the story, taking an active part only when they must--or they want to experience the adventure personally. I have found that most people (including myself) can get into the game better if they just play themselves. They may add color to their PC by adopting a different race, sex, alignment or some such, but the PC's personality is still basically their own. If one crafts a totally different personality, one spends more time trying to figure out how this other person will react to each situation than in taking action.

Real ROLEplaying, rather than rolePLAYing, always seems to add to the work and put a barrier between the player and the action. You have to do what the character would want to do and to pursue his goals, I had always thought that the whole idea of FRP gaming was to allow you to go into the adventure to follow your own goals.

When people ask me what "D&D" and fantasy gaming are and how they're played, I use the analogy of a novel. The GM is the author; he sets the plot, setting, time, secondary characters, etc.; but you the player take the part of the hero. Instead of just watching, it is YOU who is there making the decisions.

When my players (and I) play themselves, it is much easier for them to place themselves in the action, to "be there" in their imagination. Emotion comes more naturally into play as the players handle situations. Playing a fully-developed character seems to replace this with cold-blooded mental calculation as to how what's-his-name would react. This seems to defeat the purpose of the game as I understand it: to enjoy the escapism of personally participating in an Adventure.

When I noticed how many A&Eers seemed to put Acting the character of a truly different and distinct person before straight out Adventuring, I was quite surprised. It is only in A&E that I have heard such sentiments voiced. Perhaps I don't fully comprehend how one ROLEplays instead of rolePLAYing. I've tried crafting PCs with personalities different from myself, but the extra work rarely was balanced by extra fun. But that's just my opinion, and if you have fun playing some other way, then go ahead, as long as you don't sneer at my playing style.

As long as I've got the ole soapbox out, I think I'll have a go at another hot topic of late: intra-party conflicts and party unity.

I have the feeling that part of the difference of opinions here may stem from confusion on each side as to why the other side feels as it does. Those who feel party unity must be enforced do so mostly to keep hack-n-slash/powergamer types from victimizing other players. Those who like to allow inter-character conflicts to develop freely are looking to play out their characters' personalities and have fun through the interesting interactions which will develop. Both sides are working at cross-purposes and have gotten mad, mostly due to misunderstanding.

My view stems from my basic conception of what FRP gaming is for: you're playing a GAME. Games are meant to be fun. As GM, I get as much pleasure from entertaining my players (who are usually my friends) as from acting and storytelling. So if the other players are unhappy, I won't be too happy either. Hard-core roleplaying can produce a lot of exciting interaction. The problem comes when a player has a PC who, for whatever reason, spends most of his time trashing other PCs. That player is ruining the game for the others. They create characters they would like to play and develop, and the offending player kills them off.

The personality clashes between characters which lead to similar clashes between players stem from the unnatural way in which the PCs come together to form the party. In real life, people are drawn together by mutual interests and outlooks. For a time they may fall in with people who don't have the same interests, but eventually they will find a group of friends--and leave the first group for the second. Adventuring parties are formed from a grab bag of assorted individuals. In real life, many of these agglomerations would never have formed, but once the players have decided on their PCs, then that's who's going to be in the party. It would really be surprising if all the characters' personalities did mesh right off.

The only way I can think of to avoid having games ruined through a player insisting on playing PCs so as to annoy or enrage other players would be during character creation. If all the characters are created together, the players can decide on the general tone of the PC party and work within a loose, general limit. If the player and GM consult separately on each PC before the game, the GM can advise the player of any problems that may arise. Having the players clear PCs with the GM before starting play to insure compatibility with the campaign isn't a new idea. If a player is putting together a PC to replace one just lost and knows the other players and PCs still in the game, it shouldn't be too hard for him to come up with a character he likes but who will fit in with the group.

For me and many others, gaming is a social activity. I get together with friends to play a game and have fun. Granted there is a difference between FRPing and other games; one must keep a separation between the real world and the game world and should try to stay in character and in the game world for good continuity of play. But one is still there to have fun, not to stick stubbornly to a course of behavior, no matter how much irritation or enmity it arouses. One should have some consideration for one's fellow players; you can't just say, "Well, that's just how my character acts. Just because you don't like him isn't any reason for me to change his personality; and if you don't like it, you can go f\*\*\* off." But this doesn't mean you can't have a PC with a somewhat abrasive personality, or that all possible inter-character conflicts, however minor, must be suppressed. Just have consideration for your fellow players' desires to have a fun time playing too.

As I mentioned at the start, I think the problem in this dispute over PC personality conflicts and party unity is one of misunderstanding. Those who want to damp down conflicts and require unity are seeking to keep the "I'm a Chaotic Evil Assassin, and so I can kill everybody off if I want!" type player from ruining everybody else's game. They want to concentrate on the story and group goals without having to worry about whether the hack-n-slasher across the table is going to go for their character.

continued in three pages--at the end of THE WOL FANCIERS' IRREGULAR



THE WOL FANCIERS' IRREGULAR

by Megan Dansie, 386 Unley Road, Unley Park, SA 5061, AUSTRALIA; (08) 272-3969.  
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Hi! I'm back after a break with a zine of my very own. (What? You never noticed I was missing?) All sorts of things have been happening to me in the last few months, which have made it hard to find the time to write. However, I've been shamed by Jenny Heim's perfect record into taking up my pen again.

The most important thing that happened is that I've gotten engaged! The ~~available~~ ~~fant~~ very wonderful person is Toby Stankiewicz. He is an IBM Systems Engineer, local Master of the Lists (SCA), and a DM with a truly appalling color sense. He has also just had glandular fever, which all ties into why we're not going to the US (see below). We are getting married on Sept 1st this year, but my family is moving house just after Easter--hence the two addresses. The second is Tony's. I just hope all my mail eventually finds me. I must admit to getting a kick out of getting lots of mail--so keep those cards and letters coming, folks!

HOW ALL OCCASIONS DO INFORM AGAINST ME--or, My Trip to the USA That Wasn't

I haven't yet received the issue in which Lee put in my "notice of intention to visit." I know it went in, however, because of the many replies I received. Most arrived during my exams, and I know I've lost at least one, so even though I may have written personally, I'll say a public thank you to LEE GOLD; JOHN SAPIENZA; QUENTIN LONG and his amazing stamp; TODD D. HINTZ who lives in MN but was postmarked Denver, CO; DAVE HARGRAVE and the HEYDTs and the person who wanted a slouch hat like those in "Gallipoli" (sorry, I've misplaced your letter--please write back). It is quite wonderful to receive welcomes so warm from friends by correspondence. Tony and I really regret not coming to see you all, but we intend to visit the US as soon as we can get the time and money after we are married.

I had intended to travel to the US in February '84 for almost a year now. In October, I happened to mention this to Tony (at that stage only a SCA friend), while driving from an SCA event. He said he loved to travel but hated to do it by himself, and asked if I minded if he came with me. I said no, and we made plans and wrote lots of people in FRP fandom and the SCA.

In November we got engaged (quick, ain't it?); a few days later Tony was diagnosed as having glandular fever. He spent eight weeks home from work and is still not 100%. We decided not to risk his having a relapse by travelling in February. Besides what his boss would say after eight weeks sick leave! So we had the heartbreaking task of telling all the good people who wrote us that we couldn't come. I can't tell you how great it was to hear from you, and I hope to keep writing to as many of you as possible.

To answer the next question--no, we aren't going to the US for our honeymoon, for many reasons. We feel it wouldn't be fair on either us or our hosts to have the sort of "crash with friends" trip we'd like at such a private time. So we are making plans for a few years hence.

This has turned out to be a rather long account, but I wanted to explain to all my friends in A&E why I seemed to change my mind so quickly. When you're engaged, it's hard to remember that your private life is probably not as thrilling to others as to you. So I'd better....

SUMMON LARGE SENTIENT TREES--Come, Ents!

A&E #98

GOLD: Your W&W storytelling session: love it! love it! They only showed a few episodes here. The last one was the FIRST part of a TWO parter (grumble). It looked like the pilot episode, because Vector had his monocle stolen and some of the characters hadn't quite jelled yet. Please tell me how the episode ended. Better still, if you've got a plot summary of the series, I'd love to have it.

Most of the SCA/FRPers I know loved it. What a pity it was cancelled. I suppose it needed more time to establish an audience than the studio could afford. It certainly fulfilled the cliché that all the money was up on the screen.

SAPIENZA: See thanks above.//Keep those TStar Wars coming. I find it very interesting. It would almost be amusing if it didn't involve people's careers, money, not to mention product quality. I worry especially about younger gamers who don't know what is happening to the company that is, to them, Mt. Olympus.

BAMBACH: I'm impressed. It's amazing what some people will do for fun (like sitting up till 5AM rolling funny-shaped bits of plastic and moving tiny metal people). Good luck with your index. What time-frame are you working on? You are surely not going to index every issue of everything since they began publishing! I look forward to progress reports.//Re ct LONG: Steeleye Span: only the best. They are touring here Feb 1st. I'll give a report of the concert. Be assured that in these colonies, they're well known.//Re ct to EVERYONE: Do you realize how much you'd be welcomed to an SCA (Society for Creative Anachronism) group? A good researcher is a valuable resource. Welcome to A&E.

MURRAY: How dare you live one block from me and not visit, curse you! Why is it that CoC makes me want to run for the old brandyyyy? Actually, the number of characters who have lost their jobs after a "bad" experience makes me think the Cthulhu mythos is all a communist plot to discredit the government by increasing unemployment.

HEYDT: See thanks above re your letter. The more I hear about LEGENDS, the more I like it. Can I get a copy? If it isn't published, perhaps Harry & Ray would like a sort of "blind" playtester in Australia? I'd settle for more details on the rules. The whole skill system seems to make so much sense. I want to buy it! Please pass that on to the authors.

SIMPSON: You've summed up my feelings on some of the so-called marketing ~~tippoff~~ practices very well. I stopped buying modules when Judges Guild started to go down the tubes. The first year I subscribed, I got a Christmas card signed by the whole crew. The next year I didn't even get a subscription renewal notice.//I can't subscribe to DW because they have an Australian agent, who doesn't even know Adelaide exists (it's a capital city). I know I can get any zine through Lee, but that's hardly the point, is it? Without the prozines, I have little information about new releases. Even in my JG days, I had to shop by mail and trust to luck. I don't want boxes and gloss--give me contents.

JONES: re ct to WILLNER: what's an irving?

GILHAM: Enjoying Tiphareth. I always knew mages were entitled to ~~sex~~ love lives too.

HALSEY: A belated welcome to A&E.

DIEN: Found your world background very interesting. I am trying to work one of my own out and am constantly ~~amazed~~ astonished at how much better at it almost everyone else is than me.

WIXTED: I tend to favor magic being fatiguing, but agree that using STA and fatigue is a bit much. If I have the Difficulty Dice method correct (see below), I would favor Method #2: letting Fumbles give STA loss.

EVERYONE: Will someone please explain Difficulty Dice to make it clear to those of us who haven't followed every word of the discussion?

BROOKS & FLIN: Love the clichés. The product of a "mighty intellect that throbbed behind [your] domed forehead"?//I found your Middle Earth writeup very interesting and enjoyable. Keep it coming.

PHILLIES: I would like to add my small voice to the multitude acclaiming your writing talent.





THE GOLGAR CHRONICLES No. 20 (I think)

Being the work of one Jenny Hein, 10/72 George St, Norwood, 5067, South Australia.

ODD BITS AND PIECES

Wizards and Warriors: Yes, the TV station failed its Put-episodes-in-order roll and put the first episode on last. I was sure it couldn't start with the rescue of Ariel. Not to mention what they did with the title. Wizzards wasn't a typo by me, that was what they were advertising it as! At least we finally got to see Vector with his monocle.

DM Crash Repairs: Yes, Little old Adelaide sports this ~~place~~ near where I work. The mind boggles, doesn't it!

In case, like me, you ever wondered where it came from: "Life is just one damned thing after another." Elbert Hubbard. (Public Service Calendars are great sources!)

SPARE COMMENTS A&E 101

LEE: (re Shapero) Just for the record, I would like to point out that there do exist cultures where there is an elite language. Thai is one. 90% of the people (or thereabouts, I don't know the real figures) speak common Thai (and lots of dialects also get in there somewhere), the nobility speak Royal Thai, which is a totally different language. In fact the national anthem is only understandable by those who speak Royal Thai (it was written by the King.) People usually learn Common Thai if they speak a less common tongue (rarely the other way round) or use an interpreter. A slightly different situation than Shapero suggests, but not an impossible extrapolation.

INSERT: It is now some time later, Rob is safely married off and has disappeared with his lovely small typeface typewriter. I have moved into Neil Fraser's spare bedroom and can now ~~sneak looks at his world~~ crawl into bed at the end of a hard night's ~~slaughter~~ gaming instead of having to head home. For those who missed it, the new address is 4/104 Sixth Ave, St. Peters, 5069, 424469. I have also been writing for A&E for two years and have missed only two issues (both due to backlogs, not laziness). This includes three of Tales From the Northern Woods, one Perilous Dreams and one short story, making 25 zines in total. Wheeeeeee! Hand the lady a banana!

COMMENTS A&E 102

LEE: Like your pain system//(Re Hein & Murray) Oddly enough, I agree with all of your criticisms. Note that for creating quick characters and NPCs in particular, D&D is by far the easiest system. Nitpick back - except for a few mistakes, it was alphabetized. The mistakes occurred in trying to alphabetize (is that a word?) directly onto stencils from a non-alphabetized list, adding others as I went.

V. FOSTER: (Re me) Thankyou. I'm glad someone liked the filk.//I loved the offbeat weapons. Unfortunately my FRP world does not have such things as a TV remote control unit. Can you imagine the fun you'd have if characters found one in a treasure trove?

M. FORRESTER et alia: Loved the zine title.//Welcome to A&E//Loved the open letter to Roleplayers. I've always wondered what would happen if the PCs and NPCs took over.//RAEBNC on Dreamtime.//All in all an excellent first zine. (It had to be. I don't usually do RAEBNCs.)

V. FOSTER (again): I think your 'where do I get a copy?' refers to "The Ultimate Threshold". If so, the answer is, I haven't the faintest idea I got mine from the school library years ago.

At last, another submission from the Wizard of Aus: a quote from someone you know, not me, I wasn't there and he's giving no clues: "She's got a CHA of 14, so she's not a total dog!" If you hassle him enough he might actually come back again. (Listening Braddon?)



## STRAY COMMENTS (And other PBMs)

J. TELLER: What's happened to LOR? After turn no. 1, nothing. If you aren't going to continue with it, can I have a refund please.

J. HUDDLESON: What's happened to Fangharm? The two month turnabout is well and truly over! (Though yours is free and I shouldn't complain too loudly about it.)

On the brighter side, may I heartily recommend R. ELWOOD and P. da SILVA's PBMs. Both free and lots of fun. You might even get to meet me!

## THE SAM SAGA Part 2

Froya was a beautiful lady with long dark hair, a purple crystal mail shirt and three leopards. Berik hailed her in the pass and told her about the things following us. She decided to go off and fight them 'so she'd have a chance to die.' Odd!

I found out the story much later when she caught up with us again. We'd camped for the night in the valley and she'd come sauntering in to Kralnor's curtain wall - he has a curtain that opens up into a room. He can use it to teleport anywhere that he has been before and opened it up or can just close it and end up in some odd, inaccessible plane. Freya wandered in - it was open - with her leopards and dumped my bracelet and book on the table. I claimed them as mine, though the others were a bit dubious. A more greedy or motivated lot might have tried to claim it as common goods but I wasn't going to give the stuff up and they weren't prepared to push it.

I can't remember exactly how it came up, but Freya offered to find out who I really was. I started my spell and one of the leopards got me against the bed and put a paw over my right breast, claws out. I'm no hero. I told them about my job on the Turanian Prince and how I was a thief. I like my skin the way it is, or rather was.

One of the other leopards tore open my pack and the Uruk went through my books. Admitting to being a Thief was one thing, and they didn't appear too cut up about it, but being a Nymph was another. I said I was a novice Witch n hoped like hell they didn't know anything about it. They let it go at that and I breathed easier. I can tell you.

Later Freya talked to me privately. She said to be careful on how I used my spells and offered to get rid of the soldiers that were following me for me, if I deccerated a temple for her. At that stage I was agreeing to anything and said OK. She went off and I assume she obliterated the soldiers. She seemed capable of it, and I certainly never saw them again. Not that I was trying mind you.

Berik learnt of my bargain and warned me. Freya and her three sibs had looted the temple of the Cat god Kàrrana Vir. He'd turned the sibs into leopards and cursed them never to know love, pleasure or fulfillment and not to die until the time was right (that is, until the sod let them.) Frey was about 1,000 years old by then, which explained her suicidal tendencies.) She was also forced to serve him and protect his temple. Course, if someone else deccerated it and they weren't around to stop them...

I sorta decided to back out of the bargain. No way do I want that sort of thing happening to me. Even Damon wouldn't expect me to honour it now. I've met Kàrrana Vir. He's not a nice person. Threatened to curse me if I didn't let him out of the box. But that was recently, n not two years ago when this was happening.

There was a general discussion about what to do with me then. The idea was that I would come with them then, as it wasn't safe for me to leave their company. They told me I'd be much safer with them, I poor fool believed them - after all the black 'men' were still out there. What they really meant was that it was safer for them. I now knew the exact location of their camp and destination (a place called Mitra's Fist), their strengths and weaknesses. If the black guys captured me, especially if they figured out who I'd been with, the trouble would



really start. And they didn't need any of that. Not more than they had.

Only Servius tried to tell me what was going on and tried to say how dangerous it would be with them. He said something about how one of Mitra's priest's hair had caught on fire. Suddenly Servius's head was covered with a black fire. It took some time to put out, even in the snow and with Damon trying. Black fire, Serenting's fire.

I suppose here is as good a time as any to explain what I'd got myself into. I guess by now noone hasn't heard something about Serenting, the Hand. For some reason he took an interest in Damon. I'm not sure what it is about Damon, he's not like normal men, there's something special about him, and I'm not just saying that cause I'm hitched up with him. So many people, important people, have said he's got great potential and he's just started to find out things he can do. But why?

Anyway, Serenting started researching Damon's true name. Damon got wind of this and got Servius to help him change it. Serenting got hold of Damon and made him promise to find the Ring of Thoth-Amon. He gave him two years to do it and if he didn't Damon's soul would be forfeit to him. He also asked Damon to join him. Cute. 'Do this or else, by the way dear chap, do come and join my merry band.'

Damon acquired companions at various point along the way. From what I can gather, he never asked them to come, sometimes tried to dissuade them, but they all had reasons of their own to come along. Kralnor had some grudge against Serenting and wanted to use the ring against him, Servius, Berik and Shareenar were there to make sure the Ring didn't fall into the wrong hands, Mathias was out for the goodies to be had along the way (especially the magic), John Wesley, well, who knew knew what he was there for, but he seemed to have got some strange liking for Kralnor, and Elren was out, wait for it, to further the cause of Druidism. Believe it or not, he was serious!

They went to see Ni-Weser-Re - a sage in Thunderhold - who sent them to see Markooslar, a female Laiah, who sent them to see Tarakamalasian, a diamond Dragon. They went to her island and proceeded to carve their way through the traps, mansters and other greeblies guarding the place. When the merry band finally found her, they gave her a magic item in exchange for the information that the ring or at least a clue to it, was in the Dark Tower in Red Moon Pass. And that's where I came in.

Not much of a story for six months work, in fact the whole thing doesn't make much of a story now I come to write it up, but it is two years ago now and time lessens the excitement of it. Though I must admit, I was scared to death most of the time. Too much excitement is bad for you. I think I'm in trouble!

Also camped in the valley, farther away from us was a Turanian caravan headed by a Paladin of Ishtar, Mumchandar. We went over to talk to them about the area. Didn't learn much. They kicked half of us out for not following the right gods. Must admit some of them were pretty wierd. John Wesley said he worshipped his mother, which threw me. Now I come to think of it, he may have meant Mother Earth, but who knows for sure. Wombats is funny critters. I almost got kicked out too. I weren't too sure how Shanimar, the goddess of Bliss would go down so I said I didn't follow any. I wasn't much of a follower when I did worship her, so It didn't make much diff, whatever I'd said. But I was needed as translator and did it none too accurately until Kifyen put paid to that. I pretended an interest in Ishtar and got carted off for instruction from some woman. Prtty dull stuff. Still, I got some grub out od it and if I ever need to pass myself off as a dutiful follower of Ishtar, I could do it no sweat.

The gist of the info was that Mumchandar said it was late in the season to be trading but they wanted to make a fast buck or two and were taking a shortcut out of Turan. Normally they wouldn't be caught dead in the Pass as it had a bad reputation, whole caravans disappeared without a trace in it. He was pretty sure of himself though and



thought he could make it through. Silly sod.

Kralnor closed the curtain wall that night, just in case. Just as well, I reckon, cause the next morning the caravan was gone. Oh, it could have left early or something, but I think that's unlikely.

We went off into Mitra's Fist. Mitra's curse Servius called it. I had passed it on the way in. Grotty little vilage.

(Ed's note. For those who want a full description of the area and adventure, I refer you to "Dark Tower", a Judges Guild publication by Paul Jaquays. Neil didn't change much and I'll only put in here stuff that was unusual or necessary for the story to avoid boring you.)

The vilage had two towers, a black one that had no doors or windows or anything we could get in through. The other was a grotty temple of Mitra that had a bad feeling to it, according to Servius.

We sent Kifyen back later on to check out the towers. She didn't come back for some time and the search party found her half dead. She'd got into a fight with a crossbow bolt and crashlanded into a mountain. Not a pretty sight. Some of em carted her off to someone in Kralnor's curtain wall to get healed while I sat with a couple of the others and twiddled my thumbs and thought.

Now I've been saying we so far but then it was them and me. I was there because I figured it was safer and cause they couldn't afford to let me go. I didn't trust them and they didn't trust me. I was scared they'd chuck me out into the cold cruel world (not knowing their reasons for having me around), so I decided to seduce Damon. He was the nominal leader of this motley crew and seemed to be the type who'd feel an obligation to any girl he went for a roll in the hay with. When he got back from depositing Kifyen he went off by himself, I guess to think about the whole situation. I followed him, did my stuff (a Nymph's trick that that's part skill, part magic) and you can guess the rest.

He looked pretty devastated after. It threw me. I wasn't sure if he was angry or what and even then Damon angry was a force to be reckoned with. He sent me back to the camp and then went off by himself.

Then I didn't know Saren from a bar of soap and I didn't care. I know now Saren's pretty touchy on who you fool around with. You've got to remain faithful to whoever you first sleep with and I don't reckon Damon had been planning to do that with me. In fact, you're supposed to be married to them or intending it at least. Damon was a virgin when I got to him and that meant I'd succeeded much more than I'd ever hoped to. I think he went off to pray about it and I guess Saren told him it was OK cause he bumbled back to camp looking faintly happier. So much for my irresistable charms.

Kralnor and Damon were at a wary truce at this time. Kralnor was always pushing to see how far he could go. Tonight he offered to clean Damon's armour and proceeded to pee on it to clean off the muck. Damon laughed it off and later Kralnor challenged him to a fight, just to prove he could beat Damon. I cast a spell to prevent him drawing his sword. I didn't want them carving each other up. Kralnor realised what I'd done and made me remove it. He was livid but at least I'd broken up the fight.

It was about this time he revealed that like Freya, he knew I was a Nymph. He made me promise by my true name that I wouldn't harm any member of the party without physical provocation from them. And if I were to help him out and maybe give him the ring when we got it then he'd reward me well. I agreed, though not necessarily to the latter bit. Just as well, Shareenar at one point hinted broadly I was a whore. My knife almost got out of it's sheath before I remembered the promise. Cowardly bitch, sheltering behind Berik.

More next time. In case you didn't guess and have just tuned in, Sam is a Nymph (Houri)/Thief belonging to me. Next installment: The Dark Tower! (NB, Mistakes courtesy an illiterate (almost) Sam. Wes thu hal!







HEIN AND MURRAY: I can think of one you forgot: it takes skill to be able to sense amounts of time passage without timekeeping devices. (Some people "know" when three minutes have elapsed, while others don't know 10 minutes from 45.)

JOHN SAPIENZA JR.: If the students didn't use a dungeon and didn't have any dragons, could they change the name to "Generic-brand Roleplaying (in a white box)" and get around the rules?

PETER SHAPELY: If there was no such thing as luck, there wouldn't be dice! A fumble is not based on skill, now is it?

And now, one or two fast comments on A&E #102

PETER MURRAY: It must be Berkeley Game Company, because Games Of Berkeley is a retail store on Addison between Fulton and Shattuck. (Speaking of Berkeley, Grove Street has been renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Way)

SCOTT BAUER - You want words? Try the file /usr/dict/words at your friendly neighborhood UNIX system.

Enough comments for now, I suppose - let the others handle it. Anyway, it's time for yet another of the TALES FROM THOSE WITH THIRTEEN FINGERS, since people with thirteen fingers know that  $6 \times 9 = 42$  (in base 13, this is true), whereas the question of Life, the Universe, and Everything is "What do you get when you multiply six by nine" and the answer is "42".

This is going to be a little shorter than usual, because of yet another 3D6 special feature. This time, it starts out on one of those stupid archeological expeditions to some unknown asteroid in the middle of some galactic nowhere - but this is more than that. This happens to be the REAL, CORRECT, UNALTERED story of the legendary "Sergeant Orc" - accept NO substitutes.

Anyway, Sergeant Orc wasn't an orc at all - he was, in fact, one of these thirteen-finger types you hear about, and he was indeed a sergeant (actually, it's roughly equivalent to a Master Sergeant in the U.S. Army) in the Galactic Federation's Own Space Marines, and there's some law about having an NCO present at every dig because if a weapon was found, it could be handled correctly; besides, it gave the soldiers something to do between the major campaigns. During the dig, the science-types came up with the usual assortment of fossils, mostly stuff that was already stocking a lot of museums everywhere, but one or two items that would make the expedition a success. Near the end of the dig, in one of the deeper holes, somebody came up with what appeared to be an ordinary diamond - ordinary, that is, except for the fact that it happened to give off a faint glow of its own, and that it was rather large for a diamond (it was spherical with a radius of 15 mm). Figuring that this may have been the power source of some past weapon, they gave the thing to Sarge Orc like they're supposed to. But our hero knew better than that.

A long time ago, when the City-States fought it out, there was a legend about a princess that won a battle by casting 2000 illusions to outnumber 1000 troops. Originally, people who heard this story didn't believe it, and most people thought "rightly so". Even I didn't, and I wrote it! But Sergeant Orc knew. After all, he got his name by leading the famous "Orc Patrol" (no, they weren't orcs) in the Battles over the City-States (long after they crumbled into dust). He knew the truth about the stone. He realized that nobody could come



up with that many figures in such a short time without a little outside help -- mainly, said gem.

Maybe it was a legend after all. Maybe the stone was a powerful weapon -- or a trap. Why not try it? He concentrated on....a rare fossil not found within 10 light-years of the area. Suddenly, there was a shout -- what appeared to be the fossil of something that hadn't been found within 10 light-years had been uncovered. The chief science guy was shocked. "I don't believe it!"

\*\*\* POOF! \*\*\*

The fossil disappeared. "Hey, what happened? It must be a case of space hysteria, or something like that!"

"But we all saw it."

"That's the worst kind!"

Anyway, nobody heard much about Seargent Orc after that, until the Middle of Nowhere campaign in the streets of some major city on the Pete Tamiyn planet, wherever that is. Things were going bad -- heavily outnumbered and all that -- so Sarge broke out the stone, and thought up....2000 of the Space Marines finest, plus a few tanks and things to spare. The enemy ran, as expected. The good guys made their advance toward the capitol buildings. It may have worked -- except for the fact that they passed the house of Mr. and Mrs. Z-Attu-27 or something like that which doesn't translate very well. They happen to be late sleepers, so all of this noise -- running, tanks, shooting, friendly death screams -- aroused them. "Go see what the racket is." So she got up, looked out the window, and -- "Uh -- it's -- I -- I don't believe it!"

\*\*\* POOF! \*\*\*

That's why they're called illusions. Tough luck.

Not one of the better stories, true, but the 13-fingered guys were up until 1 AM at the time. Besides, that wasn't the main event. Everybody remembers how 3D6 started in late 1980 -- discussing the latest FRPGs and all that. Well, back on February 22 or so, I got a package from your friendly neighborhood UPS guy (mine must have been sick or something -- if you were expecting a package that day and didn't get it, now you know). Insofar as the label said FANTASY GAMES UNLIMITED, I knew that it was the long-awaited LANDS OF ADVENTURE. (The next day, LoA arrived at GAMES OF BERKELEY.) Nice, colorful box cover -- open the box up....let's see, there's a white rules book, a white Greece/England culture packs booklet, and a white character sheet. Also included were two (green?!) six-sided and two (one green, one white) 20-sided dice. Finally, the all-important FGU order blank. Open up the rules booklet....(36 8 1/2 by 11 pages, which includes cover, index, and two character sheets -- one corresponding to the examples and one to locate the rules sections corresponding to each part of the sheet.)

In order to generate a character, it takes 6 D20s and 5 D10s (assuming a human with no options), plus 2 or 3D6 for height rolls. Only Craft, Talent, Appearance, and Strength are straight D20 without modifications. Like SPI's (er, TSR's) DRAGONQUEST, the characteristics are mainly used to determine skill percentages, which are the mainstay of the game. All skills are divided into 10 categories, including Communication, Magic, Miracle, Movement, Persuasion, and two kinds of Weapons skills (Melee, Missile). Note that every character will



have a magic skill percentage; the average is about 38%, which means, for example, that an Inhibit Behavior cast 10 feet away for 12 seconds duration with standard intensity has 38% chance of success; if cast for 5 minutes, the success rate is 28%. Unlike magic, however, miracle skill ratings must be higher than all others or they become zero.

(OOPS - a correction: the comparison to DRAGONQUEST should have been to UNIVERSE - I think DQ uses characteristics over skills.)

The end of the book has a few, well, let's say "interesting" subjects: Superior Spirits (Daemons, Deities, and Demons), How To Name Your Deity, Miracles, Thaumaturgists (combination of Mage and Priest), Diabolists (priests to demons?), and, of course, Animals, Humanoids, Spirits, and what kind of FRP doesn't have Dragons?

There is one thing I don't understand: if it's supposed to cover all time periods, why is the basic weapon list restricted to pre-gunpowder era?

The two cultures - Mythic Greece and Medieval England - are combined into one 28-page booklet. The culture packs do not represent separate sections of the rules as much as replacements to the rules; the numbers are the same as for the main book with a letter in front (for some reason, C is for Greece (Children of the Gods?) and M for Medieval England. Not knowing very much about the cultures, I'm not in a position to comment.

The combat-as-a-skill system is going to take a bit of getting used to, and the idea of everybody using magic (just like DRAGONQUEST) sounds a bit crazy, but other than that (and the limitation of weapons, which can be overlooked with a little research on my part), LOA looks good - especially with the relatively low price for such a "complete" (that might be stretching things just a bit) system. Besides, I can always read about improvements in A&E....

Hey, what's this about ARES folding? (Actually, I know it's true, because I got a form letter from TSR.) Subbers can transfer to either S&T or THE DRAGON, or take cold hard cash money on the barrel head. I won't miss the new ARES - not that I would have missed the old ARES very much, either.

Excuse me, but there's a knock at the door...yes? Your name is what? It's EGGhead? Gotham City is that way...oh, not that EGGhead. I know ARES has been stopped - divine right? I don't believe you.

\*\*\* POOF! \*\*\*

Well, so much for this time - until then, you know the bit about growing three fingers and all that.



## HERESY & BLASPHEMY #2

by Ian L. Straus, 2208 S. Fifth St. #103, Austin, TX 78704

typed by Lee Gold (thanks, Lee)

Factors Contributing to Roleplaying (making it easier, more likely or customary for players to play PCs with personalities distinct both from their own and from avatars of Kali).

In A&E #98, my original four factors were:

1. Roles must exist in some detail (e.g. RQ's cults make it easier to roleplay).
2. Examples of other players produces roleplaying.
3. Individual character background produces roleplaying.
4. Time produces roleplaying. (An individual player's progress from powergaming to roleplaying.)

This drew the following comments/additions to the list:

1. (Lee Gold in #99): DETAILED CHARACTERS: The more characteristics, the more detailed skills, the more detailed background to individualizes the character, the more the PC is seen as and played as a unique person. Similarly the more cultural background (in contrast to existence only for dungeon crawls), the more apt PCs are to be roleplayed. And the harder it is to GM, both harder to handle the background and to produce NPCs. Rule-derived classes are inferior, tending to produce stereotypes....Some people have used horoscopes to individualize PCs.
2. (Wesley D. Ives in #101): INCENTIVE: The GM can "tempt, cajole, or force" his players into roleplaying. Foster, require, reward it. Use "verbal encouragement" and maybe cut a little slack for characters who stay in character.
3. (John T. Sapienza in #101): "BRP uses example heavily."
4. (Dawson in #101): DETAILED NPCs: The game system cannot strongly motivate the players to roleplay. The burden must be not on the mechanics but on the scenario and the roleplaying abilities of the referee. The referee's use of fleshed-out NPCs for the PCs to interact with can provide role models for the PCs.
5. (DA SILVA in #101): "I think background is the answer." (Provide the campaign's pseudo-historic setting to the players.)

I appreciate all these comments, and I'd like to see a second round of them.

Note that a game system's rules provide (or fail to provide) guidance to the GM as well as the players. I don't believe that GMs are born and not made. Whatever the best do to encourage roleplaying can be learned and described and systematized. If those methods are incorporated into rulebooks, the resulting system will tend to produce games in which PCs are played in an individual and pleasing manner. GM quality will still vary, but most games will be improved.

I can think of a few items which help and guide GMs in the right direction:

1. The NPC record provided on page 60 of Griffin Mountain is a handy, Xeroxable form which makes it easy for a GM to flesh out NPCs. It has a list of character trait continua (e.g. "Impulsive...Cautious"; "Curious...Incurious"); a list of possible interests, and a block for classifying attitudes towards family, equals, strangers, children, trolls, et al....This form provides a mechanical aid which makes it easier (and thus more likely) for the GM to follow the pattern which Gold and Dawson believe encourages roleplaying.

2. Following Ives' idea, the choice of character advancement system certainly affects roleplaying. An EP system which only rewards killing misses a chance to motivate players to roleplay.



AD&D's prescription of loss of a level (effectively loss of EP) for extreme out-of-character actions is not effective in countering that effect, since the rewards are constant while the punishment is rare and erratic. TET's addition of EP for succeeding in difficult die rolls (which occur in use of both combat and non-combat skills) was a step in the right direction. Runequest's skill-based, non-EP system obviously encourages non-combat actions. But there is a natural limit to such encouragement, since 90% skill levels are necessary to advancement to Rune level and can only be reached through combat. A published reward system/character advancement system which provided the GM with examples of incentive for roleplaying would tend to encourage roleplaying, wouldn't it?

3. Similarly, rules which give the GM a tested system for tracking brownie points and state that the GM should cut well-played characters a little slack on bad die rolls, as Ives suggests, would introduce an improved reward system. (Someone in a recent A&E deserves credit for this one, including the term "brownie points," but I can't find their piece again. Too bad.)

What other examples have you thought of? Have you seen any new rules sets which provide such guidance to the GM?

#### COMMENTS #101

GALEOTTI: Re yr ct on ELLWOOD and Social Level/Expense Table: why not define the Standard Currency Unit in terms of what a character who has been played three sessions or an NPC can earn in a job? For instance, the going wage for mercenary recruits. That's a little Marxist, but in campaigns which have economies, it might translate to PC effort. Note that in Glorantha, according to the RQ rules appendices, characters with a mercenary past made about 4 Lunars a day in Sartar, while the Borderlands pack gives total compensation of 10 L a day to more experienced characters, and in Balazar 2 L is more than most of the natives can expect.

DAWSON: I like to see the party and its goals created by the players rather than handed to them by the GM. I have had mixed success in that line, and I often try to design adventures which fit two or more PCs. Let those players try to recruit the others. The players often ignore the leads I give them or fail to recruit each other, which tends to waste scenarios and leaves me improvising.

I can see that you have been deeply annoyed by gamers in your area who carry on other conversations to the detriment of the roleplaying. I even sympathize with you. But non-game considerations are not mortal sins, and some acknowledgement of the objective world tends to support a campaign. Note that the GM must manage the campaign both as a fantasy and as a real-world institution, which means adjusting to players' failings and preferences.//Re inter-character conflict: Okay, I believe it can add to a campaign. BUT prove you're not just power-tripping.

SAPIENZA: Re Shields: as I understand it, large (full-body) shields were not used for parrying but as portable walls. They stopped missiles and light hand weapons.//Do you know if any SCAers have tested shields and armor vs arrows? I suspect a shield will not only slow but also deflect an arrow which penetrates it, and will give more protection than armor of the same material. Friction of the arrow shaft against the shield means the arrow slows even after penetration, unlike a bullet. It's time for a field test! There's no use being Aristotelian and theorizing that heavier objects fall faster, when you can be Galilean and experiment.

GILLESPIE: Re single character adventurers (yr ct to SAPIENZA): I agree theoretically. I don't like running a universe in which PCs appear in quanta of four or five. Passing a note or stepping into another room has worked just fine for me (as player and GM) for brief events. For longer private functions, I designed a form for players to list private activities which might bore the group as a whole. I work through the forms between sessions.



Good: I would like to see more.//On the other hand, I don't think telling my players to pass the time by rereading the rules is an acceptable GMing move.

#### COMMENTS #102

LEE GOLD: Good filk song! Good idea re Pain too. So far only TFT has had rules on transient reaction to injury; -2 DX for one turn when 5 points damage is taken, and an extra -3 DX as long as ST is reduced to 3. Could you simplify your Pain system to minimize calculation and bookkeeping?

HEINSOO: RAEBNC

SADDOYAMA: Re your "Magic and War" discussion-starter:

1. Flight, both magical and by dragons/gargoyles, would lead me to build aerial obstacles on castles. Tall poles supporting cables: fliers would run into them or at least be slowed down. Flak towers would also be a standard part of defenses. As for troops in the field--phalanxes might NOT be abandoned. Trial engagements using TFT show that several pikemen can take out an aggressive dragon.

2. Effects of teleportation would be similar to those of paratroopers or helicopters. Note that the world's magic level would make a tremendous difference. At the level I prefer to play, it would not be practical to teleport a whole army any more than it is practical for us to paradrop one.

3. Magical communications would make the biggest difference. This is what's called a "force multiplier." Dispersed maneuver in several columns would be practical for ordinary, non-genius generals, not just Napoleons. The maximum practical sizes of empires would also be increased.

4. Magical espionage, if reliable and complete, would reduce uncertainty; make long wars rare and quick coups easy. Otherwise, it might change very little.

5. Mass-kill spells would promote dispersed troop formations like modern field artillery. No difference.

Summary: Increased firepower slows things down because it's hard to keep a decisive mass. Increased mobility promotes blitzkriegs. Improved communications promotes large armies and dispersed operations. The total effect depends on the magical system. Rich D&D magic with many wizards should produce modern war.

A further question is the extent to which a magical world would remain low-tech. A magically frictionless cart wheel bearing would make it easier to feed mass armies. A magician might summon Djinnns for a corps of engineers, improving mobility and supply by building smooth, straight roads.

FORRESTER III: Dawntime is more interesting for the setting than the rules.

ELLISON: RAEBNC

MINI-BOOK-REVIEW: Imaro and Imaro II by Charles R. Aunders (pub. DAW) are sword & sorcery set in an alternate Africa. I have no background for judging their use of African myth, but they are interesting and show a potential alternative to the usual FRP setting of generic European myth.



Through tulgey wood and over wabe they came...

MOME RATHS #2  
(graciously retyped by Lee)

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Well, I'll be at this address through mid-May; then it's home to Hawaii for the summer! (Gloat, gloat) By the way, anyone who dares make a collect call will be summarily drawn and quartered. (And if anyone's interested, my summer address is 942 Hoomoana St., Pearl City, HI 96782; (808) 455-4276.

The game system for my upcoming campaign is Variant Aftermath!, but since I prefer to run fantasy campaigns, I've had to come up with...

#### YET ANOTHER MAGIC SYSTEM (AFTERMATH!-BASED)

First all the relevant information, then comments on changes/revisions/additions.

<u>Magical Skill</u>	<u>Innate Aptitude</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Magical Skill</u>	<u>Innate Aptitude</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Elemental Magic	INT+WLL+Magical	10	Spirit Magic	WLL+INT+Magical	10
Illusion	INT+DEX+Magical	10	Thaumaturgy	INT+WLL+Magical	10

There are 10 levels of spells.

The basic unit of magical proficiency is Magical Ability (MA).

MA = Innate Aptitude + Skill

MA/5 (up) = Spell Points

MA/10 (up) = Magical Shock Factor (MSF)\*

MA/20 (up) = Power. To learn a spell, Power  $\geq$  that spell's level.

MA/40 (up) = Maximum Spell Action (MSA). This is used like MNA in DAT.

Magical Saving Throws = Magical Talent + Power - Level of Spell cast.

A spellcaster may increase his save by +1 per 2 SP expended.

A spellcaster may also extend his own save to a 6' radius at 4 SP per +.

If a spellcaster has insufficient SP to cast a known spell, he may use HP instead at 2 HP per SP needed. NOTE: He must have at least 1 SP to cast a spell; HP alone will not suffice.

Character's chance of Detecting Magic = Magical Talent + Skill + Spell Level

Character's chance of Identifying Magic = Skill in that Magic.

\*If more SP are expended in a single spell than the MSF, a HLH AST must be made at a minus of the exceeding SP; otherwise the caster falls unconscious for the exceeding SP in minutes.

Unlike normal skills, magical skills' scores start at 1, instead of at some Initial Score based on the character's Attributes and Talents.

For esthetic reasons, I've renamed WT as INT and DFT as DEX. Magical Talent is a new Talent, added to the existing seven. The skill costs are even higher than they seem, since my Learning Rate = Governing Attribute Group/Skill Cost, instead of just equalling WT Group.

ELEMENTAL Magic has to do with control of the four elements: fire, air, water, earth.

ILLUSION is self-explanatory.

SPIRIT Magic has to do with the mind and the soul.

THAUMATURGY has to do with the direct warping of reality. Actually, it's a catch-all for a lot of spells I thought were fun but couldn't fit in any other category.

I've purposely omitted specific spell lists, because I've always been bored reading other people's lists. In general, a spell will cost its level in SP. These spells are of relatively short casting time.

I've set aside a separate type of magic within each skill called (thanks for the name, Lee) Spellweaving. Spellweaving is a non-combat type of magic: it's more powerful, takes longer, and has a chance of backlash in the event of mistakes. (Normal spellcasting has no backfiring or klutz factors.) I haven't fully worked out the details of spellweaving yet--I'm still open to suggestions.

#### COMMENTS #100

COVER: Beautiful

LEE: I avoid the entire first/last/Christian name problem by referring to them as GIVEN names (as opposed to family names).//Your old notes on Nyosa sound deliciously disgusting. Love 'em!

STUKEY: The problem with PC/NPC magic item sales lies in the incredibly high availability of magic items in AD&D to begin with. It seems that any town big enough for two taverns has a magic shop. One wonders how such a place is guarded at night....

NALLE: True, compared to heroic fantasy, there is much too much magic in most FRPs. But isn't it great to stage a Duel Arcane every now and then? FRP without magic is somehow less fulfilling. Besides, I don't think my players would stand for it.

ELLWOOD: Why the Strandworld in the first place? True, it makes for lots of fun pseudophysics, but I think the strangeness of the environment would detract from roleplaying. The Strandworld would be the star of the show instead of the PCs. This is fine in SF; in fact, Hal Clement has based his SF career on strange but plausible settings. But in FRP the ultimate focus should be on the characters.

MCINTOSH: re ct GALEOTTI: Restricting armor and weapons in sections of a city is easily done and usually is done, especially in the high-class and/or religious districts. But how does one restrict magic use? Or more pertinently, how does one enforce that restriction? That's why mages are feared so much by commoners--they can be bare-handed and unarmored, and still blast the living daylights out of you, no problem.

SIMPSON: RAEBC.

#### COMMENTS #101

C. MURRAY & J. HEIN: Why so many tables? I appreciate your efforts, but I'd have found a lot more use in those pages had they been filled with design/philosophy essays instead. Aside from that, bravo. I liked the fiction!

HEYDT: Good God. Could I have a copy of that newspaper article about the grizzly? I don't doubt your sources, but now that you've said your piece, how in hell are we supposed to account for this stuff with respect to FRP systems? I'm out of ideas.

#### COMMENTS #102

SAUNDERS: My main objection to games like CoC is that the players know that they're playing a Horror RPG and are thus prepared for the worst. What I like to do is to take an ordinary FRP campaign and unexpectedly inject a horror scenario into it, taking the players by surprise. Of course, one can't rely solely on gibbering blasphemies to frighten/horrify the players, since their PCs undoubtedly meet weird-looking monsters on a regular basis. The main objective is to convey a sense of utter, all-powerful evil to the players. What fun!





This is to be a mainly comments issue, so without more ado...  
COMMENTS on A&E #102

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: re ct to MASON JONES, on exchange rates. It is true that in many cases, societies in the Middle Ages were concerned about the bullion content of the coins. In Scandinavia, before a native coinage was established in the 11th century, hoards of foreign coins (including coins from England and Arabia, and points in between) also included "hack silver" (bullion cut from arm rings or other sources to standard weights). This certainly suggests that the coins were only valued as being a convenient form of bullion. Even where currency was used, foreign coins may usually have been valued at their weight in gold or silver.

But in England, the situation was rather more complex. From the middle of the 10th century, coinage was strictly controlled by the Crown. Coins were reissued every 3-6 years, with the older coins apparently being demonetized. This implies that English coins, at least, had a value greater than their silver would account for. Otherwise, there would have been no point in the people regularly changing their coins, which undoubtedly cost a proportion of the silver that was so changed. Naturally both the king and his moneyers made a profit from these transactions. Foreign coins did not circulate in England; they must have been changed at one of the many royal mints. Perhaps foreign coins had a better rate of exchange than simple bullion, to encourage exchanging them for English coins.

Beyond this, it is very likely that the exchange rate between the precious metals would vary considerably between different areas, depending upon the relative scarcity of each metal. If you have a campaign in which the characters travel widely, they might well find that their stock of gold was worth much less than they had imagined--or that they could be richer than their wildest imaginings. (This goes double for travel between worlds, of course, although Nick Larter has a different approach for the travel between his planes.)

Oh yes, I should mention that it is only worthwhile to forge coins when their value is greater than the bullion they contain. The English kings strictly controlled the production of coin dies, with dire punishments for forgers. On the Continent, coins were produced by almost any lord. They probably did not command a higher value than their bullion (except within a very limited area), and unusual coins would be tested for bullion content and valued accordingly. So attempting to forge coins--by putting in too little bullion--would be a risky business.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS: re "Dawntime"

First, some nitpicks. Your HUNTER group skills do not allow for trapping large game. It is better to have a large, fierce animal fall down a pit, whilst more herd animals can be killed if they are driven over a cliff or into a series of nets or fences. Camouflaging a pit or being able to drive animals in a particular direction could be useful skills.

In the GATHERER skills, I presume that "identify" also covers "find." After all, everyone ate the gathered things, and so could probably identify them if they saw them. Knowing where they grow and when they are in season is another matter. And why pick out the weapon skills as automatically specialized? Children would almost certainly have spent their time helping gather and prepare the food, whilst they would no doubt be warned about the dangers of poisonous plants.

As for the TOOL-MAKING skills, there are a couple of omissions: making bone tools and using fibers for rope and twine. But toolmaking should not be a hit-or-miss skill, at least not at this level of technology. After a few hours practice, shaping flint to make a useful blade is not difficult, but making one usable for a balanced axe-head might be less easy. Nevertheless, an axe could be made.



The difference between success and failure in the skill would be in the efficiency of the item produced. If tool-making is to be assessed as a skill (rather than just taken for granted: my comments on training in food gathering while young probably apply to tool making as well), then the results should not be success or failure but varying degrees of success. A bad axe might lower fighting ability; an excellent one could increase it.

But my main worry is what further scenarios you might suggest. Life in Dawntime was finely balanced between survival and disaster, which would tend to militate against innovation and in favor of conservatism in all fields. There would be few opportunities for advancement or adventure in such a simple society, in which each person's place would be well established. Just surviving does not give much incentive to a game.

One book to add to your list is THE QUEST FOR FIRE. I don't have the author's name at hand, but it was written at the turn of the century by a Frenchman or a Belgian. In the story, the clan's fire is stolen or lost after an attack by another clan, and two groups of hunters are sent out to find a new source of fire. They meet a variety of animals and other clans in the course of their quest. Each clan seems to have a different physical and cultural background--which is probably very inaccurate, but would provide many chances for the players to use their communication skills.

As a last thought, it might be more realistic to split skills into groups not by function but by habitat: different skills are required by forest dwellers than by plains dwellers--and not all groups would have river-based skills. Within each group, most people in a clan would have skills for their area but few skills for another clan's special preserve. Plainsmen would not have fishing or swimming skills. Finding food in the forest might also be beyond them, because they were unaware of the different foods available in that habitat. This would make travelling outside one's own area a dangerous adventure.

WILLIAM KEYES: I have some reservations about the amount of detail in your proposed system. I suspect that even using a computer to calculate some of the details would slow things down too much during a game. I would prefer a more abstract system, even though it would undoubtedly result in less detailed realism. In this respect, games like TFT and RUNEQUEST have an important advantage, since everything can be calculated using just one or two basic systems, and simple systems at that. They are not ideal, but no system ever will be. So I would emphasize the playability of the system more than its realism. On the other hand, I agree on your points concerning the importance of a consistent background, even if this is more the province of the DM than that of the rules designer.

On skills, your suggestion is an advance on RQ, but there is one anomaly. Taking the example of the two trees: one requires 20% for automatic success; another 50%. If young Jim comes along (Climbing Skill just 15% because he was born with two left hands), he has to roll to attempt to climb both--but one is just as difficult (or as easy) as the other. If you are going to have a Difficulty Die as well, I think you would need a modifier on that as well for the relative difficulty of the different trees. I may present my own (current) thoughts on skill systems in my next zine, so I will reserve further comment until then.

QUENTIN LONG: re ct to STUKEY and others: TANSTAAFL may or may not be true, but even if you have to pay for your lunch, you don't have to be overcharged! Balance can only be achieved if this aspect of reality is ignored. (Why bother to spend time and effort developing something no more effective than a hand-gun?) In cases where game balance conflicts with reality, people are bound to come down on different sides of the argument.

Well, that's all for this issue. A&E #103 should be coming through the door in the next few days, and I wouldn't want to be too current with my comments.



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Well, shortage of time means I've probably missed two issues rather than one (unless the enormous no 100 holdover legacy has dissipated). Lack of time also means this will be mostly a comments page, so....

FERRER NUMBLES : Comments on No 102

GILLESPIE : I've been running my PRP campaign for several months now (in fact for over a year on and off), with no involvement with magick. There has been no efforts in the direction of spell acquisition by the PCs so far. The only suggestion that supernatural or mystical effects exist has been an encounter with a werewolf. (Or was it ...) That incident scared them shiteless, since they were engaged in a "simple" burglary.//What you say regarding-totally unstructured magick appeals to me, as I'm tending towards a playing style involving minimal intrusion of game mechanics. Effectively, the only "rules" needed during play are on the character sheet.//re Herzog's mythic consciousness, I really couldn't agree more. Have you seen P.W.Murnau's 1922 original of "Nosferatu"?

GILHAM : Thanks for the silly question answer. (Also thanks to Quentin Long)//I think any interest I have had in TC is fading rapidly, mainly due to financial difficulties, which restrict my visits to the games shop. I thought recent issues were rather lousy as well.

FOSTER : Liked the stuff on offbeat weapons, especially the TV channel changer.

CORNELIUS : re ot to Karieva. Restricting PC access to magick is really very simple. I mention some ways in, I think, TP6. I find that limiting the literacy of the PCs is a rather effective means. It also has some interesting spin-off benefits. Illiterate PCs can't send letters or comprehend sign-posting etc.//I've not played C&S in ages, possibly 2 years, though there seem to be an increasing fraction of A&E contributors who do. I disliked it mainly because I felt the mechanics were too intrusive. Currently I use chunks of C&S, mainly as source material, fused to a VARQ system. I've skimmed C&S II, and wasn't mightily impressed. As a counter comment, how many people actually play 80?

LARTER : The Pookie tape won't be forthcoming, at least in the near future, as I had a bit of trouble doing tape to tape.//Where did you get hold of "Dream Quest"? For that matter, is there anywhere I can get H.P.Lovecraft books, preferably in paperback?

CLARKE : I've got preparatory work under way concerning the Domesday England RP setting. I finally chose Sussex as a starting point, for no really concrete reasons other than the size of the Phillimore edition! It does have the advantage of a coastline, and my brother is a student there, so I can actually visit the place.

The major problem is working out how best to organise all the data in a readily accessible form. Currently I'm transferring details of each settlement to index cards, which is time consuming, but simple. The references I'm finding the most use at this stage are the Wellton Finn "Introduction to DB", and Darby's "Domesday Geography of England", which seems to have a wealth of information on such things as locations and distribution of various features such as fisheries, mills, pastures etc...

My plans for this when it is running are that PCs should be lesser landowners (at least at first, until I get used to running it), with a certain amount of geographical mobility. Play would be, at first, based in the area I'm working on presently, with events extending the action further afield.

Could you suggest at some point a good source for information on societal structure in this period? At the moment, I'm fumbling blindly about in the University library, and one thing I'm not is a historian.

Victorian Adventure

VA is the only game I actually got around to playing at Games Day back in November. Harry Robertson bought it, and reviewed it in No 102. An account of the only play session we've had with it to date is to appear in his zine in No 103, but I thought I'd say a little about it from the players point of view.

The scenario we used was from the rulebook itself, and involved a bit of rather unlikely plot, involving a bunch of serpent worshippers. That being said, the scenario itself was rather fun, though a bit deadly for only three PCs.

The character sheet is a bit grotty looking, with non-standard ability abbreviating, which I found difficult to keep track of. It is however, well laid out. The PCs themselves do feel right. Quite a lot of character background is built into the character generation system. I ran three PCs, my favourite going by the name of Charles Walker. Charles is a Biologist; 30 years of age, and rather too poor to be a Victorian scientist. He is, by the way, a committed Evolutionist, which should provide a lot of interesting interesting interactions with NPCs (the game is set just after publication of "Origin of Species"). He is single, attractive, of slight build. He's of middle class origin, and gained a degree after winning a scholarship to a public school.

Play went rather smoothly, though I thought some of the mechanics were rather odd. (But I can't recall any precise instances)

My conclusion from a player's point of view is that the game is a worthwhile purchase. It is probably true that the game is most suitable for experienced gamers, though the rules seem to encourage role-playing very effectively, largely due to the character background generated.

A hearty thumbs up from a player.



"To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone --to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone...."

--George Orwell, 1984

Probably just a commentzine this time, folks. I shall present them in an attempt at reverse chronological order, so that I can weed out the irrerevant and outdated ones.

### A&E 102

STEVE JONES: "By hook or by crook, we shall."

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: re ct Sapienza: For enacting "private adventures" I usually try to play/GM "one-on-one" sessions. I find them quite enjoyable, but only as a fraction of the potetial of rolegaming.// re ct Saunders: Limiting magic to NPCs is what I've done; in effect if not in decree, in my AERenth campaign. At this point the encounters that the PCs have had with magic have fostered a less than favorable opinion.

STEVE GIHAM: I enjoyed the writeup. Do most heroquests make such use of symbolism?// I'M A GENI? Maybe I'm easily amused, but that had me laghing quite merrily for five minutes.

ROB HEINSOO: Thaks for the bits from the Histories.// Your D&D exp. rationale is streyhing things a bit. But, this seems to be what D&D requires....

SIMON J. CORNELIUS: I agree that the PBZ is taking up to much of A&E.

JONATHAN AIRD: Color me stuffy, but I can't say that deaths, "classic" or otherwise, are my idea of "fun." They certainly aren't at the pinnacle of rolegaming.

NICK LARTER: re ct FLIN: with your bit about the "crude oil organ-ism" youve got one helluva rationale for the Pheonix!

ERIC SADOYAMA:re "Magic and War": I see the influence of magic as being quite the same as the influence of technology. What one side has, the other is bound to get, usually sooner as appased to later.// re gods: if the sun and moon are the same everywhere, then why can't the gods be the same? Of course, the names and beliefs attached to the gods would/may be different, just as the words for "sun" and "moon" differ from culture to culture.

RONALD PEHR: re Paranoia: I agree that much of the public's opinion of D&D/RPG is twisted somewhat. A local bookstore which carries D&D has placed the shelves of rulebooks and manuals right by the section of astrology/occult books. True, they're also not far from the humor/recreation section, but still....

FORRESTERS # +LOSS: the "Open Letter" was quite ammusing.// Dawn-Time looks Great. I can't wait to play it.// You might do well to be sure that you identify the writer(s) of each piece in such a joitzine.

DAVID S. MALLINAK: re Stormtrooper Armor: I think I've discovered the reason why ST armor seems so ineffectual. It isn't damage reduction armor, but rather a damage amplifier. You see, the Imperial troops don't want to be hampered by carrying around wounded men, and it would be risky to leave them behind to reveal Imperial secrets to the enemy. So, any shot that would normally wound a trooper causes the suit to kill



6 March, 1984

D.S MALLINAK, con't.: the wharer. By the way, I've been told that the M16 is designed not to kill but rather to seriously wound; that way three men are taken out of action....

TODD D. HINTZ: yes, I can imagine a basic set of rules which may be used as the basis for whatever systems one requires; we've been playing by them for several months. My "card file" RPG is all based upon one table and the use of basic stats. This groundwork is the source for combat resolution, magic, skills from storytelling to climbing to alchemy, etc. etc.etc.

SCOTT BAUER: ...or, "Another one bytes the dust? Nice piece on computer games.

PETER A. CLARKE: re ct Smpson: There certainly are possibilities for modern military RP adventures. One need look no further than the movies: Kelly's Heroes, The Great Escape, The Guns of Navarone, etc.

QUENTIN LONG: re ct LEE: Your definition of the SF/Sci-Fi/Time/Space is identical to my own. However, I must protest that the past tense and Star Trek do not go together!

Rousing Raebncs for #102 goto Sapienza, Saunders, Carson&Waters, Griffin, Cliffords, Keys, et al.

### A&E LOL

LEE: The alien generation system is great. Thanks.// Please accept a continuing RAEBNC for the herbalism information, game writeups, etc.

ADELAIDE: a mega-RAEBNC.

JOHN T. SAPIENZA, JR.: Very good essay on "The Elements of Rolegaming" It would appear that you and I agree as to what we look for in our games, although as far as style is concerned I tend to lean more heavily towards cinema than novels.

DAVID DUNHAM: Interesting flora and fauna. Might you have sources for these which you could share with us?

JOHN L. T. PATTERSON: wear your Enoch Powell award with pride. Actually, I am sorely tempted to agree with you re. the Midwest. Now, if the Original Thirteen were to secede (taking DC with us)....

LAURENCE J.P. GILLESPIE: Nice work on dwarves. Great timing also, as I'm just starting to detail the culture of AErnthian dwarves.

WAYNE SHAW: re ct Nalte: The campaign which I GM uses my own highly free-form system, and I am the first to admit that it reflects my own prejudice and, if you like, ignorances. It does this no more than a film, novel, comic, or whatever you please reflects the personal tastes and knowledge of the artist. I see nothing wrong with this; I see rolegaming as an artform long before I see it as an objective science.

PETER SHAPLEY: I'm not sure what you mean by "formally recognized" bad luck, but I have ideas for such things, antblack cats, and especially Friday the Thirteenth. They are not set down on paper, but then much of my game is not.

PETER DA SILVA: re ct Bart (and as I was going to comment on an earlier issue): I don't know about Texans, but I certainly don't speak 17th century English. The language we use is American, also referred to as American English. It is based upon 17th-C. English, but it has evolved therefrom, with influences from practically every language on the planet.

RAEBNCS to Ives, Heydt, Turner et. al.



A&E 100

Gary Gygax: I agree completely with what you've written.

SEVEN & WOOLLEY: An interesting idea. In fact, "Fate Role" is not unlike that which my brother and I played when we had heard of D&D but had never seen the rules. I must say however, that, for an audience such as A&E, at least, your writing style seems a little bit bombastic. I should hope that our readers and writers do not need an introduction to role playing games.

HOWARD MAHLER: While I thank you for the information on death by old age, I could never use such a system as written. I never liked the idea of a character with 18 STR and 18 CON just keeling over because his time had come. I'd much prefer an aging system which allows for the reduction of stats until death comes due to decreased resistance to disease, etc.

MYSELF: As though it weren't obvious, for "Literary Simulation" read "Literary and Cinematic Simulation."// While I'm at it, I may as well note that I can't do ligatures on this typewriter; use your imagination when I type "Aerenth!"

DAVID NALLE: re. TEU#50: I still like the title you used in A&E#84.

DIANA SHORT: I've enjoyed your bits of strangeness. I don't understand them a whit, but I've enjoyed them.// re. Analysis: Call of Cthulhu has rules for psychological/psychiatric treatment. If ever a game required it, CoC does.

ROYAL RAEBNCS to GILHAM, SAPIENZA, ROBERT, BURCHETT, LOUTZENHISER, LARTER, CLARKE, SIMPSON, et al.

A&E 99

BILL KARIEVA: The best things in life aren't free; they're priceless gifts.

JOSEPH W. TELLER: "Protectors of Power" looks very good; but somehow incomplete. Am I missing something?

PETE TAMLYN: I think that much of the dispute re. "Skill in FRP" lies in the fact that the term "game" is used for lack of a better word.

DANIEL JAMES: Your piece on planetary generation looks very good and well researched. However, I have the urgent need to jump up and down of one inaccuracy: MARS IS NOT AN AIRLESS-WORLD! We would have been pretty silly to put meteorological instruments aboard the Viking lander if it were. Some stats on the Martian atmosphere:

Surface Pressure: 7.7 mbars (about 1/125 atm.)

Temperature range: -122 F to -22 F Average surface windspeed: 15MPH

Composition: 95%CO<sub>2</sub>; 2-3%N; .1-.4%O<sub>2</sub> (similar to that of Venus and the early Earth) There are tremendous dust storms when Mars is at its orbital perigee. Water vapor content is less than 1/1000 that of our own atmosphere. This information is from a course in comparative planetology, or "astrogeology," which I took at Hofstra University. A textbook which I recommend is The New Solar System edited by Beatty, O'Leary and Chaikin (Sky Publishing Corp., 1982)(second ed.).

\*ROBERT SAUNDERS: Planets rotate and revolve because of angular momentum left over from the cloud from which the solar system formed, and because of gravity and inertia in the case of revolution. Venus is the only planet which rotates opposite from the direction of the others. Above re. ct. Gilham.

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(C) Vizzionz Impasse. c/ Diana Short. 5 Olde Coach road, Urrbrae, South Australia  
5064. February 1984

At long last I manage to finish this story. Nick Larter- I thank you very much for your comment in IO3 and apologise for not being here for three months or so. Too many troubles and third year Engineering at university to contend with now!!! For now, I present

CHARCOAL DOVE (part two)

The envoy began to scream;  
and I began to "metamorphize", painfully.

"metamorphize"...that word is not quite correct - what happened was a massive expansion of awareness. The personality which up to then I had been showing to the world and which was all that I was aware of, was in reality a mere fragment of all that was within me. (The main part was blocked off for reasons I will explain later). To expand, I needed a literal rebirth through fire, and it was only with that fire - and in an instant - that I became fully aware of relative past, present and future.

And I had to act.

First I 'threw' a screen about the envoy, an invisible screen to keep the heat out and allow him to breathe cool air until I could rescue him.

Then I flared, the flame blossomed with my anger. I was elemental, I was the salamander; I stood rejoicing in my power for a minute (like a child with a new toy) the ropes burnt, the chains glowed red, I snapped what was left of my bindings and stepped forward.

.....

A small digression. I had been a child, I was becoming an adult. I was human, but I wasn't - if you can understand my meaning, and I was gifted with vision, intuition, prophecy and feeling; I'm still learning how to use all this.

and I am gifted with power. At the time, it was all I could use.

.....

The audience had been watching with bated breath (a little piqued that the envoy had stopped screaming) and were somewhat taken aback with my action. I'm not meant to be able to step out of the fire!

I stood still a moment or two, burning red, then threw a flame or two in the direction of an earnest guard who came running up with what looked like a pitchfork. I think he wanted to push me back into the fire, but, I was now in control. He stopped abruptly when his pitchfork started burning rather fiercely.

I calmed myself down and the flames died; the audience waited.

I looked at everybody wondering what to do. I was reeling from the sudden onset of EVERYTHING and to know what was sensible to do was very difficult, so I decided to concentrate on letting them feel peace, it seemed like a good idea at the time.

My flames changed from scarlet to blue-white, spreading out from me to a distance of several feet. These people had been too stunned to move in the two minutes since I stepped out, now they didn't understand what was happening and sat in their seats semi-paralyzed.

They felt peace, some of the great peace that is beyond understanding (you may not understand it, but if you can feel it you can project it). I thought I would give them a taste of peace and then let them choose what they would prefer.

Doesn't always work though...pity.

The strain of keeping the great peace began to tell on me so I eased off and passed down through their emotions to that of friendship and stopped. I was bent over, hands on knees like an athlete catching his breath, my flame a bare flicker of crimson.



The people remained seated and immobile, I had a few minutes grace.

I stood up, stretched and looked at the envoy leaning against the post. The wood still burnt yet had no effect on him. I went over, snapped his chains (the ropes had already burnt through) and picked him up...again; then walked out of the amphitheatre clad only in flame and refracted light.

Through the pass and out to the track that ran to the main road. I/we hurried, for though I was very tired, there was not much time before they would chase - and that, despite the peace, was almost certain.

..people don't like having their minds tampered with; even nicely.

.....

A few more details: some centuries ago, my oversoul/spirit, call it what you will, had been given a 'purpose', a job to do, which I had baulked at and committed suicide in order to evade - hence committing myself to a seemingly endless cycle of lives until I did it (the gods are cruel). Well the cycle of time had precipitated the world once more into a phase when I could do my job and be released.

This was just the beginning.

.....

we came onto the main road and I despaired slightly. we had to get away fast but the road to the town was too long and it would be too easy to be captured there again. So I darted into the brush on my left hand side with the intention of getting out of sight of the main road, stumbling upon a sheep-track in due course and wandering down the curve of the mountainside.

I walked and ran in stages as the day turned into late afternoon, then twilight (to think we'd only arrived in the town that morning). we were in the foothills with a half-moon rising before I heard the first search-party overtaking us. This was both distressing and useful (energy). I stepped off the path into the trees, laid the envoy - Petar down in the shadows (fortunately he was unconscious), and hid myself, waiting for the party of five men to come close enough. I had just enough energy to throw a glamour over the men so that they stood in the pathway hearing and seeing nothing, unaware that they were under a spell. I crawled back onto the path to touch them and absorb all their energy, rendering them unconscious.

I threw them into the shadows of the trees, hidden well enough or so I thought, for anyone else to miss seeing them in the darkness. Collected Petar and continued down the pathway. Several hours later, after midnight, we were fairly well out of the foothills when I sensed two large groups of people in pursuit. One from behind - the unconscious group had been found, another from my right, the side of the river and several large villages. They must have had some warlocks with them, their communication was too good for ordinary men.

I couldn't battle these so I stopped and began to inscribe with fire, in the ground and in the air, the correct patterning sequence to teleport myself and dark burden to the portal in the grounds of my house. Then tapped into the hatred and fear energies that were well broadcast by our hunters. Then I stepped into the centre of the pattern with Petar and disappeared. The portal disappeared with me, leaving only a slight tang of ozone.

.....

I'd had partial memory of my lives always, in my years of being various eccentrics - I'd always come to this house at about the end of adolescence, the time depending on how well or how badly I had been treated as a halfwit. And I had full knowledge ('instinct') of how to use and maintain the equipment etc. Sometimes, in happier times, I was born to the peasants nearby, or further north, or to the wild folk of the forest. All over the place in fact! And not always the same sex.

with rebirth I knew everything, automatically as an adult - though I didn't lose my child's mind as you might expect, and it took some time to become re-aquainted with myself.

.....

On arriving at the portal at my house I imagine we produced a strange sight. An orange flash and myself in different form stumbling out of midair, surrounded by white light and carrying a burnt and twisted body.

I took a few steps then crashed to my knees, half-blinded in transit. Then I was surrounded, covered by hands, hands taking Petar, hands lifting me up, then I blacked out myself. I woke washed, dressed and lying on my own bed. Night, still? again? I felt as if I'd slept 24 hours, yet was still a little delirious. So many things running around my head. I felt like asking 'what happened' to the ceiling.

I rolled over and came face to face with one of my forest friends, who helped me up and told me I'd actually slept a mere 30 minutes or so. They had combined and fed their excess energies into me so that I could heal Petar. I was amazed but should have known that they'd understand what was happening, or accept it, as they held me in regard as a god. I didn't bother trying to understand at the time, I obviously knew why, somehow, but I'd leave delving into my own mind til later.

Petar was washed and suspended on straps in a small tank made of glass, filled with tepid water (you wouldn't believe what's in that house). I wondered if I'd told them to do that while I was asleep, it was just about the best thing to do under the circumstances.

Now to heal: I shook my head, it's not my best attribute but no choice here. I cleared my head and focussed on letting my consciousness reach down into and through his nervous system, through the blood and the lymph checking what had to be repaired. Major work: I started on his face; the torch had been thrust with force searing his eyeballs, the right more than the left, and burning off a considerable amount of his eyelids plus injuring his nose somewhat. I speeded the rate of mitosis to fix the eyelids and nose, then 'personally' repaired his eyes.

The other major job was his feet but before I started on them I felt his consciousness beginning to stir, so I blanked out the pain receptors in his brain as well as putting a block on his consciousness so that he'd stay under.

In his feet I repaired the veins, then the arteries, then the burnt flesh out to the skin to leave as few scars as possible. Next through the rest of his body, slowly, slowly catalyzing the healing factors and making them move extra fast to heal the other burns, clots etc. working from his feet to his head.

At long last, I pulled out of his body, what was left could be fixed by natural mechanism. I slumped back in the chair and had to be carried back to bed. it was late morning.

.....

Some weeks later - about a month ago, Petar and I sat down and faced what we had done. I'd really started things with a bang! Petar's original mission as an envoy was forgotten, the king obviously didn't agree anyway. Now we had a job to do, and Petar was in this as much as I was.

Our job is defined in words - still defined in fact in the same way as it was centuries ago when I tried to get out of it. To put this idea into practice however is rather more difficult. We literally have to start a new religion here; a combination of all that has gone before to try and satisfy all. Hideously complicated.

But for now, we just sit and plan, we are two yet there will be two others arriving in the next few years. A man and a woman - who? I don't yet know, though I do know that the man will become my life partner and the woman, who I assume will be black also, will be Petar's. In this interim I am teaching Petar all I know of psychic power and exploring further... I am the pivot point now, and I can't escape it this time!

Also, to break the monotony (well not only that) I am having Petar's child. we can work fast occasionally.!

.....

See you again soon. Byeeeee.

Diana.



Comments 102

Vincent Foster: The incentive to technology would come through the release of labour from magically augmented agriculture, and the general population increase that could be sustained, just as in this world. There was no central funding of research in pre-1930's times: the great advances of the C13 were primarily due to the tinkering of people with private incomes, or otherwise freed from full time work. Only in the last fifty years has the need for capital equipment risen so that only governments can afford it.

Population growth would also foster exploration. And what else are "Wilderness adventures" than exploration. I'm not saying that there are no self-consistent game settings, just that they are few.

Me: Temperature and albedo: Albedo acts to reduce the body from black to grey, so the absorbed energy goes as  $(1-A_v)$  where  $A_v$  is the albedo in the visual where most of the input energy comes. The radiated energy is reduced by  $(1-A_i)$ , where  $A_i$  is the albedo near 10 microns where planetary temperatures peak. The effect on the black-body temperature given in AoF 31 is to change it to

$$T = T_{BB} \left( \frac{(1-A_v)}{(1-A_i)} \right)^{\frac{1}{4}}$$

note that exponent  $\frac{1}{4}$  - it is missing from eg Traveller Book 6. This latter quotes a system for  $A_v$ , but ignores  $A_i$  - I've no real data on  $A_i$  either. Any ideas?

Carson and Waters: Shai-Hulud seems a bit drastic, but it's the only real desert beastie of any note in SF that I can recall off the top of my head.

Griffin re Masters: Log(t) for levels is just a way of giving people unusual characters (who are thus qualified to do unusual things) without just breveting them; a quick method of growing a high level character with some background, who can then expect to be a duke/general/wizard/bishop. Not the exponential growth that is powergaming.

LEE: nice filk.

Richard Schwall: **Superworld** conceals is vehicle and base design rules as the 'Sidekick' superpower. Just knowing about the Champs procedures is then enough. I agree that a sentence explicitly pointing out the the power can be used for vehicles or bases would have been useful.

Peter daSilva: Polydice D6s are rarely if ever proper dice. My own set has 1 opposite 4, for example//re Ellwood a vertical 1mi should suffice- if the strand has mountains, as it were, regions at higher gravitational potential - funny gravity need not be uniform. There is, after all permanent snow on the equator on mount Kenya//re me - fireball is a better missile weapon than thrown dynamite - closer to a riflegrenade incendiary. The '6" ' range base for a D&D fireball is quite some way in the overground 1" to 10yd scale.

Bill Keyes: I guess that's got that out of the system, then. It's nice to see those ideas properly worked out ( I tried some years back but lacked the database) Definitely one for machine implementations; though//Re Anderson's book on planets; if it's the one I saw about 10yrs ago, it's not as up to date (and in places frequently wrong) as Dole's 'habitable planets for Man' (watered down version in collaboration with Asimov called 'planets for Man') which itself dates from '65. For example Anderson trots out the old chestnut about lack of stable orbits in binary systems, which Dole is able to refute.//For Manual Dexterity, the word 'Deftness' abbr. DDF exists.

Plamondon: Fine idea, but you'll have to stop the players using stereotyped spells to fully break the cook-book mould. If the players still go ahead and do the

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same old list of spells, the rationale doesn't matter a damn. On the operational level, one fireball (or teleport, or levitate, or det. magic) is much the same as the other.

While Glorantha Runemagic is run by a simple cookbook system, the existence of (small) defined lists at least produces scope for variety between spell-users. Given the choice of Fireball or Transform Head as a spell, the former will be chosen 9 times out of 10. Limit the choice, and different magics are used. (there is of course no defense against players who all opt for the same list, however.)

If you have managed to prevent this player sabotage, it will be a Gling breakthrough.

Harry Robertson: re Masters. Having spent a page taking glorantha out of RQ, just the other issue, it should be possible, by analogy to consider Traveller without the Imperium. If we compare Trav as is to BRP+Future\*World, one may extract the BRP equivalent. The Trav magic system then fulfills part of the role of the Magic-world book, enabling one to run D&D-type games with Trav mechanics.

However, since even with the Imperium, the only differences between using Trav for SRPG in the Imperium and as a Mr Midshipman Hornblower game is the labels of the ships and gunnery. Socially, there is very little difference. A system that can run Trav as D&D would need only a few changes to the mustering out table to be usable in the Imperium (eg Barbarians in 'Citizens of the Imperium').

The other changes you point out are the inevitable 'season-to-taste' which any magic system requires which means that no magic system can be applicable to all campaigns. This problem makes it virtually impossible to design systems of merit for general use: all published systems are either cartridge-spells (D&D, Runemagic) or primitive spellpoint systems (Battlemagic, C&S), with enough Chrome to fit the designers tastes. The chrome is then what people like or dislike (Runemagic being an obvious example): I can't foresee which of the D6 choices you offer that you would take, let alone which particular variation. Any system would either have to make a valiant attempt at the whole range or declare a specific interest. ((This has turned into a general extension of the 'problem with magic systems' essay I started addressing to Plamondon))//re radishes (101) - the classical Greeks had another idea about radishes: they even had a special verb for the insertion of a radish through the anus (a punishment for adultery). It's better, I suppose than the Aztec use of chilli to control their women - those caught looking at other men had chillis rubbed in their eyes. Don't even think about what they did to those actually found to have been unfaithful.

Planetary Temperatures: I've been having a look at these theoretically, since the topic came up a few issues ago.

The simplest model considers the planet to be at a uniform temperature (that is to say that it is perfectly conducting), and balance incoming and outgoing radiation. This is the law that gives

$$T_{avg} = 295 (L^{\frac{1}{4}}/r^{\frac{1}{2}}) \quad \text{where } L \text{ is the star's luminosity where Sun}=1 \\ r \text{ is the planetary orbit radius in AU}$$

The next level of sophistication is to assume that each band of latitude is in equilibrium, but with no interaction between them. The temperature as a function of latitude is then

$$(T/T_{avg}) = (4\cos(\text{lat})/\pi)^{\frac{1}{4}}$$

This factor is equal to 1.06 at the equator, and zero at the poles. A further increase in sophistication can be gained by including planetary inclination and eccentricity of orbit. Let us define terms. Consider a planet with inclination  $I$  moving with period  $T$  in an orbit of eccentricity  $e$  and semi-major axis  $a$ . If we start the year at an equinox, at an angle  $w$  from the periastron (closest approach to the star), then at time  $t$  the star is at longitude



$$L = 2\pi \cdot t/T + 2e \sin(2\pi \cdot t/T - w) \quad (\text{angles in radians}) (*)$$

The effective inclination of the planet is  $i$  where  $\sin(i) = \sin(I)\sin(L)$ , so the aspect factor for temperature is  $Q^2$  where

$$Q = (4/\pi) (\sin q \cdot \cos(\text{lat}) \cdot \cos i + q \sin(\text{lat}) \sin(i))$$

where  $q$  is the illuminated arc, with  $1 + \cos q = \cos(\text{lat} + i) / \cos(\text{lat}) \cos(i)$ ;  $q = \pi/2$  for latitudes above  $90^\circ - i$  and zero below  $i - 90^\circ$ . The shape of the orbit makes a factor of  $R^2$  where

$$R = (1 + e \cdot \cos(L - w)) / (1 - e^2).$$

(\*) assumes the ellipse can be approximated by an off-centre circle, which is a good approximation for  $e$  below 0.25.

Both these however suffer from absolute zero temperature at the pole, where no light falls. For the simple latitude model, the Earth ( $T_{\text{avg}} = 283\text{K}$ ) has

lat	0	30	50	60	83	$T_{\text{avg}}$ is 15C=59F; This model also lacks a Gulf Stream;
K	305	294	271	257	134	I live at 52N, and I rarely have to put up with below
C	32	21	-2	-16	-89	freezing temperatures (no more than 2 months a year have
F	90	69	28	4	-128	any chance of this temperature consistently).

A simple approximation to conduction would be to set

$$-k \frac{d^2 T}{dl^2} + \pi \cdot T^4 = 4T_{\text{avg}}^4 \cos(l) \quad \text{for latitude } l$$

but it needs numerical work to solve;  $k$  here is the conduction rate, which would have to be determined by fitting to the Earth. Trying to put in thermal inertia would make the whole thing hideously complicated - only really for the computer sophisticates out there.

The simple model isn't too bad; the 1.06 factor applied to a planet with insolation 0.65 of Earth's gives an equatorial temperature just above freezing, which is consistent with Dole's criterion for the edge of the ecosphere being both at 0.65 insolation and when 10% of the planet has temperatures above freezing on average; the inner edge (1.35 insolation, 10% planet below 36F) assuming zero inclination gives

$$T_{\text{avg}} = 310\text{K} ; 36\text{F} = 303\text{K} ; \text{latitudes above } 41^\circ \text{ habitable and below } 62^\circ$$

totalling about 25% land area; so our predictions are a bit optimistic in comparison.

The inclined model gives, for  $i=I$ , summer in one hemisphere, winter in the other. Extreme daily temperatures (i.e. mean daily summer and mean daily winter temperatures can thus be derived).. The limits on these are 14-104F.

Highly inclined planets must be closer to be habitable; at  $75^\circ$  the insolation must be 9.3 to 1.9 relative for habitability, and then only marginal (10-20%) habitability results at best compared with 90-ish for earth; the main failing of the model is arctic regions that fall to absolute zero during winter.

And there it can rest. A closing comment for the last five lines:

Simon Cornelius re JTS: I have always been under the impression that rigid armour was essentially custom fitted any-way, certainly for nobles - any D&D type fighter would be able to afford that; chain on the other hand only relies on having shoulderers - women would just need to use a little bandaging to avoid a serious case of jogger's nipple. In other words, the price difference should be minimal.

Lee - re Foster: the best approach to take for those who want such a system is to roll the dice, and only make the calculation if the result is not obvious. This procedure can result in a substantial increase in play ability.

JTS: You get the first 'Nice person of the Month' award for this, for saying nice things about me.// I'm afraid there's very little to add to the Colour magics in the story - the basic setting and the cyclic dominance I stole from the SPI Sorcerer game, with names changed; what one could do with a magic varied by the person - some were better at achieving subtle effects, others in the gross use of power; the colours themselves were related as closely as different scientific disciplines - physics, geology and such, producing a lattice of effects aptitudes vs colour aptitudes. From then on, everything very much went by feel.

Jason Zslk: You get the second 'Nice person of the Month' award. I am beginning to get enough ideas to start writing notes for the next chapter of that story; I just hope you'll like it as much.

Joseph Taller (re Dick): Even a couple of rounds disorientation is usually enough to stop cute tricks with teleport. Of course demon teleport doesn't have that disadvantage. Oh dear!

Nick Larter: flour suspended in air makes a good bang when ignited - enough to be a hazard in mills and grain silos - no need for magic. If you consider producing the same effect from the airborne spores of a yeast or fungus there's another way of reducing the number of arsonists, in the same manner as Fireslind.

Mark Galcotti: Number 3 Nice Guy award coming up . . . An interesting set of ideas, on technomagic. I quite freely admit to not even trying to exhaust all the possibilities in A&E100 - merely severely restrict the discussion to situations in which traditional FRP adventuring could take place. One general point, however, is that the growth in wealth would require either ploughing back into growth, squandering in war, or distributing to the lower classes in order to enable them to consume the products of the society. The third path is the one that has been taken in most of the world today, though number 2 counts for a substantial chunk. Pure number 1 has got to be unstable. But whatever you do, the society does change - the real world industrial revolution could only occur when there were enough people freed from farm labour to work in the cities.

I effectively view magic as a likely catalyst first, and an alternative technology second. Now what would have happened with magic around from 20+kyr ago..?

Neil Fraser: Re me re .... : Ahh - but there didn't seem to be any stars around then either - they got made a few pages later./Jenny Hein - try 'agzakh etc using an overbar and a single note that it means a long vowel.

David Dunham: well, you have now. Another Nice Person award on its way to you.//On immortals - the only insight I can give is the one I gained from playing one in Pete Windsor's Allayne game. In that, there was a definite beginning to things, and the visible signs of slow decay of the mortal world. The two most heavily played characters became honourable, vindictive if cheated, and decreasingly worldly while the munchkins stayed munchkins who couldn't be killed off.

David Flin: Going back to basics, Morgoth went in for industrial pollution in a big way in Angband, although we didn't see enough to judge what he was doing. But yes, it was Saruman who popularized it during the RR.

Harry Robertson: Not only Traveller, but every other SF and modern RPG will cover guns vs swords, (My own favourite is the now unavailable Worlds of Wonder) but what they don't cover is sensible play - the use of the knife and garotte in commando raids, just as in modern warfare would enable some of the evil weaponry to be bypassed or even - horrors - captured for use.//Use up half a line and a / for 6.



//re Gillespie/McGregor - If GW did predate Trav, it was still called 'Metamorphosis Alpha' and lived on a starship.

Denise Gerneth re silithii - the reason that the females are pets, not males is that that was the way Kzinti were built.

Dave Nalle: You should realize by now that I am pro-technology; the essay was just intended to concentrate on one aspect of gaming, and of philosophy. Bluntly put, if people want to use Tolkien as a source, they should try to maintain consistency - this was mainly prompted by some of the extreme garbage being put about by ICE in their ME packs. I would also quibble that technology is not the source of evil in Tolkien, but a symptom, and an easy path, simply because destruction is easy, and technology can most easily be used - by the 2nd law of Thermodynamics - for destruction and other unpleasances. //re Michael Johnson - it has started to cease to surprise me that when you receive negative feedback about your products that you make accusations of carelessness, irrationality or other similar states. I now just accept it as part of your nature, and filter it out. On the specific point of stats determining skill ability, it was the choice of stats for the given skill that were being queried. //Perhaps the PBZ could be fitted in the bottom 2" of your future zines.

David Union: Take another Nice peoples trophy // Nice to see some DQ stuff. I have been told that DQ is reasonably well supported this side of the water. It also means a look in for something other than the well established big names ( and not all of them - where are C&S or Arduin these days ?). I certainly agree about trimming the backfire table, especially with the %likelihood - a beginner fumbles nearly half the time, which isn't just crazy, it's lethal.

Quentin Long: Re Xmas stories - at least the ones I notice - happen each even numbered real-Xmas in the Xmen, which is about the only title which I follow that has any sort of consistency in timekeeping. Of course there's always the problem with the rolling present, such as in Two-in-One 50 where Ben Grimm goes back a rather unspecified number of years (was it 7 or 17 ?). //Marksman should damn well just buy the EB with a limited charges at once modifier, rather than a flat uses per day, taking into account the possibility of getting more ammo at a cost of time ( imagine trying to buy some ammo while the Implausible Thunk is hot on your heels - like in the shop with you. . . )

Scot Fritz: but is that dynamic range necessary? I confess to not being terribly mercenary as a player - all those game points give me no thrill ( I horrified one of the other players in Phil's Traveller game by thinking 5k a head and reasonable expenses a fair deal, while he was going for 50+k and a quater-meg to spend on equipment too). The one time I had experience of such a range of coinage I found it nothing but a pain, and an overblown book-keeping exercise just to get a room for a night at an inn.

In the end every-day expenses must be in everyday coinage - there's no way that a £1000 note is a labour saver when you just want to buy a beer! The primary use of the easily portable high value coin is to make carting around incredible sums a possibility ( amsssing them is different). This is an intriguing discussion. Now what would happen - like what do you mean about 'limiting the desire to advance' - if you set the largest coin value at £1, not £1000? What, as an outsider, would I expect to be different if I kibitized the two possible campaigns? FRP culture shock strikes again!

Niall Shapero: Re Daniel James - Temperature is also important, and so is the action of living things, on the atmosphere. The Earth's atmosphere is thin as the bulk of the CO<sub>2</sub> is currently locked up in chalk. A thick oxygen atmosphere on a low-g world would require an anomalous amount of NCO with respect to heavier elements, and even then, the world would have to be much less dense, so that the top of the atmosphere wasn't too high up in terms of planetary radii ( slower falloff of pressure with altitude for lower g). The most likely candidate would be an early



population I star system, low on, but with some noticeable amount of metals - older than many stars - say 7Gyr, - and entirely lacking in significant amounts of anything much heavier than Al.

re Delgrande: rubbish! The 395K figure is for a disk (radiates thru twice the area with which it absorbs) compared with the figure for a sphere (a ratio of 4:1). Atmosphere does nothing significant. See also the earlier essay section. //ACRETE planets aren't too random - there is a constraint in the interaction between the planet and its neighbours to deal with. I've implemented a simple version of ACRETE on the IBM PC at work (the any machine with 12k free after Basic should do), that includes interpretation of the results on the lines of Dole's Habitable Planets. I've currently decided to try to get MD to publish it, but could be persuaded to other ends.

re Goldberg: Specialized intelligent machines (like specialized intelligent machine building S.I.Ms), I feel, counter that move. (by SIM I mean one that is designed for a limited range of tasks eg farming - a transitional step between the foreseeable expert systems, and a fully aware being) They'd not want to be 'freed' from their only purpose in life. And as far as slavery goes - how free are you or I - having to work for a living is only a diluted form of serfdom. I forget which Greek philosopher pointed out that slavery would last until the looms wove by themselves.

More importantly, the machines could not be consumers in the same sense as the humans for which the economy was geared - the existence of a RICH society depends on the largest possible wealthy consumer class; human slaves would destroy a vital link in the economy. Also, bluntly, no-one would build production line AI unless there was a profit in it, and you'd need production line AI to get the RICH society properly afloat. Finally, human morality has always been fickle enough that machines (not being like us) would be quite acceptable slaves - why else were Africans used as slaves when there was still a plentiful supply of peasants in the Britain of 250 odd years ago?

Wayne Shaw: Upsetting the status quo by accident can be very easy - merely trying to stop the peasants starving by improving their yields will cause that culture to boil over within generations (2-3). Once that sort of thing starts, trying to restore the status quo will not make you popular (genocide and famine). It also looks like that type of culture would sit too heavily on unpredictable adventuresomes. As I've said before, it's the incompatibility of standard adventuring and a stable culture (tried to get over, not the immediate necessity of change in a static (and purpose designed one at that) culture. The adventurer ethos requires a relaxed culture; the rest is human nature.

Oh, I also predicate that without the benefit of hindsight the HUs aren't aware of the spur-to-change that overpopulation was in this world. It's only when you realize 50 years after the event that you've set things in motion that you can't easily stop that there might be atrocities to sustain the old status quo, and even then there'd be a split between the group who didn't think anything was amiss, those who wanted to be drastic, and the group who thought that they might be able to gain a rung or two in the confusion. Now that would be interesting to game in, but things are moving. At this stage there need be no technological innovation by either magical or physical sciences, just the population boom and its effects on the economy, that would result from the obvious Good Thing of eliminating famine years - I mean even Stalin or Torquemada would see an angle for themselves in that. Once magic has been used to aid food production the rest is history. More food, more surviving children, more intensive farm labour more food, until there is surplus population to the needs of agriculture. This produces an increase in the industrial base (ie non-agricultural production). The link in the chain to attack is the first one - magical agriculture. (anyone else can take this comment too).



Paul Waters: Indeed, very little could have propped up (late) Imperial Rome - but what about Rome at the height of the Republic, the n gaining magic ?.

John Sapienza: Misogyny in the UK: The most likely explanation I can see is the pandering to the 12-14 year olds who aren't so likely to buy girlie magazines when they want to see some skin. Gamers also tend not to be the types who actually get real girls at that age either.

I think it was some similar psychological mechanism that tended to make the bulk of our PCs female, even in groups where all or nearly all the players were male, back at Cambridge (3-1 sex ratio, you see, with all the problems that leads to).

Planet Generation: Just before Xmas, an IBM PC was installed in my office, which meant I suddenly had access to a machine that I didn't have to account for the time I spent on it. So, in response to Daniel James' bit in 99, I finally started to put a version of Dole's planet growing program together. The simplified version I've ended up with is about 200 lines of Basic, a quarter of which is interpreting the raw results, and it turns out systems quite like Dole's published ones.

The extra that my program has over his is the ability to take into account different stellar masses. I do this by increasing the scale of the surrounding cloud by the cube root of the mass, and the total mass of the cloud in proportion, preserving the central density. Stars in the 1.5-0.63 range, where we expect to find suitable planets, have systems much like our own, and so generally do smaller stars, although for M type (say 0.4 solar mass or less) there only tends to be one or two rocky worlds inside the gas-giants. For masses 3-5 times the suns (5 is the upper limit for the consistency of the program as it stands), however, the habitable range of temperatures have moved out to between 10 and 25 AU respectively. Here, the vast sweep of the orbits means that - even for a broad range of choices about how the cloud scales with the star - there tend to be gas-giants, and only rarely rocky worlds. In these systems, habitable worlds would have to be moons of gas-giant worlds. For example, a system generated for a star of 5M<sub>☉</sub>,

No.	orbit radius	Mass	Type	Year	Temp(c)	inclination	Sz	gravity
1	7.7	1.1	rocky	9.5	250	9.2	8	10.2m/s <sup>2</sup>
2	10.3	1.9	"	11.8	175	45.5	9	13.3
3	13.9	330	gasgt	23.2	113	6.1	L	30.0
4	26.1	8.6	"	59.7	3	29.2	S	13.0
5	36.8	24.7	"	100.0	-36	43.2	S	16.5
6	50	.05	rocky	157	-70	7.1	3	2.3

with a planet larger than Jupiter closer to the star than the ecosphere. Only planet 4 is in the ecosphere. (Sz is size for Traveller, L=large, S=small gasgiant). Or there's a system for a star of 3 solar masses where planets 1 and 2 are about halfway between Neptune and Saturn in size, 3-5 are rocky, at ~~3.3, 2.8~~ and 1.6 Earths, another Saturn in slot 6, a world at 1.6 Earths, and another Saturn, with the ecosphere containing planets 2-4, planet 3 being the same temperature as Earth. (5M<sub>☉</sub> is type about B5, 3M<sub>☉</sub> about A0, so there's not much need to go higher).

The program also computes sun tides, and estimates the length of the planet's day, but those wouldn't fit on the page, and need more explanation.

Quote of the Month: "In my campaign, . . . the gods used up all the manna which kept them alive." Funny, I thought it was ambrosia that gods ate, and manna was just for handing out to the mortals. . . I'll not embarrass the person responsible further, so will omit to give his name.

Back to planets: Given that Sirius is about 2.4M<sub>☉</sub>, the results of my program would seem to back up Larry Niven's choice of habitable for that system. Now all I need is a mechanism for growing moons, seas and atmospheres (and climates) and I'll have a complete set-up. Pity the state of the art doesn't seem quite that advanced - still, there's always Traveller or Universe, should I ever run some SF.

(The Implausible Think appears courtesy of Phil Masters and is © 1984 to him)

THE MURDERED MASTER MAGE

by George Phillies, 1225 Island Dr. #204, Ann Arbor, MI 48105; (313) 995-4126

Fire in the Morning Part Seven

"Now, Cameron," said Pam, "I need your thumb and right eye." He lurched to his feet, every move driven by a compulsion mesh, his face contorted. He faced the weapons banks. "I've keyed everything in," she continued. "All I need is your body scan to arm the warheads."

"How?" he asked.

(I used your mind. Or did you think you have working screens, you creep?) Her words were singed with hatred.

His hands touched the controls. Status markers began their count-downs. The displays showed the ship's missile batteries, all targeted on Naseby. "You'll kill millions," he whispered. "You'll never get away with this, even if you flee beyond the end of time."

(I? Kill? No,) she answered. (When the Nuzeem spawn, they cleanse the ground where the seed will fall. Those people are dead already.) For an instant he felt her shake with tears for the departed. "I was with each of them," she choked, "as they died. That was the Nuzeem answer, you see." Cameron knew she was very close to tearing him apart.

"We have a few moments before we fire," she went on. "You'll be in stasis, Cameron, where you can't make trouble." She tapped a button.

"I have no choice," she told Mumford. "They've killed everyone on the North Polar Cap and are seeding it. Their next step will be the rest of the planet. The only way to keep them from killing everyone on Naseby is to use force, killing them and their seedlings. Fortunately the ship has enough torpedoes and disruption bombs to do that.

"This, Mumford, is the real difficulty." She waved a small box at him. "The Nuzeem will be dead in twenty minutes, but there's in between to worry about first. When they see the missiles launch, they'll come after us, looking for this box. The ship has psionic control circuits, and this is the master control unit. If the Nuzeem reach it, they'll just abort the attack."

"A good sledge hammer?" suggested Mumford.

"It's got backups, also psionic and equally vulnerable to Nuzeem control. They're scattered the length of the ship. Some are armored. We can't smash all of them, and I can't possibly protect a whole ship from a Nuzeem forest. I'm not sure I can protect anything from even one Nuzeem. Putting the control unit into stasis won't work either--the backups will turn on."

"How do the Nuzeem know what to do? I didn't know the TPC had psionic control circuits for their spaceships, and that's part of my job.

"Cameron," she said. "They dominated him. Enough that they are sure to know how his ship works."

"So, how do we keep them from grabbing it? Cameron said they could get through a ship's screens."

I protect it. You'll be in stasis, and I will be behind the toughest shields I can drive."

"Pam! I saw what Cameron thinks of the Nuzeem. They can turn mechanical screens into cole slaw. You can't--not even you--can hold up against that."

(Now, don't you worry about me. I don't chop up all that easily. Besides, Nuzeem are a whole lot better against machines than against people. Anyway, I have some advantages. This ship has good mechanical screens. We are a long way from Naseby. Now, no more talk.) She touched another button. As temporal precession carried Mumford into stasis, his last words came as "...one class body...." She snorted gently.



Now she had only to face her own thoughts. She was frightened. When the Nuzeem knew that their death was inevitable, they would try for revenge. On her, if they could reach her, and on humanity if she hid away. Even if the ship had no psionic control unit, she told herself, she couldn't have hidden in stasis. She had to stay where she was and give them a target, or she would be responsible for more mass murder below. her mother's murder, in particular. For now, her conscience would be her only company. Mumford's cynical comments about governments brought tears to her eyes.

She sat down, folded her knees against her chest, and waited. The control unit was cradled in her arms. A flurry of indicator lights marked missile firings. The tactical display showed scarlet sparks edging their way towards Naseby. She fingered the sides of the box and waited.

(Cameron,) came a pale voice. (CAMERON. OTHER VERMIN. TRAITOR!) it shouted. The Nuzeem had saturated the ship's psi-barriers. The air around her flickered slightly. The Nuzeem knew the ship and were looking for the way to stop the attack. All they found was inert metal.

(YOU,) came the shout. (You have the control. We can see it. Give it to us. We are the Nuzeem, and we are strong. We are the Nuzeem, and you must obey. Obey, or die.)

She sealed her mind against their ravings, then shivered slightly at the thought of their strength. She had gone around the ship's screens; they were coming straight through them. They said they could see the controls. If they could actually see the master control unit by scanning through her personal shields without her even being aware of it, her resistance was going to be very short. She hoped that they were only tapping a psionic link in the ship's security system.

The Nuzeem attack came as a wave of pressure, the tolling of a great bell lost in ocean's deep, the fire of the newly risen sun. Pam hardened her bubble around herself. For a moment the more jarring sensations faded. Already the pressure was sapping her strength. Three years ago, a single Nuzeem had come close to killing her. Now she faced a forest of them.

She told herself that her age would make a difference; her previous foe had attacked her in ways she couldn't really block at the time. She hoped she was right. So far, they had used only familiar methods: a lot of energy, concentrated on a few bands, without anything beyond brute force. If they tried some of the more exotic psi effects, she could still be in trouble. She could block an attack on any band she had ever encountered, but the side effects from some blocks were almost as bad as the attacks they countered.

The pressure rose more swiftly. She had stood off the great psionic machines of the TPC, but never anything like this. Her screens glowed blue, gently at first, then as brilliantly as if she stood within an enormous uncut sapphire. So far her shields were solid. She began to tremble. Lines of light, each as bright as an electric arc, burned their way across her inner vision. Her body screens were saturating. The Nuzeem couldn't put coherent commands through at her yet, but that moment was approaching. Pam closed her eyes, wishing she could shut out the light. From some place she found further reserves of strength. Then she fell into a maelstrom of fire.

She found herself back in her parents' garden, holding hands with a boyfriend. "Pam," he said, "Pam, don't hide from me." He took her by the waist. "You're beautiful. All of you. Join with me." He moved to kiss her. She felt his mind press against her shields, waiting expectantly for her to lower them so they could share the moment completely. Share the moment. All she had to do was lower her screens and...

"No!" She managed to pull back. A trap! The few fellows she had dated were all non-telepaths. She had never really cared enough for any of them to share minds with them, not when she would have had to do all the work. The illusion shimmered and faded.

[Probably to be concluded nextish]



## SHARDS OF TIME

by Wayne Shaw, 9644 Lundahl Dr., Pico Rivera, CA 90660; (213) 949-4448

As you have noticed, I have given up. Having observed the rotten way my last two zines came out when I did my own stencils, I think I'll just have Lee do them awhile. Appearing about every other month, the cost isn't all that painful.

### COMMENTS ON #102

GOLD: I find your comments about the RQ Skills system a demonstration of tunnel vision. While the skills approach in, say, LoA does make it easier to estimate new skills, I don't see how it makes it any easier to create quick NPCs, as one still has to estimate how much experience over the baseline the NPC has. And there are many of us who don't feel that all skills which do similar sorts of things are as easy to do. For example, there's a difference between using a broadsword and a greatsword.//For what it is worth, RQ III seems to deal with some of your complains as to training and quick NPC generation.

SAPIENZA; I'm afraid that my group pretty much agreed with the Chaosium players, John. After all, you quickly get a feel for what a special (impale) hit is, and how often are you going to roll in the crit/fumble ranges? Our latter-day sheets didn't have spaces for the special results either.//As for Shield Blocks vs Shield Parries, I've heard comments from a couple of people that if people did flat SCA-style blocks with shields in a real battle, they wouldn't have them long. Perhaps some of the SCAers would care to rebut?//Often we wouldn't bother to keep track of total HP. Most of us got so we could judge when we were getting close and would just do some quick addition in our heads when the character took a new wound.

GILLESPIE: The problem I have seen with letting the dynamics of play solve party unity problems is that people start getting into ruts. For example, let me describe two of my otherwise good players. One seems to run almost all his stealth-oriented characters (about 50% of his characters) as compulsive high-graders (that is, people who try to get to the treasure first and pocket any small, highly valuable items). The second, a high-quality player in most respects, is also our most thoroughgoing rulesbender and dicelord. He tends to have one of the most powerful characters in any group. He also tends to view items he has been using for the party welfare as "his" after awhile. These two have caused a third player to start acting like a cavalry paymaster with most of his characters.

And these are all good players. They illustrate my biggest objection to playing characters with goals significantly cross-purposed from the party: it seems to start producing cycles of stereotyping behavior. After awhile, most people seem to feel the other side is being unreasonable in running the same kind of characters. I've seen this get into some really unpleasant vicious circles in two or three groups.

Now the proper answer is that all of this is an example of bad roleplaying, and of course it is. But it seems to be a process which leads to this sort of thing entirely too often for my taste. It can also slop over. The high-grading player got into his habits while playing D&D with examples of rampant munchkinism and has had trouble breaking it. And the paymaster player has gotten so he has been burned so many times that he reacts that way even around players who don't do this sort of thing as a matter of course.

I admit that where I am coming from, the private adventure looks terribly impractical. The only time I have done much in this direction was with people I could get hold of outside our normal gaming period.

KEYES: Very interesting. A long time ago, my ex-roommate Roger Land, Charlie Luce and I sat down and broke down characteristics into what we considered the ultimate set. There were about 28 of them, and many of the ones you include were on the list.



UNION: I am afraid I am a bit at sea as to your comment to DAVID WEBB. POW is only a minor modifier on any of the RQ skills. A high INT has much more extensive effects. What is wrong with the idea that someone with a very strong spirit is going to have a slight edge?

GILHAM: With a little imagination, any number of explanations can be devised to get around the self-replicating probe idea. Defective probes, stellar governments with laws against that sort of thing, even basic paranoia (do you really want to invite the neighbors into your home without checking them out first?).

CORNELIUS: Even given that your comments were mainly made as a joke, I think you overlook the fact that until relatively recently most armor was probably custom-fitted. Given a culture where females buy armor often enough the armorers know how to make it, this is not going to produce a noticeable price difference.

LONG: The biggest thing that point balance in Champions does is to prevent continuing point inflation. Even a collection of players who are all roleplaying well can get into a "who is the biggest kid on the block" shtick. At a certain point, paying vigorous attention to the disabilities can forestall this.

#### COMMENTS ON #103

GILHAM: Have you considered the amount of nuisance continually doing damage to your surroundings really is?//But you did miss the note that states that Hero Points acquired by Power Disadvantages cannot exceed (Cost of the Power -1).//An interesting discussion of the question of death in a RPG campaign. I value the strong adrenal rush I get from life-or-death situations, which creates some problems in low death campaigns. Usually the only deaths in such campaigns come from people who have screwed up thoroughly. Given that I am confident of my own tactical abilities--and those of most of my characters--these just produce a situation where smart characters are obviously the winning way. I'm not saying that smart characters should not have an edge--but in both the real world and most fiction, the smart sometimes die, while the stupid but lucky sometimes live. It's all a matter of taste, but one which can cause real problems if you have people with opposite tendencies in the same campaign.

PIXLEY: It's nice to see someone else who does Aftermath stuff. If I have room, I may do some of my odds and ends at the end of this.//The administrators of the Giant Amazon project must have been out of their minds! Such obvious Homo Superior types wouldn't be safe to have around even as freemartins. Improving humanity should either be done globally or selectively. The latter might be immoral, but at least it would be relatively safe.

WOOLLEY: 1) People who write rules from which they expect to make money often modify their own prejudices and consult others who can fill in missing information. People doing house rules rarely do so. 2) This is both an appallingly common and appallingly stupid attitude. There is not an unlimited supply of either quality GMs or players in the world, and anyone who refuses to compromise deserves to discover this the hard way. 3) An otherwise good GM is quite capable of bad decisions. Overly freeform rules merely eliminate checks and balances on him.

MASTERS: Your observations on The Hobby amused me quite a bit. Having been long what is sometimes referred to as a fringe fan in US SF parlance, I had occasionally made much the same sorts of observations about them. I like many as individuals but they rather aggravate me as a group. Comic fans are even worse.

LONG: Astral Projection does not take your body along. Moreover, virtually every user of the power I have seen seems able to use at least mental attacks.//



Clairvoyance can be done as N-ray Vision and Telescopic with a point of view limit but still looks a little strange.//I've seen George's Splitting. In its current form, a character using it to produce more than two duplicates isn't worth the power to blow him away relative to other characters with comparable active points. //Cosmetic Shapechange should be a Power, not a Skill--and allow you to do things you can't with Disguise.//Actually, according to George, Combining is unnecessary, unless you insist on also being able to use the powers independently.

Since I said I was probably going to do so, here is:  
AFTERMATH MISCELLANIA

My campaign was primarily the consequence of a bioagent containment accident. One bioagent had a very strong mutagenic effect on anthropoids and some arthropods. One of these effects produced some rather bizarre giant ants, otherwise known as:

THEM

BAP	15	Bite BCS:	14	Bite WDM:	2 L
MNA	3	Damage Die:	2D6		
PCA	5				
BMA	1				
AV	8				
WDA	2				
CDA	2				
DRT	(2D10+10)x4	Mass:	50		
SF	30				

These creatures behave much like many scavengers. They love large abandoned man-made structures (e.g. shopping malls). However, when queen hatching time arrives, part of the nest will take off with the new queen like some bees, rather than following the usual ant pattern.

One of the most bizarre communities encountered was a group known as, well, uh...

THE BLUE OYSTER CULT (size: 800)

MILITARY STRENGTH: 80; 5 ME-262 jet fighters

RESOURCES: Numerous ground, water, and air vehicles in good working order. Also have stocks of food and luxuries. Go out of their way to induct psionic Changes. Have some supplies of the drug called PSI.

TRADE: Will trade luxuries, food fuel or vehicles. Give 1.8 value for ammo and 1.3 value for weapons. Will buy slaves.

GENERAL REACTION: -20

BACKGROUND: Started by a group of half-crazed psychedelic experimenters convinced that the musical group had some "hidden knowledge." Now operating as sort of a half-baked Illuminati.

The Cult has developed an artificial psionic booster drug called PSI. They extract the its basic ingredient from reasonably fresh human pineal glands. It temporarily activates one psionic function on a normal with a strength of 4D10 (if he does not have an appropriate talent, this will do him no good) or adds 4D10 to the abilities of a functional psionic. Unfortunately it also acts as a hallucinogen if the taker does not make a WL CST. It lasts 4D3 hours per dose.

The individuals who collect these "third eyes" for the Cult and generally do their dirty work are known as Harvesters of Eyes. They dress rather bizarrely; they are armed with two sai and an odd weapon called the Harvestman machine pistol. They wear a full 30 locations of mesh armorplast and are Superior-Veterans.

The Harvestman machine pistol's properties are:

BBL: SNUB//Action: AL-AB//MAG: Box 18//DUR: 1//ENC: 0.21

Ammo: 5 mm. Magnum, normally hallucinogen-tipped.

The hallucinogen can be treated as a poison with the following formula:

S-N-WT, WL-1 combat turn -3-½ combat turn-None.



When doing search situations, I ran into about five environments which did not seem to be adequately dealt with. So I did my own chart for them.

<u>Class of Find</u>	<u>Educational</u>	<u>Military</u>	<u>Government</u>	<u>Medical</u>	<u>Recreational</u>
Food	01-05	01-10	01-10	01-15	01-15
Luxuries	06-10	11-15	11-20	16-20	16-35
Weapons	11-20	16-30	21-30	21-25	36-45
Fuel/Power	21-30	31-40	31-40	26-30	46-50
Clothes/Armor	31-35	41-55	41-45	31-35	51-55
Tools/Kits	36-45	56-60	46-50	36-45	56-60
Medicine	46-55	61-65	51-60	46-65	61-70
Data/Communication	56-70	66-70	61-75	66-75	71-75
Transport	71-75	71-80	76-90	76-85	76-85
Environment	76-85	81-90	91-95	86-95	86-90
Survival	86-00	91-00	96-00	96-00	91-00

Utility Modifiers: Military +1; Recreational -1; all others +0.

Task Point Constants: Education 3D6; Military 3D6; Government 1D10;  
 Medical 1D6; Recreational 1D10

Vehicles are an important part of the campaign group's resources, so perhaps a couple of their finds would be appropriate.

AH-1S HUEYCOBRA      Classification: Combat Aircraft, Soft Target  
 Fuel System: Aviation Fuel      Capacity: 814 liters  
 Mileage: 1.05 km/liter      Maximum Speed: 259 kph  
 Structure: 3      Area: 14 x2 = 28  
 Damage Resistance: 42      Safety Devices: crash harness  
 Barrier Value: Window = 15; Body = 20  
 Capacity: 1 (pilot)  
 Notes: Armed with a 20 mm. Vulcan autocannon (1000 rounds); 8 TOW;  
 and 7-19 light rockets (VDG 10)

PASSENGER HOVERCRAFT      Classification: Off-road Hovercraft; Soft Target  
 Fuel System: Hydride      Capacity: 250 charges  
 Mileage: 1.8 km/charge      Base Safe Speed: 160 kph  
 Damage Resistance: 12      Maximum Speed: 80 kph  
 Structure: 2      Area: 3x4 = 12  
 Safety Devices: Safety harnesses      Barrier Notes: Windows 10; Body 30  
 Special Features: 8 man capacity - or driver and encumbrance up to 70/Huge 1

Well, I believe I will leave it at that, as I can see the Chaos beyond starting to show through this Shard. So, until next time.

%%%

AND SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT (...from Dave Flin)

Following a number of complaints that random rolling of attributes of characters can lead to the player being stuck with a hateful PC, here is my preference. Roll the dice for a stat, then allocate it to the attribute you prefer. Repeat. If a specific set of attributes is desired, it can usually be obtained, but there is a random element.

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## FRP : The Fifth Generation

It's in the air. Been there for some time too. Meta-rules and rules primitives, LISP-like magic and FORTH-like gaming systems. Where is all this leading us? To extend the metaphor, roleplaying games are leaving Pascal behind and entering an actor-oriented paradigm. Goodbye number crunching and hello AI!

"Not that AI junk again!" I hear you mutter in disgust. Well, you're right... that stuff will wait until next time. Instead, I wish to take a look at the future by expanding on the present. So this time I will be presenting a brief look at the "state-of-the-art" in FRPGs - Lee Gold's LANDS OF ADVENTURE. Of course, my comments are based on a playtest draft of the game that Lee was kind enough to send me rather than the game as it appears in its final form. And, of course, since I will be looking beyond LoA to the future, it is quite possible that I will not cover some areas of the game, and underplay other areas which, while good in and of themselves, do not quite match my personal vision of the game of the future. Please keep this in mind as you read on -- it is definitely unfair to compare an actual game to one that only exists as a vision of what might be...and I would not do so if I was not certain that LoA can stand sturdily on its own merits. { Indeed, at the moment it is the only system I have interest in GMing. } What follows is first an attempt to skip a generation in game design, and only secondarily a look at LoA (because it is the game that inspired the view that I express herein.)

## GENESIS

In the begining was D&D, the first generation. It is characterized by grab bag, catch-all systems for simulating a limited number of human abilities in a very limited "world" domain. For the former we are given a few characteristics and character classes, and for the latter a few encounter tables that differ (just a bit) depending on "terrain" (for which one should read "level".) All the world's

a dungeon, and all NPCs in it merely monsters.

And D&D begat C&S, and there was wonderment among the players. C&S attempted (and often succeeded) to correct the flaws of the first generation. Thus the formula EP = KILLING + GOLD of the first generation is replaced by the better EP = APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES : Fighters fight, Mages cast spells, etc. And systems are introduced for such things as castles and towns, feudal economics, etc. The world of the campaign does become a world rather than a place to rest between dungeon runs. While welcome, many of the changes introduced fail to address the cause of the flaws they they correct -- the grab bag approach of discrete rules for each and every discrete situation.

And C&S begat RQ!, and cries of joy were heard to echo throughout the land. The underlying structure of the rules are addressed by the changes introduced by the third generation of games. Instead of the character class (with its collection of related abilities advancing quantumly all at the same time) as the basic human structure, we are given individual skills and spells which must be learned individually. Rule systems used by the game are more structured and interrelated than in games of the previous generations ( %ile rolls to decide many different things, catagories of skill types, cults; all are examples of this. )

And RQ! begat...nothing! Weeks passed into months and months into years and no innovative games appeared. Until now, when we have reached the next generaion of games with LANDS OF ADVENTURE! Like RQ!, LoA is a skill based game. Unlike RQ! though, LoA presents its skill system as infinite in game terms, rather than infinite in theory. Let me explain this - in RQ! skills are infinite, except that a small sub-set of those skills are presented as standard to the game. Because of this presentation, the use of non-standard skills is all but prohibited; if a cult requires a certain set of skills,



and if another set has survival value, if the standard skills are tied even more closely to the game by being expressly defined in the rules and set down on the standard character sheet, then given that one can only learn so many skills in a finite time it should be obvious that for all intents and purposes we have a finite skill system. In LoA there are very few standard skills; indeed, the only one that I can think of is WALK SURELY. In presenting the various types of skills, Lee has also made sure to call attention to the fact that the possible skills are infinite, and that the suggested skills are suggestions, not standards -- indeed, few if any of the suggested skills are treated separately or defined in specific game terms. And while I have no proof that Lee ever thought in the terms I am going to suggest, I ask you to consider the way in which the skill categories are handled by the two games. In RQ! the skill categories seem to me to be an umbrella covering certain types of skills, whereas the categories in LoA -- though often the same in name, seem to me to have been built up from the skills beneath them. I'm not at all sure that I can pinpoint a reason for this feeling -- indeed, given that the categories in RQ! only provide a small bonus to the skills that fall under them, while in LoA the categories provide a much larger share of the skill %age { providing all of the skill %age for the vast majority of the infinite skills }, one can make a case for the exact opposite being true. I suspect that the feeling stems from the way in which the two games handle simultaneous skill usage - RQ! not at all {the skills are discrete entities} and LoA by a very elegant system taking into account the number of skills involved and the degree of difficulty of each skill. When skills are discrete and few they seem to be under a "master" skill; when skills are many and work together, they seem to join together to form the category.

"Wait just a minute there! This sounds as if LoA is less structured than RQ! So

how come you're calling it a 4th generation game, howcome howcome howcome?" You may well be right...LoA is less structured than RQ..on the surface....But... who says that structure is what determines a new game generation? Let me digress for a moment and try another tack.

## EXODUS

4th (and 5th) generation games do not appear from nowhere; they arrive as the result of a long road that has been travelled, with much travail. New games grow out of old ones, and the earlier games, perhaps because of their very all-inclusive nature, will often have a feature or two which point ahead to the next generation of games. Let us look at a few of these features from earlier games and see if they lead us anywhere.

Let us start with C&S, and one of its most admired features, the magic system. In particular I would like to mention two things. First, note that while C&S has many discrete spells (many more than D&D, for example) it divides its magic system into smaller units by having specialized mages. Second (and more important), C&S has Basic Magic, where the very spells are made up of elements that can be combined and recombined into many and varied types of magical effects.

Now a brief stop at RQ cults. As we all know, there are no character classes in RQ..but gosh, don't the cults achieve a similar effect by their recombining of low-level elements (skills) into higher level structures?

And look over here, it's Champions! { And my apologies for giving short shrift to Champs in the LoA intro earlier. I feel that it was the one innovative game released between RQ! and LoA; the trouble is, it's a 3.5 generation game! } If one subscribes, as I do, to the views of a certain LONG-time A&E writer in regards to Champs, one finds that from the powers that exist in the game, one can simulate almost any other power that is desired.

So much for our whirlwind tour - where have we gotten? If we look at the above we find that they seem to share one thing in common, what I call the ATOMIC THEORY. Instead of "Wall of Fire" we have FIRE + FORM(Wall); instead of fixed (and limited in number) character classes we have 2 WEAPONS + 2 KNOWLEDGE + 1 OBSERVATION; instead of having the Hulk we have STR + ARMOR + JUMPING/FLYING. High-level game structures are created from lower-level game elements, which can be recombined at will to create new and different structures.

Which brings us back to LoA. The LoA magic system uses this approach (probably inspired by Lee's previous work on LRS and its C&S descended magic), with four types of spells and various factors controlling area, intensity, duration, and range, which can be combined to form various kinds of spells. LoA also has a special movement skill option, the MOVEMENT ATTACK SYSTEMS, which allows one to combine various types of movement attacks into one attack skill (thus allowing the creation of made to order martial arts, as an example). It is the presence of such systems in LoA, and the fact that the philosophy of design apparent in such systems lies beneath the entire game design, that makes LoA a 4th generation game. Nowhere is this philosophy more apparent than in Lee's concept of the Culture Pack. Not the CP itself; many other systems -- RQ! perhaps the foremost with Griffin Mountain and Trollpack -- have done Culture Packs before this. It's the way that the Culture Pack has been implemented. There has been much talk of non-specific gaming systems in the past, but prior to LoA all systems have been of two types: those that have some basic cultural assumptions but forced GMs to do much of the work of creating a culture by themselves (D&D for example, where there is a definite "medieval" feel to the game even in the old boxed set, though a medieval culture as such is not presented with the rules), and those that come with a culture built into the rules (C&S and

RQ! are the primary examples here). While not entirely free of basic assumptions in the rules (no firearms, for example), LoA is the only game where these assumptions have been deliberately kept to minimum and the Culture Pack has been conceived from the beginning as an integral part of the game. By this device, the LoA rules themselves can concentrate on the lower-level aspects of the game, with the Culture Packs providing the higher level structures. (It is of some interest to note that the Chaosium designers were not content to sit still, but have moved in this direction as well with RQ3.)

While LoA is a 4th generation game, it is not a perfect example of one. The "clerical" system, for example, offers much less in the way of "Atomic" systems than the combat or magic systems do, and the drafts of the Culture Packs that I have seen offer a bit less in structure than I would like to see (of course, in trying to stick to the facts of historical cultures - rather than just the feel of a culture - the structures that Lee can use are limited). But despite the holdover of some past generation systems, I believe that within LoA, a 4th generation game, it is possible to discern the seeds of what the Fifth Generation of games will be like.

#### REVELATIONS

LoA has STP and HT as stats, and it is in the relationship between these that we get a glimpse of how the 4th generation will evolve into the 5th. Lee uses WT and STR to derive another statistic, FREE LOAD, which is used to determine the ENC that the character can carry, as well as the amount of force that the character can exert in pushing things.

In past games (such as C&S) we have seen one more stats used to derive still further stats. In other games we have seen stats have direct effect on game actions (such as the D&D ability to bend bars). But it has been somewhat rare to see the two of them combined, and rarer



still to see them produce a simple system for giving direct simulations of effects rather than arbitrary die rolls. Rare, but it did happen. The revolutionary thing occurs when you look at such a system in the context of a 4th generation game.

We have seen how the 4th generation takes low-level systems and combines to form high-level structures. The 5th generation does exactly the same thing, except that it does it with a vengeance. The Fifth Generation game will not rely on the tools of past generations, such as skills. Instead, it will try to create tools of its own out of elements formed at the lowest level possible/practical. To postulate what some of these elements might be, perhaps we should all pause for a moment, dig out A&E 102, and reread BILL KEYES' 'zine in that issue. Go on, I'll be right here when you finish.

Back so soon! Who's reading this anyway, Evelyn Wood? Well.... In describing how best to go about simulating reality ( by using specific, low-level details -- for all of you who've managed to misplace 102 for awhile ) Bill is discussing not the 4th generation that he suggests, but the 5th generation of games. By the use of low-level "primitives" taken from reality a better picture of reality can be developed. I'm not quite sure that Bill's is the way that I would go about it however; so I think that a more concrete example of what we have been discussing might be appropriate.

Let us start at the physical level, by asking : Who is a better athlete, a world class weight lifter or a world class gymnast? I'm not at all sure that I know which is better, but I do know that they are quite different from each other. One tries to generate more strength than flexibility while the other has to make a compromise between the two. Certainly the body of the weight lifter, even when both weigh the same and are the same height, will developed differently than the gymnast's. And if one is trying to

maximize strength or maximize flexibility the difference will be much greater. What we need, then, are to create low-level stats with which we can describe this physical difference, as well as such things as the speed of a sprinter vs. the stamina of a marathoner. And, of equal if not greater importance, to link these low-level stats in such a way that compromises such as those of the gymnast, will occur in the game as well. If you go for the "human tank" you take away from the "swashbuckler"; just because you can run fast over a short distance does not mean that you can last for 26 miles. We must be able to describe such differences at the low level in such a way that they do not give invalid results on the higher levels.

But low-level primitives do not apply to physical abilities only. What is a skill? Let us consider MOVE QUIETLY as an example. It is certainly a movement skill, as the name suggests. But is the physical movement the only element in the skill? Is it movement which tells you not to step on a dry twig; is it movement which allows you to see the dry twig in the first place? Or consider a communication skill such as STORYTELLING. You need to know the story you are going to tell, of course. But how about those subtle changes in voice and stance during the climax that make your version of the story so much more effective? While there are exceptions, most skills are composed of elements of knowledge combined with elements of physical ability and/or combined with elements of perception. In this sense, a skill is a higher-level structure formed from various low-level primitives. Perhaps the major benefit from this is the ability to construct a truly infinite amount of skills by the various combinations of the primitives.

Few would argue that the system is without benefits, but most would say that it is filled with problems as well. They would certainly be right. On the one hand the designer must beware of getting

bogged down with the low-level structures of the game. One could conceivably continue to develop lower and lower levels of primitives until there are simply too many to handle. The designer must decide at what point the complexity of the system overrides the power that it offers. Does one really need a separate stat for eye-color, for example? A case can be made that, at some point (perhaps in dealing with the natives of Barlaka, where eye-color is not only an important indicator of social status but reveals the type of psi ability one has inherited as well) one might need such a stat. But instead of placing it in the basic game design, one should provide the tools and interfaces so that eye-color -- or any other stat -- can be added easily to the game when needed. On the other hand, while "primitives" are powerful, they are also much more complex to use. The Fifth Generation game must hide such complexity behind the higher structures that it creates from the primitives. Ideally, to its players, the 5th generation game should appear very little different than a 3rd generation game. As well, to the "lazy" GM that lurks in the dark corners of us all (the one that whispers how much easier it would be to buy a scenario pack, or to just use the rules "as is" rather than change that one little piece of the combat system that has been bugging you), the 5th generation game should be about as easy to use as LoA or any other 4th generation game that should appear in the future. In other words, when you take the game and a Culture Pack out of a box you should be able to play it "as is", just as you would do with a 3rd or 4th generation game. { The one possible exception to this -- and it is not much of an exception -- is in the area of initial character creation. I expect that, despite the best efforts that will be made by game designers, character creation will continue to slow down. But, like anything else, you get back in proportion to what you put in. And, if there is one area that computers are very helpful, it is in rolling up characters. } To the

average user, the 5th generation game will appear not so very different from what has gone before. It is only when the advanced user, the type who does create his or her own scenarios and can't resist making that one modification which would make the game better (in other words, the typical A&E'er), wishes to take advantage of its powerful features that the 5th generation game will shine. Why? Let me return to the metaphor I opened with.

The generations of games are like computer languages. D&D is BASIC, it is fairly easy to use and gets the simpler, game-related jobs done. C&S is like PL1 (and AD&D is like ADA): to achieve more powerful tasks, such as modeling a world and/or running a campaign features have been added. They do not always perform as one might expect, and a few may be redundant, but they allow one to do powerful things. RQ! is Pascal - highly structured, more unified, easier to put down for a few months and come back to later. Not quite as powerful in processing, but still capable of nice things.

But these languages (and these games) have a certain outlook in common. They are procedural languages -- one hands over a job to a certain section of the program (game) and that section works on it a while before handing it back to you. So when you enter combat you move to the combat system, if someone wishes to cast a spell you turn to the magic system. The trouble does not lie in the separation of these procedures (because separation is often desirable) but in the way the procedures perform. The data used and the procedures that manipulates the data are treated as if they are independent of each other, when in fact they are not. This is harmless in isolation -- we don't really care how an accepted/implemented combat system works as long as it does the job (such as making sure HP are deducted if someone is wounded.) But...it is a very poor metaphor to have as the underlying philosophy of the game, because it makes the testing of changes to extend/improve the system much harder.



And it makes the larger system of the game more complex, and much harder to re-integrate changed systems back into, as well. But to me, the most destructive aspect of this metaphor is that it misrepresents the true nature of the game, since most of the situations that one should come across during the game are situations that involve role-playing, not combat; the passing of information, rather than direct effects. Instead of a procedure-oriented paradigm, we need one that is actor-oriented (or object-oriented), which involves the sending of messages between actors. This is what we begin to find in LoA, and what we will find even more in Fifth Generation games. After all, the basic activity of the game is not passing back-and-forth character sheets with the GM; it is communication. Once this paradigm is established, procedures take their proper place as a means of grouping related actions/information, rather than just a means of generating effects. The primitives can thus be seen as a means of providing the essential information needed by the higher structures of the game. And the integrated nature of such systems that the primitives present (since the primitives themselves are used to create the higher structures) makes fine tuning by the user much easier, more direct, and more powerful. { But it is not just the existence of such primitives that will create this paradigm; it requires the designer to establish it in the higher-level structures as well. }

I seem to recall hearing somewhere that from some amazingly small number of LISP primitive functions -- CAR, CDR, CONS, COND, and NULL come to mind, though surely EQ, ATOM, and LAMBDA must have been included as well -- one could create every other function available in LISP. I'm not sure that this is true, but it is probably not much of an exaggeration. If the 5th generation game achieves half the power of LISP it should be something. And I believe that it will be.

To end this discussion I will borrow from

an article by Daniel H. H. Ingalls in the Aug. '81 issue BYTE, in which he writes about the design principals behind the Smalltalk-80 language :

"PERSONAL MASTERY : If a system is to serve the creative spirit, it must be extremely comprehensible to a single individual...Any barrier that exists between the user and some part of the system will eventually be a barrier to creative expression. Any part of the system that cannot be changed or that is not sufficiently general is a likely source of impediment. ...We can thus infer a general principle of GOOD DESIGN : A system should be built with a minimum set of unchangeable parts; those parts should be as general as possible; and all the parts of the system should be held in a uniform framework."

"UNIFORM METAPHOR : A language [or a game] should be designed around a powerful metaphor that can be uniformly applied in all areas. Examples of success in this area include LISP, which is built on the model of linked structures; APL, which is built on the model of arrays; and Smalltalk, which is built on the model of communicating objects. In each case, large applications are viewed in the same way as the fundamental units from which the system is built."

"CLASSIFICATION : A language [ or game ] must provide a means for classifying similar objects, and for adding new classes of objects on equal footing with the kernal classes of the system."

These are the principles which will be used in designing the Fifth Generation FRPG. It is to Lee's credit that many of them already seem to have been followed in the design of her 4th generation game LANDS OF ADVENTURE.

Approx. 4200 words.

LANDS OF ADVENTURE CHARACTER SHEET -- #13 -- BAUER (based on GOLI)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Species \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Handedness \_\_\_\_\_

CRF \_\_\_\_\_ TAL \_\_\_\_\_ APP \_\_\_\_\_ STR \_\_\_\_\_ INT \_\_\_\_\_ HT \_\_\_\_\_  
 DEX \_\_\_\_\_ VCE \_\_\_\_\_ AGY \_\_\_\_\_ CON \_\_\_\_\_ PRE \_\_\_\_\_ WT \_\_\_\_\_

NON-COMBAT SPECIALIZED SKILLS:

Profession \_\_\_\_\_

MAN = \_\_\_\_\_ % COM = \_\_\_\_\_ % ROV = \_\_\_\_\_ % PER = \_\_\_\_\_ % ORG = \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

PIETY \_\_\_\_\_ MIR = \_\_\_\_\_ % INVOG = \_\_\_\_\_ % Culture/Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

MAG = \_\_\_\_\_ % COUNTERSPELL = \_\_\_\_\_ % BASE SPELL RESIST.: Conscious \_\_\_\_\_ Unconscious \_\_\_\_\_

Spell Intensity Modifiers: COMPULSION \_\_\_\_\_ ENERGY \_\_\_\_\_ ENHANCEMENT \_\_\_\_\_ ILLUSION \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIALIZED SPELL SKILLS:	TYPE	PL	AREA	DURATION	INTENSITY	RANGE	BACKLASH	UNITS
_____								
_____								
_____								
_____								

SPECIALIZED COMBAT SKILLS: REL = \_\_\_\_\_ % MIS = \_\_\_\_\_ % CATGY.: LT \_\_\_\_\_ MED \_\_\_\_\_ HOD \_\_\_\_\_ HUY \_\_\_\_\_

WEAPON	TYPE	HIT %	CRITICAL	FUMBLE	BASH	WT	DAMAGE	RANGE	MIS. EFCY
_____									
_____									
_____									
_____									

BASIC HP: \_\_\_\_\_ USUAL HP: \_\_\_\_\_ MAX. ENCUM \_\_\_\_\_ MOVEMENT PER ROUND: \_\_\_\_\_  
 RESIST./LEG \_\_\_\_\_ Incidental \_\_\_\_\_  
 EP \_\_\_\_\_ EP \_\_\_\_\_ FREE LOAD \_\_\_\_\_ Walk \_\_\_\_\_ WALK SURELY = \_\_\_\_\_  
 BP \_\_\_\_\_ BP \_\_\_\_\_ USUAL LOAD \_\_\_\_\_ Run \_\_\_\_\_  
 LP \_\_\_\_\_ LP \_\_\_\_\_ effects \_\_\_\_\_ Sprint \_\_\_\_\_ Sprint EP Cost \_\_\_\_\_

USUAL ARMOR effects \_\_\_\_\_ USUAL SHIELD effects \_\_\_\_\_ PARRYING WEAPON \_\_\_\_\_

MAGIC ITEMS \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER POSSESSIONS \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

ADNEY: at home \_\_\_\_\_ Other Information \_\_\_\_\_

CAPPTed \_\_\_\_\_  
 income \_\_\_\_\_  
 expenses \_\_\_\_\_



VÄRDSHuset 'D' DSSTÖTEN' is the fourth in a zine series by (copyright):  
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This Värdsbus is being typed on a self-repaired typewriter, which goes boing! everytime I strike the keys. I shall therefore give only a short review of the wound system I use in my system. This review is dedicated to John T. Sapienza whose essay on 'hit-point-less combat' first set my brain churning.

In a previous zine (Tvehövdingen) I explained a little about the fatigue system I use. The wounding system is connected to fatigue so let's hope everyone has a copy of whatever issue that appears in. I also described the dice roll used in combat, 5D6 is rolled, of which 3D6 is a skill-roll and 2D6 is the Wound Effects Roll. This 2D6 is rolled with different colored dice, which are also distinguishable from each other. 1D6 is called the Wound Roll and concerns the seriousness of the wound, the other die is called the Effects Roll and has to do with the time required for healing, as well as being a measure of the energy behind the blow.

In order to make the notes on the chart more understandable I should point out that, on the character sheet, the characteristics are written out as a line of numbers. That is, the first two characteristics of a character with bF 9 ST 8 AG 5 DX 3 AL 7 IN 12 AP 4 look like:

bF 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
ST 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

WOUND CHART-2D6 differentiated as 1D6 WR, 1D6 ER

Adjusted WR=

less than 0- no wounds check for stun, knockdown if  $ER \geq ST + 4$   
'0' 0 or 1 - fatigue wounds check for stun, knockdown if  $ER \geq ST + 2$   
'/' 2 through 4- characteristic wounds chk stun, knockdown if  $ER \geq ST$   
'X' 5 through 7- disabling wounds stunned, check for knockdown  
'X' 8 through 10- mortal wounds stunned, check for knockdown  
Eleven+ DEAD DEAD DEAD DEAD

#### NOTES:

##### Wound Roll Modifiers

1. For aiming, +1/sek
2. Armor and shield
3. 1/2 attackers Rank
4. Wide open +2
5. Surprise +3
6. Critical Hits

##### Effects Roll Modifiers

1. As on Weapons Chart (under WR)
2. -1 each 2 ST under 10
3. +1 each 2 ST over 14
4. For all out attack,  $+ST / (Ht/Wt) \times$ 
  - a. 1 if using 2-hand weapon
  - b. 1/2 if using 1-hand weapon

STUN- save against  $(AL+AP)/2$ . Failure is punished by the character being 'wide open', that is, unable to defend actively or move at a gait faster than walk. Further, any action the character takes happens after all other actions in that second.

KNOCKDOWN- save against  $ST / (Ht/Wt) + AG$ . Failure results in the character falling. A fallen character uses 1/2 adj. AG when figuring any skill-base or pseudo-rank based on AG (of course). Any character which falls must roll 3D6 against DX to avoid dropping one weapon.

ALTERNATE DEATH-UNCONSCIOUSNESS- Each time a characteristic is forced to zero the GM rolls 1D6 against the number of zeroed characteristics. A roll less than this number means that the character is unconscious or dead. If a majority of the zeroed characteristics are caused by fatigue or character wounds then the character is considered to be unconscious, otherwise, dead.

An unconscious character 'rests' Fatigue points and Fatigue Wounds at the rate of +1/round, not +1/characteristic/round. Each time a characteristic is raised from zero (by resting or healing) the GM rolls 1D6 against the number of non-zeroed characteristics. A roll less than that number means that the character has regained consciousness.

#### BOOKKEEPING Fatigue and Characteristic wounds

The Effect Roll total is counted off starting from bF, at a rate of 1 effect point per characteristic, through the characteristics in order. If there are effect points left over after a point has been counted off from AP, then the player begins again at bF. Fatigue wounds are marked off just as Fatigue Points are (note: excepting for bF, see Fatigue rules), with a circle around the highest non-marked number on the characteristic numberline. Characteristic wounds are marked off the highest non-marked or circle-marked number (whichever is highest), with a slash /. If a circle is marked over then the player must circle the first non-marked number below. 'Below' can refer to the next characteristics in order. Fatigue wounds are rested back at the rate of +1/characteristic/round resting. Characteristic wounds are healed at the rate of +1/day, starting with AP. AP must be healed before IN can be, and so on (note: characters heal 'backwards'). Stuns last 1D3 seconds.

#### Disabling and Mortal wounds

These wounds cause bF to be marked to zero with Fatigue Wounds. Both ST and AG are reduced with one-half of the effects total, the remaining half is counted off starting from DX. These wounds are marked with an X on the highest non-X-marked number available on the number line. If a slash is marked over then the slash must be re-marked on the first available number in that number line. If no number is available then that is that. If a circle is marked over because of a disabling or mortal wound, nothing is done. Disabling wounds cause an automatic stun for 1D6 seconds, mortal wounds, 1D6 rounds. Disabling wounds cause death if not treated within 1D6 hours, mortal wounds, 1D6 squared minutes. The GM divides the time to death (in minutes) by the total of the characteristics minus the total of X's. The time interval found is used to simulate blood loss. At the end of each time interval, unless the character has been successfully treated, the player must mark an X over an available number on a number line, starting with ST as the first characteristic to be so marked. If a number line has already been zeroed then that time interval's X is applied to the next available and so on. The Alternate Death and Unconsciousness rules apply. After treatment, disabled or mortally wounded characters may 'rest' any Fatigue at normal rates, and they begin to heal at +1/week, (subject to relapse or even death, rolled for as per the disease rules). As with Fatigue and Characteristic wounds healing is done backwards.

And that is that. All comments are welcome, even from folks who hate 3D6 skill rolls. The idea behind this system is that all skill-bases are figured from the adjusted characteristics. A wounded (or fatigued) character performs less well, and because the ER is counted off starting from bF (or ST and AG for more serious wounds) for each new wound, the more physical characteristics tend to be those most damaged. I chose to separate the idea of the seriousness of the wound from the time needed to heal or the force put into the attack because, after all a razor can kill as well as a .45. The non-deadly wound from a razor will heal long before that from a pistol, however. And, the blow from the razor is much less likely to drop one in one's tracks. The differ



entiation between light and heavier weapons as concerns the Wound Roll is made on the armor chart. Light weapons can neither crush nor hack and therefore don't do as well against armor as those weapons which can. The option of adding the skill rank to the WR will favor the more highly skilled of the combatants in a fight, which I put in to reflect the importance of training, not just to hit (which any character with a high enough skill-base can do) but where to hit to do maximum damage with one's weapon.

I added the alternate death rule in order to scare disabled and/or strongly 'effected' characters off of the field of combat. The player cannot reckon on having all of the characteristics as hit point banks, the PC might die or go unconscious, either from further wounding or bleeding which reduce one or more characteristics to zero. This produces an element of doubt which guarantees that heroics are really going to be heroic. I have found this Wound Chart a very usefull tool in preventing unnecessary combat.

#### THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF TOR TUNHAM

The next morning, Tor went to meet the Greeny merchant and found him rather uneasy. The trader explained to Tor that people had been asking about him, and that it was not safe to be around Tor. Tor told him the truth of his situation, (which the Greeny had suspected) and also his real name. The merchant then sent Tor across the river, giving him a six days supply of travel-bread, a map to New Villa, and a small package/letter to deliver to a cousin in Ewit, Zhulin Daz. On the other side of the river it would be easier to spot enemies, thought the trader. As Tor started toward the river he saw the green-clothed man once again. Rushing to the bank he climbed into a waiting boat and was rowed over the river by another Greeny, one of the dark-skinned types.

Across the Estelina River from Estel Falls is a small collection of huts known as Goblin Docks. Goblin Docks is the first stop on the smuggler's path from District Six to District Seven. It's just a short detour, one day south along the line of the boundary cliffs (the border of fallen Zimbis) to the Greeny town of Warxim, then a night ride by canoe westward down the North Im Creek to Old Lake in Short Valley, where little men live. From Old Lake the smuggler walks on the valley to Boneyard and thence to the ferry and across the Estelina to Zimbone Tavern. The whole idea is to avoid the Duke's Customs in Kimple, a hamlet five miles to the west of Estel Falls. Of course, Tor knew nothing of this, but having once found his way to Warxim he was taken care of as well as any other 'client', thanks partly to the note the Greeny had given him, and was whisked onto the creek after paying five silver pennies. After an unnomfortable ride through the rapids he was ordered to sleep by the boatman, when he awoke the boat was beached at Old Lake.

TO BE CONTINUED? NOW FOR SOME COMMENTS

LEE GOLD: I thanked you for that formula before I had tested it. I can't make it work at 55 lb/sq ft but by taking 1/3 of that, 18.3 lb/sqft, I can come close (in metric that's 3.294 g/cc). It comes out a little on the high side for me and low for Astrid (the baby) but I can hook up my trusty micro and find a variable (by cubing? or squaring something?) to use with that constant. So at least it put me on the right track.

EN RÄV MED TROLLSÖ SER MAN INTE VARJE DAG. ÖVERASKADE GRISEN HONOM?



雲山山麓

Yunshan Shanlu. By Edward Wilson  
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Oh, there you are. Well get settled in because this 'zine is going to be packed with all sorts of stuff. There probably won't be any comments this, though if A&E 103 gets here in time I may tack a few on at the end.

**Armor Damage Absorption for AD&D.**

Yes fans, it is possible. You may not like it, but in a few moments it will be history. Long have people complained about the way AD&D handles armor classes. Armor absorption was tough to do because of the low damage done by most weapons: often by AC9 or so wearers would be invulnerable to all non-magical melee weapons (at least in the various other attempts I've seen).

AC                    10 9-8 7-6 5-4 3-2 1-0 etc.  
nts. absorbed    0     $\frac{1}{2}$     1     $1\frac{1}{2}$     2     $2\frac{1}{2}$

It's simple, easy to memorize ("look Ma, no charts.") and gives good results.

While I am on the subject of combat rules, I may as well say a bit on the SO tables for combat. They are not well organized: there are no quick reference charts provided and all the necessary ones are scattered throughout the book. First I tried xeroxing the pages with the chart and tables I needed, but this just gave me a thick sheaf of stuff to go through in the heat of play. But here's how I changed hit resolution from 4 to sometimes as many as 51 rolls on 4 separate charts to 4 to 36 rolls on 3 separate charts.

Put the hit location chart and wound chart together on one page. The lay out is thus (I'll just give the first three lines):

<u>d100</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Vlt.</u>	<u>Lt.</u>	<u>Mod.</u>	<u>Ser.</u>	<u>Crit.</u>	<u>I.D.</u>
1-6	Left calf	1-6	7-14	15-17	18-19	20	-
7-12	Right calf	1-6	7-14	15-17	18-19	20	-
13-19	Left thigh	1-4	5-10	11-14	15-17	18-20	-

At the bottom of each wound column you write in the DF loss roll for the appropriate wound type and note whether a Shock roll is necessary. This puts location, wound type and DF loss all neatly organized on one page. On the other side can go the To Hit table (with the % to hit at each range) and the modifiers to the basic chance to hit. Actually, if you feel competent enough to fudge all the To Hit modifiers, you can squeeze everything onto one side of a page. That way everything is right in front of you. The To Hit roll and location rolls are combined by first rolling d100 to hit. Let's say it's a 43. If it is a hit, keep the d100 roll in front of you and reverse the two numbers. In our example, the 43 hits and the location is 34, the Abdomen. At very low hit percentages this method screws things up a bit but my experiences with SO show the necessity of speeding things up.

Now suppose the PC is using a burst-firing weapon. He gets 3 To Hit rolls, which all are done as outlined above. Then there's the d6 roll to see how many rounds hit. Don't roll the location of each round. Keep the original To Hit roll (with multiple rolls as with burst-firing weapons you can note them down) and use it (reversed as above) as the location of the first round of the 3. The second round, if any, will hit the location just above that one and the 3rd will strike the location just below the first round's.

So if, as in the example above, the To Hit roll is 43, round #1 hits the abdomen, #2 hits the stomach and #3 will hit the right thigh. This won't give totally accurate results, but it is a lot better than having to do a possible 9 To Hit and 9 location rolls per automatic wea-



non per combat round. In a firefight with a dozen or more participants, each with SMGs and wearing armor, one round could take 20-30 minutes to resolve. As a wargamer of long standing I love the rules as is, but as a GM I am appalled.

In A&E 102, our favorite editor ("Yes, it is in fact Lee Gold; two points for those of you who guessed correctly,") complained about the tendency for SFRPGs to publish long lists of present-day weapons. Many others have complained about this as well. Well I agree; it is better to make up "generic" weapons and then give rules for modifying them to make up different models and/or brand names of various types. I haven't put together such a set of rules ("No, wait, come back; let me finish!") but I have come up with a sort of checklist of the different elements which will be combined in weapons, such as propellant, lay-out, caliber etc.

There are two checklists, one for projectile weapons (but not bows, slings, etc.) which introduces most of the various elements and one for energy weapons which uses some of the stuff from the first list.

### Generic SFRPG Weapons, part one.

#### Projectile Weapons:

##### Propellant type:

- loose powdered chemical
- powdered chemical in cartridge
- improved cartridges (at higher TL)
- improved chemical (at higher TL)
- magnetic mass driver
- compressed air

##### Missile/Projectile:

- shaped rock/hard mineral
- soft metal (lead) ball
- soft metal (lead) bullet
- dum-dum type bullet
- steel-jacketed bullet
- tumbling bullet
- HE round
- APDS round
- HEAT round
- incendiary
- AP
- flechette/buckshot
- tracer
- rocket (propellant/fuel in base)
- fins for stabilization

##### Weapon Action/Operation:

- muzzle loader
- revolver magazine
- bolt-action
- break-open
- pump/lever/bolt-action with magazine
- crank
- semi-automatic
- fully automatic (various rates of fire)
- fully or semi-automatic

##### Feed Mechanisms/"Magazine"s:

- hopper
- strip (rounds like teeth on a comb)

##### Magazines (cont'd.):

- card (base glued to card; for multi-barreled weapons)
- cloth ammo belt
- metal link belt
- box magazine
- belt in box or drum attached to weapon.

##### Weapon Configuration/Lay out:

- rifle-type
- pistol
- carbine
- MG (MGs and HMGs)
- SMG
- "machine pistol"
- bullpup

##### Barrel Parameters:

- single barrel
- multi-barrel (fixed or rotating)
- smooth or rifled bore
- length (1"-48" or more)

##### Projectile Diameter; Caliber:

- 3 to 25mm (usually use 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 15, 20 and 25mm).

##### "Fire Control":

- none
- leaf sight
- adjustable leaf sight
- telescopic sight (improves with better optics at higher TL)
- scope with minicomputer image enhancement
- laser target designator
- laser/electronic range finder
- antigrav compensators for wt. and recoil



Yunshan Shanlu, page three.

Boy, that was fun to type! You'll notice that the elements in each list are in a roughly "chronological" order. Though I didn't note it in every case to save space, most items will improve in quality at each succeeding tech level. A musket might first appear at TL-4 or so (Traveller TLs) but a replica made at TL-15 would be a much better weapon. The powder would be of more even quality, the barrel would have less windage around the ball and so on.

I am thinking of randomizing the tables make sure I don't just make copies of present-day and historical weapons. How does a carbine-sized double-barreled shotgun with twin revolver magazines sound?

The next step is to decide how all the different elements will interact to produce each weapon's particular characteristics. There are 8 basic characteristics: weight, cost, accuracy, range, rate of fire, damage, penetration (vs. armor), and reliability. These will be determined by the mix of elements in the weapon and enhanced/increased with advanced TLs. Higher TLs usually bring decreased weight as well.

The checklists for energy weapons are the same for caliber, barrel parameters, fire control and weapon configuration.

### Energy Weapons

Basic Type:

- Flamethrower/Flamer
- laser
- plasma (gas)
- fusion (plasma gas in fusion)
- stunner
- blaster
- energy disruptor/disintegrator
- sonic disintegrator/disruptor

- Feed mechanism/magazine (and associated weapon configurations):
- large battery carried separately, for crew-served weapon (MMG, HMG config.s)
  - large backpack (LMG, rifle config.s)
  - small backpack (rifle, SMG, carbine, bullpup config.s)
  - belt pack (config.s as for small backpack plus pistol)
  - integral battery/clip (same config.s as belt pack)

For all the above weapons, energy and projectile modifications must be made in their construction depending on the race/species who will be using it. Octopoid creatures will design their weapons and tools differently from the way crab-like or humanoid beings will. Also they will be scaled to their user species' size; not just in size and weight over all but in magazine capacity and caliber. A race the size and weight of rhinoceri might very well have 30mm pistols. Weapons designed by a non-spacefaring people will be designed for maximum effectiveness on their homeworld. Modern-day Earth weapons would be fine as used here, but an aquatic race couldn't adopt them for general use.

### A Semi-Comment.

Not long ago, someone in A&E noted how, in StarWars, the stormtroopers' armor didn't afford any apparent protection. A commenter suggested that perhaps they were designed for use against low-tech weapons. The general populace being denied access to energy weapons, they would only have less effective weapon types. The suits might also be primarily protective/vacuum suits and not armor at all, worn as much for psyching-out unprotected opponents. I found a quote from the StarWars design people which seems to bear out this psywar idea: (speaking about the big AT\*AT walker tanks) "It was felt that the snow walker would be a much more awesome weapon if it were made to seem animal like, designed by the Imperial forces to terrify the enemy."



Iunshan Shanlu, page four.

The Long-awaited Return of the Meraisse Campaign Write-up.

Back around A&E 96 or so I started a write-up. I reread one of my first offerings and it seemed to get a bit bogged-down in unnecessary details. This time I shall strive to cleave to key points and highlight lights. First, though, the cast of characters and a lead-in to the present situation.

"Our Heroes"

Amaret; an elf Warrior-mage, the blacksheep 6th son of a yeoman man-at-arms. He had little in the way of morals and scruples but was careful to leave his companions unmolested as long as they were no threat. His nature was, by this point, becoming clear to the others in the group.

Latka; a young dwarf warrior who had traveled down to the lands at the foot of the cloud mountains to seek fame and fortune and prove himself. He had a disposition similar to that of Amaret, but was especially interested in fighting and drinking.

Pinchbd; this bastard son of a peasant had come far as a Warrior/Illusionist mage. A rather good-looking young man and, at 27, the oldest and most experienced of the group. He had come across five magic rings in his travels but had only learned how to use two of them. A pleasant chap, he was the nominal leader only because he was the only really rational, stable and trustworthy one amongst them.

Isocles; son of a yeoman freehold farmer and a Power Word mage. Morally and ethically a rather neutral individual, his greed nevertheless drew him into evil acts. He craved power with which to dominate others but was to cowardly to truly succeed. He worshipped one of the 7 Lords, demon-gods of chaos and cruelty.

Joe; He had met Amaret and Pinchbd during a much earlier adventure (when they three and another recently deceased were the party). Previously a dangerous Thief/warrior whose only interest was self-interest, now a mere vegetable. Amaret's poor aim with an insanity-producing Eye device was the cause of this. (This bothered him, as Joe had always been ready to help him in his depredations; now he had no such support.)

Pevell; the last member of our band, his inexperience making him the least in many ways. Born the blacksheep son of a syndic in the Builder's Guild, this plucky Rhin had found a place as a Paladin of the goddess Wems. Though plucky and well-intentioned, his lack of prudence and good judgement got him into unnecessary trouble. Only his phenomenal luck (or maybe the grace of his goddess) kept him whole.

At the beginning of the adventure, the group had come into possession of a large gem-like crystal some 6" across. Amaret had taken it to a Diviner; the mage could only tell him that it was magical (as they suspected), had 12 spells of unknown type but for some reason, had no capacity for any spell charges. With a little help from his god, Melkor (who was called "The Enemy" by decent Elves) Amaret had discovered that he could get the 'gem' to manifest random wind effects. This worried the others and the other two mages were careful to "assist" him when he experimented so as to be in on all new discoveries. The Rhin and Dwarf had turned an arm-wrestling match with a couple mercenaries into a blood fued with a whole company of them. The group was forced to flee town in the middle of the night after the soldiers' first attempt to settle accounts. In a rare moment of hysteria, Amaret had spent all his gold on a couple poor nags for transportation out of town. They headed towards a neighboring city. As they were looking for a nice spot to rest and eat lunch, a dozen robed skeletons blocked the road before them, brandishing scimitars. Five club-wielding zombies closed in behind...



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The ghastly undead looked familiar. Amaret, Latka and Joe had taken the gem from similarly outfitted skeletons. One skeleton advanced and held out its bony hands. But Amaret wasn't giving up 'his' gem so he threw them the empty box it had come in. (He had the gem stuffed down the front of his tunic, which was more secure but made a strange lump in the middle of his chest). As they bent over to peer into the small box, he spurred his mount and led Joe's horse forward at a gallop.

The others, meanwhile, dithered as Amaret and Joe galloped away. The Elf claimed he'd yelled for them to follow but they maintained that he deserted them without yelling anything. But luckily for them the undead all ran back into the shrubbery on the left, so they galloped to catch the two friends.

Behind them, the skeletons and two similarly robed humans appeared riding in hot pursuit on some low-lizards. A short way down the road, the Rhin spotted a stockaded village. The group galloped in before the peasants could shut the gates on them. While the villagers scattered to defend their cottages from these intruders, our heroes barred the gates and manned the crude earthen ramparts. The zombies were nowhere in sight but their fleshless fellows galloped up on lizard-back. The two humans, apparently mages, sat astide their mounts about 200' off.

With the assistance of three peasant lads who fetched lamp oil and manned the gates, our six companions beat back the first assault. Eight skeletons were destroyed and all the lizards scared away by the flaming oil. Isocles was cut and put out of action briefly, a peasant lad killed, Latka overwhelmed and left unconscious and bleeding. From 200' away the enemy mage had put Amaret to sleep.

Pevell, Isocles and Pinchöd held a quick council. With Joe still useless, Amaret out, Latka hors-de-combat and Isocles barely on his feet, they had little hope of victory. But they felt their opponents to be too nasty to give the gem to, and if they kept it Amaret might eventually learn its secrets (they still couldn't trust him). They decided to have Isocles hide it in his saddlebags and to leave the village by the gate on the other side. They would tell Amaret they'd given the gem up and that if he wanted it back he'd have to go after it alone.

They travelled to a hill some miles away and rested. Amaret awakened there and his first words were "Where's my gem?". Pinchöd told him the story they'd concocted. They said it had been a unanimous decision (which it had been), but the Elf swore he'd find out who's idea it had been and have vengeance.

Two battles and two hard rides in the space of some 12 hours after a sleepless night forced them to spend the afternoon and night resting. About an hour before sundown, a powerfully built man rode up. His war-horse, mail hauberk and fine weapons marked him as a fighting man and of some means (Here a new player joinee). He gave his name as Boris but was evasive regarding his background. His sincerity and their need of able-bodied companions convinced them to invite him to join them.

After dinner, the seven bedded down for the night. It was to be an eventful one.

While at his turn on watch Amaret heard his name called softly behind him. He turned slowly to face a strange creature. It was 5' tall and some 30-40' long. The upper body was like that of a gorilla, with two extra long thin arms: one bird-like and clawed, the other like an insect's with a pincer. The head was crocodilian, with a lion's mane. Its large eyes glowed with a blue light as it regarded the Elf. Amaret correctly assumed it to be a demon. He answered cautiously, ready to rouse the others. It said it knew where his gem was and that it could help him get it back—and more. The shrewd little Elf asked what the catch was. The demon required him to become a bonded vassal, the pact



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to be sealed by Amaret writing his name with his own blood on skin torn from the body of a still-living person. Amaret thought for a moment, then agreed. He went quietly over to Joe; the demon followed, shrinking down to a yard in height. Then the spirit offered a magic dagger ('The first of much to come'), which the avaricious Elf took gladly. Amaret put a saddle blanket over Joe's face. As the half-wit struggled, he cut a strip of flesh from Joe's arm and then plunged the new dagger into his heart. After writing his name on the strip, he gave it to the demon who popped it into his toothy mouth. Amaret asked the demon what its name was. "You may call me Merrdecai," it replied.

It then disappeared, leaving the Elf with a bloody magic dagger and a mutilated corpse. Thinking quickly, he put away the dagger and went over to the still-sleeping Pinchö. Waking him he whispered that just now, as he came back from checking on the horses, he saw a strange humanoid standing over Joe. It had horns and a tail and was holding a dagger. They awakened the others, and after examining Joe, put wood on the fire and all stayed up on guard together.

A&E #103 arrived in the ole mailbox so I'll do a couple comments.

JOHN REDDEN; I like your League Cosmos Traveller ideas. I own both TRAV and SO and I'm not too happy with either. I'll have to study it all a bit before thinking about adapting it for my campaign. The system itself is good, but it seems to share Trav.'s problem of giving characters too few skills. I'd suggest moving the base points up from 3 to 5 or 6. Or perhaps Trav. PCs should get 1Dplus3 or so 0 level skills in things like computer, ground car, and such.

Another nitpick is the buying of stats with a pool of points. If one rolls 2D for each stat they could get all 12s, or have all rolls very high. But with a pool of 48, it is impossible to have all high. A PC who is a "brain", has a college degree and comes from an upper class family must be a clumsy wimp; and any who are fantastic athletes must be ignorant cretins from the wrong side of the tracks. Besides, rolling stats randomly is more fun!

Instead of a pool, roll 2D-1 for each stat and then roll 2D for a small pool to distribute. Or, roll 12D for the pool of points. Or, roll 6Dplus36 for the pool. Or roll 1D for each stat and 6D for the pool of points. My favorite method is to roll 2D seven times, drop one number and place the remaining six in the stats desired. Of course if you are happy with it as is, feel free to ignore the above.

MATT STEVENS; Your 'Heroquest' character generation system is fascinating. I look forward to more. Welcome to A&E.

JOHN G. ROBILLARD; I like your 'zine titles. I can just picture Erik what's-his-ax in the prow of his longship as it nears the coast, one foot up on the side. He turns to his crew and says "Vårdhuset"Spakvinnans drom'!" They cheer. (Needless to say, I have no idea what any of that foreign gibberish means).

#### GENERAL COMMENT TO FILK-WRIGHTS

When you do a filk to a tune by a professional group or artist please tell us not only the name of the song but also the artist. Quite a few filks are to tunes I don't recognize off hand. When someone does up a filk I like to read it through with the song on, but without more clues to what song it is I can only read it through. You may be quite familiar with the song/artist but others may not even listen to that type of music generally. Filks are so much more fun to read if you can have the music to go with it.

That's all from the foot of the Cloud mountains for now. Bye.



THE MIDDLE EARTH WRITEUP

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Twenty years ago, Sauron regained the Ring, smashed the Armies of the West on the plain of the Morannon, and proceeded to conquer much of the lands of the West.

Some parts held out longer than others. As our story begins, Rohan still resists, while Gondor has long been conquered, Minas Tirith razed, and the other cities taken after worthy but doomed defenses. The populace, decimated and demoralized by war, famine and the brutality of their Sauron-appointed rulers, is in little condition to rebel.

In this, the city of Dol Amroth was no different from the rest of Gondor. When three brothers arrived from the north and started rebellion, the rulers of the city were taken off-guard and all were slain.

Naturally, news of this reached the Dark Lord, and he dispatched two small hosts to deal with the rebels. But the delay before the armies arrived enabled defenses to be made, and the city withstood a siege of seven days. When the city fell, the surviving defenders escaped to a ship waiting off the coast. The morning before the city fell, a flag was raised by the defenders: black, with silver tree, stars and crown.

The seemingly suicidal bravado of these acts has a simple reason: once again, Sauron's eye must be kept from the true threat to him, and what better way to attract his attention than a declaration that the heirs of Elendil yet survive.

Characters

ANTAR: eldest of the brothers, skilled swordsman  
ARANIS: second brother, died in the siege  
ALDARIN: youngest brother, sorcerer and warrior  
LINRAEL: Aldarin's wife, now pregnant  
ROLAND: a devious trickster, with a fondness for frogs  
MIRDAIN: Big, strong, and simple; Roland's best friend.  
MORGEN: From south Gondor; a warrior and sorceress who controls bolts of flame.  
CYGNIL: Scion of the noble house of Dol Amroth; in love with:  
LEEA: Elf maid from Mirkwood  
GWINDOR: Warrior from Gondor; killed a troll with his bare hands

ROLAND

Well, we only just got out of Dol in time, an' most people was hurt, so I did my best to spread a little happiness. 'Cause of my broken arm, people didn't like to hit me, either.

Some people was spending altogether too much time in bed to be just sleeping, so I got Mirdain to hang some of their clothes off the mast. Well, I just happened to be in the room, and there was the clothes unattended, so I thought they might have lost them, an' they'd be able to find them if they was somewhere conspicuous.

People seemed very het up about some flag too. Can't say I'd noticed it.

Then we had a storm. People were falling over everywhere lookin' greener than my frogs, so I got Mirdain to sway from side to side when he was talking to them. That seemed to help a lot.

After the storm, a couple of pirate boats attacked us. I didn't see much of the fight, being downstairs at the time, well, someone had to protect the ladies, didn't they? I did see Morgen burn one boat down just by looking at it. The other boat didn't take the hint an' attacked. After that, it was noisy for awhile, an' when it quieted down, it turned out we'd now got a new boat, only slightly used.



After a few days, they started letting folks off: Antar's lot in the Pinnath Gelin; Aldarin an' Lin and Cygnil an' Leea near Edhellond; Gwindor's lot further east. It wasn't till the first two groups had gone that I got told they weren't letting me off. Seems Mirdain wanted to be a sailor, an' they expected me to look after him. I don't mind that, but me? A sailor? No wonder they didn't tell me before. I'll get them yet.

#### ALDARIN

We were landed near Edhellond and travelled northwest by night for several days. While the other groups were intending to continue the resistance to the Dark Lord's forces throughout Gondor, our purpose was rather different. I wanted to go to Minas Tirith to try to gather information or knowledge on some of the items of power that were lost during the Great War. I had had a dream which appeared to indicate that this course would be correct.

After a few days, however, I began to sense a heaviness, a wrongness in the air. It affected Linrael too. She awoke one day with a nightmare of a lightning-shrouded black figure, searching. I tried a scry to discern the source.

For a time I seemed to be surrounded by a dark swirling mist which blocked my scrying vision. Slowly, carefully, I tried to penetrate the darkness to see the evil presence which I could sense beyond. The mists loomed about me, engulfing me, and it was a considerable strain to push through them. As I travelled, the sense of evil and dread grew; then suddenly, with a sickening certainty, I saw the source of the evil. A black-cloaked figure, one of the Nine, and it was searching for me. It seemed to sense my presence, and it started to look about, striving to trace me through the link I had established. I moved to retreat, to break the link, when its eyes locked on me. It recognized me and tried silently to force me to reveal where my physical body was located. I refused, fought and finally succeeded in breaking the link. I lay, exhausted and trembling, beside my orb.

Over the next day or so, it became clear that the Ulair still sought me. The feeling of wrongness grew a little stronger. I began to realize that we would not easily lose it. But the only alternative would be perhaps less easy still. I risked scrying again, with Linrael standing by to knock the orb from my hands, breaking the spell, should any sense and assail me.

I sought the future and what might be the results if we continued to Minas Tirith directly, or if we took the other route....At Minas Tirith, the three of us--myself, Linrael, Cygnil--were standing about a newly raised cairn. My brother Aratar and the others in his company arrived, and as night fell, the dark figure of our foe approached....The scene shifted, and the four in our group approached a wall of darkness and through it, into the tunnel beyond. I was wounded with a long cut down my face. Behind us stood our foe, unable to follow.

It was clear that for the saving of Leea's life and the secrecy of Aratar's mission, that we would have to attempt the Paths of the Dead.

#### LINRAEL

Long ago, it seems like it was lifetimes ago, when Aldarin thought I'd be in danger from the Law in Dol, he was going to take me out of the city and meet up with the others of his conspiracy. We nearly made it, till we walked into something like 40 orcs. Aldarin made me go on while he held them back, and he gave me a brooch to look after for him or to keep if he shouldn't return. Later, he gave it to me properly, at least until one of our children should be ready to have it.

It had been given to their great-great-grandfather Arador by the Lady of the Wood and inherited by the younger son since then. It was palm-sized: a black stone in the shape of a swan, in a silver mount with a star and tree. I'd got Aldarin to look after it for the journey. Now, for the first time, he wore it.

We pushed onwards as fast as we could. Even I could feel the terror behind us, and Aldarin was under a lot of strain. Finally, on our tenth night of travel, it began.



There was a thick black fog, unnaturally cold; the air heavy, silent and still. It was an effort to move, to keep going. Aldarin's brooch flickered with light, but its light was sucked up by the fog.

From one side and ahead came wolf-howls, and from the other side the sounds of orcs and a captive's cry for help, but Aldarin said they were only deceptions, to slow us up.

The fog came in thicker, and the effort of moving was harder, and a soft voice said that we'd move quicker after a rest. But there was no one there.

The ground grew steep, steeper. I could hardly move, yet when Aldarin spoke to me he was no higher than me, though ahead. Behind me, the ground was level, and when I concentrated on the brooch, the ground ahead was level too.

Though it tried to slow us, after a timeless time we were near our destination. But Aldarin was growing weary; he had to keep us going and was fighting some mind battle with it too.

Then from just ahead came a piercing wail, chilling, unspeakable. For moments I was unable to move, frozen with terror. Gradually, the light of the brooch heartened me, so that I was able to carry on.

At last the fog started to thin, and we were under a gloom of black trees, ahead of us a great mountain. A hollow place opened at the mountain's root, and in our path a single mighty stone, raised like a finger of doom.

"I'm afraid," whispered Cygnil, and the words hung in the still air. "Afraid" rolled around the mountains as if in mockery.

"Beyond the stone is a short journey, and then we come to the Dark Door. Not far now. It will take but a moment to pass the stone." Aldarin sounded tired.

As we approached the stone, with a whistle the fog behind us swirled, and a sibilant voice whispered, "Stop."

My legs wouldn't obey me, or I'd have blindly fled. A dark figure stood there, a horror, invincible. Aldarin said a word, and the brooch flared up like a star, shattered the fog. Another word, and we could move again.

The shape threw back its cowl; it had no head but red fires shone in place of eyes. It drew its sword, and flames ran down the blade. It laughed. I don't like to remember its laugh. "You will all know death. Death is at hand, slow and painful and terrible." And it advanced on Aldarin slowly, step by step.

A sudden wind blew about us, but it did not move the fog. Out of the fog, diving straight for Aldarin, came a horde of batlike creatures. A word, and the brooch glowed brighter, and they vanished.

"So," it hissed, "a piece of elvish glass, and you think you can stand against me. Your case is hopeless." Cygnil was to one side of Aldarin, Leea to the other, and I was behind him, but it ignored us. I could feel the battle of wills between Aldarin and it. It took another pace forward, and a band of starlight appeared about its head.

Cygnil threw a knife at it. As the knife flew, an inky blackness surrounded the Nazgul, swallowing the starlight, and the knife went into the blackness. Out of the blackness stepped the Nazgul, now only ten paces away. Aldarin stepped forward and drew his sword.

"Come no further. Return to the abyss that awaits you," said Aldarin, voice ringing, eyes fiery, his will stronger than iron.

"Fool. You are but a child playing with tricks you understand not."

In almost a single movement, Leea fired three arrows, but they fell into nothingness inches from it, as with a lightning sloop it cut at Aldarin. Sparks flew as their blades met, and Aldarin staggered. Another arrow clanged off the Nazgul's blade, and it stopped, gestured, and Leea was covered in a blackness. She fell, and it retreated from her, leaving her lying still as death. Meanwhile Aldarin struck at the distracted Nazgul and connected; he winced, and I felt a flash of his pain. Cygnil hit at it from behind. His blade stopped dead inches from it and shattered into thousands of glittering shards. The Nazgul rounded on the defenseless Cygnil and its blade licked out. Cygnil ducked, and the blade caught his Swan Helm, bowling him over, and he too lay unmoving.



Two blows Aldarin parried; a third sliced into his face as his parry barely held the blade back from crushing his skull, and he was knocked over by the force of the blow. I suppose I went crazy, but after all I had nothing to lose. As it leaped forward to kill Aldarin, I flung myself at its feet, shrieking, tangled its feet in my hair-wire and sent it sprawling. The three of us regained our feet at the same time.

Aldarin's mind touched mine with a tired whisper, "Give me strength, love," and as I tried to will him on, the brooch burst again into brilliant light. I put all my strength and concentration into this, and the sword of the Nazgul wavered slightly. Cygnil pushed himself to his feet and wove his way over to the fight. He stabbed with a dagger; it pierced the Nazgul's darkness, and Cygnil fell again. The Nazgul launched an all-out attack on Aldarin, and his sword went flying. But out of the mist came Antar's voice. "Ho! Aranruthé for Gondor. Aranruthé for Aldarin!"

Unable to face the two of them, the Nazgul fled, vanishing like darkness before the sun. Aldarin staggered forward. The fog blew away, but no Antar appeared. Aldarin shook his head. "A trick, like those it pulled on us."

Leea woke, unsteady but alive. Cygnil was unconscious but not badly hurt. Aldarin had a gash on the side of his face from temple to jaw which would scar. We were all tired, but then the next part wouldn't be anything to worry about. Most of the Dead were gone anyway. Their only power was fear, and we'd already faced that. We were with an heir of Isildur. After all, ghosts couldn't touch us, so how could they hurt us?

#### A couple of notes from the authors:

Aldarin has an empathic link with his brothers. When one is hurt, he feels pain as well. This happened at the death of Aramis in the siege (A&E 100). He also has a two-way link with his wife Linrael: each feels the other's pain.

While the idea of someone tripping a Nazgul with a hair band may seem weird to the point of being ludicrous, it may help to realize that it was a concealed weapon: a strangewire. Weapons had been banned in Gondor.

ALISON BROOKS ON A&E #101

WILSON HEYDT: I don't understand your comment about the Knights of Ascension. Elucidate? Incidentally, the other two Wizards--the Ithryn Luin who went into the East--were Alatar and Pallardo (cf Unfinished Tales). //Your essay on humans had me alternately freaking out (he stabbed a bear) with an arrow?) and in hysterical laughter (beating a leopard to death with another leopard?) The leopard as melee weapon?). However, I suspect the other 99 people in the same situation made good meals for their respective carnivores. Note also that none of these people were without weapons, be it only a stone or a leopard.

PETER DA SILVA:A Thanks for the kind words. //I read and enjoy your comment section titles. I meant to say so but hadn't got round to it. //But I couldn't concentrate long enough to read your "spelling test." //Tolkien admired Hitler? Not according to letters. "Vulgar and ignorant little cad,...ruddy little ignoramus." He also refused to make the declaration of Aryan descent necessary for publication of a German edition of The Hobbit. Though his racial (and sexual) attitudes do leave something to be desired, he's not as bad as all that.

STEVE GILHAM: I think we agree on character classes. You don't like needless "Thou Shalt Nots"; neither do I. Nor do I like the formless "Sure, do everything" of RQ. I'd like something in between. At about the age of a beginning FRP character, I do have areas of specialization. I also have the ability to do things outside my "character class" and to improve in them, but I'll not be as good as a professional in that "class," unless I were to change "classes": i.e. professions. I feel D&D comes a bit closer to this than RQ. Clear?



MIKE DAWSON: Are you suggesting that we should backstab our friends for personal gain? In which case I have no sympathy. Or that PCs backstab NPCs but not PCs? If this has been your experience, I'm sorry. Not all of us do this. If the party must cooperate to save the universe, it is the GM's job to make them realize this (e.g. tell the PCs; most people, having a vested interest in their universe, would do their best). And it is the GM's failure if the players find they have no excuse to cooperate. You have a valid point that personality should not be violated. The options for antisocial characters remain solo runs, postal play, or runs that agree to allow backstabbing. Where cooperation is needed, take a different character and/or design your characters to be more sociable.

Backstabbing when least expected can (sometimes) add to a game, but it is unfair to expect players to game thereafter with a character they know to be treacherous. Characters who know a character is treacherous will react according to personality. But a treacherous player is just a bloody nuisance.

CHRIS MURRAY: Gosh, are the Seven Ages of FRPing going to become a standard? \*Blush\*

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: Hey, look, I pay for LUAFS (not a very pretty acronym what/), and I do most of the work on it, so I figure I deserve most of the credit! However, point taken. I'll try to make things clearer in future.//RAEBNC "Elements of RP" essay.

WESLEY IVES: Well, thank you for your thanks! But I will challenge those who claim that belief is science and present as "evidence" lies and distortions.

JENNY HEIN: 5'6" is not short! You will notice that those who think that being tall is a sign of superiority have nothing but their height to commend them. (I'm 5'5" and I'm OK...)//Liked Bunyips. Have you seen "On the Tracks of Unknown Animals" by Bernard Heuvelmans (my copy is in Paladin) which includes bunyips.// Loved your quote of the month! I know the feeling.

LAWRENCE GILLESPIE: On dwarves: thanks. Enjoyed. I just wish the relevant sagas were more accessible.

DAVE FLIN'S COMMENTS ON A&E 101!!! DAVE FLIN!!! DAVE FLIN!!! DAVE FLIN!!!

Assorted RAEBNCS: Neil Frzer (Wode), "J Murray & C Hein" (Life begins at Death), JT Sapienza (Elements of Rolegaming), J Hein (Dum dum arrow).

MARK GALEOTTI: Yes, judging FRP is difficult or impossible. That was the point. Some people try, which was why the point was made.

Middle Earth: Magic Rare? Regarding mages: yes, absolutely. The three in our Fellowship were chosen because they were mages, and the whole purpose of their quest is to get a mage close to Sauron, and they're expecting casualties on the way.//Concerning magic items: I am staying within the tradition of items being given rather than being ripped from the still-warm bleeding bodies of their former owners, but let's look at the magic present in LotR.

a. Definite magic within the Fellowship: Anduril, Glamdring, Elessar, Sting, hobbit daggers from wight's tomb; Anduril's scabbard, Phial of Galadriel. Three elven boats (won't sink no matter how laden). Ent drink. Sam's earth.

b. Pseudo-magical, debatable: eight elven cloaks, Boromir's horn, Gandalf's staff, mithril chainmail, lembas (allowed JRRT to forget food except when it suited him), elven rope.

c. Other magic: Palantirs, the Three Rings, Gates of Moria, Orthanc, Galadriel's mirror, the mithril helms of the guards of the Tower of Ecthelion, the Watcher at Cirith Ungol, the Paths of the Dead, the Nine Rings.

d. Oh yes, nearly forgot. The One Ring.

[The typist would like to put in a word for athelas.--LG]

continued in five pages--at the end of AZMADIAN TALES

Greetings. DunDraCon VIII ran quite well. We had just shy of 1000 paid attendees. I was in charge of volunteers and security, and both ran well. We had a little problem with the hotel, which had not told us they were remodeling. The main corridor was rather messy, and the bathrooms on the main floor were closed. Otherwise things went fine. I saw several A&E contributors. (HAL HEYDT had an A&E party I was unable to attend, due to a game. Next year we will be back at the Dunfey.)

#### REALISTIC ROLEPLAYING RULES (see Azmadian Tales #19 in A&E #102)

I have learned that the average adult male's body is 43% muscle, 18% fat, and 39% bones and organs, with  $3\frac{1}{2}$  liters of blood. The body has about 50 pints of water; losing 7 pints can result in death by dehydration. I am sure someone has figures on what percent of the body is bone. Presumably you could get percentages of muscle, fat, bone and organs for each body area (arms, legs, head and torso).

We can thus take the Weight/Height formula ( $WT=2 \times BLD \times HT^{**2}$ ) and subdivide BLD into  $BLD=FRM+MSL+(FAT/10)$ . The average male will have MSL 5.4, FRM 4.9, and FAT 22.5. For standard numbers, we could redefine BLD to equal  $\frac{1}{2}(FRM+MSL+FAT/2)$ , yielding FRM 9.8, MSL 10.8, and FAT 9, for an average male BLD of 12.5 (using metric units.) With  $LBDL = \frac{1}{2}(FRM + MSL)$ , we have an average LBDL of 10.3.

Taking Lee Gold's suggestion to heart, we can use hit locations with a number of different types of Hit Points. Each location would have muscle points, bone points, and fatigue points. Special hits could damage nerves, tendons and internal organs. Wounds would bleed, and the body as a whole would lose blood points. The body would also have overall fatigue points.

A thrusting blow to a limb would normally do fatigue and muscle point damage along with bleeding, unless a bone hit were rolled. A certain amount of muscle damage would have to occur before the bone was reached. Bleeding could be determined as a function of muscle damage, unless a special hit had a hit artery result.

Since the system would be on a computer, the hit locations could be further refined for more accurate determinations of results. Thus an arm would be a hand (fingers and palm), wrist, forearm, elbow, upper arm and shoulder. A leg would be a foot (toes, arch, heel), ankle, lower leg, knee, upper leg, and hip. The head would be the face, sides, back, top, and neck. The torso would be the chest and abdomen (front, back, left or right). Thus while head damage would apply to the head, the effect would vary depending on whether the blow hit the side (possible ear damage), back (nothing special, or front (eyes, nose, mouth, jaw). The ribs would be reached after a minor amount of muscle damage; in turn, they would absorb damage up to their break point, shielding the organs behind them.

A crushing blow to the upper torso would automatically involve the ribs. A slashing blow would have a small chance of bypassing them. A thrusting blow would have a much better chance of bypassing them. The three types of blows would have different muscle and bone damage effects, and thus different blood loss effects.

As a result, the body's basic physical structure could be programmed into the computer. It would keep track of each character's physical state, adjusting it with each blow or attempt at healing or first aid. The chances for a special hit could be programmed into the damage results. Thus a player could determine that he had hit; the computer would tell him what location had been hit and the observable effects. The victim would be told he was hit in a certain location and what the immediate effects were.

I envision the ultimate version as having each player sitting at a terminal. At each round's bookkeeping, the computer would print out a status report of how the character felt. Detailed physical status would only be available to the Referee, unless the party spent time examining the character--or the character was



able to self-diagnose. Thus a wound could cause pain (Save vs Pain to continue functioning), faintness (loss of blood and fatigue), and lessened ability (loss of strength through muscle damage and fatigue--and the effects of damage to bones, nerves, tendons, etc.). The character would not know immediately just how bad the wound was--and neither should the player.

One advantage of the computer keeping track of the details is added realism--including hidden effects, like poisoned weapons. The computer would know that an orc's arrows were poisoned and include the poison's effects each round after the arrow hit. The player would have to figure out about the poison from the changing results. This is far more realistic than immediately knowing because the DM has had to tell everybody the arrow is poisoned. Poison could thus act realistically (over time) instead of doing instant damage.

The instant damage used now is mainly due to the availability of poison antidotes and Neutralize Poison spells. If the players know a PC has been poisoned and the poison acts over time, they will try to neutralize the poison as fast as possible, often much faster than is realistic.

The hidden effects would also apply to spell effects. The computer would allow messages to be exchanged between the Referee and a single player without the others knowing. The Referee could thus inform one player that his character was Charmed and ordered to attack the party, without the others knowing.

Having seen the new Macintosh computer from Apple with its hand-controlled cursor (the mouse), I can foresee a time when each player would have such a cursor and a screen. The mouse could be used to indicate a PC's movement, actions, the foe being attacked, or a spell's area of effect. Each player's screen would show a the PC's view of the immediate area. The player would indicate the actions of the character. When all players had done so, the computer would process the activities and show the effects of that round, moving the figures on the screen and depicting the actions. A printout would then show the character's status.

This would work very well for a solo adventure. Given the current trend of technology and the growth of gaming, I predict we will see the first versions of such a system within the next five years, beginning with a solo dungeon program for the Macintosh or a similar computer.

For those who feel such a system would be difficult to apply to non-humans, let me add that there has been a lot of study of the physical structure of animals --and extrapolation as to what extraterrestrial animals would be like, given various changes. Bonnie Dalzell had an exhibit on extraterrestrial animals at the Smithsonian a few years ago. Somebody is bound to write a computer modeling program for designing animals. A rules system based on reality could quickly adapt such data for new monsters.

#### COMMENTS ON A&E #100

LEE GOLD: Congratulations on reaching #100. Keep up the good work. Thank you for typing my zines and for making this whole thing possible.

SCOT FRITZ; PBZ, Move Two: The period of a pendulum is given by  $t=2\pi(L/g)^{1/2}$ , where L is the Length and g is the acceleration due to gravity. Assume L is 1'. Since t is 2.9 seconds, then g is 4.69'/sec<sup>2</sup> (or 0.146 Earth gravity). This is similar to gravity at the Moon's surface. I recheck my timing to see if there was an error.//The 18°/hour sweep of the shadow of the sun means the sun will transverse 360° in 20 hours, so a day is 20 hours long.//Arrows fly about 15% farther. Air resistance is minimal for streamlined objects like arrows, so this change must be due to different gravity. The distance an arrow travels if shot horizontally from a height h is given by  $d = v(2h/g)^{1/2}$ , where v is the arrow's velocity when fired. Since h and v have not changed, a 15% change in d

corresponds to a 24% change in  $g$ , indicating .76 Earth gravity (about  $24'/\text{sec}^2$ ). This should have given a period of 1.28 seconds for the pendulum.

The  $0^\circ$  angle on the shadow shows we are near the equator. Thus there will be no seasons, although there may be wet and dry periods. From the look of the desert, I suspect it will be mostly dry and hot. We should be wary of flashfloods if it ever does rain. Sandstorms could be a real menace. The sun seems larger than Sol. Either it is larger or the planet is closer to it than Earth is to Sol; that could mean a heavier level of UV. I put on sunscreen and offer it to the others. We had better keep covered.

There are two moons, so the tides will be more complex if we ever get close to the sea. Eclipses will be more common. I compare the angular width of the moons to that of the sun to see if total eclipses are possible on this world. The lesser gravity seems to have resulted in a lower atmospheric pressure and thus a lower partial pressure of oxygen. This is confirmed by our shortness of breath and the difficulty of keeping the matches lit. I think back to the jump through the gate to see if my ears popped. I open a bottle of water to see if it was under a higher pressure than the outside air. (The air in it was at Earth atmospheric pressure.)

The sun sets at 7:38 PM. Since we are at the equator, there should be 10 hours of day and 10 hours of night. Thus the sun should rise at 5:38 AM. If it does, this will confirm the 20 hour day. We will need to change our watches four hours every day to compensate.

The first moon rises at 7:55 PM and is gibbous; the second rises at 8:05 PM and is half. The second moon is separated from the first by  $20^\circ$ . This means the first moon traveled  $17^\circ$  in 10 minutes. It thus has an orbital period of 3.529 hours. Kepler's Law says that in a gravitational well,  $R^3/T^2$  is a constant, where  $R$  is the radius from the center of the well and  $T$  is the period. Kepler's constant is  $2,437^3$  per second squared. This gives the first moon an orbital radius of 7327 miles. If this planet's radius is the same as Earth's (3975 miles), the moon is 3352 miles above it. From its angular width, we can calculate its diameter. The same sort of calculations can be made for the second moon after we time its angular velocity across the sky.

The sun would appear to rise in the "north" and set in the "south." I look up in the sky as we march to look for planets (i.e. bright stars that do not twinkle). I count them and try to time their transit across the sky. (If magic works, then astrology probably does too, and knowing the planets would be useful.) I use my binoculars to get a better look at the moons and the stars, and try to pick out useful constellations. I attempt to locate a pole star. This helps pass the time as we walk. (I probably stumble a few times due to not watching my feet.)

When we get to the city, I will follow the lead of Jason our leader. I tell him that it looks as if a party member has gone ahead and been captured after doing something stupid. We should pretend ignorance and go peacefully, as there is no point in fighting a city. We want to be welcome and to learn about matters here. We don't do this by breaking the law and getting the guard raised against us.

As least we have a translator in the scarab. I suggest that Ms. Clifford stay close to Jason. I suggest that Jason look leaderly and aristocratic--and that the rest of us form up as if we were his guard and retinue. We want to make a good impression.

I look to see if there are any native women visible. How are they dressed? How do they act with respect to the men? This will indicate what sort of culture we are in. If the women seem to rule, then Ms. Clifford should appear to be our leader. If women seem equal, then we act as we are. If women seem subservient, then the women in our party might want to mimic them to avoid seeming barbaric--or however such different behavior might be taken by inhabitants of the city.



I pay particular heed to the type of armor worn by the guards and the quality of metal of their weapons, to ascertain the level of technology here. At least we seem to be the only ones with guns! I write a short summary of what has happened on the inside of a candy wrapper, eat the candy, and nonchalantly drop the wrapper when it looks as if I am not being directly looked at. I pray to the powers that be that all will work out well.

Note to Scot: Your move report was in #100 and you gave until #106 to reply. Your next move summary could not appear until #107, probably #108 given the current backlog. This means one move every eight months, or three moves every two years. I suggest you speed up the party, or we will spend forever just getting into the city. I suggest giving only 3-4 issues to respond and encouraging anyone with a move in the last issue to also mail it to you. I also suggest that everyone in the party at the city mail their moves to Jason, so he can write a coordinated move.

#### COMMENTS ON A&E #101

WILSON (HAL) HEYDT: Hi! You also missed the money in the refrigerator in the vegetable drawer. (You know, "lettuce," "green stuff.")//I agree that humans are the toughest animals on earth. A well-trained human can be placed naked in a forest or jungle and survive quite well. Using hand-made tools and martial arts, coupled with proper use of intelligence and cunning, makes a man the best fighter around. Humans can break rocks with karate blows, run down any known animal, and outfight any known animal hand-to-hand with weapons. The trick is that a human will win if he is well-trained and if he knows the habits and abilities of the critter he is facing. Making the fiercest animals highly anti-human would also make for trouble. Most large carnivores generally leave men alone, because as omnivores we don't smell right: i.e. like herbivore prey. (The use of "man" and "he" above was in a generic sense. I dare say a black belt woman trained in survival would do quite well in the wild.)

#### COMMENTS ON A&E #102

STEVE GILHAM: You do the funnel trick by filling the funnel and plugging the spout with your thumb; then move your thumb and let the water drain into a bottle, watching which way it swirls. Repeat ten times. The direction that occurs most often tells you the direction of Coriolis force.

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: If you thought of Difficulty Dice before Ray and Harry, then I happily give you credit. It's a nice idea.//I prefer using the result of a D100 roll too. The better success margin wins out. A higher level skill means a larger possible success margin. A 90% swordfighter rolling 89 should lose to a 35% parrier rolling 5, as the 89 barely made it, while the 5 was 30% below what was needed.//Your deflection/blocking parries seem like a good idea. Two 100% fighters will wind up having half their blows parried by deflection (no effect) and half by blocking, as opposed to the current 100% by blocking. For this to result in shorter fights, armor and weapon points must be reduced, or else the blocking parries will also result in no effect. How would you figure Critical and Special Hits into this system?

#### COMMENTS ON A&E #103

LEE GOLD: You are right. If the system is computerized, then there should be separate points for bone, muscle, blood, fatigue, etc.//I agree that FAT would affect cold resistance. The extra buoyancy might give a bonus to swimming. The extra weight that would slow land movement would not apply as much in the water. (the extra girth does add to water resistance, but this is a lesser effect.)







THE FNORD 8

by Mark Galeotti, 5 St. John's Rd., Hampton Wick, Kingston, Surrey KT1 4AN, Britain  
Greetings and salutations from the Fnord-Lord. Two A&Es to comment on, so into the  
fray....

COMMENTS ON A&E 102

LEE (Tantivy): I agree that the cost of something as mainstream as a sword may be more immediately relevant; originally I thought of something along those lines. What diverted me to the humble loaf of bread, however, was the difficulty of ascertaining the price of an ordinary sword. Indeed, what is a "standard sword"? Even after we exclude all the obviously sub- or super-standard weapons, there are still vast quantities of falchions, glaives, swords and blades to choose from, and I eventually decided to use the loaf of bread because it was a smaller basic unit and because on the whole there was far less variation in prices of various loaves once the fluctuations due to crop returns had been averaged out.

I didn't look at your Pain rules closely (I prefer to look at the system as a whole--I'll wait for LoA), but state of mind is also important. Although it would be more complex, how about having Psychic Pain: accumulated by losing comrades-in-arms, failing in a mission, etc? This would lower determination to resist pain and perhaps contribute to fainting or fleeing. An interesting offshoot would be to allow Pain spells; or a low power Fear spell to generally lower resistance. Even better, though, would be the opportunities for alleviating Psychic Pain, perhaps by counseling and talking things over, (a new role for clerics?) or mind-linking to share the loss. All these offer lots of new roleplaying possibilities.

JENNY HEIN (Northern Woods 2): Thanks muchly.

LAURENCE GILLESPIE (Heimskringla 8): Thanks for replying. Your Icelandic rolegaming sounds as if it would be a very good way of learning or teaching a language. How did it work out at Hamrahlith High? How about some of those writeups?//I totally agree about the value of private adventures.

VINCENT FOSTER (Otyugh Obit 2): Thanks for the sources.//Isn't AFTERMATH great? (Well, yes, of course you think it is, because you say so, but I just wanted to say, you know....)

THE FORRESTERS & LOSS (RUTUS): Lovely title--hello and welcome. I liked your zine a lot, especially "The Last Role-Playing System" and the "Open Letter." Power to the PCs!

MARTIN ELLISON (Stuffing 2): Interesting info on India. Thanx.

SCOTT BAUER (Pittsburgh Gate 12): I don't know if I regard hack'n'slash Monty Haul as rolegaming at all; just wargaming. However possible it may be to develop computers able to GM at this level, is it worth it? Surely we should try and increase the rolegaming element of those gamers rather than concentrating on creating more poor GMs. Besides I can't see gaming being as enjoyable played with a machine as with a human. You can't really swap in-jokes with a VDU (even in your future CyberGM program). Similarly a human GM can make the sort of assessments and decisions a computer cannot. A human, for example, can tell when the players are getting bored and throw in a random encounter with some slavers; can a computer? Or can it tell when the players are not in the mood for a serious game and arrange for them to be Gated into Count Sweetmeat's Candyfloss Castle?

If anything, I think it might be a good thing if games played on computers stay relatively unsophisticated (fat chance!), so there is a definite gap between rolegames and computer games. Otherwise people may get the idea even more strongly that killing and looting is all there is to the Hobby.



ROBERT PLAMONDON (Ouroborus 17): I've been trying to get my thoughts on magic organized so I can dispense with rules as much as possible, and your article has certainly set me thinking. Many thanks.

Well, well, what an anemic set of comments; no blood, no vicious assaults, no furious invective...In short, I'm not living up to my responsibilities as an A&Eer. Oh well, sharpen my teeth, tank up on bile, charge my spleen, and...

COMMENTS ON A&E 103

Well, nine pages in one A&E, the equal of John Sapienza & Denise Gerneth!

JOHN SAPIENZA (Dragonsgold 21): I'm not sure if I agree with yr ct to ARLEN WALKER. "Free Enterprise" is rarely free and so may not lead to true competition for prices. As some of HARGRAVE's zines in the 50s (A&Es, not years!) show, big companies can exert pressure to block or kill smaller ones without lowering prices one cent. Compare a big company's resources with those of a small one. Big companies often have guaranteed initial sales, preferential rates for printing and materials due to size of operation, etc. Someone may think he could produce something cheaper with similar resources, but how can he compete without those resources?//Anyway, what about copyright? If I think D&D is too expensive, I can buy RQ or YRS for less--but what I wanted was D&D!//A company may give you something for your money, but then a cardsharp could give you an entertaining game of cards as he fleeced you.

ADRIAN BOLT (Death Stars 1): Hello.//No, I haven't seen that particular issue of DW since it had all sold out by the time I got round to going to a game shop. (Anyone care to send me a photocopy?)

MATT STEVENS (Ancient Empire 1): No need to be defensive about your social status table and monetary system. I like them a lot. The idea of using "bags of silver" gives the game a very nice feel. I'll have to think about it more.

WILLIAM PIXLEY (Cpt. Patio Blocks): Interesting Amazons, but when you say that some were special agents, I hope you didn't mean secret agents: there's not much secret about a 2.2m woman!//Agreed over the value of SF/NSS games for beginners: how many have seen "Hawk the Slayer" or "Dragonslayer" compared with "Star Wars" or "The Longest Day" (or "A Fistful of Dollars" or ....)?

LEWIS STEAD (Noldaparma 1): Welcome to the weird and wonderful world of A&E.//Does your title have any particular meaning?//As for the NaziWorld, I'll see what I can do. Watch this space.

BROOKS & FLIN (Leagues Unlit 8): Heh heh...little do you know that I am a psychic vampire and leech ideas from the heads of unsuspecting--What's that you're holding up--a TSR logo? No, no, help!...(Shrivels into wizened little ball and is instantly given a Life Peerage.)

PHILLIP ADAMS (Stormtrooper 1): I'll put some AFTERMATH stuff in my next Dragonewts' Dream, unless I forget. What sort of Ruin do you presuppose - I have used a limited N-War between North and South some twenty years hence?

VINCE FOSTER (Otyugh Speaks 2): Urh, I don't know where you got your information about London (surely not first hand?), but yr ct on Piccadilly Circus is, well, off-beam. I've been there often without club, knife or trusty minders, and wasn't bothered or even worried. In fact, my job means I do a lot of message delivering, which often means I am in the areas of London generally seen as the "rougher parts", but still I have had no trouble. I don't really believe that it was my imposing appearance that scared off whole armies of muggers.

Right, that's the first comments which occur to me. I really must actually get down to doing another DD. I've got most of the stuff written down on rough; just haven't had time to type it up. Ave atque vale, - Mark.



FROM BEYOND THE RIVER STYX #16\*

by Vincent Burchett, EXERCISE ELF ONE/DCOT; USMTH, APO NY 09038 (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia); 24 Feb 84.// \*I can't seem to remember the actual number, but this is close enough.// \*\*\*Retyped from Arabic by Lee with my thanks.\*\*\*

Here I am once again to dispell the rumors of my demise in the sands of the Middle East. Actually I was going to wait to contribute until I returned from here in sunny Saudi Arabia (getting a good tan while you all are freezing your tails--and other appendages--off!) around April, but I was spurred on by receiving A&E #102 a few weeks ago. (My mail is sent here only if it's First Class like A&E.)

I'm beginning to believe that I'm the most travelled FRPer in the world. I've been through most of the US, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong (there are some D&Ders there!), Grenada (although I wasn't there to play), and now Saudi Arabia. I got an assignment to Germany in July (from there I can visit all of Western Europe), and around September I'll visit my Israeli penpal. (Showing pictures of her in her army uniform around here has proved to be hazardous to my health!) I think I'll continue on with the rest of this zine before I run out of time.

### D&D in Saudi Arabia

I've been here a month and a half now and, as far as I can tell, D&D is exclusively played by the Americans I'm here with. I'm sure some of the oil field workers play too, but they're too far away. I haven't played any yet, but some of the AWACS people here do. On occasion I've borrowed some of the books from a guy to write up scenarios to use later, so my time wasn't wasted here doing nothing. I would've brought my own books, but a month before I came here I lent my FF tome and MM vol II (autographed by EGG, Frank Montzer and Kim Eastland--grumble, grumble, GRUMBLE) to a friend, but he left for an extended tour to Greece and (ahem) accidentally took them with him. I may not see them again unless he mails them back. It seems as though my equipment does more travelling than I do!

As for the Saudis playing D&D, I believe they would be rather good at it since their country is largely medieval, but selling it here may be tough. I don't know any Moslems that play, but I assume it's not against their religion. Some of them may react like our more orthodox Christians towards concepts like spells and devils, but they may be in the minority.

The culture here is very interesting, to say the least. I see some of the features of fantasy villages and towns right here every day, and I'm keeping my eyes and ears open. I've bought two of their distinctive headdresses so far (one is red and white, the most common here; the other is black and white, commonly worn by the PLO--and there's a lot of them in town too!). And I'm gathering carpets, jewelry and perfume, which is very cheap here. (Prerecorded cassettes of the latest music can be bought for 50 cents each, but I believe they violate our copyright laws.)

On the job here, I've gotten some outstandingly detailed maps of the area. So armed with those and the things I'm learning here, I should be able to get some outstanding desert adventures and scenarios together for the myriad RPs I play.

Unless I think of something else to type (I usually do that too late), the rest of this zine should be comments on A&E #102. I really wish I weren't so busy so I could type more often like in my earlier days, but my job (defending democracy, etc.) is more important. But if I can spare a few hours every now and then, you'll never see the end of me. ONWARD!

4 March 84: COMMENTS ON A&E #102 from Sheikh Vincent of Arabia

CA 22.6% UK 21.3% DC 10.3% ICELAND(!) 8.0%

No coup this month; it seems as though CA and the UK are always jockeying for the #1 spot. It is interesting to note, however, the surprise solo coup attempt by LJP Gillespie on behalf of Iceland. Even though he came in a respectable fourth, he deserves a bow for the effort. (But I win first place for the most isolated.)







THE DARK AGES PAGES #10

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COMMENTS ON #103

JOHN SAPIENZA: Erin is a system with skill advancement. The %s given are Starting %. Sorry I didn't make that clear. I have previously responded to the idea that one second = a combat round.//Under the system I proposed, yes, Greatswords and Greataxes would be  $+4/2D6/Best:10$  sec; and yes, that would not be realistic. I have changed the system slightly, using A&Eers' comments (both in person and in print). The feedback has helped me solidify several aspects of the game.//Incidentally, note that Erin has a STRJCTURE, so it was easy for you to extrapolate extensions to the system.

NICK LARTER: I am surprised, shocked, overwhelmed and pleased at the reception you gave my Roundless article in #99.//I have included the updated version, incorporating further ideas on the subject.//please feel free to present stats for Erin, based on contemporary weapons.

VINCE FOSTER: Yes, I agree that DEX affects an action's speed. Thus  $(STR\%+DEX\%)/2 = \text{Weapon \%}$ . In Erin, Weapon % determines the weapon's speed.//Thanks for the feedback on my system.//Your note on Punching speed is well taken. Best Speed on a Punch is now 1 sec. (A tolerable compromise?)

DAVID R. DUNHAM: My bow data is not wrong. I have no bow data, as bows were not in use in Ireland (except for the Daoine Sidhe, "Thee-na=shee," the Fairies/Elves). The weapons chart with bows was SCOT FRITZ'S--and listed as belonging to him.//Your bow information is correct. X-bows are simpler to operate than others. I do not know why SCOT has them as more difficult. SCOT?

DAVID FLIN: #100's bacover reminds me of a drawing that includes a flying ship! (Funny--The Artist) Glad you liked the cover (a Martian front cover!)

DAVID UNION: RIGHT ON ALL COMMENTS. THANKS FOR THE FEEDBACK.

STEVE GILHAM: Que? Inspiration? Did I say something I don't know about? By the way, my last name is WIXTED, not Wixtead. Thanks.//My system still does not allow for martial artists killing three men in 0.9 seconds. But then the martial arts were not available in Ireland in the dark ages. I do not claim the perfect system, nor did I intend for this to be one. I designed a system I like. The system is not LoA, and therefore is not universal.

LEE: Help! If a human character, Mr. Joe Average, wants to learn a martial arts-type Movement attack, how many attacks can he make in one Round (12 seconds)? What is it based on in LoA?//if Ed Excellent has MIRACLE as his highest Rating and chooses not to be a priest, what happens to MIR? The rules don't seem to mention that; it only says that MIR must be the highest or zero.//[LoA MOV Attack Speed depends on body part weight (Kick = Heavy, Punch = Light; see 9.4). Joe can do one MOV Attack/phase (six per round)...at 5 Energy Pts per Kick or 1 EP per Punch. Or Joe can do multiple Attacks/phase (as Simultaneous Skills; see 15.5) at -5%, -20% and -35% respectively--and get even more tired.// Ed's MIR stays his highest Rating until another passes it; then it falls to 0%, whether he's a priest or not.--LG]

PAUL WATERS: I am not particularly concerned with types of attacks (chopping, thrusts); I am more concerned with the illusion of combat than the actual gritty reality. If I wanted realism, I'd sign up with the Armed Forces and meet exciting unusual people and kill them. Legal murder does not excite me, thank you. I play FRPs to get out of my system those aggressive aspects of my personality that are socially trained into all males as "acceptable, proper" ways of life. (Why can you go into a toy store and see replicas of items designed to murder people? We tell people that it is okay to kill.)



FRPs have stressed combat for much too long. It is time to get into other, better aspects of the game, and tone down the combats. War will be around for a long time. FRPs are great for interest, and I like a good fight as much as the next player (as I eagerly present another combat system below), but we don't have to kill. "To wish for victory in war is to wish the other side death."

The possibilities of FRP in attitude-shifting and history teaching are amazing. The possibilities are awesome: learning that talking is better than fighting, learning that blacks and homosexuals are just like everyone else, learning what life was like 10, those many years ago. Roleplaying can expand to different situations. There is a game out that deals with roleplaying different contemporary scenarios as a parlor game. The game itself is a deck of cards. Two people pick, with items like "You are a teacher who just found out your student is lying to you" or "Try to sell a vacuum clear to a "housewife." Even though the game is stereotyped, it seems to be fun.

PAUL, the preceding tirade was not directed at you per se. Please ignore your name at the head of it. Thanks. (The man has finally flipped out!?, Morality? In FRPs? Don't be absurd!?) What I think I was trying to say to you is that I don't want to know that "half my intestines are spilling out the gash in my stomach; my liver is now vying for space near my rectum." I am more than content with "a wicked slash to the stomach; take 4 STA points."

#### THE MODIFIED ERIN SYSTEM

Melee Weapon	Stress Points	Damage	Best Speed	Speed Penalty	SPEED OF WEAPON IS BASED ON SKILL IN THAT WEAPON (Plus any Speed Penalty)	
					Skill %	Speed in Sec
Grapple	-	varies	1	-		
Dirk	4	D4	1	-		
Garrote	1	D5	2	+1	01-19%	6
QStaff (2H)	6	D5	2	+1	20-39%	5
Club	6	D6+1	3	+2	40-59%	4
Handaxe	6	D6+1	3	+2	60-79%	3
Shortsword	6	D6+1	3	+2	80-99%	2
Spear	3	D6+1	3	+2	100%+	1
Battleaxe (2H)	8	2D6	4	+3		
Longsword (2H)	8	2D6	4	+3		
Sling (2H to load)	1	D6	3	+2		

DEFENSE with the Erin system is either Parry or Dodge, taking one second each. While small weapons are faster to interpose, longer weapons haven't so far to move.

If two skills are used at once, both are halved. So if a character both Attacks and Dodges, both Skill %s are halved. There are three basic ways of combat: 1) All Out Defense by parry or dodge; 2) All Out Attack, using full Attack % with no attempt to parry or dodge; and 3) (the most used) Attack when you can and Dodge or Parry when needed. I realize that parrying should prevent the Attack, but I prefer halving Attack as it can fall under the rule for using two skills at once. Note that any two skills used at once are halved, not just combat skills.

OPTION You can take twice normal speed with your skill at the regular %, or you can split the penalty at 75%/25% depending upon what skill you want to emphasize.

#### MAGIC AND THE DRUIDS

Web THH #61

The following is an excerpt from the forthcoming ERIN game. Those who took advantage of my offer for parts of the game can just take this section out of A&E and use it in your campaign. This section deals with ERIN's magic system and is (c) Martin Wixted, 1984. The second half will appear in a future issue, delineating the individual virtues (mostly standard-type spells).

## DRUID INITIATION RITES

After the Triennial Feis in which candidates are chosen for acceptance into the Druid faith, each candidate is indoctrinated individually, one at the beginning of each month. The order of the initiations is random.

On a specific night, the initiate proceeds to a select glen on Tara Hill and waits for the Druid processional. A quiet group of Druids will enter the grove. There will be three Druids acting as guards and also the Revealer of the Secrets, the Master Bard, and the Chief Druid. The Revealer will ask the initiate if he or she is prepared for the test, for the attempt to gain favor with the Mother Goddess and to be elevated above normal men into the spiritual favor of the Goddess.

The initiate will then remove all clothing and receive a tricolor robe of blue, green and white, open down the front to symbolize extreme poverty and willingness to hide nothing from the Goddess. The Revealer will crown the initiate with an ivy wreath and administer an oath not to reveal the mysteries that are about to be shown.

The initiate will then be instructed to pass through the Tolmen (a holed stone) as an act of ritual purification and preparation for rebirth into a new life, in preparation for great and important truths.

The Revealer then requires the initiate to take another oath not to reveal any secrets of the Druids under pain of death. The Revealer then places a cold, gold adder's egg in the initiate's hands. The initiate must go into the Dolmen (a tomb) for three days and nights, to discover the mysteries of the Goddess, to find the faith and strength within him or herself, to use the Adder's Egg as the judge of success in finding these truths.

The Revealer says, "If you discover the Mother Goddess, you will know it. You are not permitted any sustenance except for the faith and guidance offered by the Goddess. You are not to exit the Dolmen until called forth, back into the land of the living. You are to speak to no one."

The Revealer will ask if the initiate is ready. Then the Master Bard will ask if the initiate is ready. Finally, the Chief Druid will ask if the initiate is ready. The initiate will be led to the Dolmen and left inside. The Druids will leave. The Dolmen is on Druid hallowed ground and will not be disturbed.

### INSIDE THE DOLMEN

There is a stone shelf for reclining along a side wall, away from the open doorway. There is an air hole in the ceiling. There is a dirt floor--and cold stone walls. Here the initiate waits for three days and nights, conscious of the Adder Egg placed in his or her possession.

The lack of food and water and the silence of the Dolmen enable the initiate to gather inside him or herself; to explore unknown aspects and to push past many self-imposed limits. There, the great transformation may happen. The Mother Goddess may enter into the candidate's spirit--or the candidate will be shunned, unwanted by the Goddess.

#### The Mechanics

The character has three tries to make a WIL% saving roll to succeed (there being three days of the ritual). If all three rolls fail, the Mother Goddess has not chosen the candidate. He or she will be asked to return the egg upon exiting the chamber, given his or her own clothes again--and then must leave. There is no shame in the refusal, only despair at not being one of the chosen. There is no second chance. The Goddess has refused you.

### THE THIRD DAY

Sometime before dawn, the procession will return to the Dolmen and call forth the initiate. Should the initiate have succeeded, it will be evident. (The person's attitude alone will show the answer the Goddess gave.) The candidate will then be asked if he or she kept all the commandments as directed. If the initiate kept them, the processional will proceed away from the Dolmen, the ritual finished.



The Mechanics: The Revealer of Secrets has Detect Lie 200%, so lying will not help the candidate. If the candidate has spoken to anyone, eaten, or drunk anything, the Revealer will proceed to the Temple at Tara. A ceremony will commence, ending in the Keeper of Secrets putting the initiate to death.

#### THE VERIFICATION

The initiate will be blindfolded and directed along, towards a small lake to one side of the Tarahonge. The initiate is then forced along a narrow path caused by twelve Druids who stop him or her--and then throw him or her into the lake. This ceremony is accompanied by chants, hollers, "dog barking," horn blowing, cries, and thunder. The initiate may then take off the blindfold and is directed back to shore.

At the point the sun begins to come up, and the rays will bathe the initiate walking into the sunrise. Upon regaining land, the initiate will be greeted with a ring of wood, blazing away. The initiate will be directed to take the final step and walk through the fire. Once all this has been done, the procession will turn towards the Temple and lead the candidate into it.

The Mechanics: The water will keep the candidate wet, to protect him or her when walking through the fire. The noises are made by the Druids, to intimidate and distract the candidate.

#### THE INVESTITURE

In the Temple sits the Arch Druid and the other members of the Inner Circle. The Arch Druid will tell the candidate that he or she has successfully completed the rites of passage and is now worthy to be called an Initiate.

The Arch Druid will explain that the hall of Druids was the perils and temptations of evil afflictions, that the immersion of water symbolized the water that encircled the Earth. As Hu (or Ceridwen), the candidate came forth from that flood a new person. The trial by fire symbolized the fire that is to encircle the earth; as in the trial by water, the candidate has passed through it and gone on.

A teacher has been chosen for the candidate and will now be presented. They will be told to prepare for learning from each other, and the Arch Druid will instruct them to retire to the forest to study, to condition their bodies and minds, to learn to use the gift of the Goddess: the Dreamstone.

#### The Mechanics

The Arch Druid selects the teacher; it will always be a same-sex situation.

The initiate spends the next game year in training. If the character makes the appropriate Saving Roll, that ability is +1 (and +5%, so that WIL 10/50% goes to 11/55%). The Saving Rolls are: WIL%, STR%, AGI%, STA%, APP% (the person has a greater air of authority and power), and VOI% (the person will be trained to sing).

The following skills will be added to the character's skills: Advanced Numbers (INT%), Law (INT%), Pass without Trace (WIL%); Sling (STR%/DEX%), Quarterstaff Attack (STR%/DEX%), Quarterstaff Defense (\*STR%/DEX%); and any four Herbal Skills (INT%/WIL%). (If the character already has one of these skills, the new skill level is (1.5 x Old Skill Level). The Quarterstaff and Sling are marks of the Druid; other weapons are not advocated.

Most important and above all else, the initiate will be trained to use the Virtues that live in the Dreamstone. Known by non-Druids as Adder's Eggs, the Dreamstones are called Goddess Crystals by the Druids. There is a finite number of these Crystals. The magic used to create them is no longer made available to the world by the Goddess. They are gifts of the Goddess and bestow magical abilities on their owner.

A Crystal contains the memories of all its past usage and enables the present wearer to use its knowledge as he or she sees fit. Crystals are known as Dreamstones (especially by the Daoine Sidhe), for the memories of the stone occasionally touch an owner's mind when asleep.







ZINE WITH NO NAME in: Godzilla Meets Dirty Harry

Dreams of Vishnu Report: February 27th

I have now reached the halfway point in the final typing into the silly computer. I estimate eight more weekends to finish that, and two more weekends for the final picture pasting, last minute edit, rearranging, and all that bushwah. At the moment, I have a target date of May 26th (my birthday), and it looks as though I might make it.

To whet the appetites of those who want more information on the thing, here's an abridged Table of Contents:

The Multiverse

Creation (expansion of A&E #84)

The Fourteen Worlds

Hunas (Huns), Yavannas (Greeks), Shakas (Chimerians, Scythians, etc.), Chi'in (Chinese), Aryans (East Indians).

The Four Goals of Human Life: salvation, love, duty and wealth/fame/power

Castes; Kshatrya warrior code (see Abyss #23).

Hashaseen (assassins), Thuggee (human sacrificers), Dacoits (bandits).

The Four Stages of Life (child, householder, student, retired, and mendicant) [Yes, I know those are 5 stages; I can count that high even if I do use  $PI=3$  for estimates!]. Vyasadev and Manu always refer to them as the 4 Stages, however. They also call Ribhu, Sanatana, Sanat, Sanaka and Sananda the Four Kumara Brothers.

Women (I guarantee an insult a paragraph to woman libbers)

Manners, Customs, Dress; Food and Drink; Music, Poetry and Dance; Science

Time: calendar, yugas (eras), history, holidays

Cities, Villages, Housing, Extended Family; Government (and how to become it)

Vedic Literature and Religion

Attributes; Humours (see A&E #80); Skills

Money (yecch! vile stuff!); Salaries, Jobs; Taxes (even worse yecchy stuff)

Experience

Simple Combat; Advanced (or should I say "overly complicated"?) Combat

War; Four Branches of the Army (Infantry, Cavalry, Elephants, Chariots;

Medics, Engineers and Spies' Field & Siege Warfare

Healing

The Eight Yogas: mantra (prayer), karma (good deeds), raja (sacrifice), hatha (body control), samkhya (meditation), jnana (study), bhakti (devotional service), and wild (and it is too!).

Boons, Sidhis (spells, Blessings and Curses

Romance, love, marriage/married life. child bearing. (This section is longer than you think and covers not only wooing but also keeping the wife/wives happy till death, retirement or insanity do you part.)

Reincarnation (also leaving the material world for the spiritual one).

Aging

Weather

Magic Items; Gems and Jewels and their origin

The Devas (demigods, saints, angels, see Abyss #21); Ashuras (anti-devas)

Heroes, Villains, Sages and Weirdos (over 200 of these three last listings)

Animals, Plants, Drugs, Poisons, Natural Events

Other Intelligent Species

Philosophy and Timing of Encounters

Adventure Suggestions

Sample Scenario (can be played with a group or solo (if solo, don't cheat)

A rather large and tedious dictionary of all the Sanskrit names and name parts I could find (500-700), so you can name your characters intelligently.



All in all, 435 pages of manuscript at last count. Since I keep adding details, short stories and other things that pop into my head, it could be even longer.

As is easily seen, a good 85% of the game has nothing to do with violence. The combat system strongly resembles RuneQuest, but is based on an Action Point system rather than Strike Ranks. About the only new thing in the combat is the Feint. This option causes the opponent to have to save on IQ or be out of position for a number of phases. Of course, if he isn't faked out....

The magic system will frustrate a few. Instead of instant power or spells, one has to practice the eight yogas above to gain the spells and power to cast them. You wanna throw a Fireball? Sure. Just meditate for six months....

I admit that 75% of the people who buy the game will drop the mechanics and use their own favorite system and use the scenarios and the vast information on the world and the things running about in it.

One quick word of semi-warning for those who don't get along well with Christianity (no, there are no Christians in the game): I have decided to hand over all profits and proceeds from the game to support Christian missionaries in India. I won't be making a cent on this game. I figure that since I spent five years here preaching Hinduism, I might make up for it a bit by helping return the favor. So if you have any qualms about that, I thought I'd be polite and warn you.

BOOS AND HISSES, HUGS AND KISSES ON #103

NEIL FRASER: Fink! How dare you come up with such a good zine title and not let me have first use of it? Just for that, I'm gonna have Slarty Bartfarst dig a fjord through your living room!

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: Ouch! Okay, I admit I was a bit too sarcastic in my review; I even wrote Dave apologizing. However (sarcasm aside), I do think the review was accurate.//Speaking of accuracy, don't forget that engineers built bridges, domes, arches and other round objects for millennia before Archimedes discovered  $PI=22/7$ . And even more bridges before  $22/7$  was settled as being 3.14 for general use. And I can't recall any ancient engineer having any problems with his bridge or dome or arch staying up. In fact, most of the bridges I have seen were based on the oval rather than the circle, and the same goes for domes. And geodesic domes are based on hexagons.//Well, pass along my thanks to Jaffee for his swell analogy on the gem.

DAVE NALLE: A rebuttal: First, do you have a license to practice mind reading at long distance? Didn't think so. Then perhaps I can supply some facts to replace your out of state telepathy.

I did indeed read all through the rules. (I had to, or how could I have found the faults?) I agree that I overdid the sarcasm, but I had no other reasons for disliking the game besides the ones I gave in the review.

Finally, I never stated that attributes should have nothing to do with skills. I stated that I thought that ESP and rationality had little to do with Sculpture. Your pointing out that Dexterity influences Typing hardly answers why those two attributes were chosen to affect Sculpture. Why not Dexterity or any Artistic type attribute, or good old Education or IQ? That is the problem. Not use of attributes, but rather the ones used.

Unlike you, I can't say how your playtest groups use the combat rules. I only saw the rules themselves. Thus I can't base a review on what somebody does with the rules three thousand miles away. I can only review the rules themselves.



Joy unbounded, a dole cheque. This means that I can afford...

I CHING, YOU CLAUDIJS 6 7/8

by the three-dot king, Harry Robertson of 193 Bruntsfield Pl, Edinburgh, EH10 4DQ, SCOTLAND Tel 031-229, 4682 (if anyone really wants to phone from abroad!), look it up in the book).//My father has repossessed his typewriter, so this is being typed with all possible thanks by Lee Gold.

Ah well; on with the show or some comments on 102...

(Mark 3: #1 is about a foot under the crud on my desk and #2 was libelous; try again, huh...)

FOSTER (Otyugh Obituary): Yr magical languages: Latin--since it was the major medieval written language. Surprisingly enough, there was a great deal of "magic" written in it. Have you considered Norse as well? As a sidetrack, a lot of the runes carved into various parts of the world translate along the lines of "Harald Onetooth was here." What's Assurian?//Like the offbeat weapons. The spraycan also makes a nifty flamethrower if you put a light to the spray. Roger Moore zaps a snake (?) doing this in one of the Bond films.

UNION: Astonishing layout...! I'm stunned.//Yr ct to WEBB: This is pretty well what's happened to POW in Robert SAUNDERS' VRQ. (I think we haven't met any magic yet to test out part two of the theory.)

AIRD: Welcome. Purely as a matter of interest, what's your full address?

SADAYAMA: Bienvenu a L&S. (Well, someone wanted a multilingual zine, I forget who though...)

FOSTER (Otyugh Speaks): re yr ct to me: Sh, you weren't supposed to notice. Seriously: indeed they are, and the reason is that the rough notes were lying at the back of my NPC folder for several years, and I plain forget where the original source was. My apologies to Mike Ferguson for the unintended plagiarism.

LOSS(?): Yay for the ISPPIC. Chelsea (see Terra Ferreta 5 in 102) not only wants to join but is prepared to give bomb-throwing seminars, for when the refs try to cart scab NPCs thru our democratically-elected lines (as they will). Tues & Thurs, 7 pm, her place; it's up to you to get to 1921-type Boston, however...

FORRESTER III: Dawntime looks interesting too.

HEIN: re ct to SAUNDERS: Also the way he types it makes it damn difficult to read the zine in the typewriter. [ct from R. SAUNDERS: Cheek! I can explain.]

LONG: ct to LEE: Blake's 7 was SF. Star Trek was sci-fi. That's my opinion....(Obligatory contentious comment.)

Hmm, end of comments. RAEBNCs to everyone else. It was a good issue but I couldn't find much to comment on. BILL KEYES was going to get a lengthy ct, but Lee said in 103 what I was going to a helluva lot better than I could, so...

Let's see if 103 is any better, shall we.

BOLT: ct to me: the titles are London's Underworld, Mayhew's London, and Mayhew's Characters; publisher: Spring Books, Spring Pl, London NW5. They cost 21 shillings each. I think they may be out of print though....

HEYDT (ct to JAMES re his ct to DA SILVA): (stick with it): But round here "Leslie" is masculine and "lesley" feminine. How about Divineperchildperchild-hilary? (As in Hilary Waugh)//Scenario Sources: Shakespeare's well worth digging into too. For instance, "Macbeth"--where the characters might be sent out to drag in the weird sisters to explain themselves further or hired to make sure Fleance really is dead or join the rebellion or...etc.

LARTER: Interesting and logical piece on firevenders. You seem to have this happy knack of making the unlikely plausible. Stick with it.//Are you planning to explain Secretaries more fully sometime? They seem somewhat omnipresent in your world.



WOOLLEY: Thanks for the explanations. I think I follow now. BUT yr aging (groans). Why does the player get to choose the characteristic that goes down? It seems a mite unrealistic

SAPIENZA: ct to LEWIS: Misogyny? No, but there's an awful lot of MCPism over here unfortunately.

REDDEN: I actually enjoy rolling up Traveller characters and, if I'm bored, I'll go off and create a couple, so I've always got a handy pile of (N)PCs just rarin' to go...//More on this below.

FRASER: ct to BURT re ct to HEIN (confused...): 38% of the vote and two seats short of a majority? Luxury. You should try living here under dear old gerrymandering Maggie T and the archaic British voting system. Consider: Tories 39% of the vote, overall majority of well over 100 in 650 seat House; Lib/SDP Alliance 23% odd of the vote: about 20 seats.

Brief pause for a quote from SAunders' CoC game.

GM: There's a glowing blue rune on the door.

Smart alec PC: If we go thru there, we'll be glowing blue ruins.

Ah well, I thought it was funny....

Back to the comments....

FOSTER: Altered Images, new wave? Reacts as per "Cause Acute Pain" spell. They're as MOR as they come. Now for real new wave, try UK Decay, The Exploited Discharge, etc.

DUNHAM: SAunders' VRQ campaign doesn't have Healing as a spell, and people don't die in vast numbers as you predict. People tend just to get incapacitated, then carted off to a Healer to be stitched up. Something like your "Death in RQ" is also in operation which helps a bit.

BROOKS: Re ct to ME: risky, risky, more than my job's worth, y'know. Oh, all right then; just don't tell anyone who sent you.

SELF: Before anyone tells me, I know the American Revolution started in 1776. My arithmetic just went a bit off-course for a second. [Flunk! 1776 was the Declaration of Independence. The Battle of Bunker's Hill (fought on Breed's Hill) was in 1775, and the First Continental Congress in 1774.--LG]

MONS JOHNSON: Willkommen!//yr ct to MUROMCEW: Whilst I appreciate that you're a squaddie, in my book anyone who uses phrases like "Nuke 'em till they glow" has me worried.

End comments. Skims back thru....Ah well, not much on RPGing in there. What's wrong with me just now? (The fact that it's now 6:00 AM and I haven't slept for about 30 hours has nothing to do with it, of course...)

Right on to JOHN REDDEN's League Cosmos Traveller character generator. This brings the number of different systems I have to four. Basic Traveller. Year-Allocation: Books 4 & 5, Paranoia Press's "Scouts & Assassins" and "Merchants & Merchandise," and Trevor Graver's "Criminals" from WD19 and Andy Slaik's Scout Expansion from WD20. And finally Robert McMahon's Merchant expansion from "Alien Star" 1. Throw in John Conquest's Alternative system for the Navy and Marines (WD31) and John Redden's to make the fourth. Whew!

Let's create a Naval character from each system, using identical stats, and then create a random one and see how it goes. Ready? Here goes. Stats: STR 9, DEX 9, END 7, INT 8, EDU 10, SA 5. (Basic TRAV = BT, High Guard = AT, John Conquest's system = JC, and John Redden's = JR.) Much frantice dice rolling later, the results:

BT: a non-commissioned 30-year-old with Vac Suit 2 and Medic 2, a blade and 10 K Cr

AT: a dead 25-year-old. First PO with Computer, Carousing and two Gunnery Skills.



JC: A budding Captain Kirk with a chip on the shoulder, since he was booted out of the service in cuts at age 21 with Pilot2, Nav, Fire Control and Computer at 1 each; and Technician (Engineering) and Medic at Lvl 0 each.

JR: Basically a 24-year-old bushman: Jumping, Swimming, Climbing, medic and Vac Suit at 1--and Nav, Survival and JOT at 2. App -7, for -5 and Psi 10 giving (I think) [REDDEN: by (2\*Psi\*Str\*Enc, I assume you mean 2\*(Psi+STR+End) rather than (2\*Psi)+STR+End] Pss 52 and PSR 50.

Interesting. Everyone would appear to have individual ideas on what being in the Navy entails, to judge from the range of skills on show, but JC and JR certainly seem to give you a better idea of what a character is like than the BT number-crunching exercise.

Okay, let's run thru a random character, shall we? (Shut up, I'm going to anyway). First off the stab and assignation.

	STR	DEX	END	INT	ED	SOC	Stab	Total	
BT:	9	5	7	6	9	2	38		Marine
AT:	9	8	7	9	9	5	47		Marine (Draftee)
JC:	5	4	B	B	8	4	43		Marine
JR:	10	7	9	9	6	7	48		Nondescript

All these marines! Honest, that's just the way it came out. Already we see that JR's character has a distinct advantage in number terms, and that the BT character is a back-street kid made good. On with the show.

Well, everyone survived this time anyway. But again the results were somewhat different.

The BT marine managed to get commissioned and in three terms picked up LVL 1 skills in: comms, electronics and tactics as well as improving DEX and STR by 1 each. Upon mustering out, the marine was awarded membership of the Travellers Guild for no apparent reason, as well as a neat little gift of +2 to height. Again, there seems little beyond this other than as an exercise in number-crunching; the character is given little "body" by the generation system.

The AT character comes over as a gung-ho John Wayne-type. In three terms, the marine racked up: cbt rifle 2, fwd observer 2, zero-g cbt, wheeled vehicle, and medic--plus an appearance on the recruiting posters (Recruiting 1) and MCG (and bar) and MCVF. Oh, and a commission. For this the marine was rewarded with membership of Travellers' Guild and 12,000 Cr.

John Conquest's character also received a gratuity of 12,000 Cr and a pension of 6,000 Cr per annum, for only two terms work as a platoon equipment officer with skills in Admin (2) and Mech (2), as well as three weapons skills.

Finally, the JR character picked up a grand total of three skills and got established as some sort of crook (computer, forgery and bribery) at age 28, although with a FOR of 12 the person might have some sort of magical career ahead--if training is available.

To sum up, JC and JR both give the player a wide choice of skills, allowing one to build a character to one's own specifications far more easily than in AT, while BT can be pretty well written off as useless. Whether this is a good thing is a different question. Certainly I feel that a beginning player could easily just get confused using JC or JR.

Anyway, till next time, "Keep watching the Skies." Bye.



NOTES FROM A BAD D.M.

by Brian Lane, 1550 S. Santa Fe Ave. #11, Vista, CA 92083  
as typed by Lee Gold (thanks)

A certain notorious rabbit from Monty Python started some speculation on how it obtained a set of "vorpal" teeth. Was the creature an illusion of incredible power, perhaps a mutation of the ever popular Thunder Bunnies from Arduin Grimoire?

We decided a much more subtle answer was more likely. The rabbit was nothing more than a fighter with a vorpal blade, who had been polymorphed into a fuzzy, cute "harmless" Wabbit. The reasoning was thus: our DMing group ruled that all possessions as well as the person victimized by a Polymorph were transformed (mainly to stop looting by other characters and to lessen the amount of magic temporarily available to the characters).

We reasoned that if an item was functioning at the time of transformation (such as armor), it could function in the new form. Further, if passive magic (meaning the beneficiary did not have to activate it) could function, why not items that needed only mental commands? These would include any item that did not need to be physically manipulated: eyes of charming, many rings and amulets, and some miscellaneous magic items. We specifically excluded any magic item that was held unless it was in hand and activated, so the Dagger of Venom in its sheath would be unusable.

Realizing the immediate results might unbalance the various campaigns if applied freely, we decided to have each magic item save vs. Disintegration to be allowed to function within these guidelines.

(I realize I haven't mentioned the specific effects of, say, being turned into a dog whilst wearing +5 plate mail. This was left up to the individual DM. I allow the magical effect to survive the transformation, so that particular dog would be AC 7 + 5 (AC 2). This would be an easy way to make enchanted monsters and safely "store" magic items.)

My favorite part of the system is that when a creature dies, the form remains the same. I let the magic item be corrupted along with the corpse when putrefaction sets in. It's a great drain on character resources to haul a corpse back to town to have Dispell Magic cast on a monster that might have something useful incorporated into it.

This resulted in PCs casting Dispell Magic on new monsters during the first couple of rounds of melee. It worked quite well for the early encounters, but after a few dispelled forms were worse than the polymorphed monster first met, their habit stopped abruptly. (Oh dear, the dog with Teeth of Wounding turned back into an Ogre Mage. Oh dear me.//He-he, he-he!)

Note: for those who would quibble, an Ogre Mage may only polymorph to a bipedal, humanoid form, so I rule that if polymorphed into something not covered by its own power, it's stuck.)

I like to encourage players to use standard spells in new or different ways. I've never been very good about coming up with new uses myself. The only one I've used in a new way was Purify Food and Drink. I was running a lizardman cleric at the time when one of the players had a favorite character killed. Well, the spell was available, and I was willing to risk the wrath of my ghod, so we have a Preserve Corpse aka Purify.

For those who've been wondering, I am quite new to A&E, having seen only two issues. Undoubtedly, much of what I have to say has appeared in earlier issues. Nonetheless, I will continue to inflict my opinions and ideas on you hapless readers. (At least as long as Lee's patience lasts. A long, long time, I hope.)



# STARSHIPS AND SORCERY

ISSUE # 3





From the Toubes of Netherwhere, the clicking keys of one David Union,  
4 Old English Road, Worcester, MA 01609; (617) 755-4582; (c) Union 1984

S&S-2

Hmmm,...seem to have misplaced a month or so there (somewhere).

Back from Boskone, had a great time. Briefly met Lee and a few others and decided to go to Lunacon. Did manage to miss most of the scheduled events though. I think that I will begin with some sparse notes on A&Es #100 & 101 and then see what begins to grow....Re A&E #100

RANDALL STUKEY: I like the idea of a COM attack, but in a player group where characters have an average COM of 22+ (in a total of three campaigns, about 22 regular heroes (some alternates)), this might encourage COM wars. I myself cannot imagine a person with a 30+, and having a COM of 50 might present an interesting conceptual difficulty.

Some of the skills are a bit picky. Detective work does little enough as it is, and some of the skills listed are not worth points. And although a Seduction roll between two NPCs might be useful (I'd rather arbitrate), it is more fun to ROLE-PLAY the seduction and base the result on that. After all, it is a role-playing game, not a roll-playing game.

I too have concocted an "astral projection" power, but am not yet convinced that it is necessary. Judging by the comics, the source for the game, your cost is a bit high.//Note my comments on Familiars were written quite awhile before they saw print. Also, some of the powers you suggest have been accounted for in the modifications mentioned by Quentin Long.//Lastly, play-balance is the objective of the game designers, whereas "realism" is the objective of the GM. Properly run, money matters don't seem to hinder play. But despite all this, I really did like some of the ideas.

STEVE GILHAM: We once had a half-plant/half-person lycanthrope in a D&D campaign. It ended shortly thereafter.

SCOT FRITZ & MARTIN WIXTED: Unfortunately, in much real fighting between two swordsmen (or women), the direct attack is not too likely to succeed. The feint and riposte are more effective, and the attack time is pretty much different. Also, real time combat takes a lot longer to play than real-time, making it more complicated to match a magic system to it (a "close to RT" system). Weapon use decision should always come into play, but seldom does except in AD&D. I am working on this for DQ.

LEE: How about describing some of these plants?

MICHAEL JOHNSON: This may sound somewhat uninformed, but could you sum up your intended game, "Dream of Vishnu" in a lion or two?

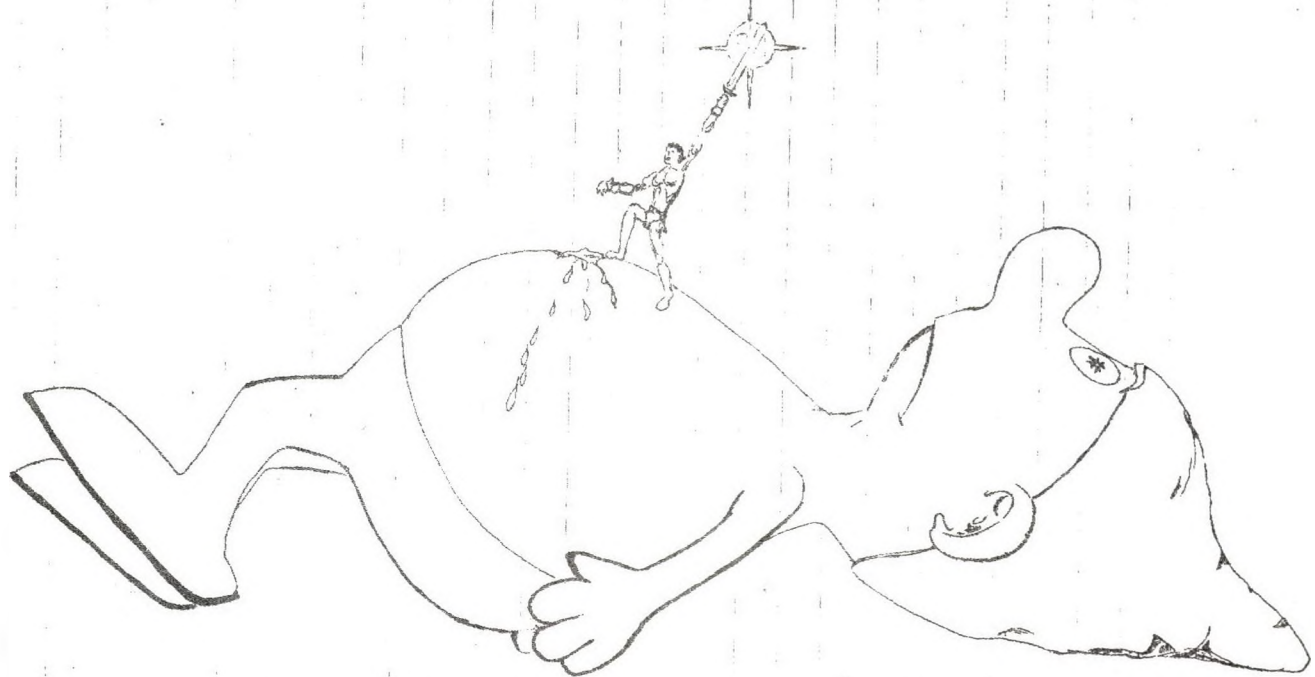
ROB ELLWOOD: A DIFFERENT world.....Interesting.

NIAL SHAPERO: Although I cannot say I really liked OTHER SUNS (see below), there is a lot of good source material in it for use in SF rolegaming, and your material in #100 is a good example. My main qualms with the system are: 1) It seemed to have no underlying principle from which not-covered decisions could be made (non-arbitrarily). 2) It seemed to try to make sure that Will figured into just about every calculation wrt PC generation. 3) Although I can see where some of the numbers came from, they are not neat. It seems as if you found a number range you wanted and then constructed some combination to generate it. 4) Somewhat silly fumble chart (p 16). But I do really like the alien races, backgrounds, etc.

GENERAL: Greatly enjoyed issue, especially the fiction, and the cover was fantastic.

"One became great by expecting the impossible, another by expecting the eternal; but he who expected the impossible became the greatest of all." - S. Kierkegaard





**SMURFSLAYER...THE MOVIE**  
 COMING SOON TO A THEATER NEAR YOU!

The Why of It, part 3:

The only other person on that particular transcab was an elderly woman, who seemed completely engrossed in one of the latest best-sellers. Several people got on and off during the many intervening stops but Jim didn't know any of them. He simply relaxed and recalled Jean's schedual; by now she should be home even if she had made a few stops on the way. He had no idea what might have made Mike suspicious, but decided not to call ahead. Catching her a bit off guard would be his best chance of noticing any duplicity.

Jim pulled up the collar of his coat as he got out of the transcab. "And this is supposed to be spring!" he muttered under his breath as he connected with his office computer via his TYT and got the apartment mumber he was looking for. He crossed the sparsely trafficked road and entered the apartment building. After checking in with building security he went up to the fifth floor, found the correct apartment, and rang the buzzer. He then waited a few moments and tried again. After the forth time the light went on on the door-intercom and he heard Jean's voice respond,

"Wait a sec." After a few moments of waiting the voice returned, "O.K., who is it?"

"Jim Alexander."

"Oh, Mr. Alexander. Come in."

Jim entered. Jean was in a bathrobe near a desk apparently trying to organize a large stack of papers. Jim said, "I want to talk to you for a few minutes. Do you have time?"

Jean Answered, "I was just going through some stress reports on the launch frame, Mr. Alexander. I was hoping to finish them by the



end of the week. And I'm sorry about the last set of reports. I had just started and I wasn't sure of the format..." Her voice trailed off.

"That was one of the things I wanted to talk to you about. I realize you're new, and trying to make a good impression and all, but you were hired as an engineer, not a secretary. Just turn the reports over to the clerks."

"Yes Mr. Alexander." Jean responded in a subdued voice.

"And," Jim continued, "Jerry Coruthers should be writing those computer simulations himself. That's what we pay him for."

"Yes, Mr. Alexander."

"The other thing is more of a political matter. If anyone asks you, the official project stance on the Vega incidence is, and I quote, 'We have no more information about the matter, nor have we committed ourselves to any opinion. And we are together on this.' unquote. This is a favor to Bob Sampson. That O.K. with you?"

"Yes Mr. Alexander." Jean had a slightly puzzled look on her face. She queried, "Does that mean that we do have more information on the Vega incident?"

Jim answered with flawless hesitancy. "Not...definitely. Maybe if you come by my office tomorrow I can show you. It is a little hard to explain."

Jean stepped into the kitchenette. She asked, "Can I get you something to drink, Mr. Alexander?"

"No, it's all right." Jim answered, "I have to get going in a minute. But there are two more things."

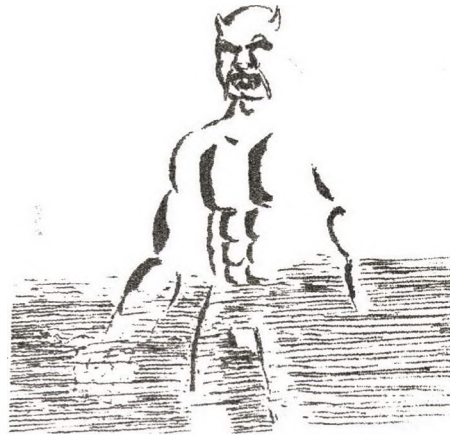
Jean came back into the room and sat down with her drink, motioning for Jim to sit down. "Oh?"

Jim said, "It has come to my attention that you have been working overall far too hard since you started. After the launch there will be precious little besides work, and I want everyone ready to handle the load. Once under way we won't be able to afford any nervous breakdowns." He went over toward the door.

"Excuse me, Mr. Alexander," Jean began, "but I thought you said that there were two things?"

"Oh, yes. Would you please call me Jim?"

--to be continued---



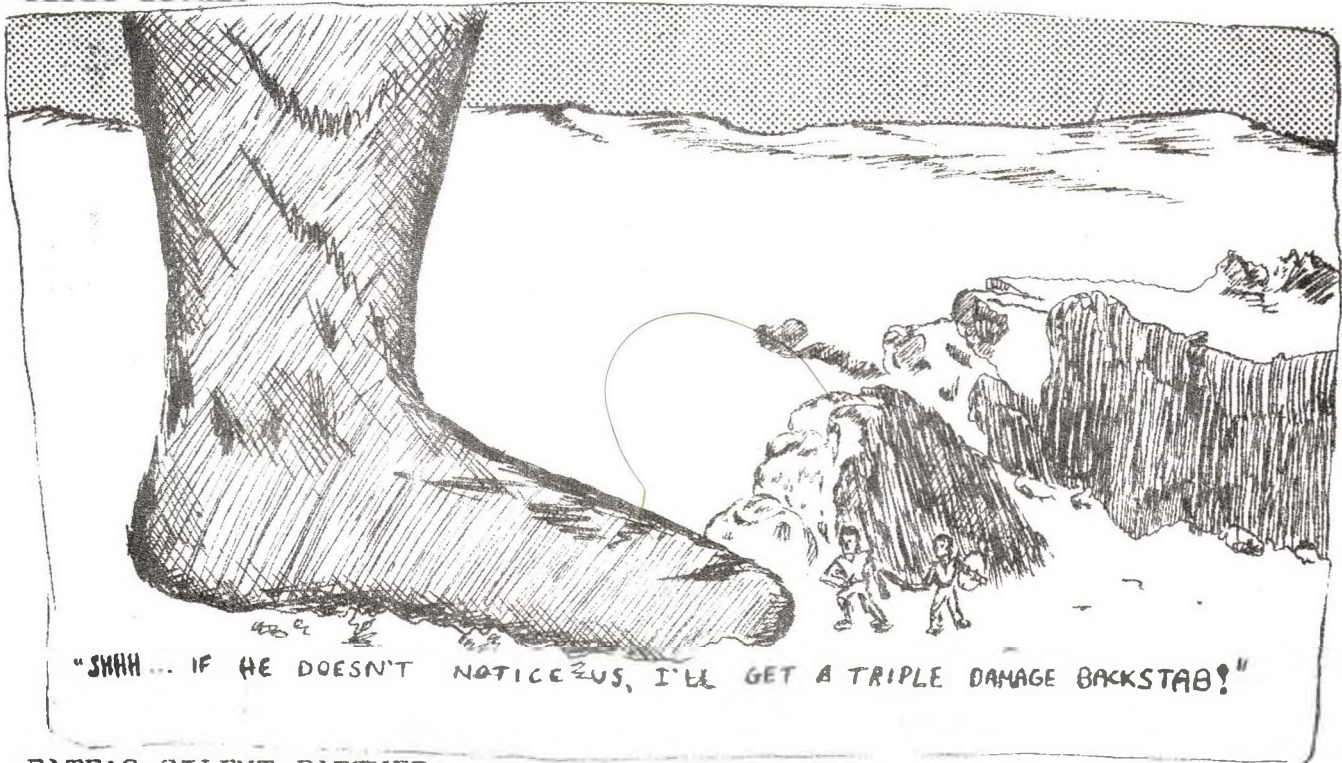
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5

"And now the time has come when we must depart: I to my death, you to go on living. But which of us is going to the better fate is unknown to all but God."  
---Socrates



#### FATE'S SILENT PARTNER:

"Pod away, Captain." said first lieutenant and survey chief Sam Connors.

"Good;" Captain Simpson said, "then call me when the pod touches down. I'll be in my cabin. This is the crew listing for the survey party. Have everyone on it suited and ready by touchdown." With that the Captain went to his cabin to rest. The crew was experienced and he was not worried that anything would go wrong with such a routine operation. And besides that there was little that could be done if anything went wrong; another pod would have to be sent down to the newly discovered world.

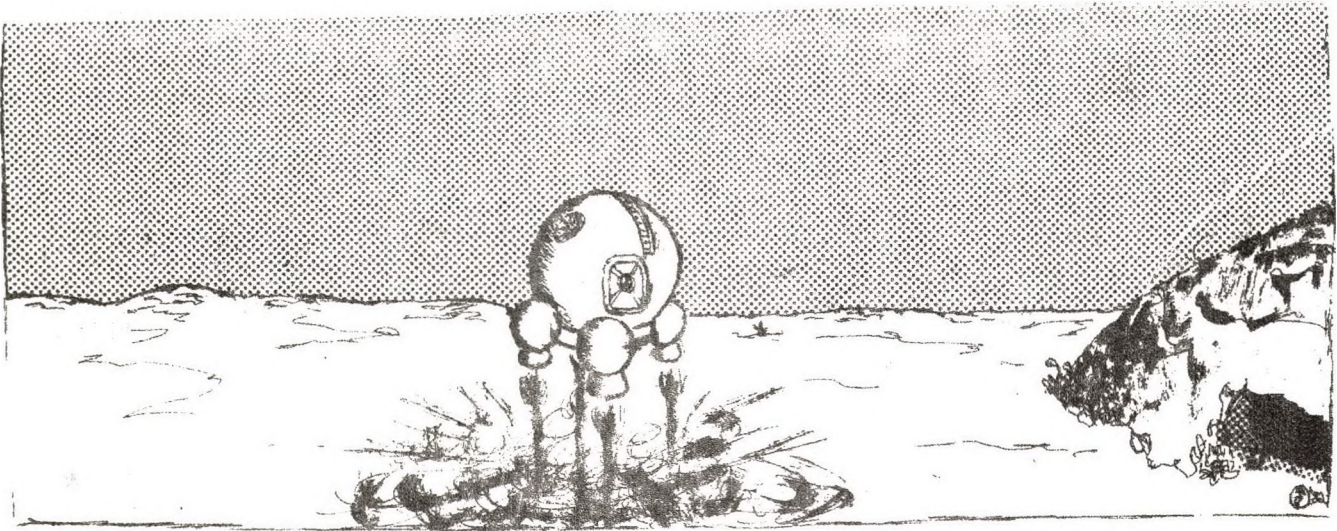
As the Captain slept his crew finished gathering all the information that they could from orbit. After correcting for an unexpected malfunction in the ship's spectroscopic sensors the crew turned its attention to the remote controlled pod that contained the matter receiver. There was a lot of information that the pod could collect from its position in a relatively close orbit to the planet that had been christened Xenia.

The eight crew members that would comprise the survey party brought their gear to the disembarkation chamber and the ship's navigator slaved the pod's controls to his console. The pod left its orbit and began spiraling down. An hour later the pod's rocket engine flared for final descent.

"Captain," the communications officer's voice said over the intercom, "the pod is landing now."

The Captain responded, "Good. I'll be at the disembarkation chamber in a few minutes. Pipe the video through the screen in there as usual."





The Captain got to the chamber just after the last of the survey party that was to go with him to the planet's surface. He flipped the videocom switch and asked the communications officer why there had been no picture during the landing.

"We got most of the instrumentals, Captain, but we had a little trouble with the pod's transmitter. Johnson thinks he's got it fixed now. We should be getting a picture about--ah, there it is. That O.K., Captain?"

The Captain thought for a minute and nodded, then said, "As long as you have a fondness for barren wasteland. I'll suit up now; have Sam give me a rundown as soon as possible."

The party got suited up and gathered the needed exploration equipment. One of the ship's engineers manned the matter transmission unit's controls. Through the radios in their space suits the survey chief filled them in.

"...and the radiation levels are acceptable. The test insects and animals on the pod seem all right. There don't seem to be any motile threats and the pod's matter receiver tested out O.K. with both the mice and the survey drone. So you're all set."

"Then here we go again." said the Captain. "I'll go first."

One by one the party was transmitted to the pod. Each left the pod quickly to hasten the arrival of the others. Kim Langly, the party's biologist, got out her bacterial samples to run atmospheric tests. An extensive array of equipment was brought into play as the planet was analyzed. As new machinery was transmitted to the party via the pod the party formed detailed descriptions of the planet's magnetic field, its atmosphere, its geothermal structure, <sup>and</sup> even its age and geologic history.

Four hours later Sam's voice once again came through all their radios simultaneously. "That's it then. All evidence indicates that the air is breathable, if a little thin. At one time or another there must have been life here. Captain?"

The Captain replied, "I think that we'll stay in suits a little longer. Then you can keep us informed of anything that happens with the test animals. And we can begin to explore."

The party assembled the rover that had been sent down in several pieces. They boarded and began traveling in a random direction. Some time later they came to a series of caves.

The Captain asked, "What do think, Mike?"

The Geologist Michael Franklin said, "Pretty typical. Regular--"

"Hey, look over there!" Bob Fine, the senior chemist, yelled and pointed off to the right of the rover.

"Well," Kim started, "I'll be--there is life here." She had turned at the shout just in time to see the small creature run into the nearest cave.



"Then that cave," said the geologist, "is definitely warranting of our attention."

The Captain turned the rover toward the cave and increased speed a little. When he got to the cave entrance, he stopped and ran an equipment check. Then he took one of the lasers out from the compartment under the seat. He turned the lights on and started up the rover, asking, "Is everyone all set?"

He rounded a corner as the murmur of approval came over his suit radio. And then stopped the rover short. He called up to the distantly orbiting ship, "Sam, are you getting this?"

Sam answered, "We have you on audio, but the visual is scratchy. We can't see any details. Not much at all, in fact. That cave must have some rock that is interfering with the transmission. But we'll get to see the recording later. Keep going if it's interesting."

The Captain and the biologist went over to examine some of the artifacts.

The voice of the ET expert came over the radio. "Primitive, maybe a trilaterally symmetrical race. That digging over there was probably either some storage area or maybe a sleeping area....If they slept, that is. But the state of preservation of these artifacts is excellent. And those bone-like structures! Although most have become dust, we may still be able to reconstruct one complete being."

"I admit," the Captain said, "that this does seem to be the find of the century. But can anyone tell me what the chances are that any of these creatures or their descendants are alive now?"

The chemist said, "Minimal, Captain. I think Kim would agree that the overall barrenness argues against it. But it would be much easier to analyze this stuff if we could take these damn suits off."

"In the absence of any reason not to--why not," the Captain agreed.

The party got some equipment out of the rover and then took off their suits. Then the Captain spotted the creature he had seen earlier at Bob's exclamation. He fired the laser, but it jumped into a passageway. "My aim must be off," he said. "So much for collecting specimens."

"Over here!" called Kim. The Captain went over to see the fungus-like plant that the biologist was referring to. When Kim went to touch the plant, it disappeared. Both were puzzled.

Then, before anything could be said, the Captain saw another of the creatures, drew his weapon and fired. He should have hit the creature dead center, but instead it disappeared.

At the same time, Mike said, "Captain, there's something wrong here. I just went to pick up one of those stone tools, and it disappeared. I don't get it." Mike went to lean against a stalagmite-like rock--and fell.

By that time, the whole party had realized that something was wrong. They went over the artifacts and tried to find something that did not



disappear. They tried to find something that was real.

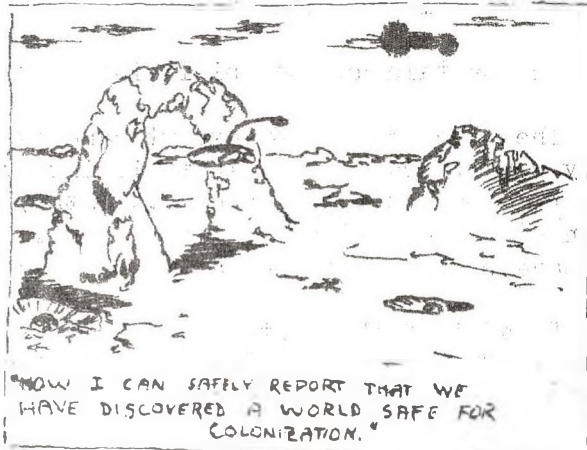
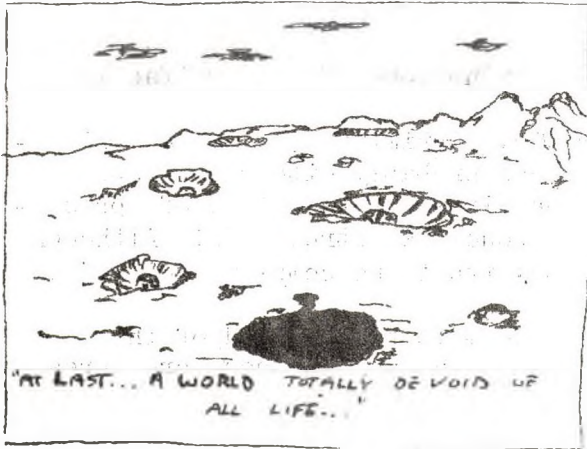
The Captain shouted, "let's get back to the rover!" He looked around. Through darkening vision he saw the others turn and fall one by one before they could move.

"Instrument malfunction, Lieutenant Connors. They never had a chance." Johnson turned slowly. "They died in seconds."

Gears turned and current flowed through its circuits. The machine scanned outward from the molten rock at the barren, airless wasteland... and chuckled.

--)D.M.U.(--

THE STAR CONQUERORS:



THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH: It is quite possible that the insects have beaten man to every invention that man claims as his own.

COMMENTS #101:

JENNIFER GOLDFINCH: I liked your poetry. "The Song of the Ages" might be nice if set to music. If I come up with anything I'll let you know.

JOHN SAPIENZA: Bravo--100% (TGD#55) !

WAYNE SHAW: (re ct to Goldberg): I have always felt that less rules work fine for an experienced GM, but poorly for the inexperienced one. On that basis, a beginner's group would do better with a fairly structured game like Champions or Superworld, while an experienced group might prefer the



flexibility of V&V.

(Re end comments): Generally I have abandoned campaigns when the player group restructures (severe change in regular attendance).

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: I have been told by several store owners that they prefer boxed games over bagged because they are harder to steal (to conceal)

GEORGE PHILLIES: I was told that you were in MITSFS; that true? As always, great story segment...

ON DRAGONQUEST:

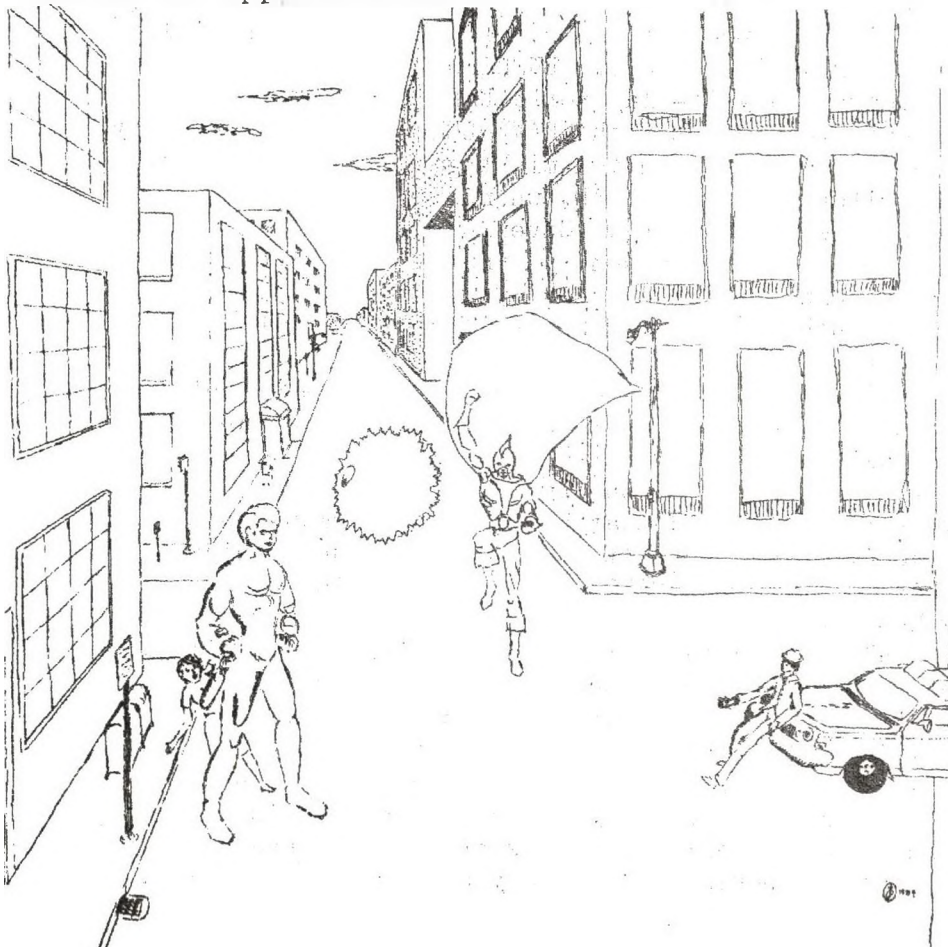
Having been practicing sword-play lately (not the SCA type, where they use all weapons like clubs) I find that the better swordsperson is MUCH better defended. The key factor is that s/he will have a real good chance to parry any incoming attack. So I propose to add the following:

- 4% for large light weapons
- 3% for med light weapon or med weight weapons
- 2% for heavy weapons
- 1% for real small weapons

to DEF where applicable, i.e. in weapon v.s. weapon combat. Bludgeoning weapons go down one category. A light weapon v.s. a heavy weapon has a decent chance to break if the added def is used, maybe +12% (87-99). These numbers seem to be pretty much minimums. They are PER RANK, but still might have to be doubled to achieve realism.

The knockout rule (16.5-New 2nd Ed.) seems a bit extreme. I think the simplest way to deal with it is just to give a save of 3\*WP+current fatigue. Or maybe WP+END+PC Difference (to reflect reaction time as part of skill, as evidenced by IV calculation). Any ideas?

Disarm system is similiarly arbitrary as it does not happen all that often in anything I have watched (of fencing). Either this should be reduced to something like (SC-20%-4%\*Rank Difference)\*15% or just give a save of either 3C (and must execute a pass action) or some multiple of MD (and can act as normal). Comments by any DQ people out there would be appreciated.



GENERAL QUESTION: A co-conspirator and I are interested in publishing a Champions scenario... What steps are taken to make the attempt?

BEWARE: Next issue of S&S will have the beginning pages of a comic book.

If you haven't noticed, \$ and time are sending this bi-monthly. I hope to catch up on comments next issue (visions of Atlantis rising from the ocean, Jesus Christ returning, and Ms Mystic #3 coming out pass before my mind...).

Until next time,

Ayu-Bowan  
David Union

(Material © 1984 David Union)



FILLER PRINCE NUMBLES

by Mark Goldberg, 6910 N. Sheridan Rd. #301, Chicago, IL 60626

A&E #100

STEVE GILHAM: Literacy was seldom better than 10% of adult population until the printing press spread into Germany. Obviously a minority would have the time, talent and temperament to be a spellcasters--and these would be almost exclusively of the Nobility and/or Priesthood, complete with appropriate attitudes/prejudices --especially the opinion (held both east and west) that handling money or practising a "trade" was socially undesirable. Nor would 1 in 300 (or more) mages erase the vast ignorance and caused plague and famine to decimate the peasantry. If mages engage in vendettas and must have quiet, isolation/meditation to function (all limited by a political/religious/educational position), I agree a society won't be "classically Feudal," but it wouldn't have to be "technomagic" advanced.// The local TRAV'puter explanation was that digital systems are destroyed by a jump-drive field so (except for certain high tech systems that produce in-solar-system-use digitals), everyone uses Analog'puters--and thus a lot of human crews too.

FRITZ & WIXTED: TSR's AD&D "Weapon Speed Factors" have little basis in reality, and some of your speeds obviously reflect lack of weapon-skill. As one trains and practices, not only does one use a weapon more efficiently (more speed and damage) but also with better control to both hit a vulnerable foe location or even deflect a foe's attack.

A&E #101 (more comments)

a particularly superb issue for fiction/writeups; take bows, everyone.

HEIN & MURRAY: Impressive skill list. Ambush is dictated by the terrain and the last skilled skulker. Several types of cooking: in a manor, farmhouse or camp --and for varied numbers. (Feeding a hundred takes a lot of organization!) Many of these skills were only taught to offspring as apprentices; few were taught formally but usually in bits and pieces mixed in with other types.

WES IVES: Thrice welcome back. Stick around; we need you too.// "Revised D&D" is a step in the proper direction. It also doesn't pretend (a la AD&D) to cover everything. Usually a player's only protection vs the all too common Killer DM is his "Not Cheating" (i.e. playing by the rules). BUSHIDO is pretty usable, but CAR WARS is the only easy-to-learn, easy-to-play sorta-FRPG you might be able to use as is. (It's also fairly easy to connect with TRAVELLER).// Hmm, if magic by its very nature remained individually taught, then you might get the same kind of effect as publishing new fantasy writers did in 900 AD, when scribing was a profession and a dozen hand-copied books was a library. Given the eccentricities of spellcasters, how could magic ever be put on an assembly line or mass-produced? How's the A&E Play By Computer game going?

WILSON HEYDT: Your zines are much too brief. Hokay, I'll bite. Whadaya mean TRAV spaceships need safety margins?

VINCENT BURCHETT: Gee, you might have my voice on tape. I wandered into the Gencon RPGA meeting too. Would love to hear what Mentzer has in mind for RD&D. It sounded better than AD&D's 'eventual' rewrite.

LARTER/CORNELIUS: "Butterfly Flick"? Lola the Leather Ligaturess.

WAYNE SHAW: I think Steve Perrin realized that a Thor or Superman would detract from the roleplay and make it more difficult for the GM to run (a high power) SUPERWORLD. So keep talking about SWORDBEARER and your additions, and perhaps it will get played! By Wes Ives.

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: Your real world data is terrific reading. FRPG Title? (Sea Wolves? Axes of the Norse? Bersarks?) How much money to advance order? Are all PCs human? What "professions" have most of the played PCs followed?

JOHN PATTERSON: "ALTERED IMAGES"/Sheena Easton: are there any tall female singers in Scotland or just part-Elven? There are more Brit songs on the US Top Forty today than ever before. Note that Boy George and Annie Lennox (he's prettier) are what it takes to shock anyone after 20 years of British Invasion. I'm trying to find MACHIAVELLI locally. Would appreciate your variant's details.



PETER DA SILVA: All governments create and enforce laws that benefit one group more than others. Most pre-modern societies had unwritten cultural limitations that were far more repressive than a "government." A hundred years ago, a lot of English colleges wouldn't have accepted you, merely because of where you were born, much less because of your name or your father's occupation. I dunno the GM set up for "Magnesium Flashrock," but "Magic" is the only likely answer to limit carelessly tossing blastspells and oil.

A&E 102

JENNY HEIN: The new RD&D omits an XD&D monster: SEA DRAGON: AC 1, 8 HD; Move 180' (Swim/Glide); 1 bite (not poisonous) @ 3D8 OR 1 spit (3/day, 100' range, 20' diameter, 1 round poison, 50% to use per melee round). D4 App. Morale 9. Treas M. Neutral. Glide on fins for up to 6 rounds. 20% able to talk/spellcast (3 L1 and 2 L2 spells). Apparently can waterbreathe. Green with yellow crest.//I've never heard "Christian name" used. Most ask "What would you like to be called?"

LAURENCE GILLESPIE: Thought-provoking discussions. How many female players have you had, and is there a place for female PCs in your Nordic FRPG? A truly Barbarian GM was fascinating. I'd certainly like to read another culture's descriptions of roleplay. (Apparently roleplay can be viewed as culturally independent.) The artwork for SPI's RAGNAROK made me glad I didn't resubscribe to SPI. Were there Icelandic elements in the invasions of Ireland and Northumbria?

ERIC SADOYAMA: Aloha. Sure there can be LOTS of deities. I recommend that each deity's power be in direct proportion to the number of devout worshippers in each area. Different pantheon deities with similar interests might well combine and share power against a rival.

War Magic is a BIG topic. The forms of TFT/RQ magic on one-on-one combat and lack of powerful mages limits effects. AD&D/C&S has a major focus on mass combat with some glaring weaknesses in defending against magic assaults. I'd assume AD&D castles would be covered over to limit invisible/flying foes and enchanted while built and/or Magic Resistant for protection vs specific spells. Even a dozen flying archers aren't going to hurt a thousand heavy infantry. AD&D also represents a period when large troop units combined several weapons types--and flyers are visible targets for all ground archers and mages. Both RQ and Phil Davis's VAD&D use Unit Standards with a radius of protection against certain spells.

There have been at least three fixes for Fireballs. 1) Reducing damage by keying to spell level, spell point systems, etc. 2) Reducing blast radius to 10'. And 3) Hargrave's method of dividing damage evenly among all within blast radius rather than giving the full amount vs each within the radius.

I also suggest adding a logical L1 spell, "Finger of Dispel Magic," which would affect one spell or a 5' radius if an area spell has already gone off. As in RD&D, the dispel fails 5%/level the dispeller is less than the caster. Of course, Joseph Dien's Variant and BUSHIDO feature spellpoints and spellcasters with innate counterspell abilities.

I agree that Invisibility should be at least a L3 spell for D&D mages. Other needed spells include Magic-negation and Anti-teleport/telekinesis/telepathy/clairsentience, perhaps as part of Protection vs Enchantment spells. Original D&D set up MUs as limited shot, mobile artillery, and a number of spells would make besieging castles unnecessary. Hence a strong king with superior wizards could probably carve out an empire. But mages are isolationists and fragile.

Top Down Design would indicate you should design at least an entire continent's flora, fauna, cultures and 3000 years of history. Practically speaking, look at the number of players and how often you'll play to determine whether you'll actually need more than a kingdom and its towns for scores of games' worth of play. With several pantheons, you'll want several kingdom-sized areas. The easiest scenarios will arise out of war (raiders, revolt, religious, invasion, etc.), which need not cover an area larger than Ireland for even an elaborate campaign.



HANK GRIFFIN: Great lock data. For a long time, pepper was worth several times its weight in gold. Ammonia is more likely.

R&R CLIFFORD: Fascinating Treasure Trap data. Combat sounds as though everyone flails around until the Ref calls a halt to count up hits. The appalling lack of safety means I wouldn't "play" without SCA/Martial Arts armor.

MARTIN WIXTED: Ireland started acquiring towns in 900+ AD, along with Norwegians, less than 300 years after Catholicism invaded Erin. It was blended in by 900 AD. Lots of Lords all over the British Isles were minting coins by 700 AD.

WILLIAM KEYES: You might as well factor in fast-twitch muscle fiber (spring) vs slow-twitch (marathon). And remember that bodybuilders are deliberately stripping off body fat. Power lifters, pro wrestlers and football players all appreciate the endurance, padding and fat-soluble vitamins. A bodybuilder diet would also be expensive. // Roleplay doesn't require complex game systems. Indeed, games where the GM spends his time looking up formulae and punching a calculator/puter are more likely slow and boring. (I and many FRPG friends game to escape school/work's complexities.)

Being strong doesn't mean you can apply full strength through a weapon. Flexibility is vital too (and skill), which means that the strong but slow/clumsy "musclebound" figure probably has a basis in fact. Until a reflex is established, IQ greatly affects recognition/coordination, although quick thinking and quick reacting appear to correlate. So when will your RQ 1000 be available for home computers?

A&E #103

JOHN REDDEN: Your LC TRAV is fascinating. Why Jump! as a starting skill? Since I'm looking at TRAV as a way to upgrade CAR WARS, your variant is most welcome.

NICK LARTER: Fire Vendors is excellent SF thinking.

STEVE GILHAM: Interesting Super-W'rs vs CHAMPIONS; compare to GOLDEN HEROES? See page 35. You can't reduce Power costs below 1. Champions is firmly entrenched around here. One campaign uses around 225 pt Superheroes; the other 425 pt ones.

JOHN SAPIENZA: Sup-World has a specific section on Law & PCs (unusual for FRPG). Deeds seem a major attraction of Sup-Hero gaming.

DAVID UNION: Word for word memory is extremely rare. If you were the rule and not the rare exception, I'd be more impressed with comics fanatics.

NIALL SHAPERO: The exact structure of any ultra-high tech culture is tough to predict. I was demonstrating that with certain technology, the PCs need know nothing about starships to travel, and can thus concentrate on other skills.

WAYNE SHAW: Review STAR FRONTIERS? Unfortunately. "shoot anything moving" players who learn caution tend to infiltrate and assassinate the most dangerous foes, THEN start blasting--creating (a la Harrison's DEATH WORLD) a world in their image: armed to the teeth and trigger-happy. Review STALKING THE NIGHT FANTASTIC?

DENISE GERNETH: Welcome back. I'd like to read more on Witches, Shadowjacks, etc. Your VAD&D sounds playable to me. Where do you think you need help/ Shapechanger Elves?! // In Chicago, Qanta is also known as Kwanza. Body language can also be culture-dependent. A lot of stats tend to bog things down. Behavior/roleplay stats might well be very useful. I wouldn't drop an old skill. Some skills don't require constant practice to still be of some use years later. I'm very pleased your personal life is fun again, and you can contribute to A&E "write soon"!

## THE SECOND SPORADIC VIKING

is a more ~~or/less~~ sporadic fanzine that's made by and (c) by Torbjörn Ragnesjö, Fyrisgatan 12A, S-752 22, Uppsala, Sweden. Written in week 11.

Since I didn't present myself in my last zine, I'll do so now (just as if anybody cared):

I'm a sporadic viking of age 26. As my friend John Røbillard (Vårdshuset Snälla Vikingen/ Spåkvinnans dröm) I started rolegaming by rollplaying TFT (with him as a matter of fact), about four years ago. After a year or so, I realized that RQ IS much better, although I obviously like TFT. I have also tried related games of RQ and some AD&D.

Furthermore, I play in a hardworking rock group (we've so far released 3 albums) and to afford this I work at my dad's company instead of reading 'bout computers at the university. I also have a Commodore 64, so if anybody has any useful programs for RQ or its relatives (Call of Cthulhu, Stormbringer etc.) I'd be happy to know.

Well, on to business. Here's more on my skill-based TFT-system:

### SPELLS AS SKILLS:

A wizard's skill level with a spell depends on his IQ compared to the spell in question when learning it:

Spell IQ the same as the wizard's, or one less: the wizard starts with a skill level of 8.

Spell IQ 2, 3 or 4 less than the wizard's: the wizard starts with a skill level of 9.

Spell IQ at least 5 less than the wizard's: the wizard starts with a skill level of 10.

For simplicity's sake, I don't let the players raise the skill-levels of the spells when they raise their IQ.

Non-wizards get a starting skill-level of 4 less than wizards. Also, since since non-wizards are so unfamiliar with learning spells, I play that they can only learn spells 4 IQ below their own.

The limits for raising the spell's skill-level with EP's are the same as for weapons (see TSV 1):

Current level of spell:	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20	etc.
EP needed for raise:	125	250	500	1000	etc.

I know this means that some spells are easier to raise than others (missile-spells does damage that you get EP for, while for example Dark Vision gives you only three EP's for the strength it costs), but this could be handled by the GM giving EP'S for good use, or why not just 5EP extra per non-combatant spell.

Another way of doing this, that I haven't tried at all but is worth mentioning (or...?), is to let a beginning wizard get one skill-level for all spelling. A kind of 'general knowledge' of magic. Suggested starting level would be somewhere in the range of 8-10. In this case all EP's for spelling would go to their one and only skill-level for magic.

I just came to think of another way of creating wizards that I can't resist writing down. (I'm really looking forward to comments to all this.)

A player who wants to create a wizard gets 40 points instead of 32 for humans, and add a characteristic, Magic Knowledge. Still no characteristic may be less than 8 for humans and no one could start with an MK less than 8. Since a wizard in this case starts as a 40-pointer, he will have a harder time from the beginning to raise his characteristics. Also in this case, you have one skill-level for all spelling, but since it's a characteristic, it takes more EP to raise than for a skill-based MK. This also means that a non-wizard who does not have this MK characteristic cannot cast spells at all. Automatic magic items still work, of course. I like this idea, now that I come to think of it.

For the rest of the rules for magic, see TSV 1. The skill-system for talents will be next time (oops! Line 66. Sorry, Lee.)



Here are some charts for fumbling with battle magic in RQ. In RQII this means 00 for fumbles, and 01 for a critical. Since some spells are entirely different than others, there are several charts for fumbling, but only one was needed for criticals. Furthermore, I'm not fully satisfied with these charts. Suggestions for changes are welcome. Roll the B100 once again to see what happens.

Critical for all spells:

- 1-50 Lose half the POW used (rounded up).  
 51-70 Double effect\*  
 71-80 Lose 1/4 of the POW used (rounded up).  
 81-90 Lose half the POW used and double effect.\*  
 91-99 Lose 1/4 of the POW used and double effect.\*  
 00 — Lose no POW. Take back all POW used (not for crystals), double effect.\*  
 \*double time, damage or as if used with twice the POW etc.

Fumbles (no effect of spell unless specified)

Disruption, Dullblade, Glue, Harmonize

- 1-50 Lose 2xPOW of spell (not below 1)  
 51-60 'Hit' nearest friend.\*  
 61-70 'Hit' self.  
 71-80 Double effect on nearest friend.\*\*  
 81-90 Double effect on self.  
 91-99 Lose all POW but one. Faint 25-CON MRs.  
 00 Lose 1D4 permanent POW and as above.  
 \*POW vs POW if relevant. On self if alone.  
 \*\*As if thrown with 2xPOW and double damage etc.

Bladesharp, Bludgeon, Coordination, Fanaticism, Farsee, Firearrow, Fireblade, Glamour, Invisibility, Ironhand, Mobility, Padding, Protection, Shimmer, Silence, Strength, Vigor

- 1-50 Lose 2xPOW of spell (not below 1)  
 51-60 Thrown on closest enemy.  
 61-80 2xeffect on closest enemy.\*  
 81-90 Lose 2xPOW and 2xeffect on closest enemy.  
 91-99 Lose all POW but one, and faint 25-CON MRs.  
 00 Lose 1D4 permanent POW and as above (91)  
 \*2xtime, protection or thrown with 2xPOW etc.

Darkwall/Lightwall

- 1-50 Lose 2xPOW of spell (not below 1)  
 51-70 As above and random placement.  
 71-90 Lose 3xPOW of spell (not below 1):  
 Lose 2xPOW and turned opposite way for Lightwall.  
 91-99 Lose all POW but one. Faint 25-CON MRs.  
 00 Lose 1D4 permanent POW.

Detect spells

- 1-50 Lose 2xPOW of spell (not below 1)  
 51-65 As above and wrong information.  
 66-80 Lose 3xPOW of spell (not below 1)  
 81-90 As above and wrong information.  
 91-99 Lose all POW but one. Faint 25-CON MRs.  
 00 Lose 1D4 permanent POW.

Dispel Magic

- 1-50 As usual.  
 51-70 Doubles the effect of spell on target.\*  
 71-90 As 1-70.  
 91-99 Lose all POW but one. Faint 25-CON MRs.  
 00 Lose 1D4 permanent POW.  
 \*Time, resistance etc.

Extinguish, Ignite

- 1-50 As usual.  
 51-65 Extinguish becomes ignite and opposite within 40m.  
 66-80 As 1-65.  
 81-90 Lose 3xpow (not below 1)  
 91-99 As usual  
 00 As usual

Healing, Xenohealing

- 1-50 As usual.  
 51-80 As above, and 'heal' enemy within 3m., else only as above.  
 81-90 Lose all POW but one. Faint 25-CON MRs.  
 91-99 Makes damage as much as it should have healed.  
 00 Lose 1D4 permanent POW.

Light

- 1-50 As usual.  
 51-65 As above and wrong placement (bad to caster. E.g. on the ground.)  
 66-80 Lose 3 POW  
 81-90 Lose 4 POW  
 91-99 As usual  
 00 As usual

## Mind Speech

- 1-50 Lose 2xPOW used (not below 1)  
 51-60 Mind Screech'. Caster and 'receiver'  
 disabled 21-INT MRs.  
 61-80 As 1-60  
 81-90 Lose 3xPOW used (not below 1)  
 91-99 Lose all POW but one. Faint 25-CON MRs.  
 00 Lose 1D4 permanent POW.

## Repair

- 1-50 Lose 4 POW (not below 1)  
 51-65 Lose 6 POW  
 66-80 Lose all HPs of weapon.  
 81-90 As 1-50 and 66-80.  
 91-99 As usual.  
 00 As usual.

## Spirit Shield

- 1-50 Lose 2xPOW used (not below one).  
 51-70 Raises spirits POW 2points when  
 engaging.  
 71-80 As 1-70.  
 81-90 Lose 3xPOW used (not below one).  
 91-99 Lose all POW but one, and faint  
 25-CON MRs.  
 00 Lose 1D4 permanent POW.

## Spirit Binding

- 1-50 Lose 2 POW\*  
 51-60 Lose 3 POW\*  
 61-70 Lose 4 POW\*  
 71-80 Lose 5 POW\*  
 81-90 Lose 6 POW\*  
 91-99 Lose all POW but one and faint 25-  
 CON melee-rounds.\*  
 00 Lose 1D4 permanent POW.  
 \*Not below one.

## Multimissile, Speedart

- 1-50 Lose 2xPOW used (not below one).  
 51-60 On nearest enemy with missile-weapon  
 and within range of spell. Other-  
 wise as 1-60.  
 61-70 As 1-60.  
 71-80 Lose 3xPOW used (not below one).  
 81-90 As above and 51-60.  
 91-99 Lose all POW but one and faint 25-  
 CON MRs.  
 00 Lose 1D4 permanent POW.

This chart should be used by the referee, since some results are not visible at once.  
 For example 51-70 in Spirit Shield above.

## COMMENTS ON 102

SAPIENZA (TGD): One of the most interesting write-ups I've read. It was full of usable ideas. It must have been a real fun campaign.

LEE: Very interesting herb-lists. I've found several herbs against poison, wounds & feavers I'll get into my campaign.

SAPIENZA (TRW): Re to skill vs skill: If using 'roll high'design, where are the limits for critical and fumble? As far as I understood, you meant that with this design you didn't use the difficulty die.// Shields: this sounds good, but the players would have to know their skill and compare their roll to the other one, and this will rather slow down combat than speed it up, I think. I've always assumed you want to speed up RQ combat. Right?? // Weapon parry: If I understand this correctly, this means that if the parrying person is rolling higher than the attacker (within his %age) he gets a better parry than if rolling lower?! Is that then a critical parry? What if the attacker rolls a critical (e.g. 2), then the parrying person just has to roll more than 2 to make a perfect (deflecting) parry. Right??

SADYAMA (re. to magic and war): In general, I think that powerful magic can be fought off by powerful magic. In the case you mention, invisible characters are still vulnerable to traps, and also to defensive magic like e.g. RQ 'Warding' and TFT 'Ward'.

In the case of airborne archers, why not attack them with the same, or with magic that works at long distances? Also, if out of range to those on the ground, they would have difficulties to hit by themselves.

In the last case with the scrying magician sending a fireball destroying a platoon, I'd think that if magic that powerful exists, someone would surely know a protective spell of the same level. I wouldn't use a magic system that could destroy



entire platoons in one stroke, though. // Re. to gods: I think there could be only one moon- and sungood respectively under the circumstances you mention, if there is one moon and one sun in the planet system in question.

HEINSOO (re. to 'something completely different'): a fun and imaginative way to describe the most fanatic hard-rock fans. Just as in so many other cases, e.g. politics and religion, there are always a few that distinguishes themselves from the mass by more or less fanatic behaviour, and to outsiders not familiar with, or to follow up your 'Blue Oyster-Cult'-description, not 'initiated in' 'hard rock' and 'heavy metal' those few becomes characteristic to the hole branch.

KEYES: What is Poul Anderson's book detailing how to construct an inhabitable world called? Do you know of any other books in the subject?// Did you look at a picture of me when describing 'looking in a Nordic way'? I have shoulder-length, strait blond hair, blue eyes, shaven chin, I'm 5' 10", 187 lbs., ~~well~~ fairly muscled, unscarred, and tanned in the summer (no northerner is tanned in the winter unless travelling far south), ~~and a comeliness of 14~~. Close enough, or..? (even my moustache is light blond.)

COMMENTS ON 103

FOSTER: I like your musical taste. A Swedish band I can recommend is Heavy Load, that have released 4 albums so far.

DUNHAM: Why should an immortal not have a beginning? Even if they can't and will not die, why shouldn't they have been born or be able to give birth?

ROBILLARD: A neat system (as if you didn't know I think so). I hope you'll publish it all in A & E, so that more people than I get to know of it.

E O C

GENERAL QUESTIONS and sillyness

Does anyone have a copy of Interplay 7, or know from where to get it?

Does anyone have Wyrms Footnotes 1-6 for sale, or would it be possible to get photocopies made and paid for?

Does any of you comic book readers have Warlord Annual no. 1 & 2 for sale? Do you know! what company to get it from if not?

Sillyness in FRP: I have a friend running a very variant D&D -campaign. All the 'wandering monsters' you can meet are written on one card each and when the dice tell him, he picks the one on the top. His worst 'monster' is "Björn Wiklund, game master. Knows and can everything. God of the gods. Harsh! Harsh!

Well, the hour is late, I can't think of more to say right now, and I have to get up early tomorrow, so the rest of the page is yours, Lee. VI SES IGEN. HEJ DÅ!



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I have not yet seen how TELL #49 came out, but I'm going ahead with #50, still in quest for a new title for the 'zine. Stop the presses!!! Since I started writing this, I have seen TELL #49 (great how you can insert text on the computer), and I'm none too pleased with how it came out, so to complete the experiment, I'd like to do this issue directly on the stencils to see the difference, but I can't find any, so maybe next zine. This time I've given up on doing something significant, as I have only limited staying power. However, fear not, this TELL will feature that most desired item, MEGAPLUGS!!!. Perhaps that would make a good game. This time we'll also have comments on two (actually three now) issues which I seem to have passed over to which we shall proceed directly.

#### COMMENTS ON #101

(some reader unfolded the pages I had marked, so these comments are more or less at random)

Where did all these Australians slither in from?

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: Deja vu? Isn't that virtually the same argument you made for 'role gaming' about a dozen issues back? You still haven't convinced me. Why not 'adventure gaming' or 'adventuring'?

PETER SHAPLEY: Seems to me that bad luck is those times when mischance works against the benefits of a person's skill and aptitude, however great or deserved. The combat minus example you give is actually very realistic if the character, because of his experience with the black cat, convinces himself that he is disadvantaged/doomed, and therefore psyches himself into fulfilling the curse.

#### COMMENTS ON #102

ROBERT SAUNDERS: If your local games shop doesn't know where to get RE products, they should contact Esdevium Games, our UK distributor, whose ad (featuring RE products prominently) can be found in WHITE DWARF.

STEVE JONES: A Scouts Guild is only one of a number of possible semi-legit covers for a Thieves Guild equivalent.

VINCENT FOSTER: Thanks for the ABYSS review. Seems like people either love or hate the 'More Munchkin' section. A single issue is \$1.50.

DAVID UNION: A good point on time. The scale I suggested was really intended for fantasy/medieval backgrounds. For my campaigns after 1800 (London 1890s, Superhero TCT (Challengers), modern and SF, I use a realtime or flexible scale. // WHISPERS hasn't been selling subscriptions for at least two years, as the schedule is a mystery even to Stuart Schiff. You can order copies for \$5 each at 70 Highland Ave., Binghamton, NY 13905. Generally the best thing to do is to force a local bookstore to carry it, that way you'll know when a new issue is out. It is an excellent magazine. Spawn of Fashion is beyond me. However, I'm looking for a copy of Alma Mater if you know where to find one.

STEVE GILHAM: I will persist in generalizing. In my experience TTT players would rather move characters around than role play and RQ players would rather observe their world than participate in it. // In the XYZD&D situation, it does seem that there is a vast amount of difference in the incredibly perceptive eyes of the average munchkin.

NICK LARTER: They say Bierce lives on. Perhaps he prompted us to keep his name in your



attention. // The guild you describe is far more than the traditional Thieve's Guild, and actually performs a useful civic function.

ERIC SADOYAMA: In most historical situations magic has been either illegal or socially repressed, and would be very hard to charter. This is why I included them with Thieves Guilds. Of course, there is a mystical/supernatural element of ritual in all traditional guilds.

RON PEHR: I hope 'ORACLE' sends me a copy sometime or at least gets in touch in some way, as we've had mail returned and had removed them from our comp list.

MARTIN ELLISON: Self-serving comment response reserved.

SCOTT BAUER: For me the positive aspects of role-playing involve human interaction. Computers are not human, and can never adequately simulate the complexities of emotion and imagination possible in a good player or GM. I'm not pessimistic, I deny the possibility that computers could GM role playing and keep it role playing.

PETER DA SILVA: Your comparisons of game systems to computer languages are lost on me, although I do find them rather humorous. TFT may be fast, but to use comparisons more to my area of knowledge, a mass-produced Machete and a Damascus broadsword are both swords, and both kill people quickly and easily, but there is a world of qualitative difference.

QUENTIN LONG: I have read a fair number of pulps, and some early comics, and am broadening my base, so that is adding a flavor to Challengers the SHRPG I'm working on. In addition, I have some fine consultants with broader backgrounds.

#### COMMENTS ON #103

JOHN SAPIENZA: Sorry I'm getting a bit crotchety, but perhaps the lifting of some of my workload because of my new computer will improve my disposition.

ADRIAN BOLT: I was hoping everyone would comment on my RQ ravings, as every voice makes a difference, and response seems to be running fairly even, though favorable responses are in the lead, especially through direct mail.

JASON ZALK: Thanks for the ABYSS review. To answer your question on the cover, no. I got over guilt quite a while ago. I think it's quite likely that the fine professional artists of the 19th century might be forgotten if it weren't for reprints. I can't pay them, but I can keep their talents on view.

JILSON H. HEYDT: Your opening this issue leaves me wondering if your juxtaposition of the mention of a YRS review and the quote from Voltaire was a subtle complement or a subtle dig. I'll take it as the former (god knows why).

MARK GALEOTTI: I can't go on any longer on RQ. I think it may all boil down to the fact that there are too few skills to cover the things I want to do, I can't guide the training and skills of my own character, and I hate the restrictive and illogical cult system. As you said, subjective criticisms. I'm just a subjective kind of guy.

DENISE GERNETH: Your Texas APA sounds interesting. Keep me informed on progress, and I'll try to send a zine if I can get pulled together.

JOHN T. SAPIENZA: I personally like the idea of having PCs use their wits and imagination instead of magic or massive combat availability. I've always liked role-playing which was a challenge to the mind rather than tactics and overkill. Deeds not riches is a good philosophy, one which I try to encourage, but for most players the easier route is easy to slide into.

DAVID UNION: There are some advantages to the D&D culture shock, as it makes ideas which you don't think are that novel surprisingly unexpected for players who have been ground into the other rigid rut of D&D. // The best way to acclimatize players is probably to run some rather background oriented adventures, for example, hire them to guard an early printing press from a



repressive church, or introduce them to a highly developed urban society or trading system involvement.

NIALL SHAPERO: Hate to tell you this, but the Mafia is not a Thieve's Guild. The Mafia is a fraternal/familial pseudo-government more akin to a major corporation than to a Guild of Thieves. It is involved primarily in activities which would be legal in a more open society, making a large majority of its money from victimless crimes such as drugs, prostitution and gambling, though protection and other forms of extortion are also major pillars in the structure. However, the types of crime represented in Thief or Assassin Guilds are not really a major element of the Mafia. In addition, they are not really a benevolent society, as is implied by a Guild. There is no Mafia Hall to be found in any major city, and Mafia leaders do not publicly advertise their position. The fact that the existence of the Mafia is known does not make it an accepted public institution. It certainly is an underground organization, as it is not public or legal in its activities. If the Mafia came out in the open, it would be prosecuted and persecuted, and even as it is, it is only one of a number of criminal leagues and corporate organizations, some splinters of its own body, many of which clash from time to time.

WAYNE SHAW: I really should comment on your comment, but I'm running out of steam. Sorry. I can't discuss RD any more.

### ATTENTION SUPERHERO ROLE PLAYERS

It seems like an increasingly large number of A&Eers are getting involved in superhero role-playing games, particularly Champions and Superworld. As I work in advance, I'm currently getting rolling on Challengers, a superhero role-playing game based on the T3 Challenge Tomorrow system, scheduled for release this summer. So far the playtest and development have been going pretty well, but because I'm working with a playtest group which shares certain interests and attitudes, there may be areas we are overlooking, so I thought I'd get what help I can from A&E's knowledgeable readership. What I'd like, if possible, is some input from superhero gamers out there on what they would like to see in a superhero RPG? Specifically, what they think is best and most enjoyable about the systems with which they are familiar, what they don't like and could do without, and what elements would make up the ideal superhero game. I hope that some of you will be able to help out with suggestions or ideas, as we want Challengers to surpass the games currently available, without some of the flaws which some of the pioneering games on this topic have. As far as background, we're planning to emphasize heroes with limited powers and realistic natures, characters on the lines of Moor Knight, The Shadow, The Phantom, Black Panther, Batman, Daredevil, Black Widow, etc. The actual background is going to be well developed and detailed, with an interesting world situation. More detail will be forthcoming in these pages, but any aid would be helpful.

### WRITING FOR ABYSS

If any of you budding young talents out there would like exposure in a medium other than A&E, we are looking for articles for ABYSS, and from the talents displayed by A&Eers, you should be a good source. ABYSS publishes all sorts of articles each issue, usually on fairly progressive themes. We aren't afraid to publish controversial or unusual items, as we don't have the vulnerable, high-profile status of some larger magazines. While we only pay between .5 and 1.5 cents per word, and our circulation is only around 7000, you can reach a really active and interested audience, and write with more innovation than more conservative magazines. We're also looking for art, so if you have talents in this area, give us a try. Payment for art runs parallel to payment for articles. You can order a sample copy (\$1.50) and guidelines at the address above.

### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

I've been doing some reading this spring, and I've found some good new books. Of particular note are On A Pale Horse, the first of a new series from Piers Anthony, which should be out in paperback soon, Bard II, the sequel to Bard, by the Australian author Keith Taylor, and Imaro II, the sequel to Imaro by Charles Saunders. The first is one of the stranger and more original science fantasies I've read, and the other two are among the more unusual swords and sorcery works I've seen, and surprisingly good for sequels. I won't give



more detail so as not to ruin the suspense, but I recommend all three highly.

## HISTORICAL NOTE

By my reckoning this is the 50th issue of T&E which I have done, almost half as many as there have been issues of A&E, somewhere around a total of 300 pages of type, totalling over 150000 words. However, in honor of this momentous occasion, I am just going to relax and send this zine in late, wrapping up with massive plugs. For some reason I just don't feel moved to do something more significant.

## MEGAPLUGS!!!!

Believe me, as an intelligent A&E reader, you really want to read this section, because nowhere else will you find such startlingly wonderful deals on inconcievably exciting Ragnarok Enterprises products.

## TO CHALLENGE TOMORROW, ETC.

We're fairly taken with this new RPG, and are working hard on expansion sets for it, dealing with a number of periods and backgrounds. For those who don't know, TCT is the first really versatile game to be put on the market, with complete rules for play and a system ideal for use in any period from the end of the middle ages on. It is a flexible skill-based system with the emphasis on character development and role-playing. While there is a lot of background included with the rules, to make the game really useful, we are producing background packs on various topics. The first of these, Triad is already available, and presents an interesting traditional SF background, including background, rule additions, and three scenarios. London By Night is the second, and will probably be out by the time this sees print. It presents an impressively complete look at London in the 1890s, the world of Sherlock Holmes, Dracula, etc. It is a large pack, including a number of maps, a special book on background detail, and about 5 scenarios (give or take one). The third is not yet available for order. It is Challengers, the superhero aid mentioned above. We're offering these items at a discount to A&Eers. You can get Triad for only \$3, postage included, London by Night for only \$5, postage included, and the To Challenge Tomorrow basic rules for only \$8 including postage. Suggestions for further background expansions are welcomed.

## ABYSS

In an ongoing quest to expand the readership of ABYSS, I'm offering a special deal to A&E readers, the regular subscription price of \$7 for 6 issues or \$13 for 12 (sample for \$1.50). Why is this a deal? Well, it looks like the subscription prices are going to be going up a bit soon, so you can get in now before it's too late. ABYSS sort of offers something new. It is not a lowest-common-denominator oriented magazine like mass market publications on the lines of DRAGON or SPACEGAMER, and it is not the private forum which you find here in A&E. It is a unique alternative, featuring the kind of mature and original insights and ideas which you find in A&E in a more organized and directed format like the larger magazines. A lot of A&Eers write for ABYSS from time to time, and the articles are mostly on general aspects of role-playing and background, rarely wedded to only one system. Give it a try.

## YSGARTH STUFF

I'm still flogging Ysgarth, the ultimate fantasy role playing system, getting more and more ultimate as we release supplements which add more material and ideas. It is a progressive system, using skills and oriented towards character development and realism. There are three supplements out now, and one more on the way. The special offer here is on the boxed set of Ysgarth. This includes the first three supplements, the rules, and a set of character and GM record sheets. Normally, this would be a \$21 value, but if you're reading this, you can have it for only \$18, in the new, more durable box. The whole packet comes to 244 pages, about 200,000 words of text, the most complete and developed role-playing system on the market. You can get the basic rules for \$12.95 including postage (not a special deal). The fourth supplement The Ancient Powers will be out soon, and covers some of the background and tradition of the Ysgarth, as well as having some special notes on magic.

Seems like that's all I've got space for. If you want to know more about these or the 30 some other items we have available, send for a free catalog. Back next issue. DFN



BEWARE...World under Construction #5

(c) by Robert Loutzenhiser & Bob Guer, 1501 Winfield #3, Bremerton, WA 98730  
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Talk about long absences! These past few months have been very hectic. I had a tumor operation, moved to a new apartment, was put on swing shift at work, have a new girlfriend, and my gaming store is changing over to videos! Which means I have to go to Seattle for gaming supplies. Also I have no players now, so if there are any interested persons in my area....

As you may have noticed, BEWARE has a new addition to its pages; let me introduce Bob. He is going to college here at Bremerton and first learned about D&D from fellow students. We ran into each other at the now defunct gaming store. I was looking at a nice apartment but couldn't quite afford it, so Bob (who hated his roommate) helped me get this place and moved in. Now for a warning: Bob hates stupid people; last week he chewed out a professor for giving his class the wrong method for solving tensors.

So, having done my share, I turn control of my hand over to Bob who will be doing comments. My thoughts on his comments will be in brackets.

You have prepared a proposal for the regional director of purchasing for your largest customer. If the presentation succeeds, your sales to his company will increase by 200%. In the middle of your proposal, he leans over to look at your report and spits into your coffee. You:

- A) Tell him you prefer your coffee black.
- B) Ask to have him checked for any communicable diseases.
- C) Take a leak in his "out" basket.

#### COMMENTS #102

D. UNION (Vampires) [or Voordalak--defined as the human personality devoid of the ego (superego), seeking continued life by blood drinking at night from the living. The original vampire was turned by garlic or fire. To gain entrance to a house, it must be invited in. (Magic Circle protecting the occupants?) A vampire was not damaged by a non-magical weapon and could only be killed by an ashen stake through the heart, by having the head removed and buried separately, or by being totally burned. Any dead human could become a vampire unless it was buried with the proper rituals to prevent it from rising.]

All that bull about turning to bats and smoke, hypnotism [Mesmerism for the purists] and psychokinesis was added later [much by Hollywood]. [How did he get his victims without Mesmerism? While they were sleeping!] Quit interrupting! [Most primitive peoples had demons or ghosts which sucked blood, which was considered the source of life. Also there is a disease which gives a person a craving for blood, due to an inability to create enough of his own. References: The Golden Bough, Real Magic (Bonewitz), Der Deutsche Volksaberglaube (A. Wutke).]

S. GILHAM re ct James: [How you did it, Bob is a sixth year Astrophysics major.] ( $L$  is proportional to  $M^{3.5}$ ) does NOT mean ( $L=M^{3.5}$ ); this formula only applies .3 Mo-20 Mo. The increase for luminosity as compared to mass is not a straight line graph; rather it forms an S-curve with the proportion decreasing as mass increases. Try  $F = L/(4\pi d^2)$ . This gives total luminosity incident per area, such as a planet surface. Use  $L = R^2 T^4$  to get total solar output. This is only good for zero-age main sequence stars (Class V) and won't work for Class IA, II, IIb, III, IV, VI, or VII stars. For other classes, you have to use ( $\sigma_{\lambda} = GM/Rc^2$ ).

Tidal interaction cannot account fully for the reversal of Venus' spin. There has not been enough time. More than likely, in fact pretty much accepted, is the Moving Flame theory, which comes down to having prevailing winds help change the spin. Uranus' equilateral change was due to collision. Now, what about planetary and solar wobble?



R. SAUNDERS re ct DICK: The Druids could not read but they performed magic as did many American Indians. What part of your system requires that they read? What if a mage did spell research without books; maybe with Demons instead?

S. CORNELIUS re ct LOUTZENHISER: [The system is basic. A hero is one who overcomes odds, right? Therefore he needs determination. Use high determination to affect conscious and coma rolls. Now it's heroic.]

WHOEVER (Lycanthropes): Change the very form of your body? Where do you get your blueprint from? [How about DNA?] Right, and what reads that DNA and affects the changes? Even cancer takes a few weeks. [Try mental rapport with a wolf instead, with the uninitiated, untrained mind being taken over by the animal's passions. Add access to human knowledge, no fear of man, and what do you have?] Werewolf! [Right] What about trained human minds? [Then the wolf becomes a familiar of a lower type.] That also explains where werebears get 400 lbs of extra mass, totally disregarding  $E=MC^2$ .

You are making a sales presentation to a group of corporate executives in the plushest office you've ever seen. The hot enchilada casserole and egg salad sandwich you had for lunch react. Your sphincter loses control, and you break wind in a most convincing manner, causing three water tumblers to shatter and a secretary to pass out. In the stunned silence that follows you:

- A) Offer to come back next week when the smell has gone away.
- B) Point out their chief executive and accuse him of the offense.
- C) Challenge anyone in the room to do better.

#### COMMENTS #103

SAPIENZA: What would you consider the best type combat system? With Arms Law (T), you have variable damage but have to look it up; with Mars (T) you have one damage per weapon but the system is easily used and remembered.

R. SAUNDERS: Having players actually look for the spells is better than just giving them out, but what if a player decides to actually create a whole new spell? Is literacy required for research? How about the shaman and witches? Do they have to go look their spells up in libraries too, or are they allowed oral recitations?

J. REDDEN (re ct Shock): [Glad to help out. Size won't matter. Just remember that the main variable is pain threshold, and that everything affects this. Pain is a personal thing, and what will destroy the mind of one person won't touch another.

[I GM it by saying, OK, a sword swung like that will cause 25 pts damage and 25 pts pain to all creatures. Their ability to take more or less damage and pain is reflected by the level of their body points and pain threshold. Body is the physical aspect and depends on size (and somewhat on strength); pain is totally mental and is affected by brain sensitivity (a more advanced brain is more susceptible to pain), mental training (greater discipline increases threshold), past experience (someone constantly in pain builds up resistance), mental state (a depressed person has a lower threshold), physical condition (e.g. obesity, sickness, and drugs), and genetic factors (depending on you as GM; in the real world, brown-eyed, dark-skinned types have higher pain thresholds than blue-eyed, light-skinned ones).//As to two brains, brain sensitivity is important, so you have to decide whether the two brains are like a dinosaur's or are even more advanced than a human's. Remember that our brain already requires 2/3 of our blood supply.

[You're right about needing a fairly advanced society to know about shock (1965-70 for us) and its effects. Before our era, shock was the cause of at least 70% of all injury deaths: i.e. if you didn't die instantly, then shock was probably the cause. This was why I looked into the possibilities of a system based on it. Imagine the player's reaction to having a PC survive a major injury, then keel over from blood pressure oscillations six days later. He must have been cursed when he broke into that tomb.



[What you (and I) need is to create a shock threshold table for different creatures. First, decide what damage level your weapons will do; then how many times a human can be hit by that weapon. You could also have different damage and pain on the same weapon to reflect its characteristics better: e.g. Sword 15dmg, 11p and whip 6dmg, 24p. I figure a human can be hit solidly by a broadsword twice before being put out of a fight. Using 15 damage pts per hit gives us 30 Body pts and 30 Pain Threshold. So humans will average 30-40. Upon further consideration, Body does not have to equal pain threshold; it just makes it easier to calculate.

<u>Animal Type</u>	<u>Pain Threshold</u>	<u>Average Body Pts</u>
Humanoid	30-40	about 1 pt per 4 lbs
Carnivorous Mammal	60-75	about 1 pt per 3 lbs
Herbivorous Mammal	50-55	about 1 pt per 3 lbs
Reptile	160-200	about 1 pt per 1 lbs

You'll probably say, "How can a little rabbit have the same pain as a deer, when I can kill a rabbit with my foot?" Critical wounds automatically put you into secondary shock, bypassing pain altogether.

[By the way, I'm sorry I didn't make it over to see you (Grandmother dropped by), so I hope this will compensate somewhat.]

D. DUNHAM (re ct ME): [When a person is scared/mad, adrenaline flows. It provides instant energy for the muscles; it is also a pain killer. It prepares the body for a fight/run situation. The reason you shake after a scare is that the body needs to use up the adrenaline in the blood system.]

[To apply this to the Shock System, adrenaline flows only under high emotional states: e.g. fear, anger, rage. Adrenaline counters primary shock until it runs out (when the emotion ends). Adrenaline's effects are increased strength, speed, and resistance to pain and heart stress (but not increased resistance to damage or blood loss); shunting blood from outer blood vessels to inner organs and muscles; dehydration; and an altered state of consciousness which focuses the mind on the subject at hand. When the emotion ends, the person will be hit with total exhaustion, pain from damage, and general pain from muscular stress.]

D. NALLE (Undead): Also see cts to UNION & WHOEVER: As an add to the ct to Whoever: we checked Bonewitz and our conclusion on vampires was the same as his. He added that silver, which is the only thing which kills werewolves, is a top-rate conductor of electricity. Any relation?

[You need to look at the origin of the undead myths. During the Middle Ages, people would go into comas and be considered dead. Because there was no embalming, the bodies were quickly buried. A couple of days later, the "body" might come out of its coma, fight its way to the surface (6' burial depths are recent) and voila! an undead. It would have suffered irreversible brain damage from oxygen suffocation and would probably be insane.]

[Zombies come from Voodoo. There are drugs which cause artificial catalepsy which stimulates death quite closely. The victim would be quickly buried. A few days later, the voodooist would unbury the "corpse" and put it to work in his fields. The drug also cases mental damage, so the walking dead would be complacent and simple-minded.]

[Poltergeists were once considered the most dangerous of all ghosts. No more. Research indicates that they originate from frustrated people with unknown psychokinetic power. Relieve the frustration, and the poltergeist will leave.]

Ghosts, ha! Read Conjuring Up Philip by Owen and Sparrow. This tells how a group of psychic researchers in Canada managed to artificially create the ghost of a man who never existed! They put a lot of mana into inventing a complete personality for Philip and were rewarded with nearly all the classic survival evidence in the mediumistic books. They had psychic phenomena coming out of their ears, all supposedly caused by this ghost. Ghosts are memories transferred to the collective mind of the human race; from there they create their psychic effects.



[All the above is nice to know but can't really be used in a game, so let's go back to origins. Banshee; Bean Si (wails for the death of an old family; Bean Nighe (washes grave clothes, ghost of a woman who died in childbirth); Bauban Sith (a type of succubus-vampire combination); Caan teach (the wailer); Cyhyraeth (the groaner). Those are just the Celtic death spirits.

[Wight: refers to seele (i.e. fairies). A wicked wight was an unseelie. //Wight is also Anglo-Saxon for "hero."--LG// Well, that was interesting.] Ya. It shows that some originators of the hobby really screwed things up.

[Your breakdown of a person is the same as mine. However, let me make it clear the emotions and psychic powers go with the spirit; rational and original thought to the mind; and the senses with the body.] Ghosts are blind? [Unless they have clairvoyance, they are.]

The main power of Undead is fear, [In D&D, that's the Fear Aura spell] cretins, and this is not being handled correctly. I remember one of my first games. "You see a ghost." "Do I make my saving roll against fear?" "Yes." "I cut up the ghost with my +5/+6 vorpal blade." "It's dead."

[In the game I run, fear is handled differently.] That's for sure, you bastard. [Well now, I will tell them! Imagine Jim: big, strong, the husky type; Pain 36; Body 41 and a high determination. Jim is searching a house when he suddenly confronts a ghost. Natural fear of undead reduces Pain to 29, into slight neurogenic. But being the strong-willed type, Jim overrides his fear and attacks with his runesword. Running forward, he swings his great blade and scores against the white apparition. The ghost wails, semi-materializes and rams its long fingernails into Jim's face. This attack drops his Pain down to 14 (severe neurogenic). Rolling 09, he remains conscious, but he's unable to cope with the fear and turns to run--smack dab into a demon's face! (The only light is a dim lantern.) The horror of the face and what it implies is too great a burden for Jim's already stressed mind, and he is projected directly into cardiogenic shock. His companions find him an hour later, dead. On his face is an incredible look of terror, and in front of him is a Shaman war mask....

[Is that more like the way you see ghosts?] Always hyping shock, aren't you? [Yep! If it works better, use it.]

J. SAPIENZA (re ct NALLE): Perhaps what the game needs is something like Rolemaster (TM): advance a starting character through two skill acquisition cycles. RM does this to represent childhood and apprenticeship; it also sets up the character's choice of professions. This should bring character age to about 16. To give a character a good chance, you could age him to 20, with six cycles total, well on his way up the journeyman ladder. [How about saying completed apprenticeship = three skill cycles and childhood = one?]

\*\*\*I have a few minutes before work, so on to cts that didn't get turned in.

R. ELLWOOD (#100) [from Loutzenhiser]: Rigid rule systems? Do your players trust you so well you don't need a set of guidelines for decisions? Do you make mistakes? Or do you just have the system so well memorized you don't need to look it up anymore? Do your players get to roll dice, or do you just decide when they fumble? What a way to get rid of players you don't like! Imagine, get rid of all the systems; all you need is personality descriptions and you can keep those in your mind. The player tells you what he does, and you tell him what happens, right? The ultimate form of story-gaming. (From Guer) Do you play by yourself a lot?

STRANDWORLD: AN EXPANSION PROPOSAL [from Loutzenhiser]

Rock Bombs: Lift rock to zero region using Rocs. Place reversed airfoils on rocks, to interact with negative region--and sails on long ropes to use zero space winds from end-strand hurricanes. Release rock; wind brings up to speed; wings drag it down to positive region. Angled rope cuts off wings; rock drops like a missile; speech should approach sonic.







## CARR'S TOMB #1

by Christopher L. Pesl, 714 Odana Lane, Madison, WI 53711; typed by lee Gold

### By way of introduction

I am 24 years old and work in the Madison Public Library. My first exposure to RPGs was as a college student, when I played a couple of games of V&V at the Dungeon Masters Association, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's RPG club. From then until about a year ago I dropped out of the hobby (except for buying an occasional magazine). Then I got into a group where the DM often used to playtest the game system he was inventing. In that group I have played RQ; C&S; Call of Cthulhu; Man, Myth & Magic; and various forms of VD&D.

I currently own RQ, TFT, T&T, Bunnies & Burrows, Champions, the New Ysgarth Rules (c 1980) and Bruce Galloway's Fantasy Wargaming. I also own A&E 92-100. I stopped buying it when I decided to contribute, so I could keep my first zine to a reasonable size. If anything I say here is invalidated by what others said in later issues, please accept my preemptive apologies.

### Warm Fuzzies

In terms of mental activity, A&E is one of the richest magazines I have ever read. Even (relatively) dull issues always have comments, essays and discussions that make me glad I bought them. John Burt is my choice for Champion Brain-Nudger, I don't want to slight anyone. I just don't have the time to list everyone's name.

I have also enjoyed many of A&E's stories, writeups and campaign descriptions. My favorites are Kevin Sterner's Fugit (92), David Warner's Avalon (93), Dansie & Fraser's Shareenar (93,95), Lee's Battle of Sciathos (94) and Wizards and Warriors storytelling run (98), Brooks & Flin's Sauron Won campaign (94, 98-100), Jenny Hein's writeup of Chris Murray's culture clash run (95), Sean Summers' World of Shang (95), Chris Murray's "FRP virgins" campaign (96) and his Australian CoC campaign (98) (Up with Nannies!), and John Sapienza's Carla (96-7) and Terrania (100). Peter da Silva's campaigns should be on this list but I haven't heard enough about them (hint, hint).

The Good, the Bad, and the Rotten (dedicated to Joseph Teller, whose comment to William Pixley in 96 inspired this section)

### The Colour of Magic by Terry Pratchett

If more fantasy were like this, I'd read more fantasy. Four extremely funny short stories follow the adventures of a wizards school dropout, a naive tourist from the other side of the world, and his multi-legged luggage on a disc-shaped planet where the number between seven and nine is very important. The writing style is like a collaboration between Jack Vance and Douglas Adams; and the setting sounds like a very weird VD&D campaign. Even if this is "only" a series of writeups, it's still more entertaining than a lot of "original" fiction.

### Battlefield Earth by L. Ron Hubbard

This is the author's first published SF in 30 years and, judging from its size, he's trying to make up for lost time. I couldn't find any Scientology, but I found just about everything else: evil aliens, banking aliens, extinct obsequious aliens, workaholic aliens; Scots, Russians, Chinese, Tibetans, Swiss, Swedish neo-Nazis; political maneuvering, intergalactic economic collapse, diplomacy, protocol; architecture, mining, space combat, interdimensional teleportation, multi-viral lifeforms, wide open spaces; gold, uranium; mausoleums, museums, banquets; 16 parallel universes (count 'em, 16!), and a young hero who single-handedly saves Earth and the cosmos from much of the above. I don't think Hubbard will bring back the pulp era, but he will drive a lot of people crazy (especially those who try to read it more than once). Recommended only to those with a masochistic streak.



The Master (NBC, 7PM (ST))

Lee Van Cleef is an American ninja master who returns to the States to look for his long-lost daughter. Timothy Van Patten is a young trucker who becomes his apprentice. They travel around the country beating up on all the bad guys they meet (how original!) and fending off some other ninja who want to kill Van Cleef (another network executive's brainstorm).

The show has a lot of ninja tricks (acrobatics, wall-climbing, smoke grenades, etc.), but not much else. The dialogue is stilted. Van Patten's voice-overs are annoying, and the whole thing is about as true to life as artificial sugar. If the networks want to go Japanese, they should ask Lee Gold for the rights to Tokaido no Shimbun. [How about one of the real Japanese ninja series instead? We get them out here subtitled?--LG]

He-Man and the Masters of the Universe (Syndicated)

This animated TV series can be described in two letters: P U. I didn't like "Masters of the Universe" as a DC comic mini-series, but these cartoons are worse. He-Man now has an obligatory kidvid comic relief sidekick: a maladroit wizard named Orko who looks like a pointy-eared Jawa. He-Man's patroness, the feather-garbed Sorceress, has one of the wimpiest female voices I've ever heard (and the British accent doesn't help). The animation is stiff, the little moral messages at the end of each episode are enough to make you sick, and at the start of each show He-Man supposedly drives his fist through the TV screen (kids love being punched out by the show they're watching). The only good parts are the scenes when Prince Adam and his cowardly tiger Cringer change into He-Man and Battle Cat during an absolutely eye-popping light show, but that's just not enough.

4 ETC

JENNY HEIN (92): Cute wand you have there. How's your pet rock?

LEE GOLD (93): re ct LONG: If astrology contributed to the development of astronomy, why did astronomy stagnate during the Middle Ages (when astrology was popular) and revive during the Scientific Revolution (when astrology declined)?

STEVE GILHAM (93): re ct DA SILVA: I know offhand of two sentient invertebrate species in FRP: Phraints (Arduin) and Octopi (TFT).

BILL KEYES (93): Your D&D/Champions conversion system is fascinating. Awhile ago I tried to use it backward to convert some Champions characters from DW 23 (X-Men) and DW 30 (New Teen Titans) to AD&D. I lost my notes but remember that Robin came out as a Ranger/Monk, and Cyclops somehow ended up as a Paladin.

RANDALL STUKEY (94): I can only agree with those who say you have put an awesome amount of effort into your Arn campaign.

DANIEL JAMES (94): As far as I understand magic, it's a function of the conscious mind and will, so only a living being (so to speak) can use it. A river would have to be sentient (maybe a Water Elemental or River Spirit) to flow uphill.

ROBERT PLAMONDON (94): I will keep your guidelines on combat rules in mind.

DAVID DUNHAM (94): Great filk! I tried to write some verses for TFT, but the only good one I came up with went like this:

I'm a prootwaddle and I'm real smart.

...Uhh...What's the next line?

DAVID JOINER (94): Metacreativity and Discontinuity leave me speechless.

BROOKS & FLIN (94): re 7 Ages: I think I'm a sterile hybrid of 1, 6 and 7.

HARRY HENDERSON (95): Is there any chance of seeing one of your wife's stories in A&E? [We've got a six page limit on fiction.--LG]

MARTIN ELLISON (95) Re Civilization: Your idea made me ponder if anyone has ever used SPI's After the Holocaust to create a post-disaster campaign background.

LEE GOLD (96): re W&W: Now I'm sorry I never watched it when I had the chance. [If you've got a VHS videorecorder, you still have the chance.--LG]

JOHN BURT (96): re ct GILHAM: As of RQ2, the D&D class easiest converted to a cult is the Paladin. The special abilities can be rewritten with some fudging as Battle Magic spells, and the clerical spells become Rune Magic. Monks can be treated like paladins but have little or no Rune Magic. The other classes start with either too little or too much magic (although RQ3 may change this).



JOHN BURT (96): You & David Herley have taken Ducks as far as they can go.

LEW WOLKOFF (96): I regret to say that your 1 page RPG struck me as sterile.

PETER DA SILVA (96): How in Tarim's name could you let Cerebus get killed by something stupider than Elrod and the Wolveroach put together?

BOB HEINSOO (96): Smurfs are just the beginning; modern kidvid is lousy with small cute creatures like the Biskitts (try and pry treasure loose from them some time!); the Littles (alias "Cold War in a Country Wainscoting"), and those arbor-eal masters of technomagic, the Monchhichis. How about a superhero campaign that includes the Shirt Tales? Which of the Upper Planes is home to the Care Bears? Does anyone have the stomach to write up Strawberry Shortcake for CoC? And most important, will anyone still take me seriously after reading this?//I like your B&B campaign idea. Exactly what is Strong Time.

LEE GOLD (97): Re W&W and Chaotic/Evil: Maybe you'd better give us the whole article; DW seems to be sitting on it. [They decided not to buy it. Sapienza is looking around to see if anyone else wants it.--LG]

VINCENT FOSTER (97): If I ever have to go berserk, at least I'll know how. Thank you (I think).

GEOFFREY HALSEY (98) re Arcane TFT: If a beginning character spends all his IQ learning talents and/or spells, how does he increase IQ if experience doesn't increase characteristics? I can't see where he has any room for new talents?

MARK GALEOTTI (98, D's Dream): re ct JAMES & WEBB: Some of those characters might well be affecting their worlds. Delta's fleet could be carrying vital supplies to some beleaguered community or troops to a secret rendezvous. And those Sanitary Inspectors might be trying to stop Kelvin from exposing some big Illuminatus-style secret. I admit that Pine is hard to explain as anything more than the village chiropractor involved in a petty feud (unless the cobbler is a secret member of that vile and proscribed sect known as the Chiropodists).

HARRY ROBERTSON (98): re MAYHEW: "If you ever see them, but them...." Ha! I can't even find them at the library! I hope Judge Dredd arrests you for torturing the reading public (foams at the mouth and starts to chew on his bedroom door).

JONATHAN WOOLLEY (98): I found your essay on magic very interesting (even though I don't own C&S). I wish my first issue had something as good.

MIKE LEWIS (99) re ct WALKER: How does a multi-headed baby fit through a more or less human birth canal?

JENNY HEIN (99): When does Dennis get his own zine?

BRUCE EDWARDS (99): re GUCs: Nightmarish creatures indeed.

MARC WILLNER (99); re ct BURT: Miss Bianca is a mouse whose adventures (usually centered around organizing prison escapes) have been chronicled by Margery Sharp and may be found in the children's section of the library.

PHIL MASTERS (99): ~~W&W~~ except for your question on non-human PCs: I have never played anything more exotic than a Phraint, but the continent I am populating for a local campaign includes TFT-style gargoyles (flying rock-eaters), ducks, furred humans, and rabbits (not modeled on B&B); I'm considering frog people and miniature centaurs.

QUENTIN LONG (99) re ct GALEOTTI: I can see how changing caste would affect other people's reactions, but couldn't the GM just play the NPCs appropriately and expect the PCs to do the same. Why involve the mechanics of the game?

DANIEL NOLTE (99): When can we expect Eric's next contribution?

LEE GOLD (100): re Cover 99: I believe that's a dragonewt (of at least tailed priest rank) on his demi-bird.

STEVE GILHAM (100): Your techno-Tolkien scenario is appallingly fascinating. I read Hunter S. Thompson's Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas recently. His view of Vegas sounds a lot like your description of Middle Earth under Sauron. I think a lot of sf depictions of future tyrannies would also be good source material.

DAVID FLIN (100): re ct FOSTER: Shoot-a-mile! You Brits have all the fun.

continued in two pages - at the end of TALES OF MAGIC



### Adventures in the Shattered World

Simon Grundy, the young Meinibonean Bard, has been quite popular in the taverns of York. He might be somewhat less popular if other people besides his companion, the apostate cleric Bonz, knew he lead a double life as a highwayman! However, between the known burglary of a weaponsmithy and the discovery of a murdered woman on the King's Highway, the public is becoming suspicious of foreigners. Mayhap it is a good time for Simon to pack up his kit and get out of town?

The two fast-travelling thieves, Delvish of Dukanis and Fairblossom, believe they have encountered the ultimate outrage. There are noises outside their bedroom; they think somebody wants to bungle them!

In the past year, the roads have become unsafe, almost as bad as a decade ago. Some blame the elves, some say it's a plot to overthrow the king; certainly the economic upheaval caused by the earthquake which shook the capitol didn't help. With great regret I report the death of Alicia Tamara La-Fernam. She was ambushed by unknown assailants and, although it is believed she gave a good account of herself, she died from stab wounds. Although an orphan, Alicia had become known throughout the kingdom in the past three years and will be mourned by many. She was buried in the cemetery at York with the ceremony and honors due a beloved lady. Her closest friend, Hardgale the Tracker, has sworn revenge on bandits everywhere.

Goshawk of the Thieves Guild is investigating the forbidden catacombs under the city, at the behest of the Temple of the Spidergod. Only his knife-throwing skill saved him from attacking women, apparently priestesses of an unknown deity.

### Commentarium A&E #103

JOHN REDDEN: I'm not sure what tournament sex is either--except that many years ago, one of my D&D PCs encountered a party of Orcs during a dungeon-crawl. The Orcs agreed not to fight the PCs if they could "have their way" with an NPC female. The cowardly PCs consented. Orcs and female went into a room; female came out 20 minutes later with a smile on her face. When I pointed out to the referee that he had said "a dozen Orcs," he solemnly assured me that particular band had been last year's winners in the North American Speed-F\*\*king Championships.

Untrained people have landed modern aircraft, under directions from the control tower. I read about a man landing an airliner in Arizona 15-20 years ago. Recently a woman landed a private plane when the pilot died of a heart attack. I believe the first plane got down unharmed; in the latter case, the woman had to make several attempts and damaged the landing gear but was not hurt.

JASON ZALK: While none of us hide the fact that we roleplay, I certainly don't advertise it either. Not only does "polite society" consider playing games immature; playing rolegames is considered downright freaky.

JOSEPH TELLER: Staves, Wands and Rods were to be names for magic artifacts which referred to function rather than size, shape or material. A Staff would channel magical energy, making spells easier to cast. A Wand would have spells in it, the energy coming from the Wand itself. A Rod would have spells in it, the energy coming from the user. I may adopt your idea of specific materials for specific artifacts as an additional factor. Thanks.

WILLIAM PIXLEY: The weapons originally called zip guns had wooden stocks, a barrel made of a car radio aerial, and a lock consisting of a door bolt triggered by a rubber band. They fired a single .22 bullet.

PHILIP R. ADAMS: Liked your LASFASH. Reminds me of the sort of thing Marvel comics seems to be doing now.//Glad to see you in A&E again, particularly as last time you wrote me you didn't include your new address.

VINCE FOSTER: The courts have consistently interpreted the Second Amendment so it does not guarantee everyone's right to have a gun. Gun control laws have proliferated and will continue to do so. You don't like it, I don't like it, but







SKILLS IN TANURYL

Each Skills is rated 0-99. This is converted to a Base Chance of Success of 0-19. You must roll BCS or less on D20 to succeed. In general, 1 indicates a critical success and 20 a fumble. 20 always fails, even if BCS is 20+. Each skill also has a controlling attribute, which affects certain D20 rolls.

Success Level      Effects of Ctrl Attribute (CA)

Critical              CA/3 saving throw (ST) gives supercritical

Normal                none

Roll-BCS             CA saving throw required to succeed

Failure               None

Fumble                CA/(21-BCS) ST means failure; else you make matters worse

BCS 21-25: you cannot fumble; a roll of 20 means failure

BCS 26+: as above AND: roll of 1 gives supercrit without needing a ST;  
a roll of 2 gives an unimprovable critical

Attributes are on a 1-20 scale. The ST is, as with Skills, the attribute or less on D20 (20 always fails; the Ctrl Attribute is "Attribute Level" - see B&B).

Like BUSHIDO (the system's base), BCS can be jolted over 19 in certain situations - see just below table for FX. This will be due to situational mods (e.g. +n for striking from behind). There are no BUSHIDOID Bonuses in Tanuryl (see BCS Derivation). In most numerically-based situations (e.g. Tasks), a crit gives 2xFX, a supercrit 3xFX. (Oh yeah, FX = Effects).

BCS Derivation: Some Skills use BCS, while a few (e.g. AIM + weapon) use SDN (Skill-Derived Number). There are three ways to derive BCS or SDN from Score: Improved, Reduced (or Penalized), and Standard (which is referred to as just BCS). If K = 5 for BCS and 20 for SDN, then these are the values. (Round DOWN.)

Standard: (Score/K)

Improved: ((Score gm 99)/K)

Reduced: ((Score gm SQR (Score))/K)

(X gm Y = geometric mean = SQR (X x Y); SQR () = square root of.)

Thus, for Score 60, BCS 12, IMP = SQR(5940)/5 = 15, Red.

BCS = SQR(60x17.7)/5 = 4.

The IMP-BCS replaces the BUSHIDO Bonus and is used for skills the character would be good at (e.g. Seduction for Houris, Agility STs for Acrobats). I haven't done a lot with RED-BCS, but I could have used it in very adverse situations or if the character's CA is less than, say, 4. (Let's face it, APP 2 ain't going to do too well at Seduction.)

STUKEY: Like Charette & Hume and yourself, initial scores will be attribute/talent-based.

WHAT. NO DICE?

Can one run a full roleplaying game without losing any of the good points of current games and without using dice or other random number generators? I've thought about this intermittently for a year now, and I reckon you can. Frex:

Character Generation: Points-allocation with fixed initial age. Initial money is based on Luck, CHA and Economic talent. Initial points are fixed.

Combat: Yes, a No-Dice, No-HP combat system is possible. First you penetrate parries/shields, then armor, and then evaluate damage like C&S. For No-HP, use hit location based on Aim vs Defense. Calculate Severity and cross-index for "chances" of death, broken bone, pain, blinding, etc. (Thus Sev 3 vs Heart gives DS 20 - Death if you have STR 20+). But I get stumped on the tables. (If dice are used, you just can say D45 = 45% chance of inflicting death; P4 = Level 4 Pain.)

Skills: Instead of a BCS roll, you perform a task to carry out an action. Thus to pick a lock, you get BCS points every 2 minutes until your total exceeds the lock's resistance. This is a limited and feeble system, I know. Ideas?



**Magic:** Use a system a bit like T&T/AD&D, with fixed damage and no saving throws. Instead, Effects are divided by the victim's Magic Resistance - or, for an all-or-nothing spell, you save if your MR exceeds the caster's MagPts expended.

More to come (POSSIBLY). Comments would be very much appreciated? JTS?  
**Point-Allocation Character Generation:** Tanuryl uses this system, with random initial points. There are very, very few breakpoints in the game. (If you're interested: 24 attributes + 19 derived + 50 subclasses....)

**CALL OF CTHULHU:** I had 19 pounds knocking around, so I bought it. IT IS RIDICULOUSLY OVERPRICED! I can't say I was too keen on the basic system, but the main reason I got it was not to play it but to spring a surprise on my unsuspecting Daredevils players. After all, everyone gripes that the PCs will be expecting nasties in CoC, but one of my players during DD char-gen, wanted to know why the Occult Studies skill was useful. Someone is going to receive a shock in the near future. (I've got the Shadows of Yog-Sothoth campaign, and it's Truly Wonderful.)

**Mechanics:** Statistics are converted to a combination of maths and Aesthetic talent saving throws. CoC "Psychology" is just a Perception roll (WT CST). Astronomy is a new skill, while most others can masquerade as DD skills (e.g. Hide & Camouflage as Stealth) or are irrelevant (e.g. so what if Cthulhu Himself has Gardening 65%). Magic will be the stumbling block.

**Structure:** I intend to run an orthodox DD campaign, but when the PCs are back in Boston again, I'll hit them with a scenario from the back of CoC. (Of course, I'll rewrite it on A4 so they can't tell it's CoC.) From there, a tour of the Far East seems in order (DD Adventures), followed by a return to Boston and membership of the hermetic Order of the Silver Twilight. (Before this, I might--just might--have a PC inherit a house and run a scenario based on HPL's The Rats in the Walls.) After SOYS, I've no idea. Following Cthulhu Himself with a rerun of Maltese Falcon just doesn't seem to ring true.

+++ Department of Irrelevance in Mathematics Official Communique +++  
Kindly state if you call the square root of -1 "i" or "j". J indeed! Upstart.

**TFT:** I've only looked at this in shops, but I reckon that any game that charges for spells in \$ and cents must have something wrong with it. But three characteristics.....Hmm,....Elementally (see page 1) ST = Earth, DX = Fire and so IQ = Water. Yes?

**Calling All Classicists:** In Greek mythology, if someone mortal (e.g. Aeschylus, Eurydice) died, went to Hades and got brought back again, were they ageless? Or would they die again? Or did they voluntarily pop off again when their job in the Upper World was finished? Do you really care? [Judging by Theseus and Alcestis, choice two of the above.--LG]

**Politics:** The SDP is like a d.c. ammeter needle measuring a.c. current: it sits in the middle and quivers....

**Satire on J Hein(ous):** Where's the hall?

**DAREDEVILS STUFF:** Practical Skill: BARGAINING (Wl+Wt+Comm)

When trying to reduce an item's cost, you must get a higher Effect # than the shopkeeper using this skill. Reduce your effective score (not BCS) by the % reduction you want. If you lose, you must buy the item at full price. (No touring all the shops in the area trying to make your roll!) If you win, you get the reduction you aimed for, minus the shopkeeper's WL group Effect Die roll (typically D6) times base price/100 (i.e. DR%).

In a foreign country, average this skill with your score in the relevant Culture Skill. The result may not exceed Bargaining OR language used.



PIXLEY (96): Zip-Guns are a nice idea but I am slightly confused. Do you mean "8 task points with a period of 4 hr"? I suspect that your explosion %s are a bit generous (but then I enjoy rounding the players' chances down), especially for 8 TP. How about 2%/3%/4% and a task value of 12 or 16? If, upon completion, the builder fails to roll Mech or less on D20, then the gun is faulty: this replaces the FRM BCS.//Re armor: I've found that a good age roll makes a character far too powerful. Your system helps offset this. Unfortunately, it seems to assume an American campaign. My South Wales campaign has a 1997 ruin, and I do not accept that the UK will be full of American footballers et al by then. Also the British bobby never reached the stage of resembling a Chieftain tank with leprosy. Both of these visions are hopelessly optimistic, but that's life.

PESCHEL (95): Ah, but why should clerics have medical training anyway? The super-clerics (Christ et al) had healing powers, but only those who trusted/worshipped the cleric's deity benefitted (faith cures). Yes, curative powers should be limited, but even a L1 cleric should have some healing power, increasing with level. How about a Piety CR/saving throw for the cleric's coreligionists, to see if they can muster the faith? (Or to see how much they benefit; a success gets the full cure, while a failure might get a third. The new C&S Miracles system works similarly.)

LARTER (96): re ct LEE: Have you read The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail (highly recommended), which argues that Wales is actually Valais, Switzerland? You wouldn't have to cross the sea to get there.//ct LONG: I don't want to get rid of numbers: they are my natural environment. I do like the idea of having indices, but I'm not sure I understand them. Somehow, the idea of having lots of incomprehensible numbers at the top of the character sheet appeals to me, but I'm not sure if that's what you want. Nevertheless, I may try it out.

I don't like inverted roleplaying. First, I wouldn't trust Nick "evil grin" G&#\$+ as far as I could throw him. Second, it gives the PCs an unfair knowledge of the world. I see your point, and I realized that it can be used in some situations, but your example makes me think you overuse IRP techniques.

SAUNDERS (96): ct MOORE: Charrette & Hume dropped WIS for WILL and replaced some INT/WIS facets by WIT - "not...really the character's overall intelligence.... Rather, it measures the character's ability to handle data in the campaign environment" (BUSHIDO: 1041.0). It also covers perception.//CHA is dropped, but the Talent system includes Charismatic, which is used in calculating initial scores for leadership/rhetoric skills and affects reaction rolls. This indicates how perceptive the NPC is likely to be; if good talking by the player can swing me round to his point of view whatever "my" initial attitude, fair enough.

JAMES (94): RQ ~~players~~ munchkins? RuleQuesters, obviously.

BURCHETT (96): re Ogre Magi: You couldn't find it? I had the same problem with the Ankhkeg, Shambling Mount, Gelatinous Cube, Beholder, etc.

STUKEY (94): re ct FRITZ: "Only examples of...intelligent grammars were ...artificial." WHAT? You don't give your criteria for intelligence but I'd say that Classical Greek (at least) was intelligent. Hell, even a variant form of ENGLISH could be considered intelligent! In any case, if all the evidence points to natural languages being "stupid," then FRP ones should be too.

CORNELIUS (96): ct JAMES: DEATH TO ALL PROGENY OF SINCLAIR, AND MAY THEY ROT WHEREVER ELECTRONIC RUBBISH BE DUMPED. I think that makes my position clear.

WILSON (96): ct PLAMONDON: Specialization for fighters is now official and Thou Shalt Use It, by decree of EGG in the DRAGON (I know not which).

WIXTED (96): Original D&D & Basic used 10s melee rounds. It's not a first.

DUNHAM (96): Werévampires: I love it.//Tanuryl vampires drain Life Energy. (This is handled by adding to Life Energy Used, but that's a quirk of the game mechanics required by the aging system. When LEU = LE for death, you die of old age. Casting spells uses LE; growing old costs 100 LE/year.)//I like dried water.







## THE SENILE SAGE ?+3

by Robert J. Clifford, 312 Westmoreland Dr., Dunbar, WV 25064; (304) 768-6768

As a result of our wanderings through Europe, it appears that FRPlayers in the US (as well as Australia) are at a distinct disadvantage in developing realistic locales and buildings. While we contend with information gleaned from films and books, Europeans (and Brits) can actually see and experience authentic castles and cities little changed from the Middle Ages (the period most used, in my experience). This disadvantage is increased because most of the references used are wrong or incomplete; and the rest generally fail to provide the proper spirit. As an example, let's take a quick look at castles.

I have yet to see a playing aid that accurately represents a castle. And as a result, the tactics I have seen used successfully in gaming would NOT work against a real castle. Not surprising, considering the centuries of experience that went into designing and constructing fortifications. (The effects of magic against such an edifice would be quantitative than qualitative, a change in the amount of power available rather than a change in type). One feature of castles' little-known defenses is that after they are explained, they seem so obvious.

For instance, walls around both castles and towns were ROOFED, usually with slate or tile. This provided protection from weather and plunging missile fire, as well as concealment--and would also help against flying attacks in FRPGs. As a last resort, these roofs were used to drop heavy objects on attackers scaling the walls or assaulting a breach. Note that while the wall supports were timber, every-thing that could be directly hit was non-flammable. Consider how this would affect that attacking Dragon or flying creature who could neither see nor hit an enemy while being assaulted by missiles from various arrow slits.

And I'm afraid that Errol Flynn's practice of cutting the rope to lower the drawbridge wouldn't work. First, the supports were invariably chain, not rope. Second, the gates were counter-weighted, so that the rest position of the bridge was up; it had to be winched DOWN. Releasing the windlass or cutting the supports would raise the drawbridge. Finally, cutting the supports would usually DROP the portcullis.

Unfortunately for your players, most of their brilliant strategies had been conceived long ago, and countermeasures developed. This underlines a problem most of us face in roleplaying games: the people who lived under such conditions were intimately familiar with their problems and had devised solutions to them. In spite of any superiority we may (erronously) feel, we re still examining their problems from the outside. How many GMs have had players winning by strategies that are so obvious they must have been used before counters were found? (There are ALWAYS countermeasures.) And how did you handle it? Unless you are an expert on the civilization you are trying to re-create and intimately acquainted with all its facets, you will occasionally make a gaffe.

And not only must GMs be familiar with such significant details, but players must also realize that PCs would be familiar with them too. My own solution has been to call a short halt and say, "You realize that..." outlining the problem and giving a chance to reconsider. Unfortunately, this does interfere with roleplaying.

This has grown so convoluted that I've lost my train of thought. A writer I AIN'T.

Anyway, I don't see a solution, since no one can be an expert on everything. I guess it's just my military and engineering training that makes me cringe when



patently obvious strategies are allowed to go unchallenged. I'm sure each of you has your own peeve. I have several others as well, which are not germane to this ~~diatribe~~ discussion. References to cover those esoteric areas of interest to FRPs is sadly (but understandably) lacking. Perhaps the upcoming Culture Packs from Lee Gold et al. will help. In the meantime, however,...

#### BOOK REVIEW

While visiting the souvenir shop in the British Museum, I saw a copy of THE TIME TRAVELLER BOOK OF KNIGHTS & CASTLES. This is part of a series of TIME TRAVELLER books on Viking, Roman and other ancient cultures. Unfortunately, I only picked up this one.

The book is written for children and consists of equal parts of mediocre illustrations (in color, however) and text. While it only has 32 letter-size pages, it is the best and most useful introduction to the era I have seen. I only hope that future Culture Packs provide half as much usable information and the feel for the culture. I have leafed through some of the other books, and they seem comparable in quality.

The series editors are to be congratulated on an excellent job. Text and illustrations combine for easy understandability. (I believe even Munchkins could understand it if they wished; I play to try it on some of the local crowd.) And it would be difficult to compress the vast amount of data any smaller without sacrificing clarity.

Interested in rights and duties of the members of a barony? The means and speed of transportation? Means of communications? Makeup of a noble's caravan? Extent of wilderness and hazards? All of this is covered in the two page section "Journey to the Castle." Without getting technical, it provides all the information a player needs and his PC would have. "Beyond the Castle Walls" gives a good (if not complete) description of the castle defenses as well as a layout of the subsidiary buildings and facilities within the castle walls. "Inside the Keep" has a cutaway of a typical keep with examples of the jobs performed in each area. "Dawn at the Castle" covers such things as sleeping arrangements, dressing, and bathing. (For those who remember the opening castle scenes in "A Lion in Winter" and thought the vignettes were "cute" but couldn't understand them, these three chapters will offer great insight and understanding).

To keep this review shorter than the book, I'll just mention the remaining sections: Going on a Hunt, Having a Feast (learn why they had those big iron cauldrons), Trip to a Building Site, A Trip to Town, the Training of a Knight, At the Site of a Joust, Return from the Crusades (good ideas for setting up a few scenarios), and The Castle is Attacked.

The books cost 1.99 pounds in Britain. There is also an American publisher: Hayes Books, 8141 E. 44th St., Tulsa, Oklahoma. I don't know the American price. Unless your players are already intimately familiar with a culture, these books will be excellent source material (assuming one is available for your period). I definitely recommend them (even though they do not list magic) and plan to get the rest when possible. Even if your campaign is not quite the same as the historical period (an excuse I've heard often to justify anachronisms and inconsistencies), the books are still excellent as a means of instilling the proper feel.

PBZ

Under the circumstances, it seems as if Ruie and I should provide more biographical information for our leader and the GM. I have a degree in Chemical Engineering and 10 years experience as a practicing Industrial Hygienicist, so I am conversant with the toxicology, symptomology, and treatment of most common industrial and commercial chemicals and products, as well as more esoteric data (how many readers are aware that nutmeg is a hallucinogen?).



I spent two years in the infantry (1/2 Lieutenant) and have never fired less than Expert with a rifle; however, I am only an indifferent pistol shot. I have been a member of the SCA for 10 years now, but have not fought much in the last four years for lack of opportunity. I am a long-time student of military history, tactics and engineering. I can ride a horse albeit poorly and have a smattering of outdoor skills picked up in scouting, camping, bivouac, etc.

As for my wife (NOTE: Ruie has long since become intimately familiar with ALL the puns, rhymes and variations on her name and is quite apt to react violently to their use; you have been warned), she has a degree in sociology. She has been a councillor of various sorts and a professional student. She has made an exhaustive study of the Occult (we have over 200 volumes in the basement). [We have ALL of our books there--RL] from Astrology through Phrenology (which explains her habit of incessantly hitting me over the head) to Witchcraft. I am a skeptic. She can ride well, is a good pistol shot and a better bow shot than I am, and has some martial arts training. She claims some ability as a dowser and greater ability as a "Whisperer" (i.e. animals always are friendly to her, particularly equines and canines but not geese). I am still a skeptic. She will provide more information in her report below.

### Observations & Conclusions

Apparently the atmosphere is thinner than ours and has a lower partial oxygen pressure. This will cause individuals to tire easily today and tonight (longer for those out of shape; maybe three nights)--and sleep as though drugged. Lots of luck waking up your relief. All of us should be acclimated within a few days.

I don't understand the problem in starting the campfire. Since we are all breathing, there is no normal reason a fire cannot be started. Given the available equipment and expertise, the only reasons we wouldn't be able to ignite the fire would be magic or some inhibiting substance in the air. (Only fluorocarbons come to mind as effective enough without being immediately obvious).

### Pre-Move Information

There are actions I would have taken upon learning the disposition given in the last move. I would be wearing my fatigues and combat boots. I would carry a broadsword, a dagger, a hidden boot knife, a broken hacksaw blade (my belt is stitched double-layered leather; I cut the stitching and insert the saw), 100 copper pennies and one silver 100 shilling piece. I will leave the rifle behind with someone who can use it and attempt to borrow a pistol for my wife.

### Move

My philosophy on violence is to do all you can to avoid fighting. If that doesn't work, Fight Dirty. Therefore I recommend we go along with the locals. Everyone should get comfortable and act unconcerned. I will ask Ruie to strike up a conversation with our guard. DO NOT ask any questions about the government, military, religion or other possibly sensitive areas. Assume the inhabitants are intelligent. Limit questions to domestic items with a few questions on things new visitors would be interested in: e.g. a good inn, local costs, good buys. This is the best way to allay suspicion and get a feel for the society we are entering. It could prevent a faux pas like that apparently made by our predecessor.

During this period, I will attempt to unobtrusively examine the fortifications and surroundings. Questions of interest. What sort of traffic is indicated by the tracks at the gate? Heavy or light? Human? Animal droppings and tracks? Wheeled traffic?//What is the state of the wall? Well guarded? Designed for show or use? Well constructed? Dressed for appearance or plain? State of repair? State of readiness (when battles are imminent, certain constructions are usually added like roofs, gates in the merlins, etc.)?



Is there a substantial body of water near this city? Have we seen any cultivated fields? The city is likely a trading center and so more tolerant of outsiders, willing to let minor violations of taboo pass. If it lacks a navigable water access, it is probably 1) a Raw Materials Source (e.g. mine), 2) a Refuge (the lack of cultivated land makes this improbable), or 3) a Trading Center. This information should give us greater insight.//By the way, how are the people we see dressed, and what is their appearance?

I will follow our leader's directions. However, I recommend: 1) we do nothing to alarm or antagonize our captors until we know the set up and local mores; 2) we pick up all the information possible, especially the trivia; 3) since the natives have not shown any supernatural powers, we keep all paranormal abilities and widgets under wraps. This last includes Tech gadgets we brought. I recommend that all watches and such be hidden, using other party members as screens.

If taken before authority, I recommend we tailor our actions by observing the natives. If imprisoned, wait till we learn more. Finally, do all we can so as not to be separated.

### Miscellaneous

Six kliks in 2+ hours? I would examine this closely. Either the way was rough, the distance was elusive, or someone is playing with the time. 5km/hour is average over normal terrain. Even with frequent stops due to low oxygen, this appears excessive.//Is anyone getting SLEEPY?

I'll re-establish acquaintance with Lew, the only one in the party with whom I am more than passingly familiar. I will attempt to become acquainted with the rest of you as we go along. This walk should have been a good start.

Scott has my sympathy. He will have to cope with a number of people, highly trained in a wide variety of fields which can affect the adventure. He needs to be consistent and competent in all these fields. I don't think it is possible.

GOOD LUCK.

PBZ

My name is Ruie. (Say it like the Spanish "Ruy.") I don't mind the "Lady Clifford." Is it for having the courage to marry Cliff? I am 5'7", with long dark hair, hazel eyes (glasses) and fair skin.

I do all types of needlework: design and make costumes, knit, crochet, embroider, needlepoint, etc.//I ride well and--given rope--can make crude tack (halter; with a piece of chain, a rough bridle; the horse won't like it) and bare-back pad with stirrups. I'm a good rifle shot and shoot Expert with a handgun. I'm very good with a bow (up to 50 lb pull).//I play folk and classical guitar. I can juggle, not expertly but I don't drop things TOO often.

I've studied the Occult: ceremonial magic, palmistry, talismatic magic, crystal gazing, witchcraft, Tarot reading. I'm a dowser and what country people call a "Whisper": i.e. I'd have a plus on dice rolls for making friends with animals in a FRPG. I also have a limited danger sense (i.e. when danger is near I feel the way you do when a storm is approaching; I can't tell what it is or where it is coming from or when, but the time limit is about 1 - 1½ hours).

Before we go to the city, I change clothes. (I came through wearing a long dress. I like to wear them around the house.) I put on a dark cotton shirt, jeans and one of Cliff's light army jackets (for the pockets), boot socks and knee-high leather boots (like the ones worn in THE THREE MUSKETEERS movies). Over this I put an ankle-length black cloak with hood. I'm wearing the Scarab around my neck under a dark blue cotton scarf. (Who needs a WITCH scare?)







Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is arranged in several paragraphs and is difficult to decipher due to its low contrast and blurriness.