

Armadillo Droppings™

ARMADILLO GAMES

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IS THAT
A
PARABLE
OR ...



IT'S A
SIGN ...
... IT'S A
MIRACLE



IT'S A
GODDAMNED
HAND PUPPET!

... A
VERY
SUBTLE
JOKE?

Our First Ever No Theme Issue!



EDitorial

Welcome to the first ever combined issue of the Armadillo Droppings! Yes folks we really lied to you when we said the summer issue would come out in late August and the Fall issue in November. Blame it on the warm weather. Blame it on Keith's job. Blame it on me. Either way this is our vain attempt to catch up and get back on track.

We've been receiving some interesting publications ever since we were listed in Factsheet Five. My particular favorite is Black Leather Times, a quirky, sexy and very witty publication that must be read to be fully appreciated. The artwork is slick and the contents very provocative (i.e. intended for mature audiences). This means there are lots of sexual references. Subscriptions cost \$18.00 which gets you six rude issues and their big book Lunch with and Edge. The address for this 'zine is: Black Lether Times, 3 Calabar Court, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 I only hope that someday I will be able to produce something worthy of this truly bizarre 'zine. I'd also like to meet some of the women that write for it, but that's another story.

I'd like to take this time to welcome all the new shops that are carrying the Armadillo Droppings. Keith has worked long and hard (no sexual puns intended please!) to increase our presence throughout the mid-Atlantic states. Hell we're even shipping the Droppings as far west as Ohio. So if you're reading the Droppings for the first time, we hope you'll like it and perhaps give us some feedback or maybe even an article?

As I write this column, it is the waning days of summer. It's hard to believe that the cold weather will soon be upon us here in the Northeast. With that in mind, and since the next issue will be the Winter issue, we would like to try and get your votes on the best of gaming in 1994. Keith and I will be putting together a quick little survey that lists a variety of categories such as RPGs, miniatures rules, boardgames, etc. All you have to do is fill it out and return it to us so we can tabulate it and present the results somewhere down the line.

As always if you are interested in submitting material please feel free to call me at 518-463-8955 after 6PM or Keith Houghton at 518-356-3916. Or write to either of us in care of the Armadillo Droppings using the address on the front cover.



CYBERPUNK:
Hindsight Doesn't Wear Mirror Shades
by
Ed Rotondaro

I was in a bookstore recently and noticed a special new 10th anniversary edition of William Gibson's Neuromancer, the quintessential *cyberpunk* novel. That started me thinking (always a dangerous practice), about the future as proposed by the cyberpunk movement. Just how close are we to the worlds that Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Walter Jon Williams and others have prophesied?

Before I launch a diatribe against cyberpunk, let me fill you in on my background. I work for the state of New York and have been using PCs for the last eight years. My first PC was an IBM AT with a 10MB hard drive, 512K of RAM and one floppy drive. I have been fortunate enough to watch the technology evolve from bulky, overpriced, slow systems all the way up to six pound full color notebook PCs with 486 processors. My current job is system support for a network with 225 users. In this capacity I setup new systems, help users purchase new systems, repair or upgrade older PCs, install software and help the users with all those little problems on the information highway.

With this kind of background, I tend to look at the future from a more pragmatic attitude. While I assume that most of the readers of the *Armadillo Droppings* have some idea of what cyberpunk is, perhaps a definition is in order. Cyberpunk refers to both a style of science fiction literature that flourished in the '80s as well as a term that the mainstream media is using to define the growing on-line computer bulletin board subculture.

Here's my definition of cyberpunk for what it's worth. Cyberpunk is a sub-genre of science fiction that concentrates on the near future. Instead of faster-than-light starships, interplanetary travel and aliens, we have world wide computer networks with artificial intelligence. Genetic engineering and direct computer neural interfaces are commonplace. Multi-national corporations replace national governments. The environment is usually ravaged by acid rain and other toxins. Cities are generally falling down and the middle class has all but disappeared. The rich live in skyscrapers or orbital habitats away from the crime and pollution. The best visual representation of this future is the movie *Blade Runner* with Harrison Ford. Although the Philip K. Dick story it was based on was not cyberpunk, the movie managed to catch the look and feel of a seamy, run-down future.

Cyberpunk has gotten a shot in the arm due to the Clinton administration's fixation with the so-called information super highway that will transform our lives. We've all seen the AT&T commercials that tell us how we will be able to borrow books from libraries overseas or tuck our kids

into bed while cross country. This past spring, Oliver Stone launched an overblown mini-series called *Whispering Palms*, the first attempt at introducing cyberpunk into the mainstream. It failed for the most part despite some good performances by Kim Cattrall, Jim Belushi and others mainly because most viewers couldn't make heads or tails of it.

The problem with predicting the near future is that it is an inexact science at best. It's almost always different than what the scientific experts, (who should by this time know better) or the social scientists (who haven't got a clue) tell us. Remember when we were all going to be using video telephones and living on the moon? Somehow that future got sidetracked.

People and societies will not change as much as we think. Are we really that much different than our ancestors? Are we that much more tolerant of people who are different from ourselves? Check out Bosnia, Rwanda and other charming hot spots for the answer.

I don't know if it's me or what, but cyberpunk seems to have become a bit too derivative lately. The genre peaked in the late '80s, and despite Gibson's new bestseller *Virtual Light*, it appears to have run out of steam. Like the fantasy boom of the '70s, the authors all use the same ideas and the same one dimensional anti-social characters.

One of the most interesting things about the cyberpunk genre is how much it reflected the attitudes of the eighties. The decade of greed and self indulgence was also the decade that saw the introduction of the PC, the ATM and the computer network. It was the decade where cable TV and VCRs provided a whole new alternative to the traditional major networks and movie theaters. We became a 24 hour society, barraged by news, infotainment, and music videos. It's not surprising that cyberpunk embraced these new trends.

The '80s were also a decade of environmental change and political upheaval. The stability of the world was shaken by the fall of Communism and the rise of mini-nation states like Bosnia, and the return of some that had been occupied for decades such as the Baltic states. The dispersal of the former Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal to its various states has left many with the feeling that anything can happen. The destruction of the world's rain forests and the devastation of the environment in Eastern Europe are warning signs of the cost of unbridled industrial development.

Socially the '80s saw the collapse of the nuclear family in the U.S. as more single parent households emerged. Handgun violence and crimes of hate rose while the specter of AIDS loomed over the world like a funeral shroud.

It's no coincidence then for cyberpunk to paint a grim, dirty and dangerous future in direct contrast to the hopefulness of *Star Trek* and other high tech futures. But just how much of this is reality and how much is the fantasies of a bunch of urban, club hopping, punk rocking bachelors living in run down lofts?

Cyberpunk writers run the gamut from informed to wannabees when it comes to technology. In the strictest sense, an author doesn't have to be a

technological expert, he or she just has to conceive of technologies that advance the story they're trying to tell. Take the classic Gibson direct computer neural interface. What exactly is happening here? The characters in his Sprawl stories still have to use a keyboard to enter information, but no longer need a monitor because their minds are linked to the various databases they're trying to access. Get real people. We'll have PCs that we can talk to long before this will ever happen!

How about the disappearance of the middle class? Almost all cyberpunk authors take this for granted, but then I'm forced to ask who buys all the high tech goodies in these universes? Face it gang, the U.S. is still the world's premier market for high tech because despite all our economic woes, we still have the largest and richest middle class. Poor homeless people don't buy CD ROM players or multi-media PCs. No matter how cheaply future manufacturing becomes, companies plan to produce and sell in bulk, not to a small elite fringe that can still afford their products. But wait you say, what about the new European economy driven by a reunited Germany and without the threat of the Communism? Sorry folks, Europe is still full of squabbling little countries that distrust each other and will never get it together for even a common currency let alone economic unity. The only common belief that the Europeans have is mistrust of Japan and the US.

Environmental damages are one area where the jury is still out. Remember the global warming scares of the mid-80s? Well it seems like a lot of scientists are being forced to revise their gloom and doom forecasts because they don't have enough hard data to support their hypotheses. Toxic wastes on the other hand and the growing AIDS epidemic are real threats that have to be addressed.

The collapse of the nuclear family seems unfortunately to be a problem of American society. The rest of the world doesn't seem to experience this to anywhere near the degree that we do. I've got news for you. The nuclear family is alive and well in this country, even if those families are primarily immigrants with english as a second language. You'll still have to deal with mom and dad and your 2.5 brothers and sisters, 1.5 pets and 2 family cars.

As far as world-wide computer networks go, we are on target, but we still have a long way to go. Even the highly touted Internet is mainly a giant chat line, the electronic equivalent of hanging around the office coffee maker and gossiping. Yes I know that there are many highly specialized on-line services out there, but the bulk of CompuServe and GENie users are e-mail voyeurs trying to express their opinions on the deep inner meaning of *Star Trek the Next Generation*.

The biggest problem with cyberpunk is the quest to be hip. In attempting to be on the cutting edge of technology, politics and culture, cyberpunk falls victim to the Andy Warhol syndrome. As Warhol said in the 1970s, we'll all be famous for fifteen minutes. It takes time to develop lasting trends and ideas. In this world of short attention spans and remote control channel surfing, cyberpunk shows what happens when you write a story based on today's events. Next week, no one is interested in reading it. It is no

coincidence that most of the cyberpunk novels of the '80s are no longer in print. Now compare that to the works of Larry Niven or other hard science fiction authors.

Most likely, we'll find the future to be both stranger and more commonplace than we ever imagined. And it won't look like cyberpunk no matter what kind of virtual reality glasses you're wearing.



The Organized Gamer
by Brian "the Bishop" Malone

This second installment of lists of cards used in Games Workshop products will center around the evil magic spells of the **Warhammer Magic Supplement**. The following spells do not include any new items listed in the various Army List Books. The power needed to cast them included with the letter "P" followed by the points. With the release of the Chaos Supplement later this month, all four major evil races will have been released.

SKAVEN

- Wither P1
- Pestilent Breath P1
- Skitter Leap P1
- Scorch P1
- Putrefy P1
- Madness P2
- Vermintide P2
- Warp Lightning P2
- Cracks Call P2
- Curse of the Horned One P3
- Death Frenzy P3
- Poison Wind P3
- Plague P3

DARK MAGIC

- Witch Flight P1
- Vanhel's Danse Macabre P1
- Doombolt P2
- Blade Wind P2
- Hand of Dust P2
- Malediction of Nagash P3
- Arnizipal's Black Horror P3
- Soul Drain P3
- The Transformation of Kadun P3
- Raise the Dead P1-3

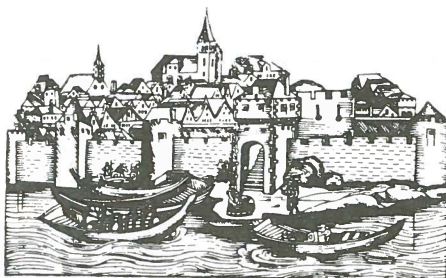
ORC

- Mork Wants Ya! P1
- Mork Save Uz! P1
- 'Eadbutt P1
- Brain Bursta P2
- 'Ere We Go! P2
- Gaze of Mork P2
- Fists of Gork P2
- The Hand of Gork P2
- Da Krunch P3
- WAAAAAAAAGH! P3

CHIAOS

- Boon of Tzeentch P1
- Pink Fire of Tzeentch P1
- Bolt of Change P2
- Tzeentch's Firestorm P2
- Acquiescence P1
- Pavane of Slaanesh P2
- Beam of Slaanesh P2
- Fleshy Curse P3
- Stench of Nurgle P1
- Stream of Corruption P2
- Miasma of Pestilence P2
- Plague Wind P3

"On the Road with Keith Kuralt"
or
"I think we're lost."



Do not despair friends, for we have traveled far and wide to bring you news from all parts of the realm. In fact we hit the road several times since last we met. Our first stop was in June when Ed and I went forth to nearby Troy, NY for an Art and Craft Show at Hudson Valley Community College. Now this may seem like it's stretching things a bit from our normal fare, but that's only because it is. In fact it was a complete debacle.

Let me digress for a moment. Ed being a veteran of the Craft Fair and Festival circuit, has made quite a name for himself as the premier parvenu of painted collectable Fantasy and Sci-Fi figures in these parts. (Ed's note - thank you Keith.) Seeking to expand his market share, Ed was interested in picking up one or two new shows to sell his wares at. I on the other hand attend game conventions, miniature and model shows. So the thought of something a little different appealed to me. So when we saw there was an Art and Craft Show at HVCC we decided to give it a try. The event was sponsored by the Franciscan Monks and the Church of Our Mother of Perpetual Pain. Proceeds would go to cloth the hungry, feed the homeless and house the naked. Well it looked good right up until we got our booth set up. It was then that we noticed there were NO customers. The hall was filled with interesting vendors alright, but where were all the people to buy this shit? They were nowhere to be seen. By mid-afternoon we had run out of tapes to listen to, as well as patience. We decided to blow off the rest of the day and not bother returning for the second day.

There were two notable highlights to this hellish endeavor. First we got to annoy the other dealers by playing our music too loud, although the "Butt Hole Surfers" can hardly be enjoyed any other way. Secondly, Ed brought me to one of his favorite taverns (Ed's note - Holmes & Watson in Troy) for a steak and a beer which made us both feel much better.

Several weeks later, having recovered from our fall from grace, Ed and I hit the road for a doubleheader. We first traveled to a most excellent game and model shop called "War and Pieces" located at 7 South main Street, West Hartford, CT 06107 (Phone 203-323-0608). Nestled amongst a cluster of diverse specialty stores, War and Pieces is a must see for any gamer, miniaturist or modeler. Although not one of the physically larger hobby stores I've seen, it certainly ranks up there with the most packed with merchandise. They have an outstanding selection of games, miniatures, models, reference books, magazines and accessories. All of which is very nicely ordered and arranged to make your shopping a real pleasure. I was most impressed with their 25mm F/SF miniatures selection. I believe it's one

of the best I've ever seen. Ed and I were both shocked however to find out that the Armadillo Droppings were being used as toilet paper, due to frequent shortages at the store. Oh well, we still like War and Pieces and would suggest if you make the trip to West Hartford, you bring the lads an extra roll or two. Tell 'em the Armadillo sent you.

Next we headed back toward Springfield, MA where we stopped for lunch at a back street bar which had no food. So we went next door to the deli and got a couple of sandwiches to go, (to the bar that is) and swilled down a couple of beers. It was only then that we realized we had no idea where the "Dragon's Lair" (our next stop) was located. Ed made a quick phone call and got some directions. Off we went down the highway toward West Springfield in search of a white building. Do you have any idea how many white buildings there are in West Springfield?

"There's one Ed! No that's a gas station."

"Oh there's another one! No that's the Animal Hospital".

"What's that? Oh, just a KFC."

"What about... No..."

"Ed what street is the 'Dragon's Lair' on?" I finally asked.

"Well I didn't think to ask that" Ed replies sheepishly. (Ed's note - **must have been those beers we had with lunch**). "The guy just said take the West Springfield exit and it's a short distance up the street in a white building."

"Oh well that narrows it down a bit" I chuckled.

"Keith I think we're lost" Ed muses.

"Very perceptive Ed."

By this time I was laughing hysterically. I didn't care because I wasn't driving. Funny the way that works.

So back to the highway past the next exit (which was not for W. Springfield) and past the next exit (which was for W. Springfield).

"Wait a minute Ed, didn't we just pass another West Springfield?"

Ed cranks the wheel, we rocket down the next exit across seventeen lanes of traffic and back onto the highway headed in the opposite direction.

"Ed! There it is again. Do you think there's two West Springfields?"

"Those diabolical bastards! The map doesn't show any West-West Springfield or East-West Springfield" Ed announced with all the bladder control he could muster.

So off the next exit and back around. Oops, missed it again, so back around. This went on for some time, but I didn't care. I wasn't driving. Besides, by the eighth or ninth pass, I was able to complete a detailed drawing of the local sewerage treatment plant located conveniently ten feet from the highway.

We finally negotiated the West-West Springfield exit and lo and behold there, just a short distance down the street was the "Dragon's Lair" In a white building as promised. (Happy, Happy, Joy, Joy). Their address is 225 Riverdale Street, West Springfield, MA 01089.

There was little left to do but go inside and see what was shakin'. So we did. We were pleased to see a spacious store filled with comics, collectibles,

games, miniatures, models and even a video section in the back. The highlight of the store was their large comic section. The miniatures were arranged uniquely, that is by type of figure rather than by manufacturer which is more common. I found this to be helpful in some ways, but confusing in others, but I didn't care. I wasn't driving. The staff was cheerful, helpful and seemingly good sorts. (Ed's note - And they let me use their toilet!)

Well the bottom line is Ed and I give both "War and Pieces" and the "Dragon's Lair" two thumbs up and highly recommend you visit both shops in the near future.

In closing I'd just like to mention that the Bishop and I made our anal pilgrimage to Historicon in Lancaster, PA in late July. It was the usual good show, although I believe improvements were made to the organization and basic logistics. Historicon had plenty of excellent dealers, plenty of fat smelly gamers, plenty of trading and a decided lack of sexy women and ice cubes. Well, that's Historicon in a nutshell. Sure beats an Art and Craft show.



This Old Toaster

by

Kurt Schneible

This month's topic: Tee shirt repair

Pizza is a tasty and nutritious food without question. But for us white tee shirt fans, it's also a highly dangerous one. Several weeks ago, I was camped in front of the television, watching the MacNeil-Lehrer Report (not "Wheel of Fortune", a mindless exercise preferred by politicians and other less fortunate members of society), when it happened. A humongous heap of pizza sauce took flight. But no, it didn't fly away. Paradoxically the gigantic glob of orange-red goo chose to follow the hated "Laws of Gravity." Instead of landing several yards away from me in a sparsely populated area, the unthinkable happened. The pulsating tomato-based plopette fell from the general location of my mouth to my thorax coming to rest of my new white tee-shirt.

Despair, thy name is stain! What to do now? After recovering from the shock, I bravely sought to contain the crisis. First of all I flipped the remainder of my pizza slice to my cat Bootsie, who gratefully devoured it. She also got some pizza sauce on her without any apparent show of concern. In her case, it all comes out in the wash.

But would I be so fortunate? No such luck pod'ner. I immediately ventured to the bowels of the basement, where the "Sacred Washing God" has his oracle. A number of the "slaves of the Sacred Washing God" were

also there. They had snappy Madison Avenue identities, such as "Era", "Tide", "Bold" and "Dirtcrusher". I felt a sudden wave of relief. Certainly these powerful forces could return my wonderful white tee-shirt to a state of glory.

I applied and scrubbed the mysterious substances into the hated stain, placing my beloved tee-shirt into the water filled reservoir of the "Sacred Washing God." Sadly my dreams turned to dust. Yes the stain was diminished, but not eliminated. After repeating the process several times, I abandoned any further efforts, fearful of creating a regional drought.

But what to do now? I couldn't bear to dispose of a perfectly good white tee-shirt, especially when the damaged spot constituted less than two percent (estimated) of the shirt's total area.

The following day, I wore the shirt down to the YMCA and attempted to engage in my regular exercise program. As you might have expected I was unable to concentrate on my work-out. Instead my thoughts were drawn to that despicable stain. I immediately concocted a remedy. I discovered that I could judiciously position my right hand over the spot, thus concealing my shame. This was a satisfactory solution for the first couple of days, so long as I didn't mind spending each workout as a poor imitation of Emperor Napoleon. Unfortunately, this strategy was defeated by the nature of the workout itself. My left arm got plenty of exercise, but my right arm having the overwhelming responsibility of covering the little orange-red stain, began to suffer.

I could easily envision a worst case scenario in which my right arm would, over time atrophy and fall off. I would then have to compensate by covering the spot with my left hand. My left arm would then eventually wither and die. I could retrain my feet to cover the spot, but at what cost? I mean if both legs also atrophied and fell off, what would I be? Nothing but a limb-less head, neck and thorax covered by a white tee-shirt with a stain. As my mind drifted through this horror story, my hand inadvertently fell to my side, revealing the hated spot. At that very moment, two attractive young ladies in tight spandex outfits jogged by my location. They each broke into a huge grin and I knew why. (No, my workout shorts don't have a zipper). As they wandered off, I overheard them talking about "The attack of the Killer Tomatoes" or in my case, "The Killer Pizza".

I was at my wits end. (Ed - A short trip). All of my accumulated wisdom meant nothing. I was driving through my own personal city of despair, when I saw the sign. "Tee-shirt Repair Shop" it said. I quickly parked the car and went inside. The proprietor, a wizened old man who looked like he had the wisdom of Solomon, carefully examined the damage. He explained to me that most of his repairs were slightly less ambitious, like re-stitching a torn seam. However, he was able to offer a solution to my problem. For only three hundred dollars, the offending portion of the tee-shirt could be surgically removed. Utilizing an electron microscope, a section of white cotton material would then be carefully cut to size, positioned and meticulously sown into the garment. Overjoyed that my problem had a

solution, I quickly wrote a check to my new hero. My tee-shirt would be ready a week from Thursday. He also suggested that I consider the purchase of a tee-shirt from his existing supply, directing me to the rack of tee-shirt of various sizes and colors. I promptly chose an orange-red colored shirt and happily walked down the street to order a pizza.

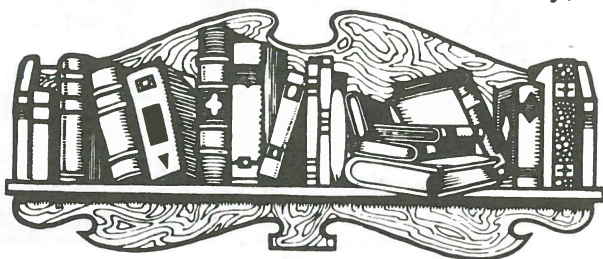


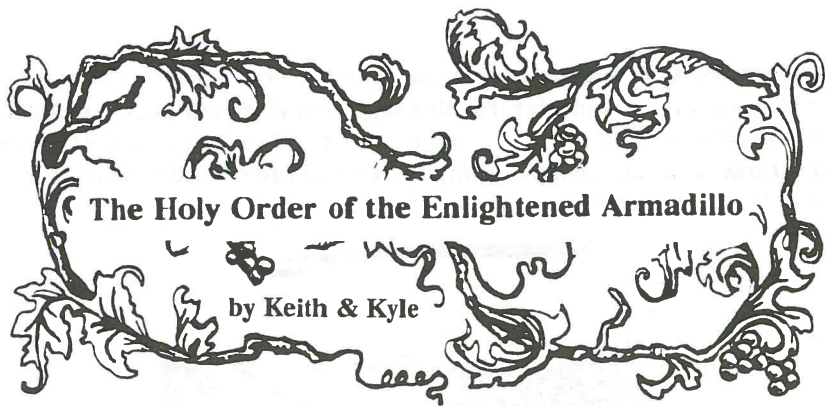
Help me somebody! I've got to get this toad into position!

Armadillo Bulletin Board

For Sale: **WHITE DWARF MAGAZINES:** Issues 97 thru 150 for only \$100.00. That's less than \$2.00 each for 54 hard to find back issues of White Dwarf. Call 355-6517 or drop me a line at the "Droppings" (Keith Houghton).

Trade: Armadillo Games will take your unwanted (unpainted) Fantasy or Sci-Fi miniatures in trade for anything in the Gallia USA line. Call (518) 355-6517 for more details or write c/o Armadillo Games, RR#6 Box 105, Schenectady, NY 12305





If you remember, Sir Kyle of Madden had been chosen to escort Pope John Thomas III through the English countryside. Sir Kyle requisitioned the services of Tom Parker his faithful manservant, Christopher the apprentice codpiece maker and Father Malone the local bishop, all to see to the comforts of the Pope and Sir Kyle.

Being that they had traveled a goodly distance that first day and with darkness nearly upon them, Sir Kyle decided (at the suggestion of Tom Parker) that they stop for the night in the little hamlet of Slippet which they now came upon. There they found the famous Slippet Inn where there would be food and lodging at a most reasonable price.

Upon entering the seemingly peaceable lodge, they found the tavern to be filled with riotous laughter, drunken men and large breasted women. There was much cavorting there and Pope John Thomas saw that it was good. So he placed himself at a table covered with many empty wine bottles and surrounded by a bevy of voluptuous (yet pious) tarts that did say unto the Pope, "Yea, let us take thouest most Holy Scepter and let us polish and hold it and feel the power within." The Pope saw that this was also good and so he did lay hands upon their melons and bless them each and everyone.



Sir Kyle and Father Malone gaped in horror as the Pope leapt to his feet, rounded the table and grasped a smallish yet greatly inebriated knight by both his shoulders and did plant numerous loud sloppy kisses on both his cheeks.

"Like the bells of St. Michael's," exclaimed Sir Kyle, "The Pope doth swing both ways!"

"And who be this slovenly Knight that does present himself likened to an anus to the wind?" retorted Father Malone.

"This-a-is mia oldess friend. Sir-a-Edwin of Polutous, Italia" ejaculated the Pope. "And I would-a-be most-a honored, if Sir-a-Edwin was-a-to join us in our-a-pilgrimage." Sir Edwin simply smiled with half closed eyes and slumped back in his chair as Pope John Thomas released his grip.

Sir Kyle, the Bishop and Christopher sat at a nearby table too stunned or tired to debate this issue. Tom Parker, having relieved himself of his great bundle of provisions and his first two beers, was now entertaining the other guests with folk songs, juggling and hopping around on one elbow with both legs tucked behind his head.

Pope John Thomas and Sir Edwin drank, ate and reminisced late into the night while serving wenches took turns being blessed by the Pope and dodged Sir Edwin's enormous thrusting lance.



Meanwhile, back at the Castle of Evil King George there were dark plottings and great subvertings afoot.

O. S. S. F. (See how much room we save by abbreviating "Our Story So Far" instead of spelling it out word by word and wasting precious space that could be better utilized to recap our story? Hmm?): Bruno McGurk's in trouble.

Going on vacation?
Don't forget to pack the DNA!

RAMMER

by CHARLES SANTINO

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Part 2

The octopussian worker-thing from Kurgosh IV released Bruno from its slimy clutches, stood on its wet, bulbous head, and whirled its tentacles around in the air with a graceful dexterity that was as impressive as it was counterproductive. Presumably the creature meant to blow out the flaming greenbacks that were about to engulf them, or at least to employ positive air pressure to push the stuff away. Instead, the propelled oxygen acted as gaseous kindling, and the few bills that hadn't already ignited did so now.

Bruno shambled towards the door, his body still smarting from the sucker-grip of his Kurgoshian co-worker.

Meanwhile, up on the catwalk, Paymaster Rebo was pelted with the burning money. Wiping cinders from his eyes, he spoke, his tone melodramatic and foreboding: "Gentlemen, I have reached...my...limit! Nay! Correction — I have *surpassed* my limit. You have provoked the Paymaster of Government Space Factory 1AF909: Ramscoop Engine Assembly!"

While Rebo spoke, massaging every syllable for its monologistic possibilities, Bruno tried to kick down the door and get out of Payday Bay. He was having no more luck getting out than he had had getting in.

Rebo grabbed the catwalk rail and vaulted down to the Bay floor, displaying the characteristic speed and quickness of the Poltaygian Urb-Apes, those over-educated, fiendish simians who held so many mid-level bureaucratic posts in Government installations. Rebo was proud to call

himself an Urb-Ape from Poltaygia; every other sentient being in the galaxy considered that appellation a huge insult.

Rebo levelled his fire pistol at the Kurgoshian and fried him in his own juices. He pressed the communicator-implant on his left nipple. "Steward! Send the chef down at once to Payday Bay. Instruct him to remove the Kurgoshian and prepare him for dinner for myself and my staff. Thank you." He pointed his weapon at Bruno, whose bag of cash was once again stuck in the diaphragmatic portal.

"What a pity! You wouldn't even make a decent meal for my pet snoygoyt, who takes great pleasure in stuffing his face with rancid larval ecto-spinerettes."

Bruno realized he was about to become just another space factory statistic. His life flashed before his eyes, a repetitious pattern of back-breaking work punctuated with short bouts of reckless pleasure-seeking. He decided that if he survived this confrontation, he'd think about doing something to make his existence worthwhile. There'd be no harm in thinking about it, anyway.

All of this reflection took place in a very small slice of time. When Bruno snapped out of it he found himself flying through the air at Rebo and then banging away on the Urb-Ape's face with his pot roast-like fists. The Paymaster's pistol somersaulted into Bruno's hand.

"Really, Mr. McGurk," Rebo sputtered through broken teeth, "think *hard* about this, my loutish friend. Killing a mid-level bureaucrat aboard a Government Space Factory involved in important defense work? You would be fortunate to receive the death sentence for that infraction, if you grasp my meaning. You —"

"Don't you Po'tay-gee-an monkeys ever shuddup?" Bruno asked in a purely rhetorical fashion as he stuck the pistol in Rebo's ear, exactly as he had fantasized only minutes earlier. It was more satisfaction than he'd experienced in the whole tenth months he'd toiled on this shift, hammering out ramscoop engine parts in zero gravity nausea.

Joy quickly followed satisfaction: his shift was over! Vacation time at long last! Rebo slumped to the floor, unconscious. The currency fire was nearly burned out, but the Bay was filled with blinding smoke. Bruno didn't need to see the door to know exactly where it was and he ran for it, snatching up his bag of loot along the way. Adrenalin pumping, he knocked the door clean out of its socket with one Herculean kick.

Bruno was feeling so giddy, so absolutely *elated* by this favorable turn of events — what, with his two months of bacchanalia commencing, Rebo conked out on the Payday Bay floor, and that ridiculous Kurgoshian

headed for the drawn butter — that he decided, most impulsively, to steal Rebo's personal flyer.

After all, if he waited around to be processed out through regular bureaucratic channels, he would no doubt end up in the stockade. The commotion in the Bay wouldn't go unreported for long. No, he had to get out and get out fast. When he clocked in two months from now, there was hardly anything worse they could do to him than put him back to work. In any case, he'd worry about it then. Now it was time for stealing Rebo's flyer and getting down to some serious carousing.

Bruno broke into a run then pulled up short. He thought about the "Space Patrol" vids he watched as a youngster. When the bad guys were leaving the scene of their dastardly deeds, and the authorities were pursuing them through the crowded spaceways, they would *slow down*. By keeping pace with the traffic pattern, they blended in. The Government men would pass them by. Feeling devilishly like a crime-vid baddie, Bruno walked calmly through the factory corridors, humming the melody to a bawdy drinking song. He was the epitome of normalcy and nonchalance.

He stopped again, this time to look up at a massive ceramic floor plan of the Space Factory that was bolted to the corridor wall. Where *is* Rebo's cabin, anyway?

Impatience ate away at his cool façade. Every innocuous public address announcement rattled him. None of them said, "Get Bruno McGurk!" but the next one might.

He ran his fingers along the floor plan. When he saw Rebo's blood dripping off his pinky, he pulled his hand away and looked around nervously to see if anyone had noticed the evidence. Apparently not.

He located Rebo's cabin — not far from where he was standing — and made a mental note of the location.

In the reflective surface of the floor plan he saw someone walking toward him. Without turning around, he narrowed his eyes to see who it was.

A female.

She strode briskly from the offices across the hall.

The *Administrative* offices.

And the female was *her* — the "new one" he'd observed earlier!

"Can I help you with something, sir?"

Bruno turned slowly, composing his face into a frozen parody of tranquility. She didn't react noticeably to the moronic grin plastered

across his brutal features.

“I’m lookin’ for my cabin, miz.”

The foolishness of his statement hung in the air like the smell of decomposing fish. Bruno was smart enough to know that if it sounded stupid to him, it must have sounded ten times worse to her. He couldn’t stop himself from wincing.

“You don’t know where your cabin is?” She suppressed a smile.

This blue-collar boob was obviously trying to cover something up, she thought, but Bruno had no idea that she didn’t suspect anything nefarious.

Bruno looked down the long hall, turned his head back to talk to her, looked down the hall again, turned his head back to talk, looked down the hall one final time, and then the significance of his triple-take sunk in: a Factory cop was pushing his way through the bustling corridor, unholsteing a fire pistol.

A pretty girl will get you killed every time, Bruno thought. And she *was* pretty. More than just not old and not fat, she was young, vibrant, and best of all, apparently human, or something close.

“See ya later!” Bruno disappeared around a corner.

He made it to Rebo’s cabin undetected. The cop no doubt thought Bruno was headed for his own quarters. PRESENT DNA-ID, flashed the light on Rebo’s door. A needle slid out of the wall, groin high. Bruno leaped back, thinking he was under attack. Then he remembered the bureaucrats’ personal security system. He was supposed to prick his finger on the needle, which would instantly analyze his DNA. If he was Rebo, he’d be admitted. If he wasn’t, he’d be vaporized.

The danger must have heightened Bruno’s awareness, allowing his mind to make connections that otherwise would have certainly escaped him. He smeared the blood from Rebo’s face that was still wet on his hand onto the needle and hoped it was fresh enough to fool the bio-electronic gatekeeper.

It was. The door *shooshed* open. And there was Rebo’s beautiful, shiny flyer, sitting peacefully in the see-through airlock. Bruno tossed his bag into the craft and examined the controls. They looked simple enough. Then he heard someone step into the airlock. The girl! was Bruno’s first thought — she wants to come with me! He got out of the flyer to greet her. A fire pistol attached itself to the end of his nose. The cop from the corridor squeezed the pistol’s trigger.

(to be continued)



CAPSULE REVIEWS:

by

Ed Rotondaro



This issue I'll be focusing on my usual obsession, recent releases for Battletech along with one interesting product from Games Workshop. This past summer saw several products released by FASA for their flagship system. In order of chronological appearance, the first new product is the **3057 Technical Readout retailing for \$15.00.**

The new readout has the same format as the previous ones, but it focuses solely on the Battlespace system. It both supplements and replaces the old Jumpships and Dropships book. It includes revised statistics for all Inner Sphere and Clan dropships to bring them in line with the new Battlespace system. In the case of the Inner Sphere, there are statistics for both the obsolete (read original) dropships and for upgraded vessels with lost tech weapons such as Gauss Rifles, pulse lasers, etc. Several new designs are also included primarily for fighting in space against other dropships.

The Inner Sphere is finally producing Warships, although nothing larger than a destroyer is available yet. All the original 2750 Warships as well as some Clan designs are included. The readout also contains a large errata section for Battlespace. The artwork in this supplement is not quite up to the standards of the other readouts, but this shouldn't detract from its usefulness. Personally, I'm not a big fan of Battlespace, but if you are then this book is definitely a must buy. Overall I rate it B+.

The next release was a campaign/scenario book entitled **Tukayyid, retailing for \$12.00.** Tukayyid focuses on the epic battle between Comstar and the Clans for possession of Terra itself. The Com Guards victory forced the Clans to accept a fifteen year truce that prevented them from conquering any further worlds. This scenario pack is somewhat different from the usual Battletech supplement in that the forces in most battles are not given, but rather generated by the players each time they fight. A unique system of bidding allows the players to first decide the level of Com Guard forces defending the objective. The Com Guard player then can pick and chose mechs and vehicles from a table that includes 2750 designs, 3050 refits and specially modified Star League mechs. Once the defending forces are chosen, the players then bid for the right to play the Clans and once they have agreed on the size of the forces they will use, they too pick their mechs from lists that are specific to the individual Clan making the assault. A die roll is necessary to determine the availability of certain Omnimechs and variants. Second line mechs can always be had if the player prefers.

Gunnery and Piloting skills are based on a table that has values for green, regular, veteran and elite mechwarriors. A further enhancement is a set of rules governing how honorably the Clans will fight. Depending on the Clan in question, some will not engage in physical combat, others will not engage multiple targets and some such as Clan Wolf will fight exactly like their Inner Sphere opponents.

Tukayyid is not a supplement that you can just pick up and start running battles. The players will have to do some setup work before hand, but once that's done there are several scenarios that are linked together to let you recreate the various battles that each Clan fought on Tukayyid. Many of the battles take place on one or two mapboards, so you will probably want to keep the forces small to allow for some maneuvering.

Tukayyid includes several variant 2750 mech designs as well as a jump capable MadCat configuration. Amazingly enough the record sheets for these mechs are included! This release should appeal to players who enjoy matching themselves against the Clans. It's also useful for generating Clan opposition forces for Mechwarrior campaigns. Overall it rates an A.

Finally as the summer came to a close FASA released the hardcover revised **Battletech Compendium retailing for \$20.00**. This is the third attempt to revise and clarify the Battletech rule system. It demonstrates the impact that on-line computer bulletin boards are having on all segments of popular culture. Many of the rules changes are due to questions sent in to FASA via GENie and CompuServe. To assist the experienced gamer, the rules are marked with a symbol where ever there are changes. The new artwork including splendid computer generated mech illustrations adds to the visual appeal of the Compendium.

Some interesting changes are the number of Narc pods in a ton of ammo. Previously you had to buy two tons of ammo to get six Pods. Common sense has made it six pods per ton. Also the rules for Thunder LRMs that appeared in the Tactical handbook are now incorporated into this edition. Some interesting clarifications regarding jump jets and level two water caught me totally by surprise. Did you know that you can no longer jump out of level two or deeper water? Also if you are in level one water and some or all of your jump jets are leg mounted, you can't use them. This will change how certain mechs are handled during play.

A decision was made to leave out the aerospace rules since the Compendium is only supposed to cover ground combat. A section covering special situations does give you brief rules for tactical air support. Somehow I anticipate another release covering aerospace and Battlespace combat.

The Compendium also includes eight mech record sheets done in a totally new format. They include two new mechs, two variants and four corrected mech sheets. Some of the corrections lead me to believe that the new CD ROM mech design program must have been used to detect the errors.

The Compendium will also be released on CD ROM. To run it you will need a computer capable of multi-media with Windows 3.1. I'm looking forward to seeing this product in action since it will allow you to custom design mechs. The CD also contains all the published mech designs found in the various record sheet booklets. I wouldn't be surprised if all the record sheets are revised using the new format which is better organized and easier to photocopy.

The new edition of the Compendium is a must have for any Battletech

gamer, especially those who try to run tournaments and don't know the rules! Overall this one is A+++!

Finally we have a very interesting new product for miniatures painters. It's the third book of the 'Eavy Metal series, **The Citadel Miniatures Modelling Guide**, retailing for \$20.00. The guide concentrates on figure conversion techniques, along with tips on how to assemble multi-part figures as well as modellings tips.

The conversion techniques are lavishly illustrated in a step by step manner. Conversions range from simple head or weapons swaps to elaborate creations of unique miniatures. The complex conversions frequently take an illustration from White Dwarf or some other Games Workshop product as their inspiration. The Space Marine captain on the box of the new Warhammer 40K set is the subject of one such conversion as is the Dire Avenger Exarch from the Eldar Codex. Both conversions are superb yet within the range of most experienced modellers.

The new Modelling Guide is treat for the eye as well as source of techniques for any miniature painter. If painting figures is your hobby, this guide rates an A++. I highly recommend it.



(Ed's note - this is another brooding article from the Bishop's younger brother, the Thug. It covers his experiences at Games Day 94. I've tried not to edit it too much so that you can get the full effect of his dementia. Remember, this is what happens if you game too much.

**"What I did on my Summer Vacation"
by the Thug
BALTIMORE!**

It was a foggy morning when I began my trip down to Baltimore. I took Route 88 to 81 then 81 to 83 and finally to 695. Exit 30 on 695 was where the hotel was. I made it there without getting lost once. When I checked in I found out that there was a wedding being held. Little kids ran up and down the hall screaming and making noise most of the night. **(Ed's note - sounds like a typical game convention.)** After I fell asleep Friday night and got my four hours of sleep I was ready for the convention.

Me and my navigator arrived at the convention at 9:00. The line we stood in was about 50 people. At about 10:30 there was a line of over 200 people. I was going crazy waiting in line. We had Mr. Know-it-all in front of us and a bunch of assholes in back of us. **(Ed's note - looks like you fit in nicely Thug.)** When I finally got in, I made my way to the line for the painting contest. I found out that when entering figures don't listen to the person behind the counter. There are also a few more things to consider when entering a Citadel contest. One, make sure the figure is painted well. Second, make sure your bases are green and you use green flock. If someone tells you to enter a five man squad instead of ten, don't listen to them.

There were a lot of set ups for games available for play. They even had the new Lemman Russ tanks that were coming out. The most popular games going on were Warhammer Fantasy Battle and Warhammer 40K. The staff for the most part were pretty down on the rules. I took plenty of pictures of all the figures entered. One of the most interesting entries was in the Vehicles Category. The entry was from Mike Naylor. I think that he should receive the big dummy "lamont" award for entering an illegal figure. What I mean is the resin Titan figure for Warhammer 40K not made by Citadel. I'm surprised they didn't pick him and his Titan up and throw his ass out the door. (Ed's note - I've seen the resin kit in question. It is a superb piece of modeling and painting on Mike's part and was a licensed product from Games Workshop! Stop whining Thug.) After I was done looking around and buying things I decided to play a game. The game started at 2:30, Orks against Imperial guard. Ten minutes after I began the game I found out that I had fifteen minutes to get my figures. Always make sure you have something to carry your entries in. Well me and my copilot left with no Golden Demon Awards. We both left with a lot figures and other things. Back to the hotel we went. It was about 6:30 so we decided to find a Citadel outlet store to look around in. We got the phone book out and found a store. We proceeded to the store with no problem finding it. We loaded up with a lot of figures and approached the counter. When we looked at the pieces, we noticed they weren't priced. No big deal right? Wrong, it took 45 minutes for us to get prices. I ask you why wouldn't you price your stock? (Ed's note - Actually Thug makes a good point, who's minding the store at Games Workshop these days?) I have one word for these people and its "stupid".

I am not a writer (Ed's note - True) and this story probably sucks (Ed's note - Yes it does.) but too bad. Anyone who doesn't like it can kiss my dumb white butt. I went to Games Day. I was there here is the report, the end.



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