

THE CRUSADER™

July 2005 Volume 1 Number 2

The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer

ELVES by
Steve Chenault

**HOW IT ALL
HAPPENED**
by Gary Gygax

ART by
DARLENE

FICTION by
Davis Chenault
& Dan Cross

**A TRIBUTE TO
RPG ARTIST
DAVID C.
SUTHERLAND III**



Peter Bradley 2005

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ISSUE #2

THE CRUSADER™

The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer

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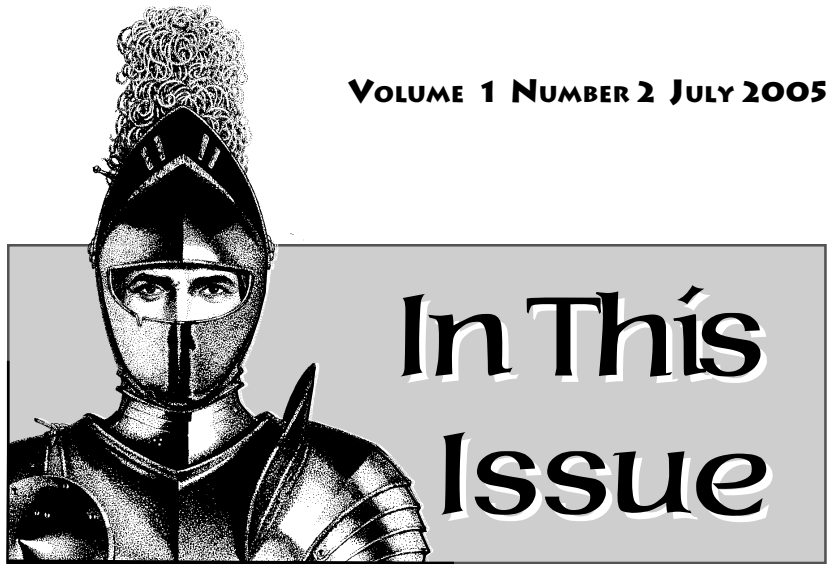
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VOLUME 1 NUMBER 2 JULY 2005



HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

"Way Back When" by Gary Gygax 2

FEATURED ARTICLE

"Elves" Stephen Chenault explores Elves' mythological origins, literary interpretations, how to play and fit them into your game 3

CRUSADER COLUMNS

Hammer & Anvil: Casey Canfield addresses the etiquette of group gaming in *"The Art of Effective Communication"* 5

Auld Wyrmiş: The wear and tear of armor is addressed by the Old Gamemaster, Mike Stewart in *"Armor Game Rules"* 21

Historical Footnotes:
 Steve Chenault explores the History of the Crossbow, and the Long Bow in *"Crossed Bows"* 23

Mírmír's Well: Rob Kuntz asks: *"Old School VS New School?"* 29

The Tinker: Joshua Chewing offers *"A Beginning of Sorts"* 32

ART, FICTION AND COMIX

FICTION: *"The Theurgist's Lethe"*
 Installment Number Two by Dan Cross 11

ART: *Tribute to DAVID C. SUTHERLAND III*
 Paul Stromberg honors *"A Great Man"* 15

ART: *Pages from my Sketchbook:* DARLENE Shares Her Creative Journey and recalls her unusual experience with *"The Nagas"* 17

FICTION: *"Frankenburr - The Crack Parade"*
 by Davis Chenault 19

COMIX: *"Fellowship of Forgers"*
 by Finarvyn 25

FICTION: *"The Lay of the Lothian Princes"*
 by Stephen Chenault 25

INDEX TO ADVERTISERS ON PAGE 34

HOW IT ALL HAPPENED by Gary Gygax

The Inspiration for the D&D Game, its Creation, Gen Con's Founding, How TSR came into Being, and its Early Days WAY BACK WHEN...



The number of times I have been asked questions about how the D&D game was created, what inspired it, GenCon's beginning, the formation of TSR, what it was like way back then are innumerable. Suffice to say that

my usual response to such queries is terse. Such questions require complex and lengthy answers not suited for even a general seminar at a convention, let alone a letter or e-mail response. But when the Editor of *The Crusader Journal* proposed I write a column dealing with these topics, it didn't take me long to agree. Now, at last, I have a proper forum for detailing my answers. So whenever I am again asked about the topics, I will simply refer people to *The Crusader Journal*.

So for the first time, you are about to read the first of many installments dealing with the beginning of the gaming hobby as we know it today.

The initial essays will perforce deal with the near-ancient history of my childhood and adolescence and for it was then that the interests that brought into being GenCon, the D&D game, and Tactical Studies Rules. The accounts will move progressively closer to the present time, and end when the early days of TSR came to a close in 1978.

Come with me now on my journey back to the time when I was first introduced to fantasy, for that is how it all began.

My father was a marvelous story teller. What a treat it was for me at age three and later to have him tell me a bedtime story. Those tales were usually of giants and dragons, wise old wizards with magic rings, cloaks of invisibility, and always a little boy involved in the adventure and derring do. My mother was also attentive to her eager little son's demand for exciting stories. She read many sorts of things to me, ranging from the Sunday newspaper comic strips and *Jack & Jill* magazine through stories from *Book Trails*, a set of books for young people, and volumes of fairy tales. What I wanted most were adventure stories, and of

those, I loved fantasy above even tales of pirates and jungle epics.

Back in the 1940s there was no television, and that was good. Listening to radio programs surely developed my capacity to imagine based on what I heard. There were many exciting radio programs, children's and adult, and I loved listening to them, just as I did going to the movie theater on Saturday

afternoon. Afterwards I would gather with the other boys and we would play "Let's Pretend" games based on whatever we had heard on the radio or seen at the theater. The array of props used was typical of the time—toy guns, wooden swords, shields made from the lids of fruit crates, and whatever else was around and would make do.

The girls didn't join in play with the boys much, only when playing hide & seek in the evenings. That didn't really matter much, as there were about a dozen boys in the immediate proximity of my house. The lads on my side of Kenmore Avenue called themselves the Pirates. Those across the street were the Indians. Peashooter and snowball fights were between the two groups, but when any "strangers" showed up we were one. There were periodic scraps to see which boy was where on the toughness

ranking, and one girl was right near the top. Although I was a couple of rungs beneath the top, about number four, I had a full back yard, so I generally got to call what make-believe game we would play... my first experience as Game Master.

All play wasn't outside. I loved card games, playing pinochle when I was age five, chess at age six, the one pretty well, the other badly. When I could, I'd rope in a friend to play such games with me. It was easier to get them to play with my blocks and toy soldiers, though, so that happened a lot.

Next we visit my move from Chicago to Lake Geneva in 1946, and the first real role-playing game that was run there, so come on back.



WHEN CAESAR STOOD UPON THE BANKS OF THE RUBICON LOOKING SOUTH TO ROME HE HESITATED. BEFORE HIM STOOD THE VAST, COMPLEX MECHANISM OF THE PAST, GLOWING WITH A HOST OF INTRICATELY WOVEN STRATAGEMS. WITH HIM, HE HAD BUT ONE LEGION, WEARY FROM 8 YEARS OF BRUTAL WAR WITH THE GAULS. BUT WHEN CALLED TO SURRENDER HIMSELF TO THE SENATE AND CERTAIN EXILE HE DID NOT HESITATE. HE CALLED HIS LEGIONARIES TO CROSS INTO ITALY, TO CROSS THE RUBICON. AND AS HE DID SO HE SAID ONLY THIS : ALEA IACTA EST!

ALEA IACTA EST

The Die is Cast



Elves

by Stephen Chenault



Throughout our popular culture there exist almost as many interpretations of what elves are, as there are ways for the United States Congress to waste our hard earned money. There is a rich literary and mythological tradition for elves, from the Norse epics to Tolkein, from comic books to Brian Froud's wonderful depictions.

There are almost too many to describe. We have small, delicate elf creatures who are mischievous, mean pranksters. Small, tough elves who fight from the backs of beasts as they go to war. At times elves are lordly and contemptuous; other elves are magical and elusive. Then there elves who are tall, noble and strong, whose knowledge of the world and its making is beyond a mortal's understanding.

The host of literary sources for elves is voluminous and filled to overflowing with the types of good ideas and concepts that any game designer relishes. Elves, far more than most of the other races that appear in RPGs, are perfect grist for the creative mill because the sources that one can draw upon are so very rich. Despite this, they are the most stereotyped of the races. Elves are always quiet, soft spoken, wise creatures who dwell in harmony with the natural world. Elves can be, and should be, so very much more.

Most of the older, particularly the Germanic, literary sources treat elves as spirits, sometimes good, sometimes evil. Shy, diminutive creatures, elves delight in entering the mortal worlds and taunting men, luring them into deadly traps or haunting their dreams. They are also associated with fertility, either in league with the fertility gods or are the actual gods themselves. They are another manifestation of the many animistic spirits that occupied early Germanic religious beliefs.

Scandinavian mythology treats elves slightly different. They are still shy, mischievous creatures, and

are still associated with fertility, but they are tall, the size of men and able to do as most men are. The Norse and Danish sources portray elves as almost entirely female. Almost all the sources portray elves as able to blend with, or are actually part of, the natural world. They use mists to travel in and are clever enough in disguise to make themselves appear invisible.

We see elves in a clearer light in the early English sources where they often appear as lordly, beautiful and god-like. They possess a land, Elfhome (Alfheim or Elphame), where they are ruled by a beautiful, and powerful Queen. But beyond her there is little that lends itself to the structures of elvin society, and we are presented with elves who do much as the please, are willful and disdainful of the mortal worlds. These elves are magical creatures who use their abilities to beguile men and carry off women.

Perhaps the best literary examples of elves can be found in the pages of J.R.R. Tolkein's *"The Silmarillion."* Tolkein blends the concepts of English and Scandanavian elves into one concerted whole. The tale he presents is all encompassing and charts the long course of the history of the elves of Middle Earth, their rise and fall, their achievements and their failures. In Middle Earth elves are not creatures that play on the fringes of human culture, but rather, are creatures who have governed the course of the world's history. Here they are not background props, but are the very focus of the tapestry's story. Too, they are not all presented in the same light. There is no common denominator for an elf in Middle Earth. They are a race of folk who are as different from each other as any number of characters in a Shakespearean play.

The shining light of the elves of Middle Earth is Feanor. Described as the greatest of smiths, Feanor is envied even by the gods, who in the end, covet that which is his greatest creation. Feanor is proud and treats most of his fellow elves as underlings and treats other races with utter disdain. Though in the



end his pride destroys him and those of all his greater-than-life sons. He never wavered from his chosen course and never once looked back with regret. Feanor was strong, fearless, proud, prejudiced and unforgiving. This is a character hard to associate with and hard to imagine oneself playing in any game.

Feanor's would be a hard character to play in any game, as RPGs generally portray elves as stereotypes. You can typify their behavior. Almost all elves are noble and wise, both skilled as a woodsmen and with the bow. One who lives in harmony with his environment, patient in his outlook, lacking in greed or any of the sins visited upon the more uncouth races such as humans, elves are filled with a spirit of freedom and independence. All these personality traits are assumed because their great age has bequeathed them with a wisdom others are denied. And this wisdom dictates that one must not alter the world to suit one's needs, that would be a human, orc or dwarf approach, but rather live in abject harmony with the world.

This approach to elves has one fundamental flaw. It creates a whole race of people who are nothing more than cookie-cut-outs of each other. It denies them a personality that we take for granted when playing humans. Elves in RPGs are largely emotionless animals, who do nothing more than live out their long lives in peace and harmonious comfort with the world.

This need not be so. Elves can be treated in the same vane as humans, without losing any of their mystique or power at the gaming table. It only requires that we look at elves from a different angle. Does the elf build his tree top kingdom as a natural extension of the trees or does he shape the trees to better hide and defend his kingdom? Elves are possessed of a long life and in those lives they would necessarily have perfected a great many skills. In the world of Erde, as presented by TLG, elves use their long lives to shape the world to better fit their idea of what beauty and power is and can be. The world is fundamentally flawed and in need of cultivation. The difference between elves is as distinct as it is subtle. Humans shape the world to fit their needs; elves shape the world to fit their needs by bringing out that which they perceive is most powerful in the world around them. A tall tree need not be cut down and made into a good wall, but rather encouraged to grow taller and become strong. This molding of the world necessarily causes conflict with the hosts of other folks that elves come into contact with.

Elves can also be given the host of personality traits that all intelligent races should possess. They are greedy, lustful, desirous of power as well as good and noble, kind and sympathetic. All the great host of traits associated with free thought are there. Why an elf would automatically see a greedy dwarf as something to be pitied is no more palatable than it would see a burning tree as something to be left alone. An elf

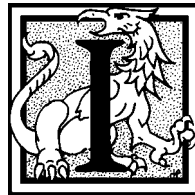
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THE ART OF EFFECTIVE COOPERATION

BY CASEY M. CANFIELD



I don't think it will surprise anyone to hear that participating in any RPG is a group effort; although solo adventures can be a short-term diversion, there's nothing quite like the feeling of getting together with friends for some rousing adventure.

However, it's possible that even the best group of friends can create an environment where it is not only difficult to succeed as gamers, but it's practically impossible to get any gaming done at all. Even in the most focused of groups, there can still be a fundamental lack of teamwork when it comes to the game itself. So,

the gaming group has a multi-dimensional challenge – not only must the group come together to focus on the game, but the members of the group must work well together to meet with success.

I construct my adventures to require players to be on their toes. Often, they must be skilled at using all of their resources – otherwise, they may find themselves rolling up new characters entirely too often. When a group has trouble working together effectively, scenarios constructed with this philosophy can be very punishing as a result. After a few adventures of this sort, groups can get discouraged.

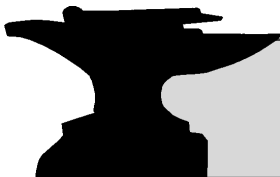
I've heard some opinions over the years that the best solution is to balance the adventure to the skills of the players. After all, the game belongs to the players just as much as it belongs to a referee, right? While that philosophy sounds wonderfully just, I find myself unhappy when I play in such games. To me, they hold no mystery. I want to think and be challenged, not take for granted that the CK has constructed every encounter so that the adventurers can defeat it. PC success shouldn't be the goal of the CK – it should be the goal of the players.

Human beings learn by making mistakes and learning how to avoid those mistakes in the future. While I want my players to have fun, at the end of an adventure, I want them to realize that **they** were the captains of their own success. The best way for players to attain that sense of accomplishment is by improving their own gaming skills. The best way for them to improve those skills is through challenge, not from "kid gloves" and an over-reliance on perfect encounter balance.

With those principles in mind, let's talk about cooperation.

CASEY CANFIELD

HAS BEEN PLAYING AND GAME-MASTERING RPGS SINCE 1983. CASEY CURRENTLY PLOTS THE DEEDS OF NEFARIOUS CHARACTERS AND CREATURES FROM HIS LAIR JUST OUTSIDE OF POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK.



GAME TIME IS FOR GAMING

"BANISH THE REAL WORLD FROM THE TABLE."

If I put time aside to play C&C, I want to play C&C the *entire* time. Gaming time is scarce, for anyone, but it becomes even more scarce when the scant amount of time that *is* available is used for other purposes.

It's easy, when gaming with good friends, to get caught up in the real world events that have happened since everyone last gathered together. However, let's be honest – if we just wanted to socialize, then why aren't we setting time aside to do that rather than wasting gaming time?



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LISTEN TO YOUR GROUP

There are few things more dangerous to a gaming group than gamers with strong personalities forcing those with more passive personalities to agree with them simply because they speak at a higher volume.

Here's my experience: strong personalities tend to talk so much they miss things. Passive personalities tend to stay quiet and absorb what others are saying. As such, they tend to have a more complete picture of the situation at hand than more aggressive players.

If a group wants to succeed, it had better learn to listen to the passive personalities in the group. Aggressive personalities need to learn to give more credence to the ideas of the quieter members, particularly if those quieter members are newer gamers.

An untainted perspective is a wondrous thing. New gamers are afraid of looking stupid, or of making the wrong decision, but they aren't bogged down with preconceived notions about gaming situations. They are more likely to think of things more experienced gamers will not, but they are also more likely to react to stimuli in the manner that the character would react.

Passive personalities need to speak up. It's difficult, but it could prove essential to party success. Shy players should not let themselves be dismissed out of hand, even by more experienced players. They should defer to experience at appropriate times, but remember that they are voices at the table. All players deserve more from gaming than to be constantly relegated to the rank of follower for the louder personalities in the group.

Also important is the need to listen carefully at all times. Not all characters can be constantly involved in the action. The players of those characters who aren't active should be listening to the actions of the rest of the players.

This serves three purposes. First, it allows for quicker gaming. When the entire group of characters reunites, the information doesn't need to be regurgitated to the players who weren't paying attention. Second, it allows for undiluted information to be shared. If the entire group is listening to an interview with an NPC, then the entire group gets to know the information gained directly from the source, allowing better decision-making.

**"LEARN TO LISTEN
TO THE PASSIVE
PERSONALITIES IN
THE GROUP."**

As a CK and GM, I have considerable empathy for the amount of preparation and work that can go into running a game. It's not paid work (unless you have peculiar circumstances), and it's usually done because the individual wants the other members of his group to have a fun game. In light of that, is it polite to expect the CK or GM to put that sort of effort into a game, and then only spend a fraction of the gaming session actually adventuring?

As a player, if you show up for the game, expect to spend that time gaming. Anything less than your full attention is rude to the CK and to the other players that are attempting to work as a team. Inattentive behavior sends a clear message: unless the offending gamer is made the center of attention, the rest of the game doesn't matter.

It's difficult for a group to cooperate unless everyone is there for the same purpose, so the first step for effective cooperation is for all participants to take a solid interest in the game. Banish the real world from the table. All players should renew their personal efforts to be engaged in the adventure. All should care enough to be an active part of the team that is trying to succeed. Handle real-life concerns and routine socialization outside of game night.

A player that cannot do this would help the team more by not participating at all.

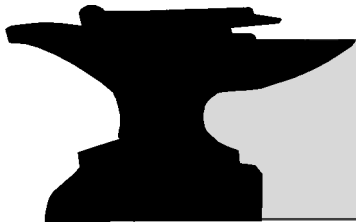
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“PLAYERS THAT DON’T PAY ATTENTION WASTE EVERYONE’S TIME”

Third, it shows politeness and interest in others to be engaged in what their characters are doing. If a player is part of the group, everything the group does should matter to that player.

There is a legitimate concern, sometimes, when players improperly use the information that their *character* has no way of knowing. This is a risk associated with paying attention to the actions of others at the table.

However, as a CK, I would far prefer to see an occasional bit of information accidentally used by a player than that player be inattentive and disengaged from the game. Players that don’t pay attention waste everyone’s time, and wasting time is far more egregious than accidental meta-gaming.



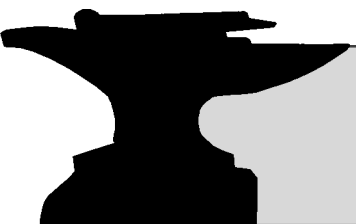
EVERYONE IN THE GROUP IS EQUAL

“EVERYONE IS BRINGING SOMETHING USEFUL TO THE MIX, WHETHER THAT BE YEARS OF GAMING EXPERIENCE, THE CLEAN SLATE OF A NEW GAMER...”

To build upon some of the ideas in the previous section, I want to reiterate that everyone at the table matters. Everyone is bringing something useful to the mix, whether that be years of gaming experience, the clean slate of a new gamer, the varying talents of diverse characters, or a mind sharp enough to solve puzzles quickly.

It is folly to disregard any other member of a group, if for no better reason than that player’s actions or ideas may end up preventing the death of a character someday.

At the same time, every player should know precisely what he or she has to offer. If playing a thief character, a player should know the capabilities of the character, and use them for the group’s benefit. If a player makes his or her presence known, then the group as a whole will be less likely to disregard that player. On the other hand, if a player only offers something to the group when asked, others might get the impression that the player would rather not be bothered, and might try to find other ways to accomplish tasks without including that individual.



THE GAME EXISTS FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF ALL

“PLAYERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO LEARN THE RULES, BUT ALSO TO ACCEPT THAT THE CK HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE THEM.”

Effective cooperation isn’t always about players working together. In this case, it’s about CKs and players working together to improve the experience for the entire group.

Try not to spend the CK’s precious time on activities that have little or no bearing on the goals of the group. When I am running a game, this exercise quickly grows tiring.

Consider the role of a movie director or editor. If a scene doesn’t add anything considerable to the story, it’s not important, and it can be cut. As a CK, I am the director and editor of the game. I could care less if the halfling character wants to spend inordinate amounts of time etching his dagger blades. It might be good

role-playing on the surface, but it’s poor *gaming* because it’s at the expense of others, who need to wait for the CK’s attention.

Side jaunts in cities for personal shopping trips, irrelevant interactions with NPCs, provoking encounters just to get into a fight – these are all examples of wastes of time that should be avoided.

A player who designs a character that would partake in these activities as part of their personality should simply make a new character. If, as CK, you see a character behave in this manner, do your group a favor and ask the player to create a new one – preferably of a more compatible personality type.

Intra-party conflict is natural in groups of skilled

role-players. The more personality a character has, the more likely that character will find conflicts with the other members of the group. However, being a skilled role-player is only one part of being a skilled gamer. A skilled gamer knows when to stop acting like the game is a cartoon, and when to start acting like the character is a living creature with real motivations.

Certain character classes, like the paladin, lend themselves automatically to intra-party conflict. Because of this, a group should discuss the impact before a paladin character is introduced into the campaign. Nothing brings an otherwise productive game to a screeching halt like an over-the-top paladin. While the paladin is bickering with the less strict members of the group, time is being wasted that could be used adventuring. The paladin should be considered carefully, as should any other character that has very extreme behavior.

A final note on this subject: if anyone in the group wants to make a character that is insane, heed the following warning. That player has no interest in a smoothly run game with

a cooperative spirit. The player is interested only in gaining attention, and will prove a detriment to group order and cooperation.

This may break the “artistic” view that a player should be able to play whatever concept of character he or she desires, but that theory only works in a vacuum – not at tables where success matters more than “art.”

I think it’s essential that I spend a moment or two discussing rules lawyers and lawyering. Every CK has his or her own tolerance for rules discussion during game play, but regardless, a few things need to be made completely clear, for players and CKs alike.

Players have a responsibility to learn the rules, but also to accept that the CK has the power to change them. The role of CK is not an easy one, and those who take it on deserve benefit of the doubt – particularly if the individual running the game is fairly new to the practice. If a CK action contradicts a known rule, do not waste valuable gaming time debating the rule or the CK’s approach. The time for discussion is *after the game session*, and comments should be presented in a polite and deferential manner.

While I feel this should be common sense, especially since this hobby is about thirty years old, there are many gamers who still don’t understand this concept. I’ve heard it said that rules lawyers are just a “different style” of

player. I always dismiss this out of hand. Rules-lawyering is a refuge for the immature. When I think of rules-lawyers, I think of obnoxious baseball players that argue the umpire’s calling of balls and strikes. In baseball, the umpire can eject a player for arguing a third strike call. If umpires don’t have to put up with this sort of nonsense from highly paid professional athletes, players and CKs surely don’t have to tolerate it during a leisurely game of C&C.

To say otherwise lends a validity to the practice that it does not deserve, due to the effects it has on an otherwise enjoyable game. If a player can’t be mature enough to respect the role of the CK, that player shouldn’t be participating, and a CK should be prepared to defend this ground.

Having said that, the CK is not without responsibility. In order to facilitate a gaming experience that is productive and fun, the CK needs to make sure that all variant rules that will be used are fully disclosed and understood by the players in advance of the game. Mid-session rules changes should occur only in emergencies, clearly unique situations (such as a new, surprise spell effect), or when such an arrangement has been worked out with the players in advance. For example, if I want to try a new rule, but I’m not sure if I’ll like how it plays, I’ll discuss this with my players. If, during the session, I decide I don’t like how the rule is going, I can then remove it from the game. In this example, the key is that I would be showing respect for my players by fully disclosing my intentions to them, and they would be showing respect for me by giving me some creative license without the danger of permanent consequences.

Another area of CK responsibility is during the game itself, when required to make judgment calls. In my last column, I mentioned that a CK should never hold an antagonistic view toward the players. That principle is not flexible. A CK should always make a concerted good-faith effort to be fair and consistent in rulings. If the players are expected to offer benefit of the doubt for the CK’s rulings, the CK had better be playing fair. If the CK has trouble in this area, but is genuinely trying, players should be trying to help the CK improve. Criticism should remain polite, constructive, and separate from actual game play.

“IF A PLAYER CAN’T BE MATURE ENOUGH TO RESPECT THE ROLE OF THE CK, THAT PLAYER SHOULDN’T BE PARTICIPATING....”

“RULES-LAWYERING IS A REFUGE FOR THE IMMATURE...”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



GOOD GAMING POSTURE IS ESSENTIAL

**“PLAYERS WHO
ARE SEATED
OVER A
WIDE AREA
TEND TO LOSE
CONCENTRATION”**

If a group wants to play as a team, it needs to sit as a team!

The most effective seating arrangement for any group of gamers is around a large table, with plenty of room for everyone involved to have their needed materials at hand. Preferably, it would be a room devoid of televisions or computers (unless used for the purposes of the game). It would be well lit, and the chairs comfortable for extended seating, but not so comfortable that they cause slumber.

I agree that it is a tall order. Not every group can have an ideal situation. Groups should try to attain as many of those things as possible, though.

The players and CK should sit as close as possible without compromising personal space. CKs use varying tones and volumes of voice to convey impressions. When the CK is seated ten or more feet from the nearest player, this loses its effect. It's also easier to address the group as a whole when the CK doesn't have to move his or her gaze around a large room to see everyone.

Players who are seated over a wide area tend to lose concentration more readily when other members of the group are busy. The subtle psychological effect of close seating helps to keep everyone's mind on the game.

If a group is having trouble keeping everyone's head in the game, consider "posture" as a possible exacerbating factor. Often, just changing the seating arrangements can alter the tenor of the game.



TO WORK BETTER AS A TEAM, THINK AS A TEAM.

**“A BAD PLAN
IS OFTEN
BETTER THAN
NO PLAN AT
ALL.”**

Teamwork is about aligning the actions of the individuals to meet the common goals of the group.

If the goal is to enter a dungeon to kill a strange monster that has been menacing a quaint little port town, then the group should discuss, and follow, a plan for handling the task. Each character's actions should be aligned with completing that task.

All members of the group should know what to do when the fighters go down, when the exit to the area is closed off, when a character falls unconscious, when a character dies, or when food and drink become scarce. All members should agree on basic path-finding techniques in dungeons and basic strategies for avoiding fights before they begin.

Groups should try to have a simple combat strategy in place when the inevitable fight breaks out. Marching orders and battle ranks should be discussed in advance. General strategies for dealing with enemy missile weapons and spell-casters should be agreed upon and followed.

Remember, a bad plan is often better than no plan at all. If a group follows a plan, at least it will be acting in a

coordinated manner, which can often make all of the difference in a challenging situation.

When planning, avoid the tendency for groups to over think. Often, a simple plan that is easily understood by everyone will be more useful than a complex plan that covers every contingency. No one wants to make a mistake, but there will be times when a group doesn't have enough information to make a completely informed decision. Sometimes, the group will just need to do the best it can. Sometimes, even an imperfect action is more helpful than a bewildered inaction, especially in the midst of combat.

Each group should have regular discussions about using character abilities in concert. If a player thinks of a clever way to cooperate with a fellow group member for improved effectiveness, work out the details of the cooperation ahead of time. For each technique, have some idea about situations in which it might be used. Then, when the time comes, don't be afraid to use them!



DON'T GET DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

As a member of a group, a player's goal should be to aid the group. A character is no good to the group if it's dead. Understand that playing the hero is important, but it can also get a character killed. It's far more important to find ways to solve problems that don't require sacrificial heroism.

The best way to keep a proper state of mind is remembering to put oneself into the character's shoes. It's the heart of role-playing – a player should consider what the **character** would do in a given situation. Keep in mind that characters would probably rather live than die, and they would probably rather not get injured at all. The most successful groups with which I've had the pleasure of gaming knew and used this principle. By using one's own instinct for self-preservation, it's far easier to guide the actions of a character that is interested in the same.

One character, no matter how powerful, cannot solve the problems of the entire group. There is nothing in any of

my games that one character could accomplish alone. Heedlessly charging into situations in an individual attempt to solve the group's problems will never work. Ignoring established plans in favor of an impulse to chase individual glory will almost always fail. I suspect that many CKs operate the same way, but I also suspect a great many gamers haven't figured this out yet.

If a player works hard to keep a character alive so it can help the group, the player won't have to waste everyone's time rolling up a new one.

In the end, a gaming group simply gathers to have fun and escape for a while. If every gamer does his or her part to contribute to the fun and engagement of the group, then all will find that the gaming time is fully used, hopefully with very productive, successful, and enjoyable results.

Good luck and happy gaming!



AN IMPULSE TO CHASE INDIVIDUAL GLORY WILL ALMOST ALWAYS FAIL.

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Terekaptra: Lost city of the Utiss is an adventure for 2 or more players of moderate levels of skill.

**Gary's back...
are you ready to play?**

THE Theurgist's Lethe

In the first episode of our story, Sir Lethe woke in a small secluded shrine under the care of two priestesses, Riona and Lydia. He was recently murdered and resurrected, according to the story told by Lydia, who also claimed to be his lover. But he could remember nothing, confirm nothing, and his demands for further explanation went unheeded. A prisoner locked in his room, Lethe was especially wary of the elder of the two ladies, Riona, a high priestess of the earth goddess Jord. Before long the shrine was attacked by a band of fanatical priests bent on destroying him, but Riona managed to protect him from them, allowing him to escape. And so he ran, charged with finding Lydia, who had also fled, and was given only this parting advice: "There are two old cottagers who live down in those woods. They've been kind enough to hunt for us while we've watched you here. Their names are Emma and George. You should go there, find them."

Lethe ran as if escaping the gates of Hades.

His horse had stumbled in a ditch and broken its leg. His provisions were nearly out, and night was approaching like a dark-hooded cobra rising from the East.

The landscape was a blur; all tangled tree-limbs and dying leaves swirling about his pounding feet.

The world was like a mirage, an unholy dream, and the terror of reality followed him at his back. Images of the armed men impaled by deadly thorns grown by the magic of Riona haunted him, and the words of the old woman reverberated through his skull as he charged down the hills and through the forest: *You run from yourself.*

Eventually he rested, his back against a large oak, his lungs out of breath. Not even the fright of the recent attack on the Shrine of Jord could spur him onward.

Lethe wondered what he ought to do. Here he was, alone and without food or drink in a dark wilderness indifferent to his plight, escaped from a band of lunatics bent on destroying him on charges of betrayal, the nature of which he was wholly ignorant.

You are to be executed on grounds of sedition against our god, his attacker had accused.

It was not likely a case of mistaken identity. It was hatred coupled with indisputable recognition. If only I could recognize myself, thought Lethe.

Shortly, he awoke from a nightmare: The silhouette of a man wielding a glowing rod, wearing a bramble crown, his body entangled in vines, was beating him senseless while screaming "Vidar curses you!" The name held great significance for Lethe, but its meaning was entirely emotional, and his awakening explosive. He heard a scream, its echo cut short by the forest trees, and realized it was his own.

Slowly, carefully he arose and brushed the leaves and grass from his brown cassock. His stomach complained of hunger as he flicked a large beetle from out of his short, black hair. Using a fallen tree branch as a walking staff, he set out westward.

Several hours later he came to a small thatch-roof shack in the woods. The building was in good repair, and the smell of a hearth fire and wholesome cooking lingered in the air.

He approached but stopped abruptly as a large black dog padded softly from around the corner of the shack and regarded him with a throaty growl. It's short muzzle, massive shoulders, and course black fur made the dog look more like a bear, but its bark broke any uncertainty as to its species.

"Hey there..." Lethe said hesitantly, hands out in supplication.

A bead of sweat dripped down and off the tip of his nose. It lunged, a blur of coal-black fur and bared, ivory-white fangs.

The air exploded from his lungs as he was hurled to the ground. His vision cleared through a haze of stars and swirling colors to reveal dark, feral eyes reflecting Lethe's own stunned face.

The voice of an old man called out, "Off with you, Griz!"

The beast lifted itself and Lethe sat up, his back aching. The old man was standing near in muddy

fishing boots and wore a leather overcoat. A hand crossbow was leveled toward Lethe's torso.

"Sir—" began Lethe.

"Shut yer yap" the man said. "Wait till my wife gets out here."

Lethe nodded and turned his head to see a short, wrinkled lady in a long gray dress emerge from the shack, her hair silver, eyes like white crystals. "Sit," she commanded, and Griz obediently sat upon its haunches, panting a few yards away, its eyes still riveted on the trespasser.

"What brings you here?" said the old lady.

"I don't know. The wind perhaps."

The lady regarded Lethe askance. "The wind eh?" She changed the subject: "You wear a priest's cassock."

Lethe nodded.

"What deity is your patron," asked the old man interrogatively.

Lethe shrugged. Good question.

"George, we must have a mute here," she commented to the old man. Turning back to Lethe she said, "Do you impersonate a priest? Have you lost your wits?"

"I'm at wits end," said Lethe, "But no danger to you."

The old man lowered his crossbow. "We'd better get him inside before nightfall, Emma my dear," he suggested.

Emma nodded in agreement and commanded Lethe to stand. Then, turning to the bear-dog she commanded, "Go now". The massive canine vanished into the trees.

Lethe followed the two unusual cottagers into their dwelling.

George hung his overcoat on a peg rack near the door and proceeded to the fireplace to get three bowls of hot stew from the cauldron. Emma dragged an empty keg to the centrally located dining table.

"Drink this," commanded Emma, handing Lethe a tumbler of dark, sweet, spiced rum. Lethe sat down on the empty keg and downed the drink in a single gulp, handing the tumbler back to his proprietress. He studied her gracious, wizened face and marveled at his luck. To think that George, the old coot with the crossbow, should marry such a compassionate woman. How fortuitous! Otherwise, thought Lethe, that dog would surely have torn his larynx out.

George sat heavily upon a pine-wood chair and loudly slurped his stew from a large spoon.

"You'll get your stew later," said Emma to Lethe; too sweetly, in fact, as if in apology.

The rum spread warmth like quicksilver from his stomach to his limbs.

George paused between bites, a piece of meat stuck between his too-large front teeth, and gazed at Lethe thoughtfully.

But something was wrong. Lethe was admiring the firelight dancing in Emma's eyes. But then her visage suddenly warped; everything was distorted and his vision became wooly. He collapsed, a fury growing in his breast. He knew, before losing consciousness, that he had fallen prey to proverbial spiders.

He awoke through a haze of pain and confusion, trussed up by thick leather straps to a small trundle bed in a corner of the shack. The smell of meat stew mingled with a terrible aftertaste from whatever substance had tainted his rum.

"He's awakening, George," said Emma to her craggy faced husband.

"Stick im' with a poker, hard like, and he'll go back to sleep." The old man chuckled.

What the hell am I doing here? Who are these people; these scarecrows whom I so stupidly trusted? Lethe's head spun and his temples pounded. His feet felt like two logs.

Emma walked over and stood over her prisoner, smiling like a grandmother. "Young man you have gotten yourself into a world of trouble. A man by the name of Ludwig came by here about two days ago looking for one who matches your description. You stand accused of sedition against our King and your patron god, Vidar. That's punishable by death. And, apparently, they already killed you once. So you're doubly in trouble."

Lethe glowered, but his gag stifled the string of expletives that he had in mind.

"How odd it is that you would be a priest of that patron of rulers and noble lords and yet commit sedition. You must be arrogant indeed."

Lethe fumed inwardly. I'm a priest? *You run from yourself*, Riona had said. His captors at the shrine said Lethe had been murdered. The evidence was stacking in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14





favor of the prospect that the two women at the shrine had told him the truth.

"It doesn't matter what he did. Ludwig paid well for the information we provided," stated George, taking his bowl to the wet sink, splashing a bit.

"We've been friends of Riona for years, but she's out of her depth. We can't shelter criminals, or any of the riff-raff that those Wycce girls' regularly drag in out of the cities."

With a sudden shock of recognition Lethe knew these were the very two cottagers that Riona had instructed him to find; the ones who had agreed to hunt and bring food to the shrine while he was held captive there.

"Fools!" cursed Lethe, the word muffled by his gag. He reasoned this was not what Riona had planned. And if she discovered the betrayal of these old rotten cottagers—if she survived the attack at her shrine—then, for these two, there would surely be hell to pay. He consoled himself by imagining these two old rats wreathed in flesh-penetrating, bloody thorns, their crippled bodies hanging from the ceiling of their cottage, victims of Riona's distinctive brand of wrath.

"What did he say?" asked George who walked over and stood next to the trundle bed, his malicious beady eyes studying Lethe's face.

"He called us fools," answered Emma. "But he was the one foolish enough to get all trussed up without a fight."

"What's that word you call me so often? He's like that word you use," remarked George to his wife.

"Disingenuous," replied Emma, glaring down at Lethe: "Yes, a quisling! You started trouble with the Clergy of Frey, the very clergy who prevented the kingdom from being invaded by the Markgraf Rurik. Justus had a hard time explaining your actions, trying to protect you. But tensions rose in Glenside anyway; your temple nearly suffered a schism. So, I'd say it's no surprise that fanatical sect rose to oppose your actions."

Markgraf Rurik? That name sounded familiar, tickling the edges of his consciousness, nearly penetrating that thick nebula of forgetfulness. Only a glimpse of a young man's face, dark eyes filled with righteous adoration, flashed momentarily in his memory.

"So, we're giving this man to Ludwig, right?" said George.

"Of course. Riona was off her wicker rocker this time, my dear," remarked Emma. "Apparently, Lydia convinced her of this man's innocence. But a male, *and* innocent? Sounds like a contradiction in terms to me."

George grimaced, left the bedside, grabbed his leather overcoat, picked up his crossbow, and said, "I'll go track down Ludwig at the encampment and let him know who we've got." Emma nodded her approval as he left the cottage.

Lethe stopped struggling with his bonds, as it was no use. He laid his head back and tried hard to remember anything; any mental scrap or hint of what this was all about. Was it true? Had he committed these crimes? Doubt and dread began to fill his soul. Why did Lydia think I was innocent? She had called me her lover. So, maybe by virtue of that fact, she was blinded to the truth? Why would he have started trouble with the priests of the god of the fertility of the land, peace and wealth? After wracking his brain for a while, he drifted off into sleep.

During his rest, he heard within his dreams an androgynous voice, echoing the whispered words, "Skirnir is his servant."

Lethe awoke, confused and disoriented, to the sound of a knocking at the door. He couldn't tell if he'd been asleep for minutes or hours, although the light of day had waned. Emma was a shadow in his hazy vision, going about her business of tidying up the cottage when she stopped to go to the door.

The door was opened, allowing a slice of moonlight to enter. Lethe heard a shifting and a grunt above him, against the wall, and realized George was asleep on the adjacent bed. So, he reasoned, it had been a while since he drifted off into sleep.

Lethe couldn't clearly see who stood at the door, but it was definitely a tall man, his muscular form accentuated by the moonlight. And he held a kite-shaped shield.

"It sure took you people long enough to send somebody over," complained Emma. She turned and pointed to the trussed up Lethe. "He is here, packaged and ready to deliver."

The man stood there within the door frame, silent for a moment, as if studying the old lady, then strode into the room, pushing Emma aside, causing her to stumble. Lethe could see that the stranger wore a forester's cloak and had a stern, weathered face and thick beard.

"No need to be pushy" complained Emma, shaken.

The man set his shield tip down on the floor and inclined his head toward Lethe, making eye contact. Lethe thought the man's eyes were smoldering like a campfire, his beard dark like thick smoke.

"Emma, you disappoint us. This is not the way to peace." The man spoke softly, but with an ominous edge. He never turned his gaze from Lethe.

George awoke and stirred, speaking groggily, "Are we now paid?"

"Who are you?" demanded Emma of the stranger. "Aren't you one of Ludwig's men?"

"No. I am an informant, a proxy of one much greater, and have come to aid your guest."

"What," shouted Emma. "You'll do no such thing!"

The man turned, unsheathing a long sword from the folds of his cloak which emitted a pulsing light. Emma shrunk back from the light, looking frail and frightened.

"You are Emma of the city of Jypor," announced the man, "daughter of the Baron Rüdiger, whose brother sought to have intimate relations with you. Your father did not protect you, so you fled to the outer regions to escape your sordid past and have lived here with this simpleminded hunter. We know it would destroy you to be found. And you know your father and uncle have searched far and wide hoping to locate your hideaway. The power of the Wycce covens have kept you safe from the prying magicks of the sorceries in your father's employ, and you have escaped the pursuers for years. Hiding, tearing down, rebuilding, and roving the land over to find any place of sanctuary."

Emma gasped and stepped back, knocking over a rack of plates near the fireplace.

"You believed the words of Ludwig when told that your prisoner was treasonous," continued the man, "And, for that, you are excused. But you betrayed the trust of Riona of Jord, and for that we've chosen to even the score. Let him go, or I'll turn that infernal animal you keep back into its true form."

George jumped from his bed in his undergarments, his emaciated body flailing almost comically, like an angry wooden figurine. "Who in the blazing hells are you?" he demanded. "Get out of my home or I'll—"

"I am Skirnir, friend of the priests of the Temple of Vidar" interrupted the stranger, "and I'll be leaving now." Sheathing his formidable sword, Skirnir turned and exited the cottage.

Emma, nearly hysterical, looked at Lethe with

frenzied hatred. A chill wind whistled through the open door. George stood rock still with a dumbfounded expression. Then Emma slammed shut the door and quickly extinguished the lantern sitting upon the central table. The room was plunged into darkness...

Lethe heard a sickening sound, like that of a large object striking someone's skull, followed by a heavy thud.

The lantern was re-lit and held by Emma, who stood over Lethe, anger traced in every crevice of her wrinkled face. Her beloved George lay sprawled out on the floor, out cold, blood covering his matted hair, an iron frying pan tossed to the floor nearby.

"What allies you have," said Emma with disdain. "But you cannot ruin me. I curse you for overhearing that devil's speech! It's a pity, Sir Lethe, that your forgetfulness does not renew each moment. I would kill you now, but my dear George already informed the Vidarians of your whereabouts; so, I'd be culpable. They demand that vengeance belongs to them."

Reaching down she removed his gag and squatted beside him, the smell of old stew on her breath. "I can't give you up to them now unless I cut out your tongue; an act I'd be hard pressed to explain to your vengeful brethren. They wish to keep all tortures to themselves; so, instead, you'll have to escape."

Emma looked wistfully about the cottage, at her furniture and trinkets. "Then," she sighed, "I must quickly move on." With that, she produced a long, sharp knife with which she cut his bonds.

"Go," she commanded, as she stood up, and straightened her posture, her expression stern.

Lethe stood, stretching out his arms. "Well, thanks," he said dryly, then unsteadily crossed the room, intending to snatch the hand crossbow hanging on the wall.

But a flash of azure light dazzled his eyes and stunned his ears; an energy bolt from the extended hand of Emma shot across the cottage and blasted the crossbow into splinters.

"Oh no you don't. You'll get no help from me. Now go!" said Emma, her hair standing on end, as if from static, an invisible crackling energy about her.

"Thanks for your hospitality," said Lethe, looking down at the bits and pieces of crossbow strewn at his feet. "But before I leave, I do have some advice for you."

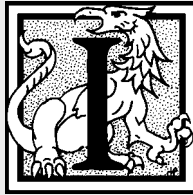
"What?"

Lethe looked Emma in the eyes without compassion. "I wouldn't worry about your uncle or father



A TRIBUTE TO DAVID C. SUTHERLAND III:

by PAUL J.
STORMBERG



I have some profoundly sad news to report. David C. Sutherland III passed away at 10:49 PM on June 9th, 2005 in his residence in Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan.

While his health had been in sharp decline, he was fairly active in his last days and was taking good care of himself. Thus, his death comes as sudden and unexpected.

Dave is survived by his ex-wife and two daughters. His sister Trudy, brother Scott, and mother would like to pass along their warmest regards to all of those who participated in the Collector's Trove auctions of David's collection over the past year. The funds have been placed in an account to support David's estate and his surviving family members.

He will be interred with full military honors at Ft. Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis, MN.

David as you know was a longtime artist in the gaming world. Producing countless works at an incredible rate, he helped illustrate the games of our imagination for generations of players. Wargames, role-playing games, strategy games, and board games. David had done it all with the care and

intensity that only a true fan of the historical, sci-fi, fantasy game genre could uphold.

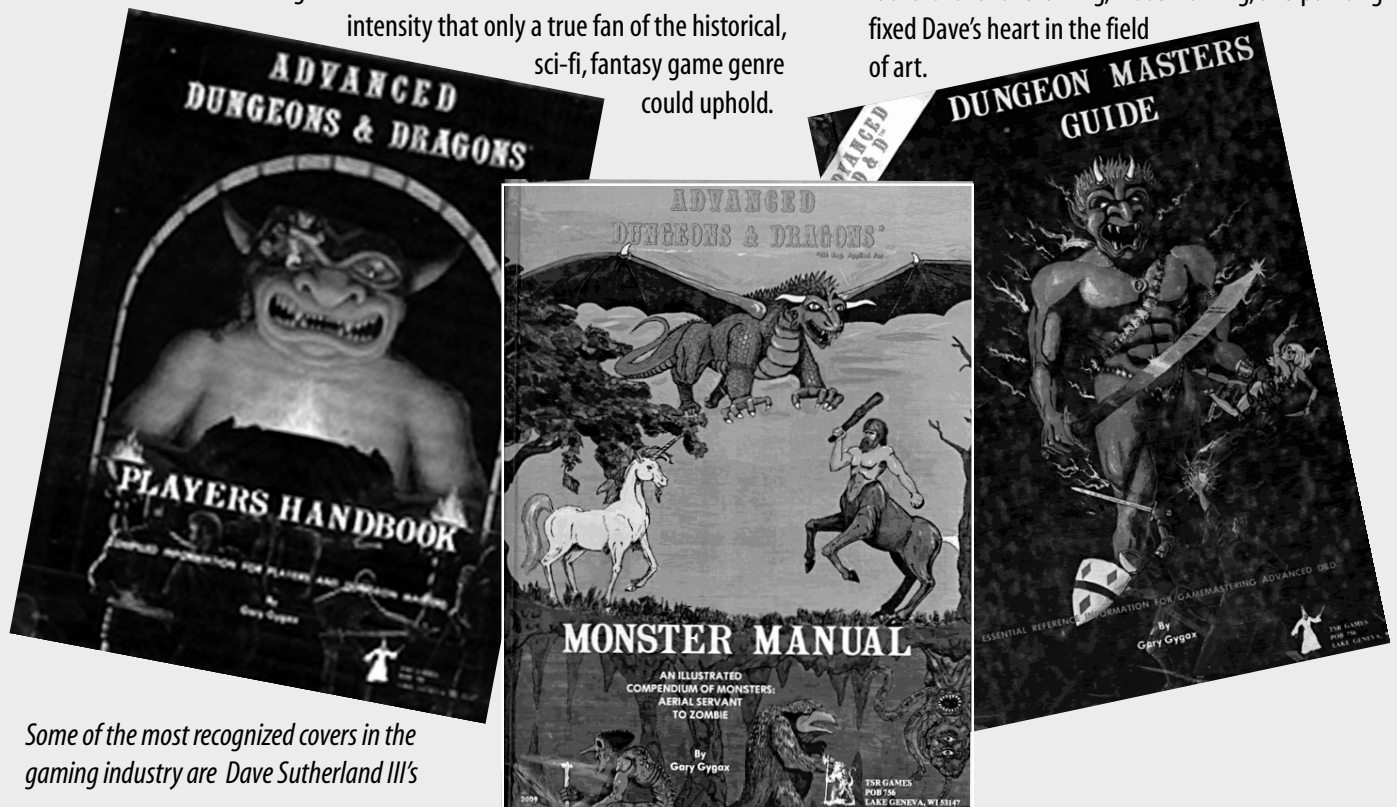
The seminal artist of the *Dungeons and Dragons* and *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* game and the fantasy world of M.A.R. Barker's *Tékumel*, David helped shape the very roots of the role-playing games we all know and love. His work is the canvas of our youth and fond sentiments. Many of the top writers and artists involved with the role-playing games industry owe their inspiration and calling to him.

David's involvement in the art of games goes back to 1974 and the breadth and depth of his work is a roadmap for the history of the industry.

Every game industry person that knew Dave respected him for his unwavering devotion to art and remembered him for his great heart. Dave was a truly honest, loyal, decent, kind hearted soul, that selflessly shared a particularly keen wisdom to all around him. Many of them owe their happiness in life and life's calling to David. He was truly a man for others.

Born in 1949, in Minneapolis, David grew up in the image of his artistic father, David C. Sutherland II. His father's work in the paper industry brought vast supplies of creative material to their home and fueled David's interest in artistic endeavors. So too, his father's love for drawing, woodworking, and painting fixed Dave's heart in the field of art.

Email correspondence and requests for additional information may be sent to Paul Stormberg at stormber@cox.net.



Some of the most recognized covers in the gaming industry are Dave Sutherland III's

A GREAT MAN

Dave, like his father, served in the military. Dave saw active duty as a Military Policeman in the Vietnam War in 1969-70. Also, like his father, David avidly sketched and recorded his days during the war.

Dave loved to dance, was an avid reader of science-fiction and fantasy novels, and became involved with the Society of Creative Anachronism in the early 1970s. He spent his free time drawing sketches and cartoons regarding these pastimes.

Eventually, Mike Mornard, a friend of Dave, also involved in the Society of Creative Anachronism, would introduce Dave to Professor M.A.R. Barker at the University of Minnesota in 1975. The latter was producing an imaginary world for use with the wildly popular Dungeons and Dragons game published by TSR Hobbies of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. The happy meeting of the two sparked a creative relationship and Dave began illustrating Barker's world for all to see. Soon, David was working for TSR and continued to do so for nearly 25 years. Loyalty.

Alas, TSR Hobbies was purchased in 1999 by Wizards of the Coast. Despite his unparalleled loyalty to TSR Hobbies the new company did not rehire Dave. In a particularly shameful moment for the role-playing games industry, the company did not even give Dave so much as a single phone call.

This was a particularly devastating, heartbreaking, blow to David, a person founded in loyalty. Those years were unkind to David and they took a terrible toll on him. Soon his health was in sharp decline. Doctors gave him a terminal prognosis.

Work was sporadic for David during this time and he felt abandoned by the gaming industry. He was unhappy and unwell. He had given up wanting to live.

In autumn 2004, however, a meeting between Paul Stormberg of the Collector's Trove and Dave's sister Trudy, revealed Dave's fantastic collection of artwork, miniature sculptures, games, and game memorabilia. According to Dave's wishes the collection was to be auctioned off on eBay by the Collector's Trove. It was Dave's hope to add the proceeds to his estate so that he could provide a financial trust for his daughters upon his passing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

THE THEURGIST'S LETHE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

any longer. After all, you're an old hag now. Surely he's dead by now."

"No," she said, "that beast is very much alive, and I'm not as old as I appear."

"Oh," replied Lethe lamely, "very well then." Turning abruptly, he headed for the door.

"Do not think your escape fortuitous," warned Emma, her tone ominous.

The massive dog Griz stepped into the moonlight, growling.

"Is he to escort me," said, Lethe, stepping back.

"No. But the chase is on," declared Emma. "And you're wrong, my uncle has already found me." Then, turning to the dog, she said "Get him well out of site, Uncle Griz, before you kill him." The hound actually nodded its horse-sized head, as if in complete understanding.

With that exchange between woman and beast, Lethe retreated from the cottage, horrified, nearly tripping as he moved quickly past the strange animal, and plunged deep into the untamed forest, his feet pumping even as his heart pounded, and his head swimming in a haze of pain and disorientation.

Beyond him, he heard a howl; a terrifying and intelligent sounding howl that intimidated the joy of the hunt. This night would surely be long.

Running was becoming a full time occupation, and Lethe was growing tired. His muscles burned and his heart hammered within his chest. Like a deer pursued by a mountain lion, animal instinct took over his conscious ego and propelled him forward through the forest.

Night descended. The fire left his body; the red of rage and panic and the verdant green of the forest faded to the dull hue of shadow. The rushing sound of blood in his ears and the beating of Lethe's heart replaced the natural rhythms of the world. Once again exhausted, nearly squeezed of hope and drive, the will to live slowly seeped out of him.

Lethe fell to the wet forest earth like a toppled tree. He knew that the black fiend, that metamorphic uncle from Hades, had dogged his tracks from the moment he left the cottage, toying with him. It was no use running, he decided, Ol' Griz was never far behind, tireless, ruthless and more cunning than most natural predators.

The chirping of the crickets and the sounds of night creatures diminished, replaced with a soft, menacing panting and the soft padding sound of paws moving slowly through the undergrowth.

The beast had arrived. Lethe didn't turn his head, determined not to look death in the eyes again.

But the fear of being shredded by those ivory teeth provided Lethe with one final burst of energy. He groped the earth frantically. And, miraculously, a sharp-tipped tree branch lay within his grasp. Lethe lifted his head and seized the sharpened branch, gaining confidence. Oddly, a raven stood on the ground before the branch and squawked once, startling him before it launched itself up from the ground.



A growl sounded behind him! Accompanied by a theatrical flash of lightening, Lethe experienced a new burst of energy. He stood, and spun around to face his pursuer with a howl of defiance that resounded through the woods.

The grisly hound lunged toward him, its murderous orbs rolled up into its skull, jaws fixed to close upon his throat.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



Pages from my Sketchbook



DARLENE Shares her Creative Journey:

THE NAGAS



aging through an old sketchbook recently, I came across some unusual drawings I'd created nine years ago. Whenever I encounter these particular drawings, I always pause and think about April 23, 1996. That is the date recorded next to the first sketch—the day the Nagas visited...

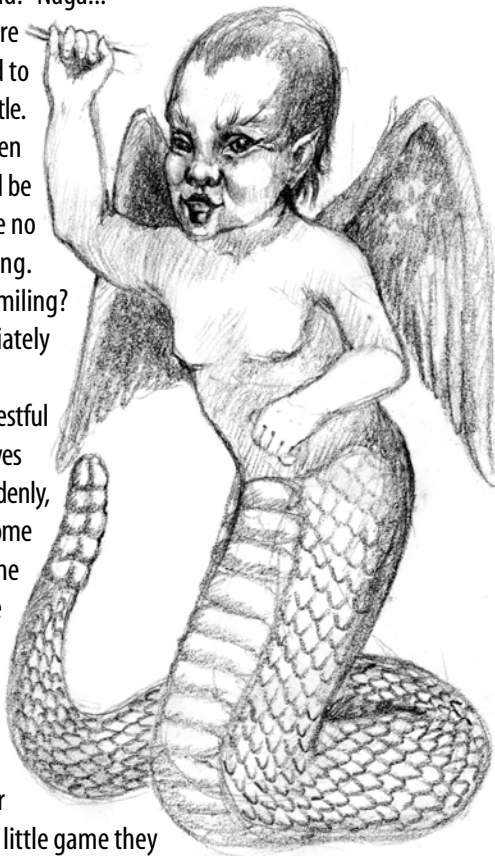
I've decided to publicly share the strange tale behind these naga sketches because I want my weird encounter to be recorded. And perhaps my readers can also ponder the question: do these creatures exist outside of my imagination?

I had been doing some sketching outside, close-ups of flowering plants. After returning to the house, quite unexpectedly, I found myself doing another sketch. The first thing to emerge was the head of a happy little boy (below). As my pencil moved further down his pudgy little form, I realized this baby wasn't quite human. Instead of legs, he had the tail of a rattlesnake! As I got into the rhythm of drawing his scales, a word formed in my head: "Naga..."

This laughing little boy creature was playful and carefree. He seemed to dance to the sound of his own tail rattle. I wondered: "was he poisonous?" Even though he was young, would he still be dangerous in some way? I still have no clue as to what he could be holding. Perhaps that's the reason he was smiling? Once I finished his sketch, I immediately started another page.

This time, however, an entire nestful of baby nagas presented themselves (opposite page). They all came in suddenly, quickly, dramatically and strong—some cute, some fierce, some wistful, some doleful, some winged—but all unique and alien. These little nagas were so compelling and interesting, I confess I've always entertained the thought that they must exist together in some separate world or plane of reality. Whatever peculiar little game they were playing with me, they seemed to be having fun. Most of them left after I finished their little "portraits."

Then an idea for a story formed in my mind about a little girl, perhaps 5-years of age, who finds a baby naga in the large overgrown garden behind her aunt's house. The lost little naga baby is in such distress, the child takes it in her arms and



CONT'D ON PAGE 31

Jasmine The Battle for the Mid-Realm™

COLLECTOR CARD GAME

IN 1982, DARLENE created and published a fun, challenging, and award-winning card game which combines magic, intrigue, strategy and heroic battles.

- For 2 to 4 players
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FRANKENBERRY

The Crack Parade

by Davis Chenault



The wind blows chilly on winter nights when the temperature drops below 30 and a drizzle occurs. Yet it is summer and warm. It is night however. And a dark night it is. Or would be, except the moon is full and casting a bluish noir light across the entire city. Even the shadows are blue it is so blue. Purplish is more like it. Hazy purple shadows. Everything is gritty also, there are lots of chains dangling around and broken stuff everywhere. There is so much broken stuff in the alleys that bums have a difficult time finding comfortable boxes to sleep in. Everything is old also; there are old cars, old trains, old hats and antique looking old black lacy clothes everywhere.

Louigies House of Pasta sits in the oldest part of the town. Cobble roads busy with traffic form a maze of old world transylvanian charm around Louigies, which is heavily accented by a new interstate overpass that stretches overhead - which is even busier than the cobble roads below. Inside this innocuous restaurant are a myriad of odd characters of little import to this story or plot but simply here to add a sense of decadent pre-natural horror. Louigie himself, in all his gargantuan glory, waddles back and forth from table to table to honor his most esteemed and ferocious guests, the dreaded 'mosses.'

The Mosses, so named by their eternal enemies, the Vampires, or snaggle teeth as the Mosses are wont to call them, gather here once a month to celebrate Monday Night Football. But it is Tuesday night and that means foul things are afoot, or they are using last years calendar to set up appointments and meeting dates.

Luscious, the leader of the Mosses in this war raging with the blood sucking gap toothed dandy freaks, gathered his pack of ravenous wearwolves and wearpups together to plot and plan a twisted and devious manner in which to pull the wool over the eyes of the pesky vamps and their sidekick tramps and lay them to waste. However, Luscious is sorta of dimwitted, having never attended an institute of higher education nor, for that matter, ever even having learned to read. (Often his friends would comment on his lack of knowledge. "What, were you raised by a pack of wolves?" This was often followed by bowls full of jelly like laughter - and then a slaughter, Luscious does not like being made fun off, especially when it comes to his education and grooming habits.) Being about as intelligent as a tree stump infested with termites,

Luscious' plan consisted of little more than, "Hey lets get together sometime and kill us some vamps and tramps."

The Mosses were losing the war. At least they seemed to be losing the war but it seemed also that with every plot twist they were staging a comeback of one sort or another. These comebacks had been going on for nearly 2 billion years or ten thousand books or so and seem unlikely to ever end - the comebacks that is, not the plot twists because they are sorta being rehashed since they have all been tried. What they are doing now is refining the twists.

It is all these plot twists that brought the monster.... but I am getting ahead of myself.

Right now Louigies was under the watchful eye of a mistress of the night, a vampiress. Wrapped in tight leather garments that clung to her like skin like grease on a monkey showing every sleek curve, she hung upside down on a metal girder sticking out of an old church belfry. Though she was supposed to be watching Louigies for signs of activity, in fact she was staring at a pile of rumpled clothing, leather boots, guns and ammunition that spilt onto the streets below when she turned into a bat. Selena (a French Canadian by birth) often forgot about the effects of changing into a bat. "And to think," she thought to herself, "I bought those boots yesterday, \$500.00 down the drain. And how on earth am I going to get oil and gas stains off that leather? Guess I'm shopping tomorrow. I know, I'll get Francie and Marcie to go to Saks and that other cool place down on Broadway. Ohh they'll just love it, it has all these neat little rings and gadgets I can use to pierce every single square inch of my body and we can stop and get hair cuts and..." and on and on and on.

Selena really didn't like changing into a bat. Bats stink, and no matter how much perfume she wore, she still stank as a bat. Also, when she changed back to human form there was always a little bat stench that lingered around her. She also felt a burning desire to eat mosquitoes when in bat form. Yet the circumstance required the change. She needed to hide and there is no better place to hide than an old belfry since they are generally nasty, grimy, dark, greasy, roach infested malignant pits of human despair which are rarely, if ever, visited. "Uggg I hate this job."

"What?" her beautiful male sidekick chirped in bat.

"I said I could eat a Bob."

"Ohh...hey can you see anything?"

"No, but if you listen real carefully you can hear some roaches crawling on my new boots."

"Ohh yeah, hey where did you get those, they look real good on you, real sexy and all. I think I'll get a pair for my honey bunch."

And so the conversation went. Repeating it would be pointless.

"Hey Selena."

"Yes Joe."

"Can you see anything?"

The two bats were supposed to be watching for suspicious activity but, being bats, they couldn't see anything. In this way, the vamps missed the monster as it sidled out of the bluest shadow and slowly made its way across the cobbled road.

Meanwhile, across town in a deserted mansion inhabited by one of the Twelve Vampire Clubs, sat Odious Stensch, the eldest of the Elders, munching on a piece of human blood pie, cooked up in the Houses' ancient brick ovens and covered in strawberry jam, these pies were known world round for their deep flavor and salty taste.

"Hmmm, scrumpdileicious..." Cawed the nearly toothless old codger.

There he sat, Odious Stensch, that snaggle toothed old codger, cawing some incoherent command to the myopic mammalian misfits gathered around his table. He was attempting to explain how to enact the next step in their plan to wrest control over the Council of Gelders (that august body of ancient sniveling, whiny, buck toothed, conceited, self-centered, egomaniacal, monomaniacal, blood lapping ticks) but could not be understood as his words only bubbled out of his mouth between slurps of blood pie, blood pudding and blood soup.

His minions, fearing their master's wrath, never interrupted him, nor revealed ignorance of what he was saying. They nodded their bobble heads and eyed the bubbles escaping from Odious' mouth and floating up to the chandelier dangling from the ceiling. After the audience ended, they left the Great Hall to gather in the Not-so-Great Hall to discuss what to do next.

Almost all of them burst into laughter after leaving as they realize the cooks had slipped some soap into the blood soup again. "That cook, he's such a ham!" "Ahaha, did you see the bubble that landed on Odious' hair?" "Guffaw, guffaw, guffaw."

And so the meeting went and all the little evildoers forgot their primary mission and went off to lounge around their Victorian mansion and engage in all manner of charming and decadent activities like kissing and smoking and drinking and doing drugs and thinking vile thoughts and wishing mommy had not been so mean to them when they were kids.

So they were caught unawares when the monster arrived! Oops not yet.

Selena dropped down from the belfry, landed on the ground with a thump and changed into a human, or vampire. She was naked! "This never happens in the movies." She groaned. Selena's problem with Hollywood was its lack of attention to details and their representation of being a vampire only showed the more positive aspects of such a life style, never the draw backs. She believe a more nuanced telling of the tales

would engender some sympathy from the cattle upon whom she fed.

So there she stood, naked, cold, and shivering. She put on the clothes she was wearing earlier and that had fallen into the mud. Her sidekick was no where to be seen and was likely off chasing mosquitoes. But Selena had a mission and it was to kick butt. So she sat about setting about kicking butt.

In painfully slow movements she slid her pistol out of its holster and pulled back the slide and let it slam forward with a metallic clink, and chambered her first round. Ready for combat, she began to walk over to Louige's House of Pasta.

Luscious, ever the vigilant wearthing, was no dupe and his keen sense of hearing picked up the familiar sound of clinking metal. "Arg wuff wuff," he yelped a warning. A chorus of howls broke the noise of the eatery and it suddenly seemed as if a pack of hound dogs had cornered their first squirrel of the season down at Louige's House of Pasta. "The dog chain, the dog chain," Luscious yelped remembering his untamed youth.

So it was that Louige's neighbor was accosted by a lot of wearwolves, weardogs and wearrabbits. For you see, Mark Cantankerous was just putting his dog on a chain to take him for a walk when Luscious heard the sound. They pounced on him like a pack of dogs on fried eggs. When they were finished all that was left was a chain with a dog attached to it urinating on a light post. The dog looked confused.

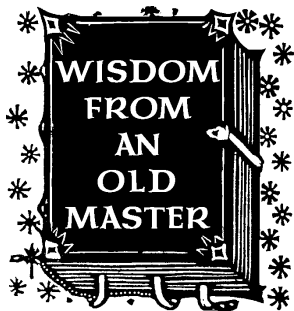
Happy at being the first to draw blood in the war that was brewing, the Mosses jumped up and down for joy as they made their way back to their kennel chasing every squirrel and cat that got in their way.

Selena saw all this and was somewhat confused. The sheer number of mosses caused her to rethink her plan of attack and she decided on a hasty retreat back to the city dump to target shoot at raccoons instead.

Then the monster shambled out of the twilight of the night and the shadows cast by street lamps into an empty street and it thought to itself, "Where is everyone?" Foiled again, the monster shambled back into the dark of the night only to reappear later at a more opportune and dramatic moment.

And into this picture of horror unabated comes our hero, the human to which we can all relate, Teddy MacNoodle, an Irishman of dubious Irish heritage. He is handsome yet plain, rugged yet smartly dressed, sophisticated yet with trailer park humility, strong yet sympathetic, and fat. Not real fat, but pudgy. Every morning he gets up and flexes in the mirror. To him, he is an awesome rendition of the male of the species. To the rest of us he is a drunkard with too few wits and no aspirations. He is the everyman and the hero of our tale. He discovers Selena at the city dump shooting raccoons and it is love at first sight!





AULD WYRMISH

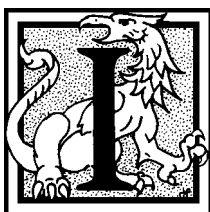
THE CRUSHING BLOW

Armor Damage Rules

Staggering from the titanic blow of the Ogre's Great axe upon his shield, Gustav the Knight fell back, his shield crumpled and useless. The cavalier slashed his sword in a whirling arc, determined to keep his foe at bay while he regained the initiative. The monster snarled in rage, raised his axe high above his head, and prepared to smash through Gustav's parry. But the knight saw a gash in the creature's leather armor; one his longsword had driven through earlier in the fray. The armored warrior leaped forward, driving his blade deep in the opening before the Ogre's deadly blow could land. The fell Ogre yowled in pain and dropped his axe, desperately clinging to his wound. Gustav freed his sword, and as the creature's lifeblood spilt away, decapitated his opponent with a final ringing blow!

BY MIKE STEWART

WHO BEGAN HIS INTEREST IN ROLE-PLAYING GAMES IN 1978 AND NEVER LOOKED BACK! HE IS CURRENTLY A POST-GRADUATE STUDENT OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS.



In the course of adventuring, armored PCs frequently pit their skill and resolve against fell monsters whose teeth and claws (and sometimes weapons) can pummel a PC to within a hitpoint or two of mortal peril. However, Castles & Crusades does not have a system to accurately reflect this wear and tear on armor. Therefore I would like to suggest the following two systems to remedy the situation. The first suggestion is a simpler system than the second, but the latter provides a bit more realism and accuracy, though requiring more bookkeeping by both players and Castle Keepers alike.

SYSTEM I: CRITICAL HITS

When a target is struck with a 'critical hit' (i.e. a 20) the AC of their armor degrades by one point. That is, leather armor hit by a critical will move from AC 13 to AC 12. This damage remains until repaired (check with your CK for time & cost). Any armor reduced to AC 10 is destroyed and cannot be repaired. Ordinary shields may be substituted, interposed to spare one's armor any AC reduction, but in such a case the shield is destroyed.

Please note that the above rules apply only to normal armor and shields. Enchanted armor and shields 'heal' themselves as part of their enchantment and subsequently behave as normal C&C equipment as noted in the rules. As such, magic shields may not be 'sacrificed' to save armor.

SYSTEM II: ACCUMULATED DAMAGE

If damage sustained in a single attack equals or exceeds a creature's armor "Hitpoint Rating" (see table below), then the armor must survive a saving throw or be reduced in protective effectiveness.

Armor failing this saving throw is reduced by one Armor Class rating until repaired. If the armor is reduced to AC 10 then the armor is destroyed, and another suit must be obtained. However, beneficially, anytime the Hitpoint Rating of a creature's armor is exceeded, *and* the save is failed, then the Hitpoint Rating of the armor reduces the damage caused by the attack. So, if a creature wearing leather armor (hitpoint rating of 2) takes damage, and its armor fails its saving throw, then this reduces its armor of AC 13 to 12, but 2 hitpoints of damage are mitigated.

SHIELDS

Shields are handled a bit differently than worn armor. If a character takes a hit, then any shield wielded automatically reduces damage by one hit point. That damage reduction can be increased to the limit of the shield's maximum Hitpoint Rating (determined by shield type), as determined by the Player Character, but this option must be declared *before* any damage is rolled. If a shield is reduced to 0 HP then the shield is destroyed.

Please note that the above rules apply only to normal armor and shields. Enchanted armor and shields 'heal' themselves as part of the enchantment and subsequently behave as normal C&C equipment as per the rules in the C&C PHB.

Armor	AC	HP	Save#
Cloth	11	1	17+
Padded	11	2	17+
Leather	12	2	16+
Ring Mail	13	3	15+
Leather, Boiled	13	3	15+
Hide	13	4	15+
Leather, Studded	13	3	15+
Chain Shirt-Hauberk	14	6	14+
scale mail	14	7	14+
Breastplate	15	7	13+
chain mail	15	8	13+
banded mail	16	9	12+
Splint mail	16	11	12+
½ Plate	17	13	11+
¾ Plate	17	12	11+
Full Plate	18	14	10+
Shield	Hit Points		
Buckler	1		
Small, wooden	2		
Small, metal	3		
Large, wooden	4		
Large Metal	6		

Notice that to determine Saving Throws, I took the AC advantage (i.e. studded leather adds +3 to AC 10) and subtracted it from 18 to get the throw. Other armors can be used, with the throws using the above formula. Hit points for any new armors must be determined by the CK with the above table as a guideline.

ARMOR REPAIR:

Armor may be repaired with a successful INT attribute check for those who would have such knowledge of armor and its function (Fighters, Knights, Paladins, Dwarves, and perhaps certain Clerics), the use of adequate tools (CK's discretion), and the following time:

ARMOR DAMAGED	TIME TO REPAIR
Cloth, Padded	2 turns per AC drop
Leather (all) AC drop	30 minutes/turns per AC drop
Scale or Ring mail	1 hour per AC drop
chain or banded mail	4 hours per AC drop
plate (all) & breastplate	1 day per AC drop@

@ = Must have access to Blacksmith's tools and a forge or foundry.

The maintenance of armor was ever the primary concern (some might say obsession) of the Medieval warrior and I hope the above systems give some help in simulating this vital aspect of combat and its results on the armor and shields of your players.



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HISTORICAL FOOTNOTES

EXPLORING
THE MYTHS
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"The English archers took one pace forward and poured out their arrows on the Genoese (crossbowmen) so thickly and evenly that they fell like snow. . . Many cut their bowstrings and some threw down their crossbows. They began to fall back."

(FROISSART, *CHRONICLES*, P. 88)



CROSSED BOWS

THE HISTORY OF THE LONGBOW & THE CROSSBOW

by Stephen Chenault



With these words Froissart, describing the opening stages of the battle of Crecy (1346), introduced to modern readers the idea of the longbow's superiority on the medieval battlefield.

The English victories of Poitiers (1356) and Agincourt (1415) further aggrandized the idea of the longbow's preeminent place above and beyond its sister weapon, the crossbow. Despite this supposed

superiority, continental armies continued to use the crossbow, even well after the tactical advantages of the longbow were known. The peculiar nature of the vic-

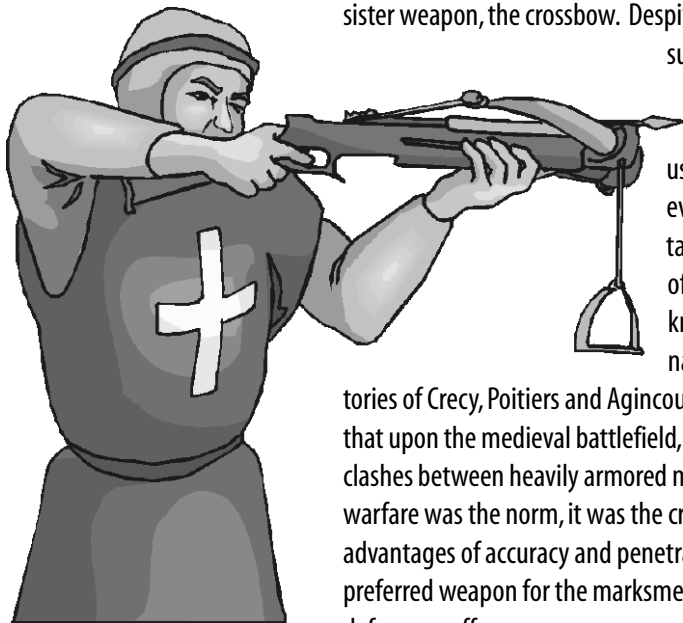
tories of Crecy, Poitiers and Agincourt belie the fact that upon the medieval battlefield, where small clashes between heavily armored men and siege warfare was the norm, it was the crossbow, with its advantages of accuracy and penetration that was the preferred weapon for the marksmen, whether in defense or offense.

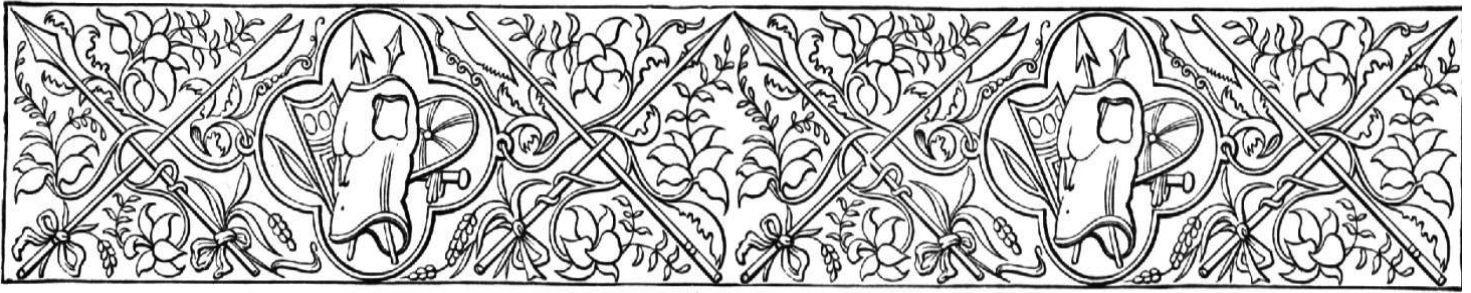
During the medieval period the short bow and crossbow were used extensively throughout England, the continent, and the middle east, both for hunting and in battle. The crossbow, powerful but slow, proved effective against heavily armored opponents, whereas the short bow dominated mounted combat and infantry skirmishes. The nature of warfare changed during the later Carolingian period. Under the

Germanic Emperors most able bodied men served their lords in the feudal levy. However, the rising dominance of the mounted wing of the medieval army made the costs of direct service prohibitive for most commoners. It became standard practice for men, and later whole villages, to cover the costs of equipping one of their own for war. Mounted soldiers in armor dominated the battlefields of Europe throughout the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries.

As the infantry receded into the background, the crossbow rose to prominence. The weapon proved highly effective against armored opponents and became the favorite weapon of defense for mercenaries, small towns, and castles. One of the best known proponents of the crossbow, Richard I, "The Lion-hearted," used the weapon extensively both in Europe and on crusade. So prolific and dangerous had the weapon become against the Knights that the Hohenstaufen Emperor, Conrad II, forbid any of his feudal levies to use it in his lands, the Lateran Council of 1139 condemned it as an evil weapon, disallowing its use by any Christian except against the infidels. The weapon continued to see widespread use by almost all the armies of Europe. The longbow, on the other hand, was an entirely different type of weapon.

The longbow's history begins in England. Evolving from the short bow it was used almost exclusively in England and certainly originated there. Edward I, King of England, introduced the longbow during the welsh wars (1272-1307). He chose the weapon over the crossbow for reasons that are not entirely clear. No doubt, the broken terrain, the unarmored nature of his opponents and the lack of set battles, however small, played into his decision. When





battling a foe without armor there is no real need for the crossbow. It proved a cost effective and battle worthy weapon. From this point on, the English Kings included the longbow in their annual assizes. The longbow's first real test of battle was Halidon Hill (1333) where Edward III used it against the Scots to great effect. Edward dismounted his Knights and positioned them along a 500' high ridge. When the Scots attacked they were so harried by the archers that they were unable to break the knights' line of battle. From this point forward Edward demanded from his Barons set numbers of longbowmen.

Proponents of the longbow attest to its amazing ability to propel arrows over great distances, with deadly accuracy, and enough power to penetrate armor. The crossbow is seen in a different light. A slow and cumbersome, if powerful, weapon, it could never compete with, much less, match the longbow's rate of fire. Though these descriptions are accurate to a degree, our Medieval ancestors saw things in a different light.

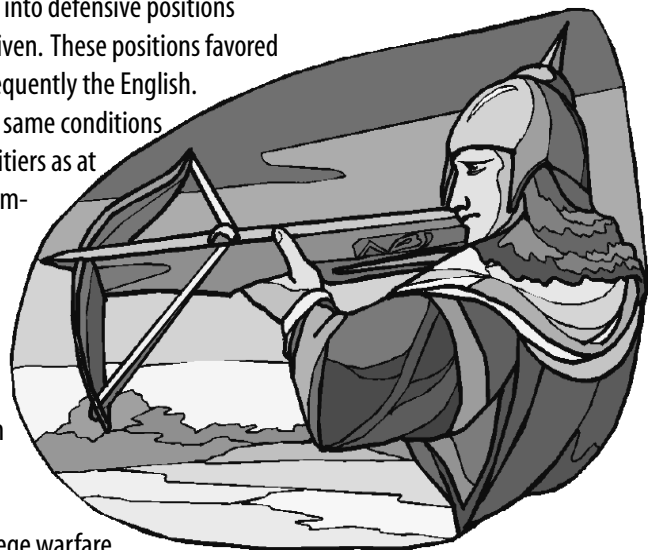
The use of the crossbow for marksman did not begin to diminish until the advent of the firearm, whereas that of the longbow, almost exclusively an English weapon, lost much of its importance after the end of the Hundred Years War. Even in the English Wars of the Roses the longbows no longer commanded a central role.

Throughout the German Empire, Italy, France and Spain small battles and sieges remained the dominate style of combat in the warfare of position and the crossbow remained the dominate weapon of choice for the marksmen. In the 1370's the addition of the windlass improved the crossbow's rate of fire (though it could never compete with the longbow) and a thick steel bow made the crossbow even more effective. The windlass and new bow gave the crossbow a pull of something in the range of 1200 lbs (Bradbury, *The Medieval Archer*, 148) compared to 50lbs for the longbow. The range and penetrating power this gave the crossbow far exceeded that of the short or longbow.

Comparing the longbow and crossbow is a difficult task. The longbow only dominates one area of Europe, and that, for a short time. It proved to be an extremely effective weapon within a limited arena. Its power, range and most importantly its rate of fire far exceeded the English needs. However, it must be remembered that during the Hundred Years War, the English, vastly outnumbered, were forced to attack France but had to avoid large clashes of arms. Never able to field the feudal armies which France could, they were forced into defensive positions whenever battle was given. These positions favored the longbow and consequently the English.

One finds that the same conditions existed at Crecy and Poitiers as at Halidon Hill. The outnumbered English carefully chose their terrain, dismounted their knights, mingled with units of archers and awaited the French onslaught. The French, accustomed to fighting small set battles and siege warfare were utterly unprepared for Edward's tactics. They attacked in disordered groups and were decimated in both battles. Both fights were hard won however and the English suffered many casualties.

Aside from three peculiarities, Agincourt was fought under largely the same circumstances. First, the weather was not conducive to attacking wings of heavily armored horse. Second, the French attack was carefully orchestrated. And lastly, the English counterattacked on foot. The mire of the battlefield bogged down the attacking phalanxes of mounted Knights. Their horses became easy prey for the many thousands of arrows shot by the English, and so the English attacked what had become a disorganized mob and destroyed them.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 31



or their part, the Elves were shattered after the Seven Years War, most of them dead or lost to the enemy. They hunted for their fallen for many years after and when they found them they lay them in funeral pyres and burned their bodies.

They did this so that Orc ravagers could never disturb the dead. But the burning was a strange thing for the Elves and the bodies were consumed only slowly so that many weeks would past and the smoke of the fire would never leave far from its origin. So in time the country was wreathed in a wonderful mist and this mingled with the geysers and steam caused from the great active mountains to the west. The lands bore the names of the Shelves of the Mist ever after.

The greatest of the Elf losses was Londea herself. She had vanished in the wars. None had seen her fall, nor her guards and attendants seen whither she had gone. They looked for her most of all, but to not and in time the remaining Elves fled to wild places and hid themselves from the enemy waiting for they knew not what. In truth some of these Elves still live in the wild places of the west, bitter and filled with lamentations for the wars they fought and lost.

After the great disasters of the Seven Years War some few of the Elves fought on. Five score as they counted their numbers and these were led by Meltowg Lothian and they were called the Vale Knights

Meltowg resembled his father in his youth. His stature stood a hand above those of his fellow Elves. His silken hair, long and gold with streaks of silver he wore in a tight tale at his back. His mail, full plate, shone green in the darkening sun of the Winter World and upon its surface he worked the shapes of the Great Trees of old. He bore an axe in battle and he wielded it with such skill that few could withstand him. For years without count he led the Lunar Knights in a vengeful war with the enemy. The loss of Londea shed his mind of what sanity remained and he was accounted as mad by all whom he met. For in battle his face twisted into that of a demon's and he slew without mercy or thought of it. He rode upon his charger all about the west, plundering small holds, burning castles and slaying the enemy wherever he met him.

In these dark days Meltowg found a forge in the wilderness upon which a great Troll stood working. The Troll named himself Mordlaw and cursed Meltowg as a fool and coward. "I have heard of you Prince of Lothian. Your deeds do boast of your powers on the field of war. But be not fooled by your own arrogance for you are meant to loose. Your methods of war are a fool's tool, for your honor will be the death of you."

"Vile Troll. War is an ugly business and one I have grown apt at waging. I care not for honor and face or sending you to earth with your dignity intact. You say you know of me, that the tales of my power precede my coming. If that were true, you would be best to

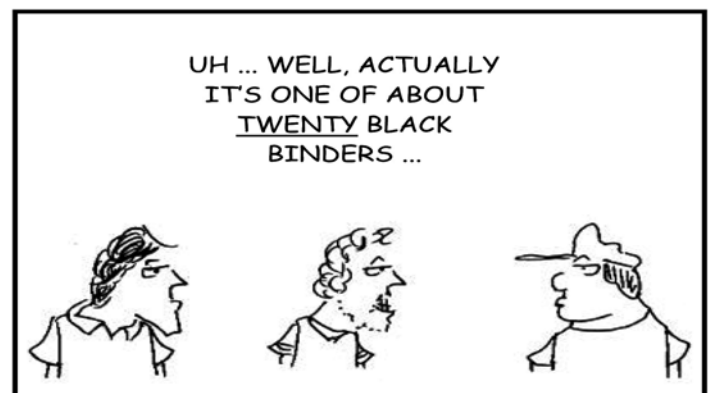
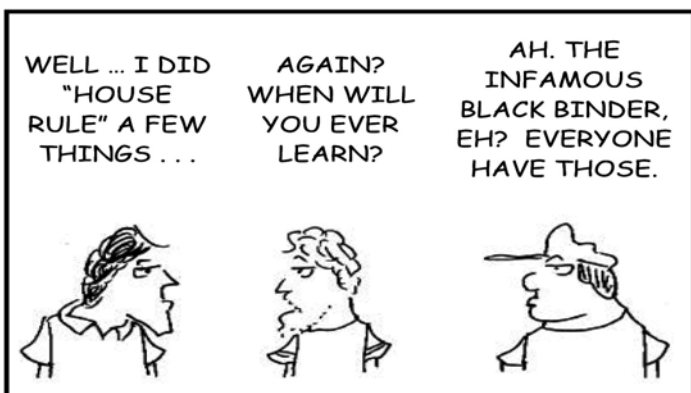
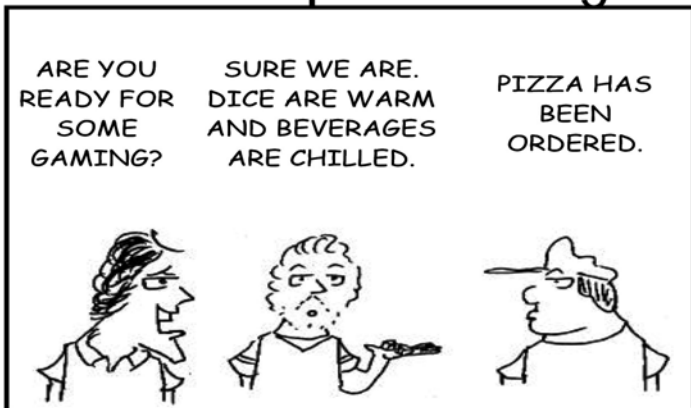
CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

Tales OF THE Worlds OF THE Rings OF Brass:

THE LAY OF THE LOTHIAN PRINCES

by Stephen Chenault

Fellowship of Foragers 01



F i n a r v y n 2004

The response to the auction was tremendous, a huge outpouring of support from Dave's fans swelled interest in the auctions. To date the auctions and sales of Dave's collection have garnered over \$22,000. Letters, cards, and emails poured in for David, all wishing him well and hoping for better health for him. Most importantly, they shared how much David's artwork had meant to them over the years.

The auction and subsequent communications were a real affirmation for David. Outside of his family and close friends, he

never realized just how much of a positive impact he had on so many people from so many different walks of life.

This outpouring of well wishes and sentiments of appreciation gave David a new will to live. Every day he tried to rejuvenate his spirit and fine motor skills. He even finished a piece of artwork that had lain unfinished for years.

It would be tragic for a great man to die not knowing he was a great man. Dave knew. Thanks to all of you.



ELVES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

need not see the world as an unfolding tapestry, but rather as a vibrant stage show in which they are themselves the greatest players. An elf can lust for gold because that elf can see the beauty that the gold inherently possesses and that only the elf can draw out.

So take some time and give your elves some personality. Break away from the stereotypes and flesh the creatures out with all the pride, avarice, yearning and joy that comes with a higher consciousness.

A few weeks ago Davis began running a game of *Castles & Crusades*. He started our intrepid band of adventurers off on the road to Blacktooth Ridge. We have a fairly diverse group of players, who range in years of experience at the table, gaming

preferences and styles. Davis runs a pretty no nonsense game. His style is pretty equanimous, he never gets mad at players or irritated, rather letting the play flow ... for good or ill (for many weeks we wandered around in the wilderness, slowly starving to death).

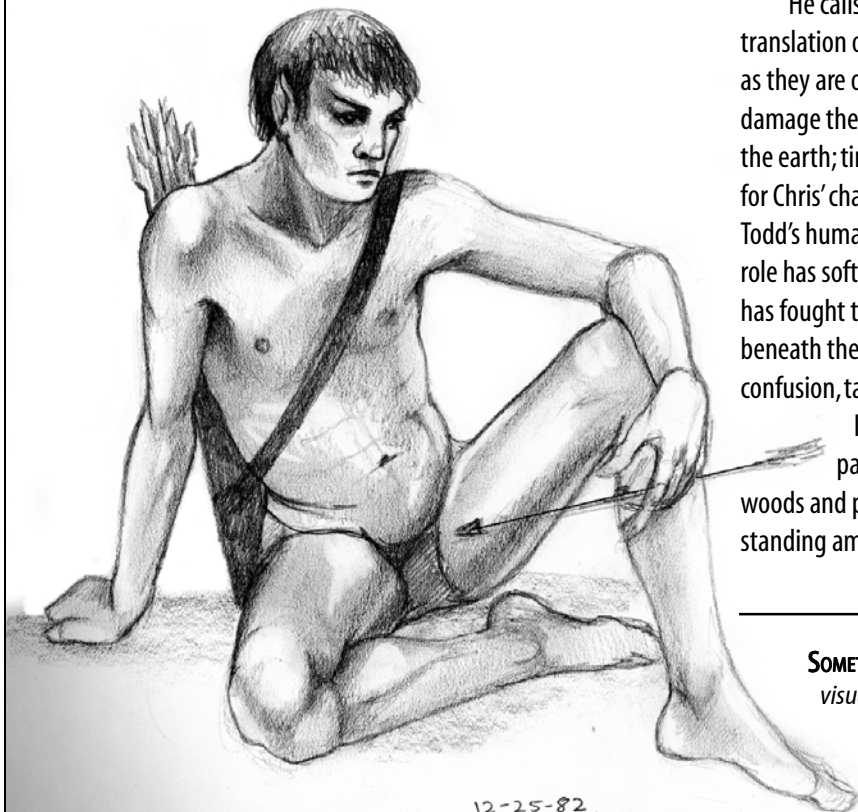
So I made an elf bard. I made him several hundred years old, though inexperienced in the workings of the world. But to the amazement of everyone at the table I gave him the most despicable personality traits I could. He looked upon them all as sub-races. Weak, desultory, slovenly and slothful. He didn't openly speak down to them, but rather spoke in the elf tongue only and leagued with the half-orc more than any other, for that one my bard could understand.

He calls them all 'transients' (we actually have the elven translation of this word, or concept, in our Erdian dictionary) as they are only 'passing through' in their short lives. The damage they do to the world is much like a dog that digs in the earth; time will heal it. I call them all "Goodman," except for Chris' character, another elf, who I call "Kinsman" and Todd's human who I have given an elf name. Of course the role has softened as the game has progressed and the party has fought together and acted this way or that, but always beneath the skin the elf looks upon the others with a confusion, tainted with disgust.

It is hard to play, but it has been a nice change of pace from the elf who always sneaks through the woods and preaches environmental harmony and understanding amongst the diverse races of the fantasy world.



SOMETHING MORE TO PONDER: *Just what IS the visual difference between an elf and a vulcan?*



12-25-82

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quiver in fear and make amends with your gods. For I'll kill you today, in the most horrible and rapid fashion I may. For I know to wage war is not a game to be played by honorable men...let us leave that to the hand wringers and merchants...war is a game not at all. War is not to be fought lightly, but only under the most dire of circumstances. But when it is fought it must be fought to one end only. Know the terror of my coming. I will kill you. I will kill your kin. I will kill all that you ever know or are ever going to know. And when I am done I'll pull your houses down and burn your towns to ash. I'll hound your people to the end of time until you are utterly broken in spirit and body. 'Honor your enemy?' Fools and dead men honor their enemies. Learn this today, your last lesson: *Victory is its own honor!*"

With that, Meltowg fell upon the Mordlaw and they fought upon the grounds of the forge. Meltowg's madness was driven by the knowledge of all that he had lost and could never regain. He fought in silence and he fought the only way men may fight wars, to win. Mordlaw grew dismayed. For long years he had accounted his enemy as weak for they always sought to fight him face to face upon equal ground, so that he always slew them with some treachery or through their own morality. But Meltowg drove him heedless and in the end spun the Troll and hamstringed his leg so that he fell upon his knees. Without word or mercy the Elf clove the Troll's head from its body so that he died upon the earthen forge.

In the heat after the battle Meltowg ordered his men to fire the forge and he gathered the metal of Iergild from the ground. He set to forging a great blade. For many days he labored thus, without sleep or ever recourse to healing his seeping wounds. He poured his soul into the blade that in the end he named Noxmurus, that is "Night of the Dead."

For many long years Meltowg led his company of Knights through a world of war and horror. True to his word he showed no mercy but slew all he deemed the enemy. In time he came to hate his own kin for their desertion of the world, he saw them for cowards and saw too that their hesitation to act led him and all the world to this pass. His knights, tattered and stained with the terror of their road shared in his nightmare, and followed him from battle to siege, on through time. Some fell wounded by the road and were left in forgotten shelters, others were lost on the road to what fate few could say, some died of wounds, others still of longing. But always they rode on. They rode to war, always to war . . .

In time of years Meltowg became feared by all who he crossed. His grim visage became a nightmare for the enemy and they fled before him. Thus the centuries played out for the Lothian Prince.

In the twilight years of the Winter Dark word came to Meltowg of the Castle of Spires and Melius the Wise. He learned of this magical place which held the gates of to the Elven Kingdoms of Shindolay and how that wizard kept them shut and bound from all eyes. So Meltowg turned his steed and company in that direction, though they numbered less than a score.

The events to follow were confusing and chaotic, like all battle. Lethe felt the weight of the beast upon him. Time slowed, his vision blurred and his knees buckled. Incredibly, that wooden stick he held became suddenly heavier and weighted exactly like a sword. In the same instant, Lethe felt himself thrust violently against a tree, his back hitting the trunk, and his vision exploded into an array of stars and commingling color. His head felt submerged in molasses as he fought to retain consciousness. Then those vibrant shapes that played within his field of vision transformed to an apparent hallucination of hundreds of ravens, dispersing with a burst of activity into the treetops.

Time seemed to stop.

Minutes of dead silence passed. Lethe could hardly tell if he was dead or alive. He had no sense of direction or orientation. The caws of ravens filled his ears. But there was no sign of the monstrous dog.

Finally, his mind passed into darkness. The sounds of the forest were enveloped by the eerie calls of carrion birds. Lethe awoke in morning light with a terrible headache. To his dismay, his eyes opened to a land upside-down. The forest floor was beneath him, with Lethe's limp arms hanging toward the earth.

The crumpled body of a middle-aged man, naked, whose skin was pale like that of a corpse, lay at the foot of the tree. A broadsword with a knobby wooden hilt projected from his bloody neck, its blade run straight through flesh into the soil.

Twisting his body around, Lethe managed to see how he was suspended from the tree. He spotted two ravens sitting on a large branch who looked down at him with seeming indifference. His feet were tied to that branch with a frayed rope. How is this possible? What happened? Who, or what, hung me from this tree branch? The ravens flew away as a voice spoke from the forest mist. It was a voice strong but as ancient as the hills themselves.

"This was the last intercession," Lethe was told. "But do not think I acted for you alone."

"Okay," said Lethe, "but can you get me down?"

"No, you hang tonight in deference to me. You owe penance to Vidar and Frey."

"Who are you," asked Lethe, looking down. He felt sick, and the world appeared to turn on its axis, confusing all sense of direction and perspective. But no man was in sight, and then the ground unexpectedly rose to greet him—his bonds magically broken—and once again the realm of deep, dreamless sleep overtook him.

He awoke at high noon, the sun beating down on his crumpled form. His hair was matted and tangled, his clothes tattered and worn, his skin rough and beard too long. A madman, that's what I am. The gods are real, of course, but I must be made of the stuff of dream; a character in one of their eternal minds,

thought Lethe. *No man should be knocked out as often as I've been. Out cold, dead again, alive again.*

The distinction between life and death might have become blurred. But the pain in his joints and limbs assured him he remained among the living.

Despair crept into his mind, slipping like a snake up his spinal column, a kundalini of dread. Why has Wotan cursed me so? Why was I so symbolically hung from tree, as the All Father had been? What game do the gods play?

Lethe heard movement in the forest. Emerging from the trees were several huge goblinoids, at least seven feet in height, of putrescent ivory complexion, their gangly bodies cadaverous. They were armed with various weapons, including hammers, swords, and cleavers. "Man-thing, get up," said one of them, wielding a large saber. Its mouth was fanged and eyes glittered red. And it pointed at Lethe with one long, razor-nailed finger.

"Ulfs," spat Lethe in utter disgust.

Several others were shoved out by the Ulfs into the open, emerging out from beyond the cover of the trees, their hands bound behind their backs. One was a tall, fat oaf, badly beaten, its brow knotted into an expression of hopelessness and smoldering anger. The other was a small creature, a male humanoid, with a shock of hair standing straight up and a bullet-shaped head. It was wrapped with chains and gagged. But its eyes spoke of fierce determination and vengeance.

Lethe dove for the wooden hilt of the mysterious sword protruding from the dead man who once had the form of his canine pursuer. But Lethe was punched by the Ulf so hard that he spun in a full circle and toppled to the ground. *Don't pass out, he commanded himself, still reeling, you're not a possum.*

"Man-thing seeks to hurt us," observed the Ulf, its voice deep and gravelly. "He must be broken like a mule!" It grabbed Lethe by the neck and hefted him fully off the ground.

"Let...me...go..." Lethe coughed and choked, kicking his feet in the air. The ulf laughed, a horrible sound, like an earthquake of the flesh.

"No, man-thing, you are our slave, destined to join the trollkin and oaf as part of our menagerie... until you accompany us to the Marches of Monyar, where we'll sell you into hard labor in the barbarian lands."

Well, thought Lethe grimly, at least I'm alive.



"Old School" VS "New School"?

ROBERT J. KUNTZ

WAS THE CO-DM OF THE ORIGINAL GREYHAWK CAMPAIGN WITH GARY GYGAX (ROUGHLY 1973-1986). ROB HAS WRITTEN SEVERAL ARTICLES ON THE SUBJECT OF GREYHAWK AND OF GAMING IN GENERAL. KUNTZ LIVES IN WISCONSIN.

INVENTING STONE...



When I first reentered this industry after a many-year hiatus I was forced to deal with a new and on-the-rise concept, that the industry as I had once known it had changed. Not only had the rules to Dungeons & Dragons changed, but the very concept on which these were based was in the midst of being challenged. The change was in keeping with a new found expression, though not a new found idea, that the Old School was passé and the New School of thought regarding FRPG, especially as expressed through the new D&D rules, was now paramount. Not only was this a presaging of things as they were and were going to be, but it also signaled that the old had been swept away forever, never to return in the face of such overwhelming odds and up-with-the-time ideas.

Having been on the original design team for D&D when we first progressed the idea in its infancy, this new found idea quickly became anathema to me. Why, I asked, should there be such a division? It was like standing on the graves of D&D's past creators not yet dead, denying the input of its past contributors and designers, pooh-poohing the many thousands who had played it, who had extolled it, who had marketed it and who had nurtured it to its greatest extent, only to loudly proclaim, "You did it all wrong!" The whole notion just struck me as humorously absurd, kinda along the lines of reacting to someone claiming that they had invented stone.

REINVENTING THE WHEEL...

Of course most of this flap had to do with the breaking of the old rules (Original D&D, 1st edition AD&D, 2nd edition AD&D and the "Basic" set of rules). In the making of a new set of rules based in name only upon previous editions of the game—but in transit actually forwarding totally new rules mechanisms—the last vestiges of support for the D&D game in its heyday (roughly 1974-1999) came to an end. This by itself was a bold move by WotC, for as a company they were no doubt attempting with this stroke to reinvent the game and to rejuvenate a sagging market at once.

That aside, this is where the old and new schism was first created. For those former adherents unwilling to make the move to the new game—which meant reinvesting time, money and, as DMs, literally revamping sometimes hundreds or thousands of rules specific concepts imbedded in their campaigns based upon their previous D&D edition of choice, thus in essence threatening to break their in-house

"Why, I asked myself, should there be such a division?"

"Reinventing the wheel doesn't always mean a smoother ride..."

designs and concepts stemming from years of tinkering with the rules, articles and ideas germane to their campaigns—this meant creating as much as possible on their own, waiting upon generic products, and resulting to “conversion” efforts, and the like. What this meant to the industry as we know it is this: it became splintered, as not everyone made the move, especially those former DMs who had indeed invested so much money and time in their games. Reinventing the wheel doesn’t always mean a smoother ride for everyone on the wagon.

YOU SAY TOMATOES, I SAY TOMAHTOES...

So, here we stand at yet another crossroad. We have splinter groups of many a kind, some satisfied, some not, some supported, some not, some happy, some happy and some not so happy, but at least they all have something in common—they’re gamers. No matter what one extols, no matter what is said as to which camp is better, which is worse, which is stupider or smarter, we all sit down at a table (or floor) and game. We use rules, we use game materials, we use dice and miniatures and other matter inherent to the game. So in essence there are no old or new schools, just different rules and processes regarding these (tomatoes, tomahtoes, if you will, for both are juicy depending upon the taste buds, which differ).

Since the rules are different regarding their mechanics, and they do differ greatly in that regard, there can be no true Old versus New when comparing the 3.0+ edition of D&D to D&D’s previous editions. Now, with the advent of multiple releases of 3.5 to 4.0 in the future, one will be able to form judgments regarding new vs. old by comparison, as the principals of these can/will incrementally change the game as it is now played; and note I will stress change in this regard, not break, as 3.0 D&D did to past editions of the game.

WIZARDS, TROLLS AND TRAVELING THE ROAD HOMEWARD...

The advent of a new concept can sometimes indeed presage a bringing in of the new and the washing away of the old. But in this case it is my belief that what is being experienced is a major bump in the road of D&D FRP.

Many of our veteran designers, DMs and gamers in this field are being challenged to rise to the occasion, to make the road ahead of them as manageable as possible considering what is being offered, what was, and what is. Wizards of the Coast, to their credit, has made this exercise for us less arduous with the Open Gaming License.

Troll Lord Games has already invested in this to their credit, also. With the advent of C&C we can look back confidently as well as look ahead and smile. Perhaps upon this road homeward, just perhaps, is where the old traveler will finally meet the new traveler. And it needn’t be on their way to school, either...

“We have splinter groups of many a kind...”

“What is being experienced is a major bump in the road...”

“where the old traveler will finally meet the new traveler”

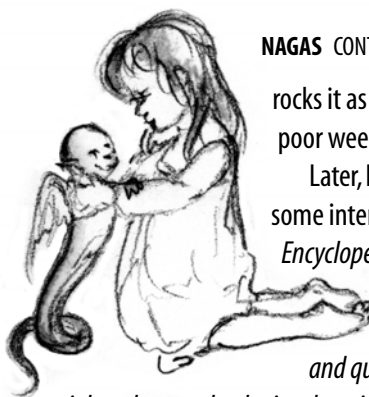




removing the overall effectiveness of the longbow. The hard fought battle ended with a French victory. The final battle of the Hundred Years War, Castillon (1453), proved the reverse for the English. The French held a fortified camp with breastworks and the English, even with the use of the longbow, were unable to dislodge the defenders. It was the first battle that culverins (a crudely made musket) were used in large numbers, the French intermingling them with crossbowmen and other archers. The massed English attacks, resembling those of the French at Crecy or Agincourt, led to disaster and ultimately defeat.

The few set piece battles fought by the English should not detract the military historian from the general nature of Medieval warfare, which generally favored the defense. Where well fortified positions were assailed the attacker was at odds to achieve victory. It was position warfare at its best. Lengthy sieges reduced large towns far more often than large set battles won wars. Edward III's successful reduction of Calais was far more valuable a victory in the Crecy campaign than the victory at Crecy itself. Calais gave him a foothold in France which was not lost to the English until the time of Henry VIII.

The longbow was all but useless in confined areas. The arrow slits of castles accommodated crossbows not longbows. Furthermore, longbows were unable to penetrate most metal armor, relying more upon the sheer numbers of arrows to drive an enemy to ground, and at Agincourt, specifically to kill the mounts of armored men. Bolts shot from crossbows could penetrate breastplates and shields with relative ease. And to the Medieval soldier, these advantages far outweighed the disadvantages of weight and a slow rate of fire. In the Medieval period the longbow was a weapon of limited scope, the crossbow, far more versatile and powerful, the weapon of choice. ©



rocks it as if it was one of her dolls. She also comforts the poor wee-thing by singing the helpless creature to sleep.

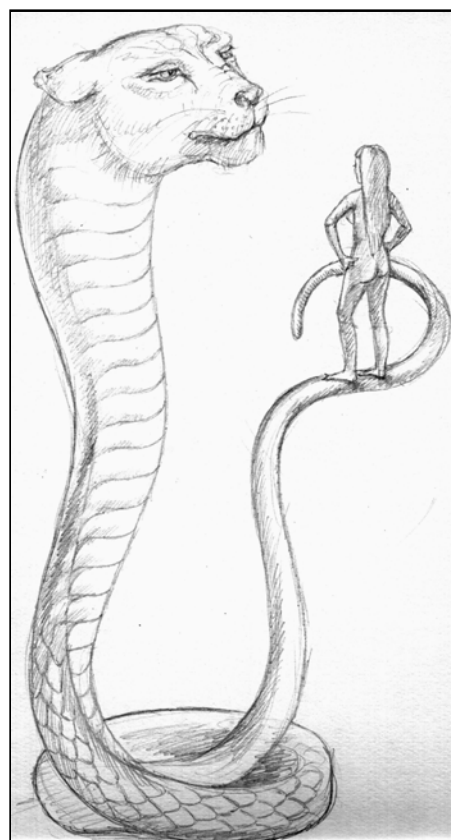
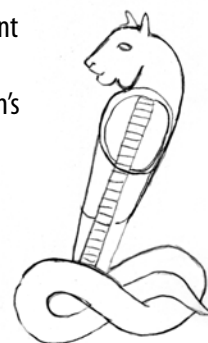
Later, I looked up the word "naga" and discovered some interesting stuff. In J. C. Cooper's "An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols" (page 150):

"The Naga and nagina are serpent kings and queens or genii, often divinities in their own rights; they can be depicted as either fully human, or as snakes, or as humans with cobra head and hoods or with ordinary snakes heads, or as human from the waist upwards and serpentine from the waist downwards. They frequently share the same symbolism as the Chinese Dragon as rain-givers and the life force of the waters, fertility and rejuvenation. They are guardians of the threshold, of the door and of treasures, both materials and spiritual, and of the waters of life."

The description above reminds me of the Egyptian Serpent Goddesses who have the head of a snake and the body of a human. I have a special fondness for Buto-Sekhem with a lion's head and a snake's body. Buto-Sekhem is considered by the Egyptians to be a totemic form of the ageless Great Mother herself. I sketched the design to the right on site in Egypt at one of the side chapels of Karnak's Great Temple Complex.

Once, I entered the domain of Buto-Sekhem and found myself face-to-face with a massive creature (below) but I digress...

Let me continue the thread of my original Naga Story. Exactly one a year later, in April, 1997, I was flipping through a catalog and found a small photograph of a

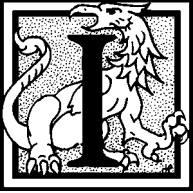


engaging Nepalese statue with a human torso, a snake body and wings like an angel. The caption said it was Naga Kanya, the Goddess of the Three Realms. Symbolically, the snake part represents the realm of the unconscious, the ground-of-being; the wings represent Spirit and the human is the intermediary between the two. Thus, Naga Kanya has the ability to relate to humans and is able to intercede both ways on their behalf. She holds a conch shell from which she pours out her blessings. In South and Southeast Asian mythology, the Nagas are considered to be rain givers and guardians of the water and the riches of the deep.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

THE TINKER

“A Beginning of Sorts” by Joshua Chewing



I cannot help but conjure up an image of a small, gnomish man sitting at a workbench inside his well-traveled wagon. In the flickering lamplight you can see his shoulders hunched, whitening tufts of hair shooting from his oversized ears, and eyes straining through a large looking glass as steady, precise hands move beneath.

The Tinker, a creature of both fiction and fact, renowned for his ability to fix, repair, and mend. But the Tinker is also an experimenter—one who fiddles with the old and relishes the pursuit of new ways to do established things. In the end, the Tinker is a creator, but often a creator using the remnants of the creations of others. It is that image that I take with me on the maiden voyage of *The Tinker* column.

There are few realms of human expression where it is accepted—if not encouraged—for the established rules and requirements to be tweaked, fiddled with, or ignored. We, in particular, belong to a hobby that loves to tinker with what is out there, to create something new from the creation of others. In many ways game design, like most all human endeavors, is one where you stand on the shoulders of giants in the attempt to raise the bar ever increasingly higher. This article concerns itself with the tradition of tinkering with and designing games. Specifically it will focus on role-playing game design but, with all being as interrelated as it is, may branch out to the siblings of RPGs, such as board games or video games.

Therefore, this column's intended purpose is to take us all on a journey through different elements of game design. Remember that all of this is just one person's opinion, but I plan to borrow judiciously from numerous sources I have encountered over the years. The Threefold Model, GNS, discussions with and articles written by current game designers and Ludologist (a person who studies games academically) will inform my writings. I do not claim to be an expert on many of the game design theories that currently exist, but I have done my best to read and understand them. I will provide sources when available,

descriptions when allowable, and dissertations where space permits. I, however, must warn of rants whenever possible, but I will do my best to keep them down to a minimum—the ravings of a lone geek are always so very interesting, don't you think (with all sarcasm intended)? As a consolation, though, I solemnly pledge that you will read no character descriptions in this column nor will I regale you with stories of the exploits of my own gaming group.

Finally, I welcome comments and discussion from you, the readers. I am providing an open e-mail to the readers, thetinker@swbell.net, that will allow you to comment back to me. I will do my best to reply to or repeat any pertinent or interesting points (whether I agree with them or not) so as to not make this my own soap box.

All that being said, the best thing to do, in my opinion, would be to jump in to a discussion. I will pick one that is relatively near and dear to my heart at present: RPGs and Character Health—or “The Great Hit Point Debate.” Every RPG in existence must address the conundrum of how to best represent the overall health of a character. I am happy to report, that everyone gets it wrong. How wrong, however, is entirely a matter of opinion. In order to get us all thinking about this, I would like to discuss different ideologies that go into the debate.

In the “Great Hit Point Debate” (hereafter referred to as the GHP Debate) there are numerous different schools of thought, of which two stick out: Hit Points and Wound Systems. The Hit Point school of thought is probably the most prevalent and well known. This school came from the granddaddy of RPGs (Wizard's of the Coast's D&D) and is still alive and well today. There are numerous variations on this theme (White Wolf's World of Darkness' Wound Levels, Steve Jackson Games' GURPS Health Stat, the Body Development skill in Iron Crown Enterprises' Rolemaster, etc.), but they all boil down to a specific number that represents the character's health with damage subtracted from that number. All wounds go into the same pool; no distinction is made as to the source or place of the damage.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33



NAGAS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

At the time, it had simply been my intention to record the facts of the statue. However, once I had blocked in the major components, it seemed Naga Kanya herself decided to visit and command the drawing session. Naga Kanya surely has a powerful presence! Thus, I had another interesting drawing experience of a visit from a Naga. Perhaps that is the only way their essence can be depicted...? I think the details of her facial features are most remarkable, mysterious, and wise.

The images I've shared here are merely a visual jotting down of ideas. They may not all be art, but they represent part of my continuing creative journey of exploration into known and unknown territory. If I can open a portal into different worlds of possibility and wonder—then I've achieved part of my challenge as an artist.



THE TINKER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

The character is considered alive until some number (generally 0) is met. There is a certain simplistic elegance to this approach, which is probably why it is one of the most common Health Systems out there.

Another camp in the debate is one that uses what I will refer to as the "Wound" system, where the characters track individual wounds. Games like FASA's *Mechwarrior* (3rd Edition), Driftwood Publishing's *The Riddle of Steel*, or Green Knight's *Pendragon* use the Wound system approach. In this type of system the wounds are tracked as individual elements that must be cared for. Some games, like *Rolemaster*, add a Wound system to their Hit Point system (via their critical system). Games that use the Wound system often tout being more "realistic" than Hit Point games. This debate is purely a matter of style, rather than substance, though, since both systems model different effects well.

The debate often sticks when discussions branch into what effects are being modeled. And it is here that a Game Designer must look. A Game Designer must decide what effects best match the genre and feel of the game that is being designed. In the end, all game systems are merely a window into the soul of the game itself. Hit Points often are used to model "heroic" systems, where characters are capable of withstanding (and/or dishing out) tremendous

damage. This isn't always the case (such as the original Legend of the Five Rings system by AEG) since the number of Hit Points a character can withstand might be relatively small compared to the amount of damage, but for the most part this is entirely a matter of scale. So a designer can intentionally design a Hit Point system while maintaining a "gritty" or "realistic" feel, merely by limiting the total available Hit Points to a character while scaling the damage appropriately.

Alternately, a Wound System is often thought of as more inherently "realistic" in its handling of character health. By tracking each wound separately these systems can provide more detailed healing mechanics as well as personalized effects for wounds. So a character who takes a wound to their gun arm might drop their gun, or find their aim spoiled, but would have no penalties to their movement. A game using a Hit Point system will often generalize penalties, if they are given at all, and healing. Games that use a Wound system will often have more complex healing and penalty systems, which often does slow down game play. So, in the end, Wound systems are often more robust in their handling of situations but sacrifice speed.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

So, can a happy medium be reached? In my opinion, no—but that is not necessarily a bad thing. As I said before, the system should match the game, not some vision of reality. Provided the system follows the tone and genre of the game being played, the model of reality should not matter as much. In general you can count on Hit Points to be a quick and easy model that lacks subtle delineations. Use this type of design to model cinematic and heroic actions. Meanwhile Wounds Systems might add breadth and detail, but will slow down game time. This type of design is better served in a more gritty or dramatic game. But remember that this is a spectrum, not a binary system. A game can combine the two methods in numerous ways, as many games do, to best fit the ideals being sought.

In the end, there is no right or wrong way to denote the character's health in a game. Mostly it is a matter of personal preference or genre conventions. But, as a game designer, it is important to not let personal opinions stand in the way of the overall game being designed. Some genres and settings might be best suited for a system that the Designer might not particularly like. Other times the designer might want something new when one of the tried and true methods would work better. It is important when designing a game to keep the overall feel of the game being designed in mind. Matching the overall feel will better serve the players of the game, and in the end the game itself, far more than any novel design or pet system ever will.



INDEX TO ADVERTISERS

Basic Action Games	6
<i>Bash (Basic Action Super Heroes)</i>	
Leisure Games	10
Lejendary Adventures	10
Hekaforge Productions	10
<i>Gary Gygax's "Terekaptra: Lost City of the Uriss"</i>	
Classic Collector Card Game	19
<i>"Jasmine: The Battle of the Mid-Realm"</i>	
Goodman Games	27
<i>"Dungeon Crawl Classics #11"</i>	
Castles & Crusaders	Back Cover
<i>Player's Handbook, Monsters & Treasures, and Castle Zagyg</i>	

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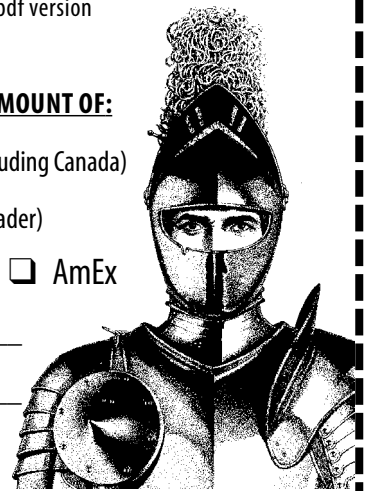
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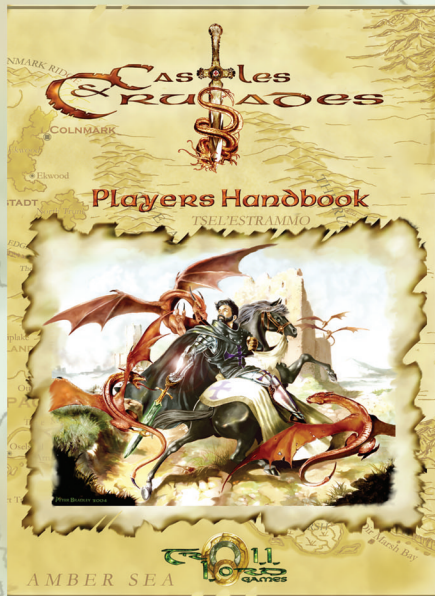
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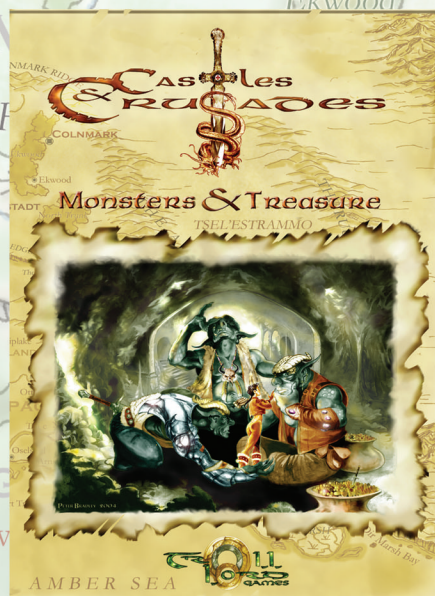
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