

Gateways

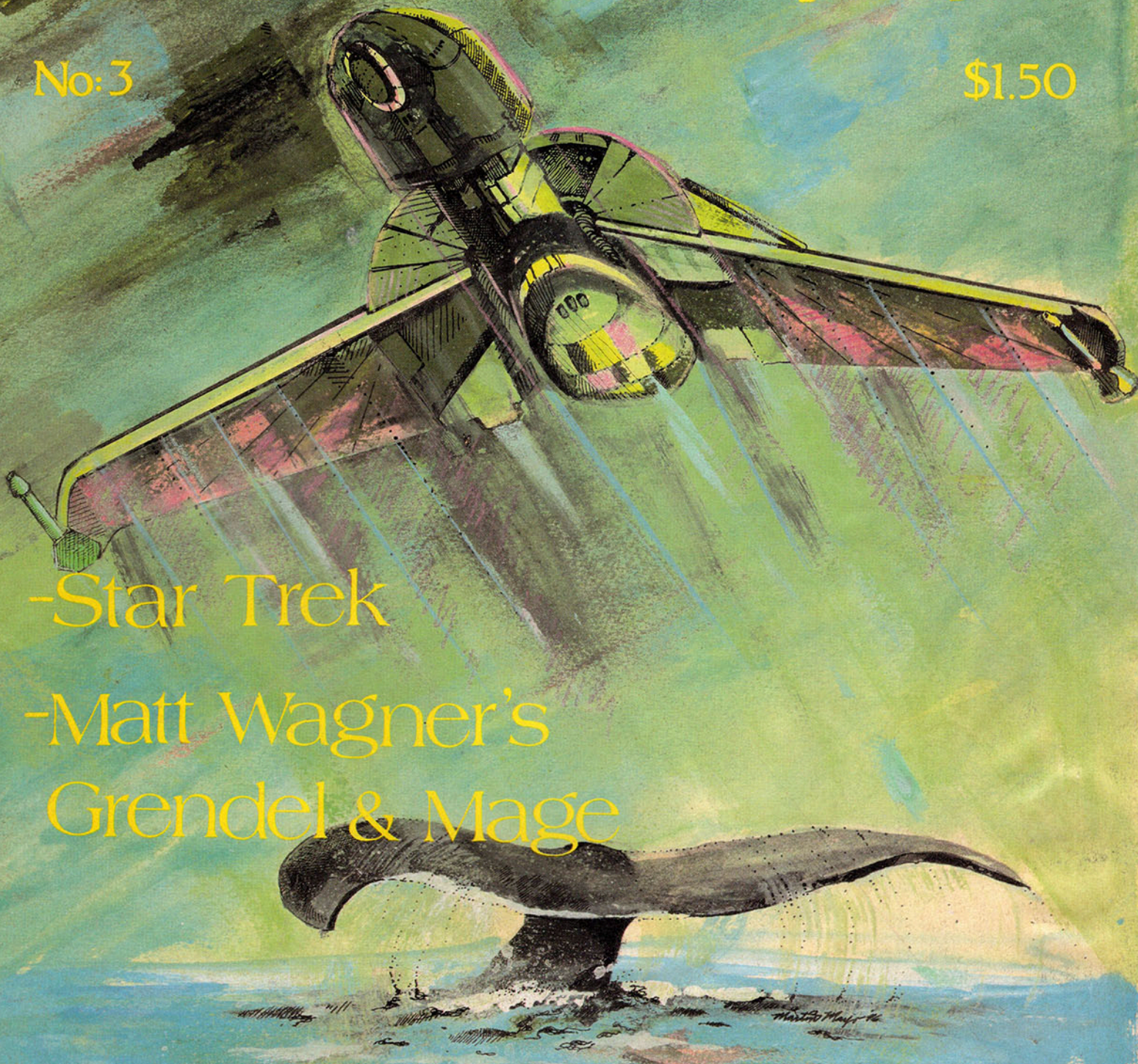
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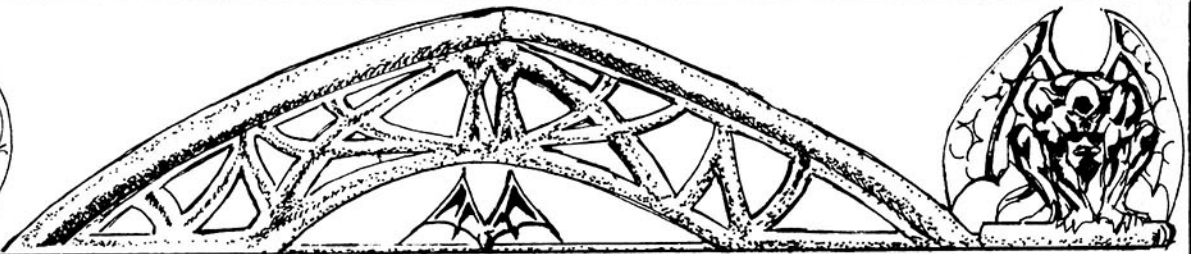
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-Star Trek

-Matt Wagner's
Grendel & Mage





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GATEWAYS

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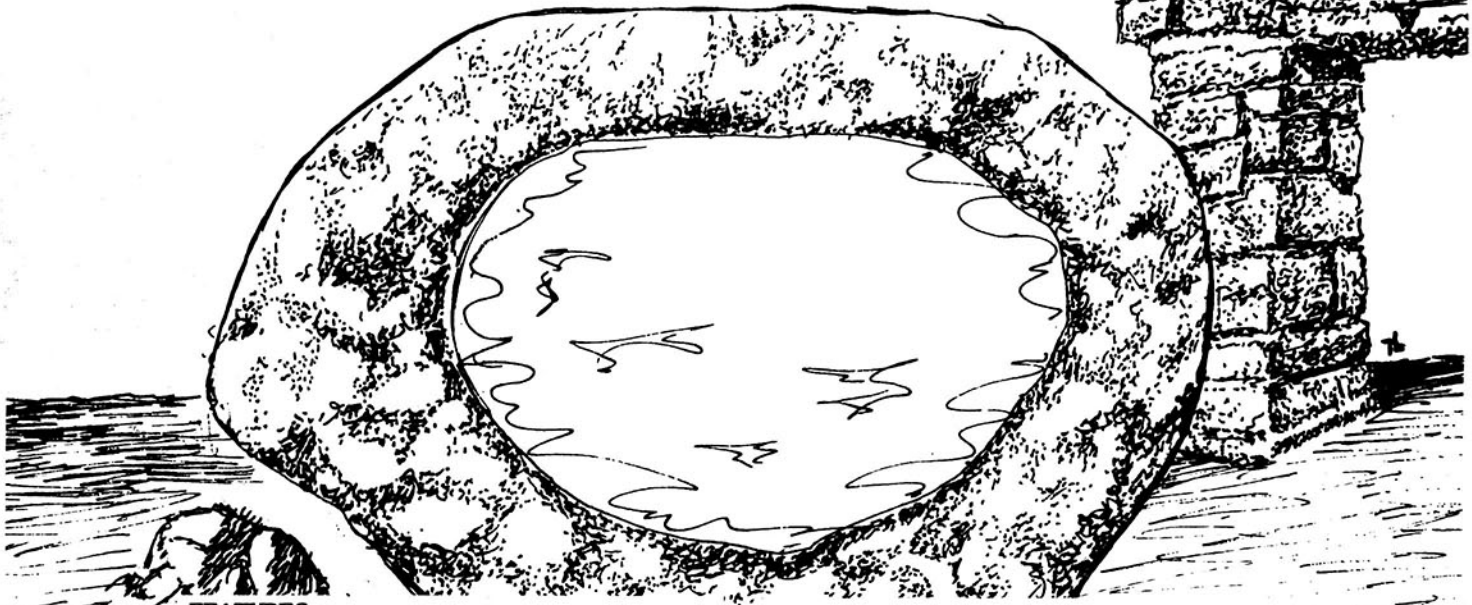
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Howling At The Moon

Dear Gateways,

I first saw Gateways at Gen-Con, and I was a little interested. The cover art was great, and I wanted to know what a progressive, etc. etc. gaming magazine was. Now, I'm really interested! It's about time someone realizes that gamers don't spend all their time thinking about rules and old games...we have "real" lives too! I think you've got a great idea, and I hope you make it big.

Adam Billings
Bridgeport, CN

Oh we will, Adam, we will. Thanks for the nice words.

To Gateways,

I'm glad that you cover independant comics. Will you be doing stories on Hampster Vice and Miami Mice? Will you have more on Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles? Are there more games with comic book animals in them? I have TMNT and Other Strangeness, but I'd like something else to play.

Michael Brown
Brooklyn, New York

Nothing else to play?! We can't think of many fates worse than that, so take a look between the Star Trek features, and you'll find a feature about adapting whatever game you have to play in the worlds of a few of the most popular comic book so-called funny animals. And have fun.

To the editor:

Congratulations on your new magazine, it looks really different than anything I've ever read. I hope that you'll be expanding your coverage to AD&D, which is my favorite game.

I'd just like to say that Serge Clermont was right when he said that some people don't like to talk about RPG's in front of people who don't play them. Some of the guys I play with have that problem. But I don't think that raising the minimum age to play will solve anything. I've been playing since I was 13, and I never had that problem. If any one comes up with a solution, I'd like to know.

Steven Beck
Elizabeth, New Jersey

We think it's just a matter of believing in what we are doing. If you believe in something, no one can make you feel uncomfortable about it. Keep trying, have patience, and by all means, keep gaming.



Dear Gateways Editor,

I very much admire your Robotech-themed articles, but enough is enough! I have for a long time been a devoted Thundercat fan, and I have yet to see you do anything on the Thundercats. I would like it very much if you would at least devote one story to them.
Sincerely,

A. Harrison.
New York, New York

Thundercats, eh? OK. We'll take a look. Keep your eyes on our Table of Contents. Any other fans out there?

Dear Gateways:
Make the magazine bigger.

Gary Foster
Chicago, IL

Whatever you say.

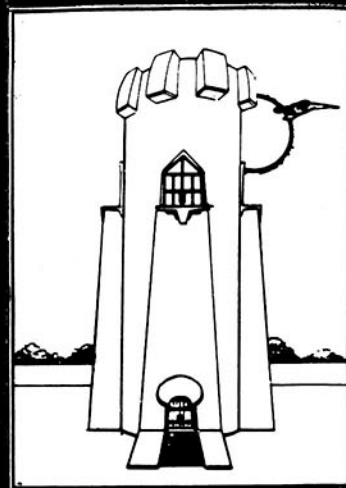
From The Tower

A special message to Game Masters. If you're a player, you may skip this section. (But you shouldn't.)

A good friend of mine had a crisis recently, a gaming crisis. Despite general knowledge and an attempt at organization, his game came up short two or three players. Since my friend uses a rather enclosed scripting method of playing, utilizing every member of the party and paying attention to subplots involving the individual players, he was forced to alter his game somewhat to make up for the missing people. He played anyway, which was a good decision on his part. After all, the other players didn't do anything wrong, and they certainly deserved to have a good time. It was after the game was over that I realized that something was wrong. I discovered that my friend was very angry at those who failed to attend, and that instead of stepping up efforts to get them to remember to come, he was going to leave everything as it was. His reasoning? He thought that since he had gone through the trouble of creating the game world, forming a complex and exciting plotline, and actually mastering the game, that the players owed him attendance. That he shouldn't have to remind them so frequently, or make last minute changes for them.

In a perfect world, gamers, this would be true. God knows I've had monumental difficulties getting my games together! And I've been angry at players who back out at the last minute, players who drop out without telling me, and dozens of unkept promises. But I discovered that giving up is never the way to solve things.

If a movie producer had just completed a spectacular film, and decided to release it without any advertising, without advance screenings, without any media support, how many people will go see it? Unless he's Steven Spielberg and someone leaked the news out, not very many. Most movie theatres would refuse to carry it. How do the studios get you to go to their movies? By *advertising* them! Even knowing that millions of people would be on line waiting to see *Star Trek: The Voyage Home*, Paramount launched a media campaign that cost them millions of dollars! You had to live in a cave if you didn't know when the movie was being released or where it was playing! And Paramount didn't stop after telling us once. Every day, on the radio, on TV, on MTV, on posters, in magazines and comic books, they told us, "Star Trek IV is coming.....it's coming.....get ready!" And so we were! Game Masters! Players are not always as dependable as you would like them to be! Hard news to take, I know. But it's something we have to live with. So be patient with them. After all, you are running this game for *them*. They will breathe life into it, they will remember it, they will add to it, change it, make it grow. You can't play a game without 'em, so you have to do your best to play with them! Remind them to come. Tell them "something exciting is going to happen to your character!" (It usually does, anyway, right?)



OK, Players, you can read now. Game Masters may skip this section. (But they shouldn't.)

I have a friend, who I sometimes see at games. Sometimes, because his attending habits are slightly irregular. One day, I asked him why he didn't show up at an especially thrilling session, he shrugged and said, "Nothing much ever happens to my character anyway. And you played easily without me, and the GM seems to manage the game very well when I'm not there. He doesn't care, and besides, I had stuff to do. And no one called me."

That was kind of a shocking statement to me, because I knew that the GM happened to care very much who attended his games (he was a tight scripter, and paid a lot of attention to individual characters), and I had known about the game for some time. But this player, convinced that the GM was uncaring, had made no effort to find out where or when the game was: he assumed that "someone" would call him, and arrange for him to attend. To talk him into going.

In a perfect world, gamers, this would be true. God knows, I've needed reminding from time to time. But the world is not perfect, and we have to do our best to make up for the minor failings it has. Players, the GM has created a world for you, put life into it's cities, it's nations, given it magic and technology, exciting situations and quiet victories. The GM has sat with you and watched you turn a series of numbers into a character who is a part of that vast world, or that one-night quest, or that series of adventures. The GM wants you there.

Players! GM's are not as dependable as you would like them to be! Be patient with them. *Ask* them when their next game is, and where. After all, you are playing in their game by invitation only. Try to get to their games on time, because they've got other things to do too. And if you can't make it, let them know, so they don't put your character in deep freeze because your mom wanted you to go shopping for her, or because you have a killer assignment due the next day. Remember, you can't play the game without them, so you have to do your best to play with them.

Every one can read now.

Gamers! Let's keep in touch, huh?

Laurie Antoniou
Executive Editor

The Tome



The Finer Art of World Generation Part III

Well, I really do hate to admit it, but that time for remorse has at last fallen upon us. That's right, this is the last article in this series (groan, sob, sob). Granted, it's a sad but true fact, and I suggest that we make the best of it, so this time I'd like to take the opportunity to take a good, long look at what I think are the two most abused (or just plain misunderstood) areas of AD&D: monsters and magic.

Monsters: All right, let's talk for a while about monsters, shall we? The AD&D Player's Hand-book defines the term "monster" as "...a kindly wizard or a crazed dwarf, a friendly brass dragon or a malicious manticore. Such are the possibilities of encounters in dungeon, wilderness, or town." Pretty vague, right? Personally, I find it a bit too vague, since it gives some DMs the idea that a monster must be powerful enough to wipe out an entire battalion of marines simply by looking mean at them. Not true at all. In fact, I sometimes wonder whether these "killer DMs" fully realize exactly what they are doing, both to themselves and to their players. In any case, I feel that the only way to really understand this phenomenon (which for the sake of repetition we'll call "Killer DM Syndrome", or "KDMS" for short) is to look at the problem from the very beginning.

The beginning DM faces several very important problems, namely the following:

- 1) How to start the players off on their adventuring careers;
- 2) How to keep the players interested in the game once it has started;
- 3) How to make the game challenging enough for the players.

Obviously, there are many more things to be considered by the DM, but these seem to be the most frequently asked questions. Let's look at each one of these problems separately:

1) First of all, you have this group of people gathered around you, and the one thing that they all expect is to have a good time. The easiest way to deal with this situation is usually a dungeon adventure, complete with treasure, tricks, traps, and of course, monsters. Now, don't misunderstand me; not only is this a good way of starting (in fact, it's how most serious games do start), but it's also a good way to allow both the DM and the players time to become adjusted to the game itself, especially if the group is unfamiliar with role playing. Unfortunately, it also happens to be an invitation to a serious case of KDMS. You see, when you limit your game to dungeons it is very easy to get into the same old routine of kill the monsters, take the money, kill the monsters, take the money, and so on and so forth, and such like.

2) & 3) These are undoubtedly problems that every DM has to face from time to time. Granted, not all will face it in quite the same way, but again, it's the basis for a similar problem, i.e., taking the easy way out by testing newer and better creations out against the players. As you can plainly see (at least, I hope that it's plain), KDMS is not really a problem so much as simply a terribly bad solution to one. Which essentially brings us back to my first article in this series, which was intended to give an idea of how to avoid these problems in the first place, or at least make them a bit more manageable.

Anyway, since the game is rather boring without monsters, I suppose that we must have them somewhere on our worlds. On the other hand, there are ways to properly go about this: first of all, take into account the overall level of the players. One thing that must be kept in mind at all times is a reasonable balance between their level and that of the creature. Now, this becomes less important at the middle and higher levels but before this point is reached, the players must be able to meet the foe and live to tell about it. As an example, a fairly strong party of 5th level characters could probably blow away a 6th or even a 7th level monster, but at 1st level, even a 2nd level monster could easily turn the tables on the group.

Secondly, what kind of beast is it? Where does it live? What does it eat (besides adventurers, of course)? What natural predators does it have, if any? All of these questions and many others should be considered (and answered) when designing a monster. Remember the three laws of logic, consistency, and variety. It's simply not enough to say "Well, it's done by magic." That is a cop out, one of the oldest in fact, and any serious DM has a responsibility to the players to at least try to logically explain how his or her pet creations got there in the first



place. As long as you keep in mind that logical doesn't have to mean boring, the possibilities are endless. All it takes is a little creative effort on your part.

Magic: All right, now that we've gotten that out of the way, we can talk about another problem that is not entirely unlike KDMS. I am, of course, speaking of the DM's magic overdose, which can be every bit as devastating to a game as a bad case of the previously discussed malady.

What exactly is "magic", anyway? I mean, has anybody ever really sat down and tried to logically explain why and how magic spells were invented? I don't think so, but then perhaps this is one of the few times that logical explanations are not really necessary. In my opinion, we don't actually have to try to define "magic" per se; I'm not even going to try. For our purposes, we can simply say that "magic" is the generic term used to describe or refer to anything that can be accomplished through the use of technology. Of course, one can always adopt Arthur C. Clark's theory on the subject, 'Sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic,' but then that forces the DM to create that kind of technology for his or her world. In any case, we'll just assume that magic works, it's there, and certain classes of characters can use it more easily than others. Understood? Fine.

Second, ask yourself just *where* is this magic coming from? Is there just one source of it? Does each plane of existence have its own type of magic? What about magic items; how and why were they made? Who on your world has the know-how to make them? They can't be that easy to make, or else everybody would have them. And if that's the case, then you definitely have a very serious problem on your hands. You have got to understand that magic items don't just appear in treasure hordes; each item has its own history, background, and so on. The simple fact that only high level clerics and magic-users can create magic items, and then only with a great deal of time, effort, and expense, should tell you just how difficult they are to come by.

Now to the beginner, this may very well sound like a whole lot of unnecessary garbage. I assure you, I am not against magic items, I wholeheartedly support them. I'm just saying that you must not allow yourself to get carried away with the bloody things. And each DM will do this in his or her own way. In my world, for instance, (I love it, a chance to plug) a set of unforeseen (and rather bizarre) events ended with a "door" to the plane of magic being opened at the wrong time, so a few of the local dieties had to take steps to prevent its leaking too much power into the world

at one time. In another game, magic-users simply never evolved, giving the monopoly to the clerics, a system which worked pretty well for tens of thousands of years. In still another, constant rivalry exists between magic-users and clerics, because neither class can understand where the other's power comes from. In short, you can deal with the situation in any way that you see fit, but the first thing that you must do is to admit that there is in fact a problem. No, I'm not saying that all beginning DMs have this problem, but some do. Four or five items per person isn't really too bad, as long as they're not too powerful. More than six can be however, and things like ten or more should be avoided like the plague if at all possible. Not only that, but magic items should be paid for in either blood, money, or hard work, or perhaps a little of all three. Nothing should ever come easily, especially to a high level party.

Well, I hope that this series (or what there was of it) was able to give the DMs out there, both old and new, a new way of looking at things. I hope that I haven't insulted anybody out there, but I can only talk about what I've seen for myself, which includes a great deal of very unusual playing habits, many of which I've discussed somewhere in these articles. One thing that I have seen time and time again is that the best thing that can make a better player is experience, pure and simple. But as I have said, and will continue to say, if you like it, and it works, then keep it. And always remember the three rules.

Jonathan Frater



TO BOLDLY GO...

A REVIEW OF THE STAR TREK ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Stardate 2/22115

Long Island, N.Y. Terra

"Can you hear me?", a lone tired voice whispered.

"Father?...I'm here"; the trembling voice cracked. It was cold for November, very cold.

"Father, I have returned to--to make my peace with thee....," he stuttered, "I know you wish not to hear talk of destiny, but it was mine!," said the voice with more confidence, "I received my calling and did what was necessary, what was right. Father, I had to go! After all these years, can you not forgive me?" the voice pleaded.

The silence was broken by the falling of the rain. Lieutenant Jonathan William Liu stood his ground, how head bowed low with respect. He raised his hand. "Look at me, father, I left an awkward and confused boy; I returned a man disciplined and proud. Will you not make peace with me?"

Lt. Liu looked at the gravesite, tears forming at the edges of his eyes; he knew coming here was not a good thing to do but it was his way. His Star Fleet uniform soaked, he laid the flowers down, bowed deeply, turned and slowly walked to the waiting taxi. Six hours later he would be with his new family in his new home, he thought to himself as the aging anti-gravitational turbines raised the battered taxi above the tree tops. It was raining very hard now.

"Where to, Cap'n?" the foreign looking cabbie asked.

"Manhattan Port Authority," murmured Liu as he looked into the distance.

When I started gaming eight years ago, I found out the hard way that a pretty box or a catchy logo does not a good game make. I discovered many bad attempts at games and some that were decent, but in the end I always ended up running back to Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, not because it was a superior game, but rather because it's "world" was constantly expanding. New modules were being released every week (a slight exaggeration) by TSR as well as a multitude of other companies which used similar rules and game principles. When a Game/Dungeon Master was hard up for ideas, there was always a source to turn to, which was the basic attractiveness of the system.

Another factor that led to the success of AD&D was that it was universal; almost everybody knew how to play (another slight exaggeration) or had at least heard of it. These two elements constituted the necessary ingredients for a very popular, but sometimes weak game. With few other choices I kept on gaming for five or so more years, experimenting with pieces of dead and moldering games until something better came along, something much better...

Enter **STAR TREK: THE ROLE PLAYING GAME**. This is a well designed game that has a lot of great things going for it, for example:

1. It is clear and has easy to understand rules. The system is well thought out and leaves few or no holes.
2. It covers both the technical and role playing aspects of the game.
3. It is true to the original and animated television series, and *also* to the major motion pictures.
4. It contains an ever expanding universe with unlimited potential for action, drama, and intrigue.

With a game that offers all of that, how can you possibly go wrong? The game does have it's minor difficulties, but these can be easily overcome with a little creativity and thought. One of the two problems with the system is that one has to keep in mind that this is "real life." One can't just blow away a Klingon on a whim because he is up against some great injustice. The game is not as simple as AD&D in that respect; laws and protocol must



be strictly adhered to. After all that is what's expected of all Star Fleet personnel, right? Free lancing is an excellent alternative to the stringent regulations of Star Fleet Command. One could be a wily merchant smuggling contraband for high profit, while another could hold the dangerous, ever-open position of privateer, or maybe even a spy for the Klingon Empire (if you're sneaky enough!). There's a universe full of options out there and only the qualified ones get the job. Free lancing can be a lot of fun, as well as very exciting, but it's also very dangerous and you have to be smarter, faster, and stronger than the competition in order to beat them.

The second minor problem deals with chain of command, and the "power hungry player" types out there. Although the game is designed for three or more players, what becomes apparent in a few sessions is that the Captain can take total control of the game and technically his word is law. The rules give good suggestions to prevent dictatorships, but the Game Master will still have problems with domineering players (they are out there). To remedy this I found that making the Captain a Non-Player Character controlled by the GM is a good idea. This gives all players a chance to "take the con" when the Captain is unavailable.

STAR TREK: THE ROLE PLAYING GAME comes with three rule booklets and a pair of ten-sided dice. The first book is the **Star Fleet Officer's Manual** with which the player can create and develop a player character. Both new role players and old veterans seeking inspiration should read the introduction on RPGs. This booklet discusses the mechanics and the How To's of role playing in depth. Also included in this 40 page work was a thing I think no RPG should be without, a **Character Generation Short Form**. This wonder of wonders drastically decreased the time consuming process of creating characters and made play more enjoyable. The latter third of the manual handles ground movement and personal combat. This different and innovative system is based on personal action points, which are

expended in order to move, evade, shoot, etc. I found this to be a useful, although unwieldy system when too many screaming, hyperactive combatants are involved, but good nonetheless.

The second of the three books is the very useful, 40 page, **Cadet's Orientation Sourcebook**, which contains information on all of the major starfaring races, dispositions of alien governments, both friendly and otherwise, a breakdown of Star Fleet Command, the U.S.S. Enterprise's Personnel Record Files, and a timeline of Star Trek history. All equipment from medical (hypos), to sidearms (Klingon hand disruptors), to personal gadgets (tricorders), to shipboard systems (photon torpedos) are fully and clearly explained. The sourcebook also held a vital section for all up and coming Star Fleet Captains; the **Handbook of Star Vessel Protocol**, which details regulations concerning all space encounters, be they with friend or foe. This book was a joy to read as well as an essential part of the game.

The last book, the **Game Operations Manual**, holds all the information needed for designing and running games. It's a GM's tool, with sections on world generation (including new life and civilizations), Judging Grand Actions (combat, personal equipment use, medical aid, etc.), how to's on presenting adventures, and finally incorporating the **STAR TREK Tactical Combat Simulator** into the RPG itself. The Combat Simulator, sold seperately, can be played by itself as a sort of player-friendly Star Fleet Battles, with a colorful game map and fairly easy combat rules which allow for a certain amount of role-playing. However, it is a board game, and not required to play a Star Trek themed role-playing game. What it is great for, however, is displaying FASA's fantastic, award-winning miniatures! Those little suckers are great, although the only ones really worth painting are the *Romulans*. In a world of mush-faced barbarians, it's nice to see some sleek, well designed and recognisable pieces for a change.

I found **STAR TREK: THE RPG** to be well worth the investment of time and money needed for me to experience it. Since it's a game that offers many things to many different types of people, **STAR TREK: THE RPG** should appeal to you whether you're the die hard trekker, the confused bystander, or even the lowly generic role player.

And just so that you're not left alone in this vast universe, FASA is constantly expanding. I've found that two outstanding additions to the game are **The Federation**, a sourcebook, and **The Triangle**, a sourcebook/module.

The first, **The Federation**, deals with the United Federation of Planets in detail. It is to be used in "reference for matters pertaining to the Federation" and to settle "conflicting information from various sources." The 127 page book explains in detail the structure, operation and organization of the UFP, in the process, making the GM's never appreciated job all the more easy. It covers details of the major races (Terrans, Vulcans, Andorians, etc.), the timeline of events that actually led to the formation of the UFP, current diplomatic relations with other major powers in the region (including in detail current treaties with those other powers), economic aspects, politics and political interests, and lastly, detailed world logs of the Federation's more prominent planets (a total of one hundred!), which makes it a very necessary sourcebook for the ever vigilant GM.

The second of the two deals with a sensitive area known as **The Triangle**, which borders on three major starfaring empires; the UFP, the Klingon Empire, and the Romulan Star Empire. The Triangle is a neutral zone filled with mineral rich worlds; renegades, outcasts,

pirate kings, dreamers, and merchants with wealth in thier glazed eyes all reside here. It is not for the meek, nor for those reluctant to act in order to protect themselves; life is not simple here, and the Triangle has no law of its own. It's for those who are strong enough or at least smart enough to survive.

The Triangle comes with a 96 page sourcebook and a full color 17" x 22" map. The beginning of the book is devoted to the history and timeline of the Triangle. It states the goals and the political, economic, and military policies of then three major bordering influences. Also included are military forces of governments set up within the Triangle itself (the Orion Frontier Mercantile Associations, the Mantiev Colonial Association, independent worlds, etc.). A total of 120 complete (geographical, sociopolitical, technological aspects, etc.) world logs are provided including histories, galactic coordinates and trade profiles. The Triangle sourcebook covers all the necessary information needed for the GM to run this high action, high intrigue area of space. Once again, it is well worth the credits.

Lt. Jonathan William Liu quietly looked at his new home from the small travel pod. He thought to himself how rough and bulky looking she was; her lines not nearly as sleek as the newer frigates, nor was she young, but she was all his. A Loknar class frigate, she and her kind were the original Federation muscle ships, the aged but reliable classics. Formed with pride and sweat, instead of produced by the dozens like the newer ones. The Andorians certainly knew how to make starships. The years had not been kind to the U.S.S. Wilmington; she was receiving a major overhaul for a previous border action. Lt. Liu would make it up to her, for he was her new acting Captain until a real officer of the rank could be assigned. He was but a lowly lieutenant, but he could prove it to his crew of 84, to the old men at Star Fleet, and to his father. May he rest in peace.





Alpha
Persaud 1106
MAY 2007 11:06

Gaming The Trek Films

Do Klingons Make Good Orcs?

Four films, all blockbuster, even when trashed by critics and fans. Written and directed by some of the hottest talents in Hollywood, full of classy, expensive special effects, they have sold millions of video cassettes and probably billions of movie tickets. No one denies that the *Star Trek* films are great entertainment. But do they serve another purpose? A deeper purpose?

Do the *Star Trek* movies work as role-playing games?

There are now four of them. *Star Trek: The Motion(less) Picture*, *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, *Star Trek III: The Search For Spock*, and *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*. A mixed bag, particularly in regard to how they work as role-playing games. Before we can examine them as potential gaming scenarios, we must acknowledge a basic difference between the *Star Trek* universe and most gaming situations. They differ in the very nature of the central conflict.

James

Petrassi

In most role-playing games, the basic aim is to complete a quest. Often this is done by entering a dungeon or some other environment where the adventuring party is expected to engage in combat. The purpose of this combat is to gain experience, treasure, and information needed to complete the quest. The player characters are looking for trouble.

Star Trek, on the other hand, introduces situations in which the major characters strive (or must strive) to avoid combat. The *Enterprise* and indeed all of *Star Fleet Command* were often referred to as instruments of peace. Force was almost always used as a last resort. Taking this basic concept into account, it is only logical to assume that *Star Trek* isn't designed for "hack 'n slash" gaming. If you're interested in large amounts of paper bloodletting, you're in the wrong place.



Star Trek: The Motion Picture never had a chance to develop into a decent gaming scenario. The enemy, V'Ger, was so powerful that any combat would have been out of the question. Kirk was forced to accept these circumstances and find an alternative method to achieve victory. Success was gained after he and his crew attempted to learn what V'Ger wanted and made contact with the thing. An interesting philosophy lesson, but a bit dull for an "action packed adventure".

The characters are another matter entirely. The original cast, reunited for the movie was a superbly balanced but in some cases under-used team. Kirk was the warrior leader, Spock the wizard, McCoy the healer/cleric. Scotty was a weapons master, Uhura, Chekov and (most of all) Sulu were junior warriors. An excellent group to take to strange places on fantastic adventures, an ideal group to develop into an RPG "party".

But not in this movie.

* * *

Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan is the most likely **Star Trek** movie to translate into a good role playing scenario. In the character of Saavik we have a new warrior joining the party. More than that in fact, for she is also a junior apprentice to the Wizard. The story: Khan, an old enemy of the warrior leader Kirk is loose

and seeking revenge. Khan is a mighty warrior himself, and has gained control of the *Reliant*, a ship which can challenge the *Enterprise*. Khan has also placed Chekov, one of Kirk's loyal junior warriors, under an evil spell.

A classic vengeance tale!

The battlegrounds are set, the lines of good and evil are drawn out, and the conflict is fast and deadly. Kirk is victorious, but the evil warrior/wizard Khan reveals his final revenge. With the artifact of creation/destruction, the Genesis device, Khan will destroy everything and every one in Kirk's world. The wounded *Enterprise* cannot escape in time...the party stands in the shadow of ultimate destruction. Only the last act by the great Wizard Spock, completed at the cost of his own life, can save the others from doom. What passion! What drama! What a set up for:

* * *

Star Trek III: The Search for Spock! The balance is broken, the mighty wizard/sage is dead. The warrior leader is stricken, the cleric is acting as if he were under a spell. **Star Fleet Command** (Kirk's council of elders?) has taken away the valiant ship *Enterprise*. They have also taken away the weapons master/mage, Scotty, to work on and



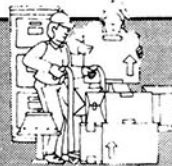
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service a threatening rival vessel. Kirk's son and Spock's apprentice are exploring the new world created in the wake of Spock's death.

Enter Sarek, Spock's father, a King-like figure and a wizard in his own right. A tale of Vulcan mysticism and spirituality is told, and the union of Spock's "katra" and McCoy's body is revealed. To free his cleric's mind and his former friend's soul, Kirk must bring all those involved to Vulcan. He is given a quest to complete. As with all adventurers, he has problems setting off on the quest. He and his junior warriors are forced to steal the *Enterprise*, displaying their skills at their various talents.

As they journey to the Genesis World, Kirk's ancient enemies, the **Klingons**, arrive seeking the secrets of the Genesis weapon. In the Klingon Commander, we see the warrior leader's reflection, a bold, canny, and very sneaky opponent. In the end, another sacrifice must be made; human life and spiritual life are lost in the forms of young David, the warrior's heir, and in the destruction of the *Enterprise* herself.

Again, the classic elements of a role-playing quest. By the end of the movie, Kirk has lost his potential immortality through his son and the spirit that he has loved for over twenty years, the *Starship Enterprise*. Yet he could have acted in no other way! A true hero must do what is morally best, and Kirk's "party" saw the need.

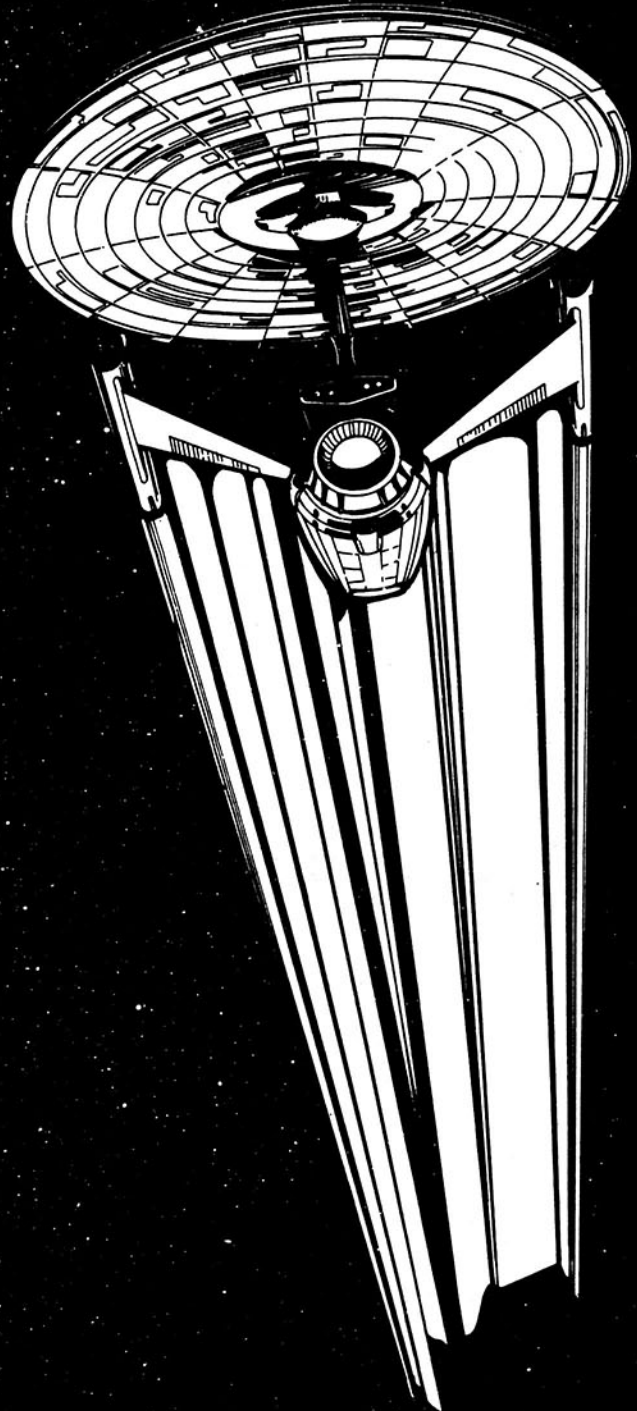
* * *

The "Whalesong" scenario, illustrated in *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, is a further example of the higher principles displayed in *Star Trek*. Knowing that court-martial is a definite possibility for what they had done, the remains of the *Enterprises'* crew return to Earth to face Star Fleet Command. (They're so *lawful* sometimes!) When their home is once again threatened, who is the logical choice to face the challenge and throw themselves into the mysterious conflict? You guessed it! (That is, if you haven't seen it already. If you haven't, I won't ruin the story for you.)

I began this article by saying that *Star Trek* couldn't be looked upon as a standard role-playing game because greed wasn't the primary motivation for the major characters. This is still true. But if you considered *Star Trek* to be an *above* standard game, in fact, a superior one, you would find an excellent motive and theme. **Honor.** The honor of true friends sacrificing for each other, the honor of service to a higher cause, the honor of loyalty and responsibility. Any player or **Game Master** wishing to use the *Star Trek* universe as the basis for a role-playing game must take this aspect into

account. If not, you might as well be playing some variation of **Battlestar Galactica**. Me? I'd rather watch paint dry.

* * *



DATELINE: STAR TREK

Jerry Schneiderman

When *Star Trek* began syndication, Paramount Pictures realized what it had and began to put out an extensive collection of products to cash in on the show's popularity. There were bubble-gum cards, comic books, technical manuals, behind the scenes books, novels, a short-lived cartoon series, over 50 paperbacks, and of course the four films. One of *Star Trek*'s best produced and most important reference books/collectables was and now is, the *Star Trek Compendium*.

Return to the Shelves

Now, at the time of *Star Trek*'s twentieth anniversary, Pocket Books has published an updated edition of the reliable old *Compendium*. This reference book, created by Alan Asherman, covers all of the celluloid *Star Trek* from the original pilot film *The Cage* (now available on video tape) through *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*. (Why they couldn't have waited long enough to include their latest is beyond me.)

This tribute to *Star Trek* contains four main sections, the first of which deals exclusively with *The Cage*. Asherman explains how Gene Roddenberry sold *Star Trek* as a "western in space", filmed a psychological melodrama instead, and was forced to make major changes to produce a second pilot film. This new pilot, *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, had an almost complete cast change, and included most of the regular cast fans recognize as the crew of the *Enterprise*. The story of the entire affair made for very enjoyable and often funny reading.

Part two runs through the three original seasons of *Star Trek*, episode by episode. For each story, you will find the author, the cast, a concise synopsis of the episode, a photo, and a look behind the scenes of that episode's creation. You will also often find notes about the music and sets used and re-used throughout the series. Asherman points out bloopers, mistakes, and an occasional touching moment in a format that keeps you turning the pages. At the end of each season's listings, he lists a rundown of the production crews, which is a nice gesture to those all important people who made sure the doors opened on time, edited final versions, and kept things going.

Following this, the same treatment is given to the cartoon series and the first three films. The cartoon section is to be appreciated in the extreme, since syndication of that series was



uneven, and many fans have never seen any of them! The film portion of this section contains interviews with many of the people involved in producing them. The obvious warmth and enthusiasm displayed by everyone who was interviewed recalls the devotion of their millions of fans; they truly love their ability to contribute to the formation of a legendary universe.

The final section of this tome contains alphabetical listings of the episodes, their airdates, and other miscellaneous information. A listing is given of all incidental characters and the names of their performers. Many people don't realize it, but *Star Trek* was a showcase for famous and soon to be famous people such as **Frank Gorshin**, **Ricardo Montalban**, **Joan Collins**, and **David Soul** (hard to find, but he's there!). In short, the book is a welcome if not necessary part of any fan's collection.

Return To The Tube

During October of 1986, Paramount Pictures announced what may be the guaranteed vindication of millions of fans' wildest dreams. Network television and major newspapers covered the press conferences announcing that in the fall of 1987, **Star Trek: The Next Generation** will come to television as a weekly series. The first episode will be a two hour movie, which will be followed by 25 one-hour episodes. Each episode will reportedly have a budget of one million dollars. Does this sound familiar? Is it reminiscent of Steven Spielberg's **Amazing Stories**, perhaps?

The good news, however, is that the Executive Producer will be none other than Gene Roddenberry, a move which places the show back into the hands of its originator. His stated intention is to place the TV series 100 years further into the future, with a totally new cast. Yet at the same time, it was made clear that the former cast members, now making out very well in the motion pictures, will be making guest appearances! This announcement has left thousands of questions unanswered, and the studio is not giving the slightest clues to how this will be done.

So let's take a look at the proposals and speculate. At the same time that we are watching **Star Trek: The New Generation**, Paramount will still be producing full length theatrical movies now taking place in the television's PAST. Will the movies turn into glorified history lessons? If important political changes have been made (will the Klingons be allies?) in the series, will that make the movies meaningless? How will the studios manage to maintain the essential continuity between the two efforts?

At the televised news conferences, the most common question concerned the original cast returning for guest appearances in the show. It has been confirmed that several of the actors, **George Takei** and **James Doohan** being the most eager, have agreed to "visit". How?! The fans cry. The studio's answer? Nothing is impossible. Time travel? Cell regeneration? Human lives simply that much longer? Flash-backs to the "good old days" at the Academy? In addition to whatever interest these individuals might have in *other* members of this proposed new crew, there should be some *paternal* attention paid to the possible, mysterious offspring of (pick A or B):

A) Saavik and David Marcus

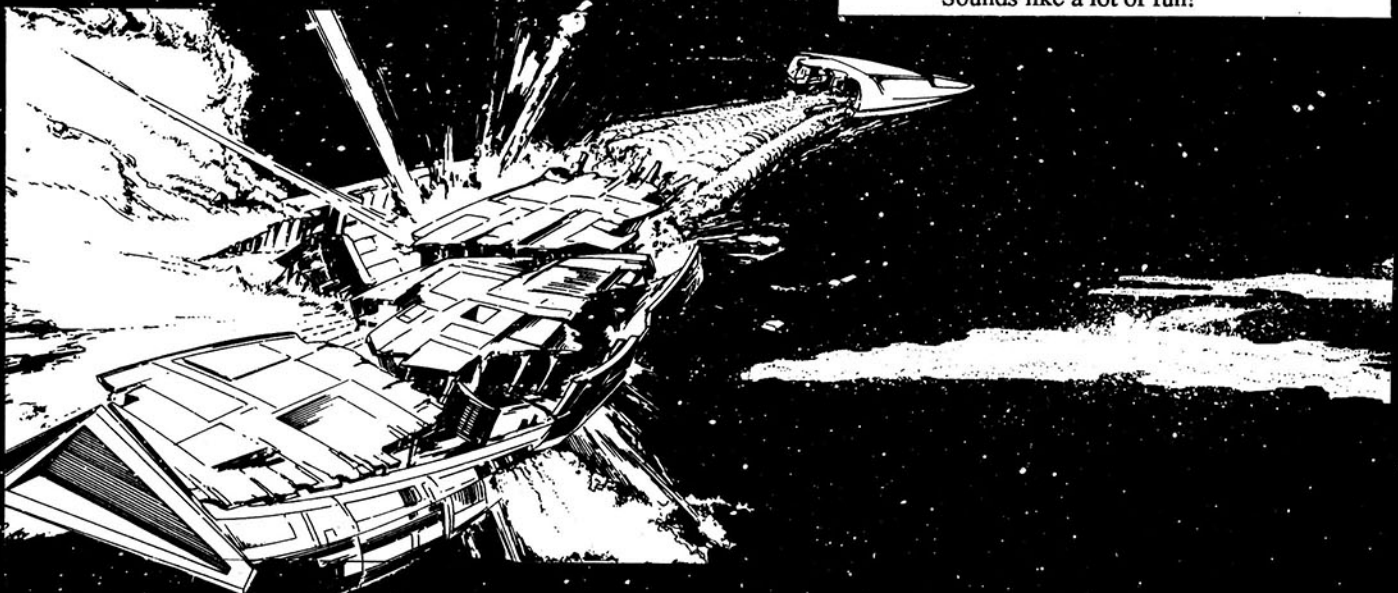
B) Saavik and Spock

And wouldn't this person have interesting stories to tell?

"They're betting they can catch the lightning in the bottle again, but the chemistry of that group of characters was unique," said Leonard Nimoy in a recent interview. But nearly all of the former cast members are counting on Roddenberry to do just that. And as for Mr. Roddenberry himself? When asked if the new show could revive the philosophies of the sixties in the harsh, little censored, very sexual eighties, he replied (smiling):

"More cleavage is not an immense step for mankind! **Star Trek** can be done again if it's not a patched-up, add-on show. There is no less censorship today...only the areas have changed. How good a chance would I have to examine the good things in the Communist system or question the whole hysteria going on over drugs, or attack the TV fundamentalist preachers who say 'Send me a hundred dollars for the sake of Sweet Jesus'? Only in the 24th Century."

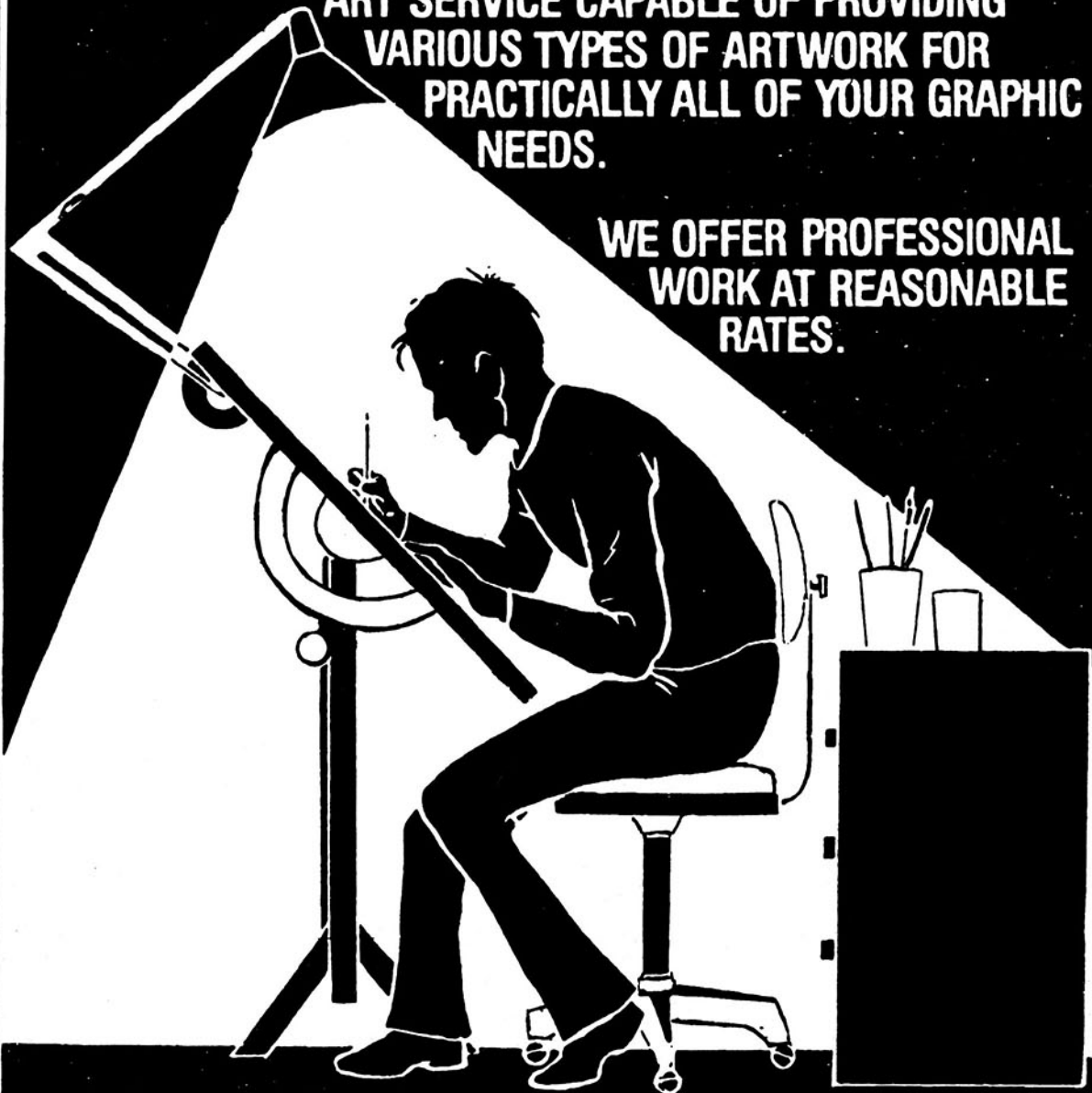
Sounds like a lot of fun!



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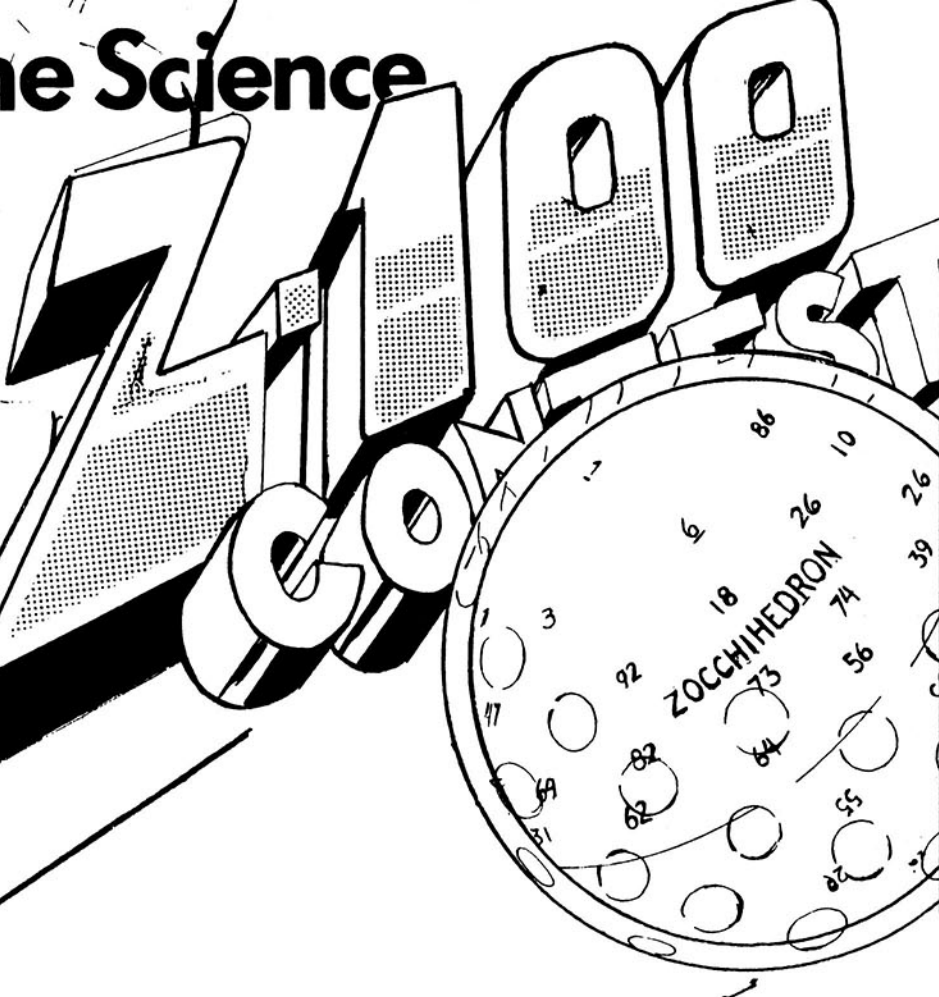
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The deadline for this contest will be April 1, 1987, so be sure to enter now! Send all entries to Gateways Publications Incorporated, JAF Box 965 New York, NY 10116.

Once Upon A Time...

Captain James T. Kirk. First Officer Spock. Chief Medical Officer Leonard McCoy. All quite familiar names from the world created by Gene Roddenberry and given life on TV in the series we knew as Star Trek. But these are more than names. They are full-fledged characters, nearly living and breathing in our memories. Along with the other members of the bridge crew (Uhura, Sulu, and Chekov), they possess unique individual personalities and histories.

Histories? Yes, histories that were only vaguely hinted at in the 79 episodes of the series. Histories that were so tantalizing to the shows' more literary fandom that they were inspired to fill in some of the gaps in their favorite characters profiles. And since those gaps could hardly divorce those characters from that magical setting of the *Starship Enterprise*, so were born the 30-odd books of the *Star Trek Pocket Books*. In no particular order, here are 17, profiled for the benefit of the reader who is looking for the best of what Pocket Books can offer.

Dwellers In The Crucible by Margaret Bonanno is an excellent exploration of Human-Vulcan relationships and the concept of 'hy'la pair bonding. It is essentially the story of T'Shael and Cleante, who serve as Warrenters of the Peace, a select group of individuals held as honorary hostages to peace, by a mutual inter-galactic treaty. When the Warrenters are kidnapped by the Klingons, war threatens the civilized universe, and in an almost minor role, the *Enterprise* is sent to help. This is a story of friendship and of the racial differences in the Star Trek universe, which makes it easier to accept the departure from traditional stories of the *Enterprise* crew.

The two recent novels **Dreadnought!** and **Battlestations!** are a matched pair. The *Enterprise Trinity* (Kirk, McCoy and Spock) are figures in both stories, but again the emphasis is on another group...or at least another person. Lieutenant Piper is an unwilling protégé of Captain Kirk, and her involvement in a massive plot against the Federation (detailed in the first book) only seems to establish her place in the gallery of galactic misfits that Kirk seems to attract. Diane Carey, in true pulp fiction style, keeps her pace fast and furious, with occasional references to other science fiction media. On the other hand, she also provides some insight on Vulcan cultural



development. The second book is a clean-up detail from the first, this time placing Piper in command of her own vessel...and that's using the term lightly. An odd sense of humor and non-stop action make these two books very popular among the fans.

A character sadly neglected in the series gets a starring role in **Uhura's Song**, by Janet Hagen, and again in **Tears of The Singers**, by Melissa Snodgrass. *Uhura's Song* is a moving and thought-provoking novel, detailing a feline culture being devastated by a disease which bears a passing resemblance to the AIDS syndrome, in that it is generally ignored by the segment of the population which believes that it will not be affected. Although characterization is at a high in this novel, so much attention is paid to the alien race and their culture that there is a slight loss of true feeling among the central characters. Not so in **Tears of The Singers**, which may fairly overwhelm the reader with its poignant tale of harp-seal-like aliens and their systematic slaughter for commercial purposes. Ms. Snodgrass' writing is absolutely, relentlessly sinister in its ability to pull the reader into the story through her strongly passionate characterizations. Each crew member who appears is absolutely recognizable, and each one grows a little through the storyline. Even the Klingons get a few good lines in. A worth-while Star Trek adventure.

McCoy gets his spotlight in **Crisis On Centaurus**, by Brad Ferguson. A political upheaval caused by the 24th Century equivalent of nuclear terrorism (boy, those 20th Century themes are popular), places Joanna McCoy in danger, and it's the *Enterprise* to the rescue. This is a strongly political tale, which manages to bring back a minor character from the series in an interesting role. Decent, but not a blockbuster.

When not solving futuristic forms of our contemporary problems, the Enterprise spends some 50-60% of her time fighting off the bad guys. Two very solid action adventures are **The Klingon Gambit**, by Robert Vardeman, and **Web Of The Romulans**, each one a study in their respective races. Of course, for the definitive study of the Klingon culture, the book **The Final Reflection** stands as the only Star Trek novel not to even remotely involve the major characters. It is instead a look at the Klingon way of life, with glimpses of a philosophy rarely even considered in the series, and barely hinted at in the movies. Any gamer who likes to play Klingons should read this book. A harsher view of Klingons can be found in **Pawns and Symbols**, by Majliss Larson. The only fault with that book is the contention that the Star Fleet officer/captive would endure such anxiety and pressure and humiliation at the hands of her Klingon captor and still manage to fall in love with him!

Mutiny on the Enterprise, again by Robert Vardeman, explores the paradox of enforced pacifism, and manages to place the crew of the Enterprise against their confused Captain in the classic, "should we interfere and save every one, or let them work out their differences" plotline. And speaking of paradoxes, can a Vulcan be a murderer? Spock says yes, but do we really believe it? That is the question in the **Vulcan Academy Murders**, and if you really spend a lot of time wondering about it, you might enjoy the mystery angle of the story. Most people who are knowledgeable about the series may just try to enjoy the Vulcan scenery.

The real stars of the Pocket books series are the novels written by Vonda McKintyre. Here, the discerning reader may find astute characterizations, thrilling plotlines, and the very spirit of the original series....only better! Her unique feel for the main characters allows the reader to see into their minds with such clarity and such passion that you are swept up into the excitement and made to feel right along with them. She takes chances with the crew of the *Enterprise*, allowing glimpses of complex pasts and histories. Did you know, for example, that Sulu's first name was Hikaru? That he was an Olympic-class fencer? Did you know that "Peter Preston", of **Star Trek II; The Wrath of Khan** was Scotty's nephew, or that Scotty had a niece who was also in the Star Fleet? These facts behind the stories add a depth to the characters which would enrich any fan's understanding of their motivations and their personal conflicts between the heart and the mind.

Although McKintyre is best known for her novelizations of **Star Treks II** through **IV**, she has also written two other novels which were the definitive works of their types. **The Entropy Effect** is a field day for time travel theorists which manages to show the sheer heroism of the individual members of the crew as they cope with an enormous tragedy. While the theories involved are a bit complex, the book manages to convey a sense of excitement that keeps the pages turning. **Enterprise, The First Adventure**, is the first in a series of super-novels released by Simon and Schuster, all at least twice the size of their Pocket Book entries. This one happens to deal with the arrival of newly promoted to Starship Captain James Kirk, and his first meetings with the crew we have come to know and love. As with all of her books, this one ties in all the personal storylines, and delivers an action packed tale rife with such singularities as juggling Vulcans, new alien races, flying horses, and an underage Janice Rand. The sheer amount of background here is amazing, and well worth a place on anyone's bookshelf. Of course, her movie novelizations are first rate.

Star Trek was an evocative series, and one which rightly inspired thousands of fan-produced pieces of literature. It is gratifying to see that there are places we as readers can go to learn about the pasts and the other adventures of the crew of the *Starship Enterprise*. But as long as the writers guidelines at Simon and Schuster maintain that all must return to the way things are stated in their "official" history, we as gamers should take our unique ability to explore the truly strange, new worlds and take the examples of good fiction and good characterization as outlined in these books and boldly go where no gamer has gone before.

Serge F. Clermont is a freelance author and reviewer. He actually read every Star Trek book ever written.

Aedan J. McClusky is a New York City Policeman, who has read most of the Star Trek books, but only in his spare time.

Star Trek At West End

You may have noticed the Boris painted covers of the West End Star Trek games. Yes, these are the same beautiful pieces of artwork also seen on the Pocket Books by Simon and Schuster, and they make for very nice packaging indeed. But are these role-playing games?

Star Trek: The Adventure Game is the flagship of the West End line, and it is a board game. It essentially pits the United Federation of Planets against the Klingon Empire, with certain named ships representing either side. (Which do you want to play, *The Enterprise*, *The Surak*, or *The Death Rattle*? Real hard to tell the bad guys there, huh?) The game is identified as a "paragraph system board game", wherein the players refer to a special book containing paragraphs referring to different situations and actions which then refer them to yet another paragraph. It is not unlike those "choose your own adventure" books one sees all over the shelves these days. The rules claim that there are 120 different adventures and conflicts the players can go through, allowing some time to enjoy the game.

The rules are a little complex, but not on the scale of your average role-playing game. West End does manage to include many of the most memorable **Star Trek** situations in the game structure, which gives the game a high recognition score. The original mission, "to explore strange new worlds, etc" is repeated here, and with several stops to get those needed Dilithium Crystals, the Federation is off to do just that. The Klingons, at least, get to have a little fun, planting spies and the like.

Not a role-playing game, but not too bad. In fact, if played in the right frame of mind, **Star Trek: The Adventure Game** can be fun.

Trek Bits

You Pointy-Eared.....!

In the original publicity booklet prepared by the NBC network sales division for the pilot episode of **Star Trek**, Mr. Spock is identified as a native of the planet "Vulcanis"! Perhaps in fear of this character's Satanic appearance, the two photographs of Mr. Spock in that booklet were cropped and airbrushed so that it appeared that he had "normal" ears!



I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT
NO ONE HAS EVER
THOUGHT OF THIS BEFORE!



COMPUQUEST

Those of us who have seen *Star Trek 2: The Wrath Of Khan* should all remember how the movie started. Saavik, a command trainee, was undergoing the computer simulated *Kubayashi Maru* scenario. We all know how that scenario ended; the way it always ends, with the ship's destruction (well, almost always; for Kirk's solution, see the flick). In any case, the simulation is intended to test the prospective Star Fleet graduates' command abilities as well as the degree of composure the trainee displays when placed under great pressure. The test ultimately reveals whether or not the subject is ready to "take the conn" on a Federation Starship. It's a complex test, and very few pass it...not many can even qualify to take it,

Unless you happen to have a personal computer.

Star Trek: The Kubayashi Alternative, published by Simon and Schuster, is a good attempt at providing a similar atmosphere of the testing of one's ability to command. At the same time, it is not a game which requires you to read and memorize volumes of technical information in order to be able to play. The premise of the game is really quite simple: Captain Hikaru Sulu, on his first command assignment aboard the heavy cruiser U.S.S. *Robert A. Heinlein*, has vanished, along with his crew and vessel. Star Fleet Command contacts Admiral Kirk (the player) to take the *Enterprise* and find them. The game is a bit more deceptive than that, however, since in order to find the clues to the ship's disappearing act, you must travel to other planets in the area and have discussions with their inhabitants.

You can certainly have an interesting time trying to learn what the game is all about, but unfortunately, the nuts and bolts of the program leave much to be desired. The game starts you off with absolutely no ideas on how to command a starship. This can be a major handicap, since your final score depends on how well you are able to emulate the actions of the legendary James Kirk. The vocabulary is entirely insufficient for the task, perhaps 300 words at best. Since the game is not equipped with a map of the *Enterprise*, it can take quite some time to get a landing party outfitted and beamed down to a planet.

That, however, is not the worst part. The familiar actions that most fans of *Star Trek* love to see on late-night TV simply don't apply to this game. For example: we constantly see

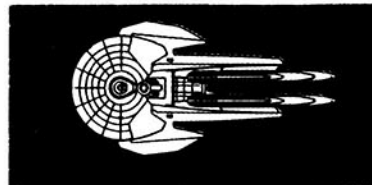
Kirk giving orders or using tactics which may endanger the ship or crew if they don't work exactly as planned. He also tends to place himself in direct danger quite a bit. But in this game, anything which might result in breaking "Star Fleet Tradition", such as acting on hunches or taking risks, is either curtailed by the insufficient vocabulary or is simply not permitted through crew action or inaction. Not only that, but when I tried asking Spock or McCoy for advice (surely not out of character!) all I got were error messages and answers like "I don't understand, sir."

Slightly more interesting than quizzing the crew is the actual search for Sulu. A typical pattern goes something like this: after orbiting a planet and getting what ever information is available from the computer and the instruments, Kirk has to let someone organize a landing party (Kirk would lose too much time and make too many mistakes if he tried to do it himself), and beam down to the planet surface. Once there, Kirk has to constantly order people to move and take readings for him, since he can't walk and hold a tricorder at the same time. (And this is an Admiral?) The crew members do nothing except follow orders - hardly in the TV or movie tradition. And don't look for graphics, here: the adventure is text-only.

Newer versions of the game have extended memory (128K), a procedures manual, and hint books. Apparently, someone at Simon and Schuster discovered the game's shortcomings. I recommend that you find the newest version of **Star Trek: The Kubayashi Alternative**, and have a lot of patience. Sulu isn't going anywhere.

Star Trek: The Kubayashi Alternative, published by Simon and Schuster, is available for the Apple II series, The IBM PC, and Commodore PC's. It is created by Micromosaics Productions, Inc.

Jack Trainman is a freelance writer and video technician working in New York, where *Star Trek* is shown every weeknight at midnight.



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THE KOREAN WAR

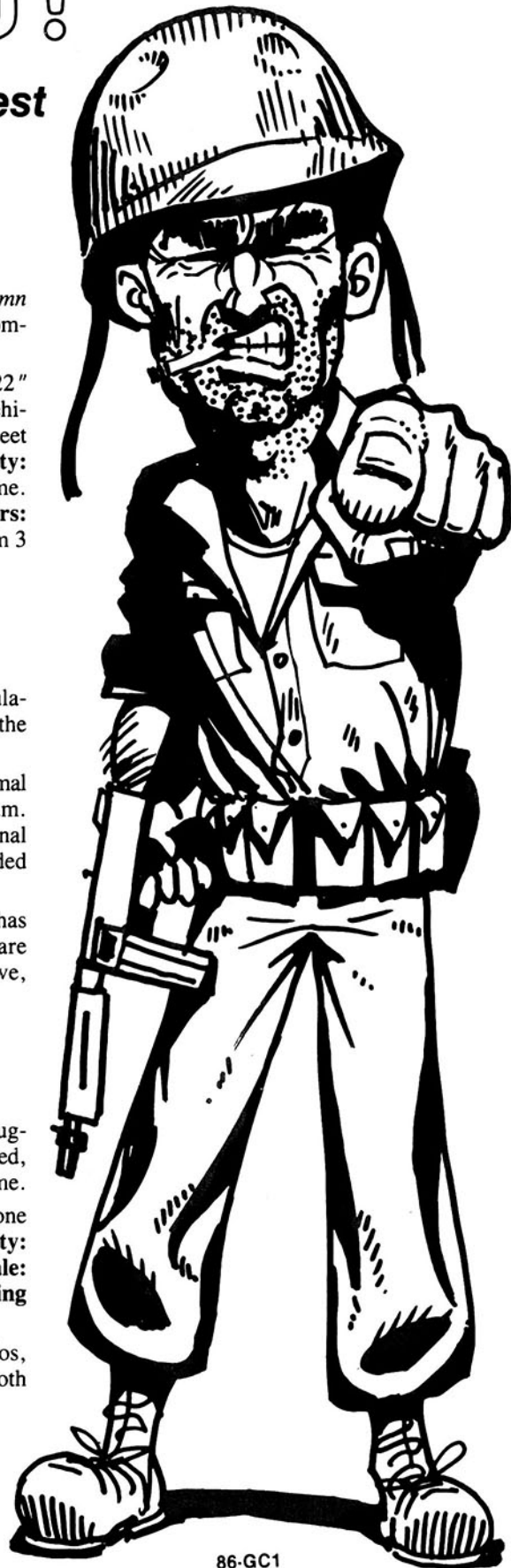
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Comic Book Forum

Matt Wagner: A Universe Discovered

Jeffrey Gomez

Valentin Ramos

An entire Universe explodes....only to be revamped and born again, a company-wide effort to boost the sagging sales of an aging comic book line. An entire New Universe is created, a number one company's nervous effort to stay that way as hundreds of independants rise to compete each month. Matt Wagner, born in central Pennsylvania in 1961, has been quietly, tirelessly building a couple of worlds of his own, and if you haven't noticed them already, you're going to very soon. **Grendel**, Wagner's account of a genius assassin's rise to power in high society as well in the criminal underworld, first appeared in the now defunct black-and-white *Comico Primer* (issue 2). The exploits of **Grendel**, always mocked by his arch-foe, **Argent**, were stylish and shocking enough for the character to slaughter his way into his own series, first as a back-up in Wagner's **Mage: The Hero Discovered**. After leaving the University of Virginia for the Philidelphia College of Art, Wagner combined his love of superheroes and the King Arthur legends to create **Mirth**, **Kevin Matchstick**, and the rest of the unforgettable cast of **Mage**. Matt Wagner, (who really *does* look like Matchstick!) spoke with *Gateways* magazine after recently completing both the **Mage** maxi-series and the **Demon** mini-series for DC comics. The following interview should prove inspiring and insightful to anyone who has ever attempted to build his own world or bring her own characters life and meaning.



Gateways: Congratulations, Mr. Wagner on your finishing the **Mage** series. We just heard that you handed the last pages of issue 15 into the offices at *Comico*.

Matt Wagner: Thank you. You can call me Matt. The book is not quite finished right now, the pages still have to be colored. **Mage 15** is the best one yet, it's full of surprises and we're really proud of it. It's set for a December '86 release.

GW: You started work on **Mage** over 2 1/2 years ago. Now that the toughest part of telling your story is over, how does it feel to sit back and see it all?

MW: I'm a little tired, I guess. Mostly relieved and glad. There's really no feeling like it in the world!

GW: Looking back over the series, even from the very first issue, there is so much movement, so much energy. You developed into quite a storyteller through words and artwork - the slugfest between **Kevin Matchstick** and the **Grakleflint** in issue 1 was great, but the war between **Kevin** and *everything* in 15 was spectacular! We'll bet there's an awful lot of Matt in **Matchstick**.

MW: It was very personal, I mean, the whole story of **Mage** comes from deep inside. It's my purest work in it's most proper vehicle. You see, I developed the concept for the story of the **Mage** series when I was still in college. It started to really fall together at the time I was finishing a drawing of an incarnation of King Arthur's wizard, **Merlin**. In a way, it was a kind of self portrait....

GW: The hero, **Kevin Matchstick**, and his wizard-mentor **Mirth** born at once.

MW: ...Right. Born, but not placed in a story for a while yet. Some friends of mine were founding *Comico*, the *Comic Company* at the time, and invited me to submit some of my stuff. The first three issues of the first **Grendel** series were published while the first **Mage** series was being developed.

GW: So, **Mage, The Hero Discovered** will indeed have a sequel.

MW: Two of 'em! **Mage II: The Hero Defined**, and **Mage III: The Hero Denied**. Each will feature **Kevin Matchstick** paired with a different incarnation of the **Worldmage**...

GW: ...Each Worldmage being a different incarnation of Merlin out of the Arthurian legends. Your love for the myth of King Arthur shines through each issue of **Mage** (as well as in your work on DC's **Demon** mini-series). In fact, by issue 14, you drop your cover, completely to have Mirth come out and say that Edsel has indeed been the Lady of the Lake, her baseball bat Excalibur, and that Kevin is Arthur reborn! At the same time, you are choosing to ignore some of the legend's tragic details.

MW: I am retelling the Arthurian myth insofar as bringing back Arthur and Merlin and their relationship, which I've always thought was wonderful. I feel the details of the lives of each incarnation don't really need repeating. I chose not to include Lancelot and Guinevere in **Mage** because the archetype of the tragic love triangle would have taken away from the heroic Kevin/Mirth discovery, and that's really what the story's about.

GW: Archetype seems to be the key word in the creation of all your stories. How important is archetype in building a fantasy universe?

MW: Very. An archetype, to me, is a very basic concept in creating a fictional universe, especially one where characters develop into heroes or villains or do larger than life things. For our purposes, we can see archetype as a figure or story that can be traced back to man's earliest history, a legend that's been retold over and over throughout the world. A Messiah who dies for our sins, a young pauper who miraculously pulls a relic from an impossible place, a boy who must confront an evil father figure to save his princess; anything strong, passionate, that all of us don't mind seeing again and again, so long as it's done in a new, exciting way. Different cultures handle archetypes in unique ways. **Mage** brings the Arthurian archetype of trickster/master and his reluctant hero/pupil from Camelot to the high rises and skid rows of a modern American city. George Lucas brought it to a desert planet far, far away, with Ben and Luke.

GW: Okay, so you're a teenager with a solid imagination who spends time reading comic books, fantasy/SF novels and watching the stuff on TV and in the movies. Maybe you even run a fantasy role-playing game on the sides with some friends. Where do you come off sneaking archetypes and symbols into your artwork and writing, and why is it still so much fun?

MW: When you're being creative, building a whole new universe for your characters to live and adventure in - or even writing a short story or drawing a single picture - you have to remember that something completely original is almost impossible to think up. We're influenced by all the media around us constantly, and it's our best bet to simply take a solid time-tested

concept and shed some new light on it. Our own unique light. I loved animation as a kid. Saw



everything Disney put out, but my favorite were the Max Fleischer **Superman** cartoons. You know, the ones where Superman has to leap and put real effort into the wild things he does. I loved superhero comics, Marvels, DC's, and I drew a lot myself. I guess I actually started to grow out of it in early college because late in the 70's it really seemed like a lot of fluff was cluttering up the newsstands. At that time, I was drawing a strip for my college newspaper, and really just getting through my courses at the University of Virginia.

GW: Looking back at college, do you feel you were wasting your time there?

MW: Not at all! I took classes called electives and a lot of what I learned there was very important. I took classes on the Arthurian Tradition and on Mythology. I read books like Joseph Campbell's **The Hero With A Thousand Faces** and studied the works of Jung in psychology. Studying the way the legends stay with us and the way we're so fascinated by them really got me thinking....

GW:Thinking about your favorite heroes, and new ways of enjoying them....

MW:and along came Frank Miller's **Daredevil** at Marvel.

GW: The archetype of Blind Justice personified in a gritty street avenger.

MW: It blew me away. Frank seemed to really understand this character and his myth. He knew that virtually everything you could say about Daredevil had been said, so he revitalized the series by introducing **Elektra** and injecting realism, passion and, well, bringing the character back to his roots. And the best thing about it was that while you could appreciate Frank's knowledge of Jung, Myth and archetype, you can also get lost in the violence and the graphic beauty of **Daredevil's "Elektra Saga"**. He brings it all home with DC and his **Batman: The Darknight Returns** books.

GW: It was at this point you submitted the first **Grendel** to your friends at Comico. Interesting how, since then, you've worked on a mini-series at DC with Jack Kirby's **Demon**, a character who is definitely evil but forced to do heroic things, where Hunter Rose was a human being capable of much more evil.

MW: I don't think Grendel is evil.

GW: The original Grendel butchered crime lords across the nation with a sort of Japanese pitchfork, stabbed a taxi-driver to death for seeing something he shouldn't have, and slew an old classmate for recognizing him at a cocktail party - you wouldn't call



him a hero, would you?

MW: All right! I confess! The first three original Grendel issues were there to be provocative, to grab the reader's attention the way no established company's books could. It basically worked and those books are hard to find now.

GW: John Byrne is opting to be "provocative" with his **Superman-as-a-Yuppie** revision. A lot of readers don't feel that it will last long.

MW: If you take the archetypal qualities out of a mythic character like Superman/Clark Kent, it can't last. As a back-up feature in **Mage**, **Grendel** developed into something more mystical, more elastic. Hunter Rose did try to be little Stacy's hero, just as Christine Spar, the second Grendel, fights to save her son from Tujiro, the Kabuki vampire.

GW: The all new full color **Grendel** series is certainly popular, and your establishing Spar as a mother lends her enough empathy to carry the new adventures. The presence of the children tend to draw Hunter and Christine from behind their masks. Grendel itself seems to be a force....

MW: Yes. That is my entire intention with **Grendel**. Like before, it's still provocative, but with a lot of help from a superior team of artists at

Comico, the concept of Grendel has become something everyone can identify with. The mask of Grendel is human aggression - all types and all faces.

GW: Each bearer of the relic shows a different side....

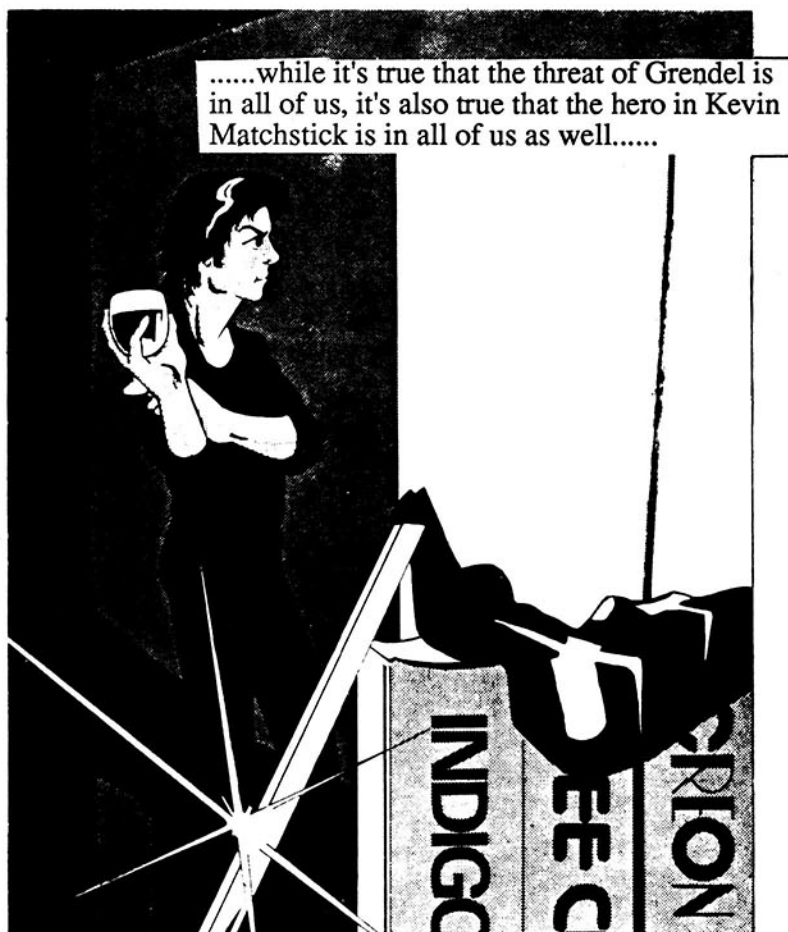
MW: Right.

GW: So then Christine is not permanent?

MW: That's right. She lasts for 12 issues. When she goes, there will be a new Grendel, a different face of aggression, and that in itself is very human. We're all capable of it.

GW: And yet, in the new series so far, excessive violence has been limited. The first issue sees Grendel smashing a security guard unconscious but not killing him. The book is designated **For Mature Readers**, but are you still keeping tabs on the amount of bloodletting?

MW: It's true, I am limiting the violence, but the violence that exists in Grendel is *real*. I want to project that violence isn't cotton candy and shouldn't be treated as such. Violence is very potent, and usually very final. Also, I want to show that aggressive violence isn't permanent. We either let it pass....



GW:or burn out with it in the end. This must be why Christine will only go 12 rounds. In the three major projects you've worked on so far, there is always a sense of approaching conclusion. They all have a viable end in sight, even if it is to lead the way for a new cycle of stories. While the Japanese have been doing this for years in their comic books, the mini- or maxi-series is still relatively new to Americans. You must get a lot of grief from readers who don't want to say good-bye to their favorite characters.

MW: Hundreds and hundreds of letters! "*Please, please, pulleeze, bring back Mirth!*" But yes, it was the Japanese *manga* - which always had a conclusion, even if a character had to die of old age - that appealed to me over the never-ending soap opera we have here in the early 1980's. But artists like Frank Miller and Alan Moore with **The Watchmen** over at DC are changing that. I think that American comic book readers are "growing up". They're a bit older now, and willing to take a look at old characters and ideas in new lights.

GW: *Mage* with its whimsical qualities, its power and honesty, seems to take place in a world created by a young Matt Wagner - even its sexiness is innocent. *Grendel* is definitely adult, with its greys, politics, sexuality and violence. Do the two universes you've created touch? Could Kevin Matchstick run across the being who is Grendel?

MW: No. I've created two very different sets of times and places to tell two very different stories. I've poured everything into *Mage* to see it done. In fact, I'm taking a six month hiatus on artwork before starting up **The Hero Defined**. *Grendel* is a bit more of a team effort - I'll be writing for it - and it is more of a place to experiment with greys and other adult things. I'm taking a course now on criminology at night school just so I can get to know Grendel better. I'd never have to do that for Kevin.

GW: On your 1986 *Mage* Tour, we've heard tales of some pretty loyal fans of yours.

MW: Oh yeah! Everyone from college professors to little kids - the range was incredible. There were even several people who came after me with green baseball bats - for autographs, of course! One girl had painted herself green and asked me if I would give her a hug.

GW: There is certainly something universally appealing about *Mage* and the fact that "Magic is Green".

MW: A story becomes popular when there are things in it a lot of people can relate to. People can see themselves in Matchstick.

GW: And, to some extent, in Grendel.

MW: Yes. If anything, I want people to watch Matchstick as he searches for the answers and keeps searching despite the pain risked in that search. Then, they can make the decision, and see that it's all really worth it. You see, while it's true that the threat of Grendel is in all of us, it's also true that the hero in Kevin Matchstick is in all of us as well.



Gateways has learned that while Matt Wagner may be taking six months off from art chores, fans will be at no loss for Wagner project releases. The wicked doings of Hunter Rose's Grendel have been collected, enlarged, and colored for release as the **Grendel Graphic Novel**, "*Devil by the Deed*". In addition to the Magebook collection that has been available since early 1986, **Mage: The Hero Discovered** will be released as a single hardbound/softcover commercial free volume, complete with Matchstick "flip cartoons". If that doesn't satisfy the Wagner-art requirement, be sure to check out a special poster, drawn by Matt for Victory Press' *Shuriken*, a fellow popular independent drawn by Reggie Byers. While **Hero Defined** and the ominous **Hero Denied** are awaited, Comico will re-package and re-release the original Mage series for newsstand sales across the country, making it available to more readers than ever before. In the meantime, Matt Wagner has hinted at a possible collaboration with Dave Sim, creator of the notorious *Cerebus the Aardvark*, over at Aardvark-Vanaheim. The project is slated to appear in black and white, and will be "more provincial in nature." Yeah, sure.....



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Screen View

ILM On Your Coffee Table

You're sitting in a movie theatre. The lights dim, the music begins, and suddenly you are transported into a magical world where all things are possible.

A spaceship hurtles toward you out of a vast, star-filled universe.

A tree bursts through a boy's bedroom window, snatching and taking him away.

A small, wrinkled creature twitches its elfin ears and spouts philosophy.

A man's face literally melts away.

This is the art of special effects, specifically the work of the team members of the organization whose name has become synonymous with state-of-the-art spectacles. **Industrial Light and Magic**, formed by Director George Lucas (who has written a fine introduction to the book) especially for the original production of *Star Wars*, has grown into a vast special effects factory for some of the most memorable and highest grossing movies of all time. The team at ILM has been responsible for the on-screen miracles seen in films like the *Star Wars* trilogy, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, *E.T.*, *the Extraterrestrial*, *Back to the Future*, the *Star Trek* films, *Poltergeist*, and *Cocoon*.

Their story, as written by Thomas G. Smith, General Manager of Industrial Light and Magic for five years, is finally done justice in a magnificent volume containing everything you ever wanted to know about both the company and the magic they create. The book is called **Industrial Light and Magic: The Art of Special Effects**, and every aspect of the special effects process is covered in fascinating detail; cinematic design, matte paintings, model construction, miniature photography, creature development...it's all in this book. Superbly illustrated with triple fold out pages and double page spreads of some of the rarest and most beautiful shots of their work, this high-quality book is a masterpiece. But it does have its price: a hefty \$50.00. Yet, as the heavy, glossy pages are turned, and each new discovery prompts a gasp, an ooh, a wow, it becomes harder and harder to put the volume down. This is a book to be saved, cherished, gazed through and read again and again. Never before has one company placed so much magic within our reach. Dell Rey has managed to produce another kind of magic in the telling of ILM's tale.

Captain Eo

The monorail ride is smooth as silk as Walt Disney World's remarkable EPCOT Center rises in the distance. You might try to memorize the location of the dual glass pyramids, the Kodak Pavillion at the far side of the park, called the Eye of Imagination. It's one of the three places in the world where you can see George Lucas' first collaboration with Disney Productions, the 17-minute space fantasy, **Captain Eo**.

After a colorful if unrelated slide-show screened for the audiences gathering for the theatre's main attraction, electronic doors snap open, special polarized eye-glasses are donned, and 150 anxious vacationers file into an auditorium equipped with its very own star field. There's a brief introduction - no picture taking, please - the lights go down, and suddenly, there's an asteroid *in your face!* A familiar sounding laser blast flashes and the floating, almost touchable rock *explodes*. A spacecraft wooshes into view, and instantly (thanks to some of the finest three-dimensional filmmaking yet done) you're in 1977 again, thrilling to the rumble and scream of a cosmic space battle for the first time. A two-headed orangutan, a flying spiderchimp, a brass robot with a bum leg, *Jedi's* own Max Rebo in the guise of *Hooter* - the ragtag crew in deep trouble on this starship are certainly reminiscent of *Star Wars*. But then again, the young black man cloaked in glistening white, rising from the lower deck is certainly not Luke Skywalker! To squeals of delight, it is superstar Michael Jackson who is revealed to be **Captain Eo** himself.

The battle continues. The bad guys have a vaguely *Romulan* ship that fires actual laser beams over your head. The sound is deafening, the action breathtaking. *Eo's* ship crashes into a *Death Star*-like trench, sending thick white smoke billowing into the first five rows of the theatre. *Eo* and his diplomatic envoy are captured and pulled before the Dark Queen, uncredited Angelica Huston in an *Alien*-Spiderwoman make-up that sends several small children screaming for the exits. As the Queen descends from her electronic web, and clanking robots brandishing neon whips close in, you've never seen Jackson so grim and angry. *Captain Eo* is forced to fight through over 25 robo-soldiers before his crews' electro-funk beat and the team at Industrial Light and Magic grant him the power to bestow the Gift of Beauty by the dazzling spark of a fingertip.

continued on page 41

TRAPPED IN A WORLD THEY NEVER MADE

Glen Savage

Do you sometimes sit down to your gaming table, dice in hand, to find yourself in the same predictable group with the same predictable adventuring ahead? Have you ever wondered if there was more to fantasy life than 3 fighters, 2 mages, 1 thief, 2 clerics, and one paladin/assassin/ranger/whatever, walking into the dungeon castle/wilderness/whatever? Wouldn't you really rather be playing something *different*? Really different?

Like a duck?

Anthropomorphic animals have appeared in literature since the literal dawn of time, starting with that persuasive serpent in the Garden. Aesop used them in his simple fables to examine the failings and triumphs of mankind. Just a glance at the fairy tales we heard as young children shows us talking bears, wolves, ducklings, and a half dozen other species involved in human-like discussions, wars, love stories, conflicts, and team-ups. Naturally, these man-like animals became a staple in comic book content. What other medium could give them the freedom they needed to spin their tales?

Now, with the appearance of several new roleplaying games and dozens of fresh comic book titles on the stands, the worlds of the funny animals can be yours to explore! There's no need to limit yourself to playing certain hardbacked amphibian youths or to any other group that has its own game. Not when there are so many knock-offs, spin-offs, new names and old classics to get into! Every book offers a wealth of background information and game ideas, and most of them cost less than two bucks.

Storylines can reach every aspect of role-playing games, from sword and sorcery to the hardest



35th Century science fiction. After all, if you're going to play a six-foot talking beaver, you might as well go all the way and assume that he can be whatever else you want him to be as well. As a game master, there are wonderfully complex decisions that have to be made, such as how the rest of the people in the game (NPC's) are going to deal with the animal heroes. Is it normal to have a conversation with an armadillo with a head cold? Can a two-hundred pound talking collie drive a car? Pilot a starship? Or more importantly, can he get a drink at a bar without showing his ASPCA tags?

This article contains only a partial list of the ready to play worlds now available on your comic stand. New titles are coming out every month, so grab the good ones while you can.

Try not to limit yourself at all, and remember that most of these titles are *satires*, designed to poke fun at our ways of thinking and interacting with each other. After all, the ability of speech shouldn't make that six-foot beaver *think* like a man...only sound like one. (And maybe not so much at that. I once knew a beaver with a terrible, whistling lisp. If only dentistry had been discovered on that world!) So with those thoughts in mind, I free you to wander through the worlds of the beasts, the comic book realm of funny animals!

Howard The Duck

Originally intended as a one-shot character in the Man-Thing series, **Howard The Duck** was unexpectedly hatched upon comicdom in *Fear #19*. Scriptor Steve Gerber was involved in a storyline which had already featured barbarian warriors leaping out of

C. 1987 Marvel Comics Group

peanut butter jars. Val Mayerik, the artist, responded to that madness with the strangest thing he could imagine...a talking, cigar chomping, gun toting duck with the demeanor of Little Ceaser. it was good for a few laughs, but Gerber and Mayerik decided to do the logical thing with such a strange, un-Marvel-like character. In the next issue, Howard took a wrong turn off an extra-dimensional staircase, and was "never to be seen again."

Where have we heard that before?

Within a matter of months, Howard was back by popular demand, in his own mini-series in **Giant-Size Man Thing**. As soon as the series finished, Howard had gained the fan support to warrant his own book...he was soon to become the world's third most popular duck. Howard even staged an unsuccessful bid for the presidency of the United States, a satire on our electoral system that remains a comic book classic.

But Howard's major claim to fame lay in his many guest shots

throughout Marvel's best known books. **Master of Kung-Fu** led to the creation of the deadly **Quack-Fu**, and **Iron Man** was especially hard hit by the appearance of the **Duck** in his own title. **Count Dracula** deserves special mention as the "most humiliated" guest star/host who suffered Howard to come near...in one best-forgotten episode, he was forced to ingest (shudder) *duck-blood*!

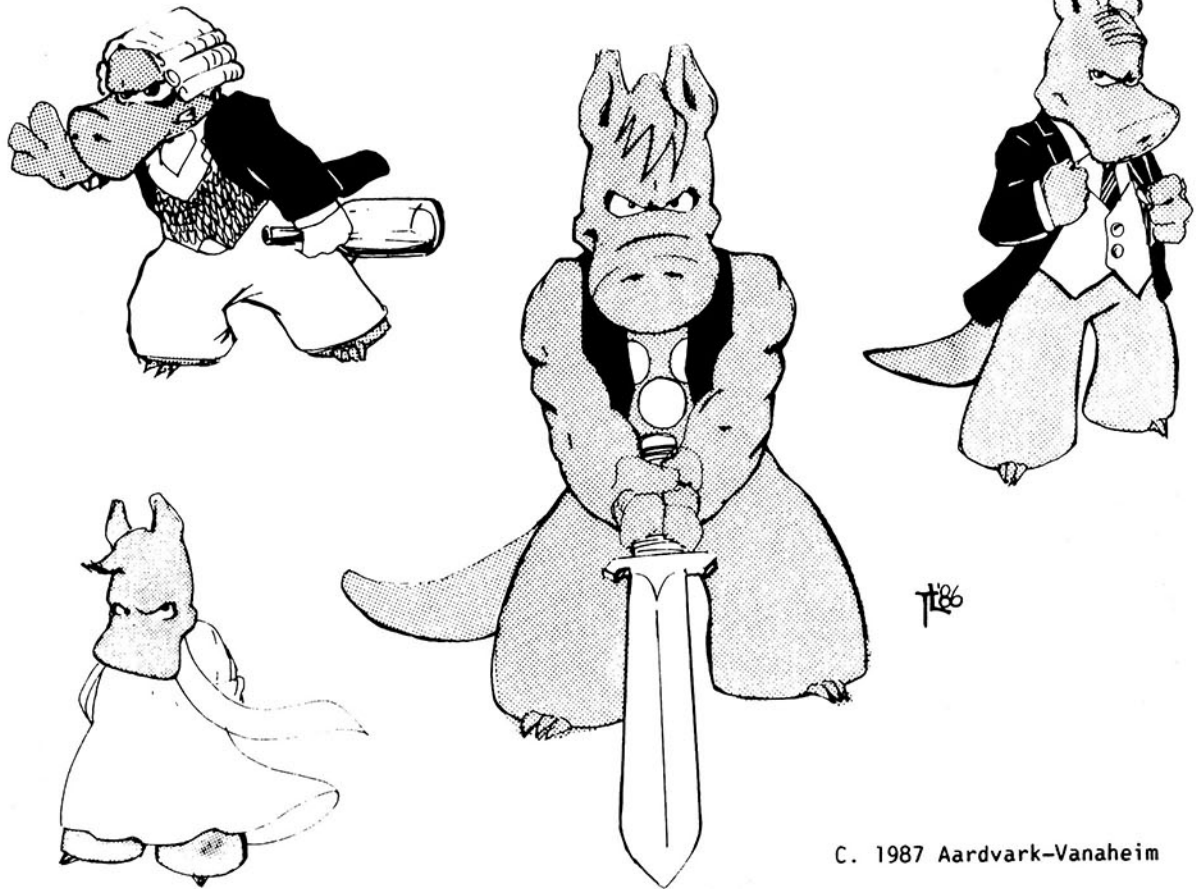
Howard's best moments always happened when he was confronted by people who didn't quite believe in him at first, and perhaps that's how he should be considered as an element in gaming. The world that Howard came from was entirely populated by ducks like him, so it would not be very interesting to set a game there...no shock value. But in the 20th Century, or the 12th, or any pre-existing game world, well, just imagine meeting a character like that! If you'd rather not introduce such a rarity, or you have no game right now, **Chaosium's Runequest** has done a nice job of

creating an entire duck-race. **Judges Guild** has also published a fine supplementary module called **Duck Tower**, which is a great introduction to funny-animal types in a high fantasy setting. Of course, you shouldn't disregard the origins of **Mr. Duck**...his super-hero stats for the **Marvel Super Heroes Roleplaying Game** can be found in *Dragon* #96.

Cerebus The Aardvark

One of the longest running and most highly regarded "funny animals" appears in an independantly owned and published comic book called **Cerebus the Aardvark**. Created, written and drawn by David Sim, the title character is on an eternal quest to make his fortune and live a life of ease in a mythical, semi-civilized past similar to many fantasy role-playing worlds. At first, **Cerebus** was an outright **Conan** parody, but as any parody produced with an amount of feeling for the absurd, it grew into a sophisticated satire on all aspects of the *ahem* human





C. 1987 Aardvark-Vanaheim

condition. Readers should be sharp -- there's a lot of socio-political intrigue surrounding **Cerebus**. That's not to say that you need your textbooks handy... just keep your eyes open.

A standard trademark of the **Cerebus** saga is the appearance of "guest stars". In a merciless spoof of a certain **Marvel** super-series, **Sim** introduced the **Secret Sacred Wars**, heralded by musclebound superheroes and mysterious, bald, telepaths. A certain aging **Rolling Stone** has visited **Cerebus** recently, joining the legions of domineering women, capitalist presidents, albino princes, slightly chaotic leaders (who slightly resemble the **Marx Brothers**), and the most **Machiavellian** of priests. This lends an air of recognition to the stories, as the reader can sit back and say, "Hey, I know who that is!", as well as enjoy the merits of the tales in themselves.

Perhaps one reason why **Cerebus** has survived so long is the fascinating world he dwells in. Reading the series coaxes you into what sociologists call a

"suspension of disbelief", a "you'll believe an aardverk can talk" kind of thing. **Cerebus** is such a central character that he never refers to himself in the first person. While this is a direct **Conan** take-off, (**Conan** will go now. **Conan** is angry.), it acknowledges a level of obnoxious self-importance often glossed over in other comic books. **Reed Richards**, for example, is not allowed to be an arrogant snot without getting it from everyone around him. **Cerebus** just seems to do what comes naturally to a character who has a book named after him. He milks it for all it's worth. The background makes for an excellent and varied game setting, especially for a game which stresses dealings with the elite and the elite-wannabe's. When the main character not only tangles with the world's rulers, movers and shakers, but actually becomes **Pope**, you know that the world is ripe for exploitation, er, *exploration*. Characters within it should take advantage of the abundant opportunities to mingle with the ruling class and

manipulate away.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

Any one familiar with the origin of **Marvel's "Man Without Fear"**, otherwise known as **Daredevil**, should also know the origins of these trend-setting creatures. Partially in answer to the predominance of **Japanese Ninjitsu** training available to every other young misfit in the mainstream comic industry and at least partly in tribute to the talents of **Frank Miller**, **Kevin Eastman** and **Peter Laird** created the team which has trained by a rat-ninja-master, named for **Renaissance** artists and equipped with the latest in stylish costumes and ninja weaponry; the comic book world will never recover.

The **Turtles** and the assorted bad guys dwell in modern day **New York**, making the team a kind of cross between superheroes and detectives, a fine situation to start a game with. However, a



second glance at their adventures reveals a *ahem* human side of their story. (I can't help it, the English language has it's limitations.) The Turtles, especially in their well received solo books, are usually confronted with more complex issues than your average super-villain-crashes-into-town-and-threatens-to-take-over-the-universe scenario. One may find them dealing with a well armed but essentially physically normal vigilante or a child whose pacifist beliefs are getting him stomped by local bullies. True, The Foot, the series' Evil Ninja Cadre are a bit super-villain-esque, but that's what they should be. Bad guys keep the heroes on their toes. Motives in TMNT are rarely black and white, something all GM's need to consider in their own games.

The big city scenario, perfect for the expression of conflicting morals and clashing characters never limits the Turtles. An adventure may (and has) take them to alien worlds...even to a world as strange as the world of the aforementioned aardvark! The TMNT/Cerebus crossover was, to say the least, something very different! Variety is the call here, and it works very well.

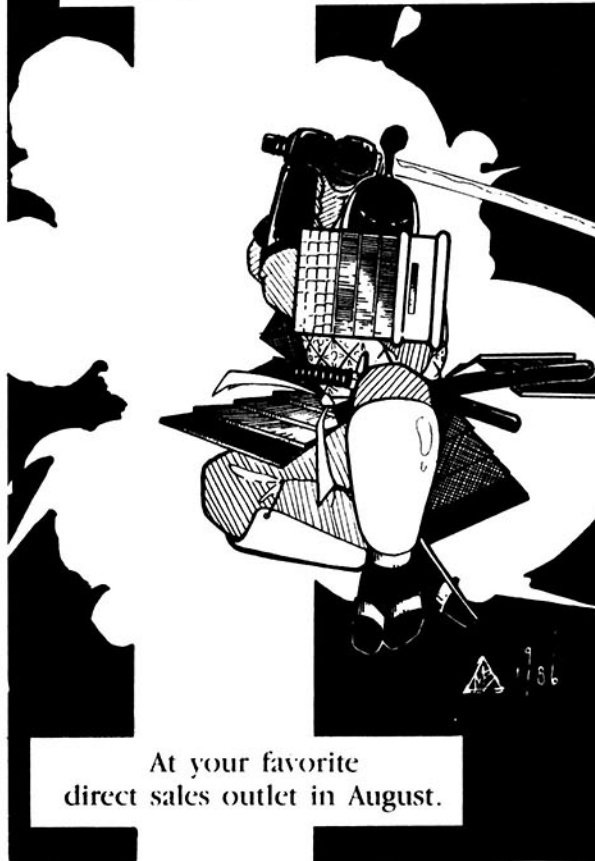
Hamster Vice

The printing on the cover is very art-deco, with the letters of "Vice" spaced well apart, but that's where the similarity to the TV adventures of Crockett and Tubbs ends. Independant creator Dwayne Ferguson has drawn on a current fad to launch a world of unique features. Hamster Vice is a comic which stands on it's own as a parody of parodies, covering not only the comic book worlds, but overlapping into cartoons, movies, comic strips, and sometimes real life. Hammy, Ben and Wolph (who you can catch in his own mini-mini-series) are the standard team of reliable leader with doubts, eager follower with high explosives and almost eager follower who just happens to be a swordmaster. Their world happens to be a 20th Century type, but it is entirely populated by animals. This can be fun!

Hamsters, dogs, roosters, eagles...all drawn with an eye for human body types in a non-human

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atmosphere. By the way, the villains all seem to be insects, and who, (or should I say what) makes a better slime-ball than a huge roach? *Euuchh.*

This comic offers roleplayers another world in which to try out guest stars, but it would be more in the spirit of the storyline to allow the PC animals free-rein to drag in references from other games, books, or any other media. The hamsters do it all the time, with comments about Voltron sprinkled through the adventures and a mistaken cry for "Groo" of Sergio Argones fame. Whichever game system is used, it should allow for fast and varied combat, as well as a certain amount of acrobatics and insect antennae movement. There will, of course, be crossovers within and beyond Swamp Indigo, the Hamsters' answer to Miami. Watch out for appearances by other current animal stars, along with 3D

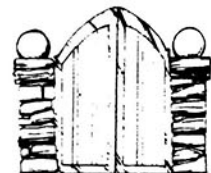
one-shots and special issues.

Samurai Penguin

With all the the comic books offering Japanese-style fighting techniques and mystical origins, it seemed that the honorable side of ancient Japan, especially the ruling warrior class, was ignored. Not any more. Dan Vardo and Mark Buck, of Slave Labor Graphics, have created and presented the very soul of that noble class, in a new comic called **Samurai Penguin**. A penguin? Yes, but what a penguin! The book itself is strikingly done, and has vanished from comic store shelves as fast as it was ordered. Why does **Samurai Penguin** work so well?

Firstly, it must be noted that this tale is clearly not part of the imitator pack, but is unique. It is set, of course, in the antarctic, hardly a place for high-speed car chases, aristocratic guest stars or frequent cross-overs. Dim-witted penguins abound, falling into the ocean to tempt sharks and arguing over what to do when nothing much is happening. Yet amid all the starkness of this polar setting is an Oriental house, a **Lord and Master of the Antarctic Penguins**, and his lone, nameless, **Samurai**.

Villains include the Blofield-like **Artimus Walrus** and his allies, the leopard seals, sharks, and carnivorous birds called skuas. A newer baddy is extremist **Achmed Achptuii**, who wants to force the President of the United States to give him a new homeland, preferably Santa Barbara. Once again, the absurd wins out, but the change of scenery and tone is welcome. Here is a chance to use those silly cold weather adventuring charts and throw in a little Oriental combat as well! **Samurai Penguin** reminds us that mixing unlikely possibilities can render the most captivating combinations.



Stalking A Game Fantastic

In the early 1860's the United States established a secret investigative agency under the cover of the Civil War. Only a few top officials knew of its existence, and it became known simply as "Bureau 13".

Wherever the supernatural awaits, both the good and the evil, the agents of Bureau 13 will be there as well.....

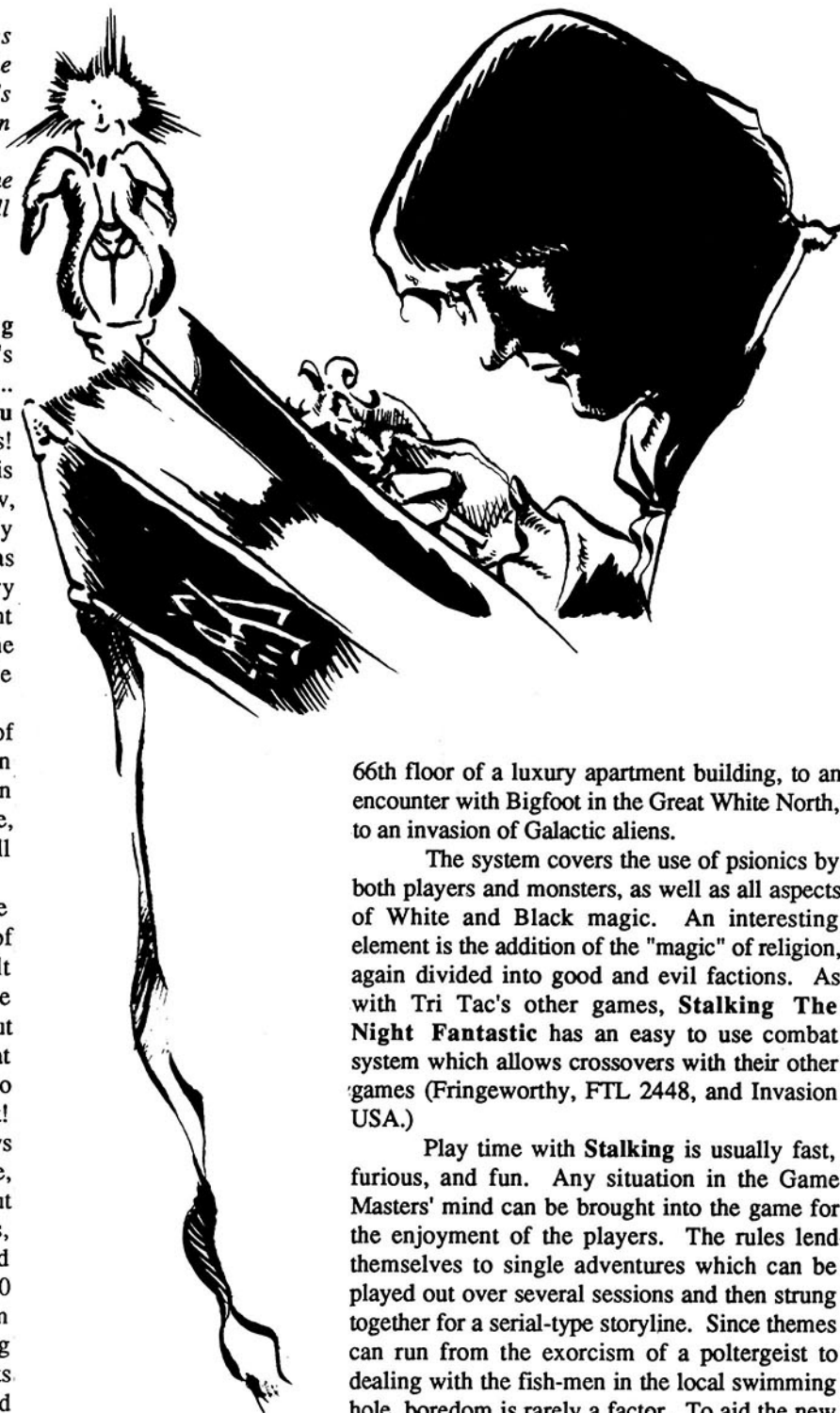
But the evil is growing...

This is the introduction to **Stalking The Night Fantastic**, Tri Tac Inc.'s supernatural role-playing game. The set-up... you, the player, have been "drafted" by Bureau 13, and are now a field agent. Congratulations! On top of the skills that have gotten you to this turning point in your life, you have learned new, exciting, and hopefully lifesaving skills directly related to your new career. Skills such as criminal psychology, document forgery, heavy weapons, combat driving, and the all important evidence dispersal. Oh yes, not to forget the concentrated study of supernatural spirits and the undead.

You soon find that you will need all of these new skills as well as any older ones, in addition to any high-tech gadgetry the Agency can supply to get the job done correctly. Courage, patience, and perhaps a touch of madness all contribute to becoming a successful agent.

A Bureau 13 agent must operate unobtrusively and within all the red tape of modern society, a challenge for any occult investigator. That is not to say that when the warning bells go off and your computer spits out a report calling for immediate forceful action at 1313 Hemlock Drive, that you go and try to verbally reprimand whatever "baddie" is present! No, sometimes there is a shoot-out, and it always pays to have the right firepower on hand. Sure, you'll get your cases which can be solved without firing a shot. And then there are the others, which make you realize why there are detailed guide book listings for the "Weatherby .460 Elephant Gun", as well as a depleted uranium slug, **Stalking's** heaviest, most damaging bullet. High explosive, silver and wooden bullets are not only listed, but come highly recommended to the agents of Bureau 13.

The above listed ammunition and a good listing of firearms accompany all sorts of creature fighting techniques collectively known as "Bane". (To the supernatural, a "Bane" is anything which causes fear, harm, or death, including Holy Water, Blessed Weapons, Words of Power, etc.) The foes themselves can range from a ghost on the



66th floor of a luxury apartment building, to an encounter with Bigfoot in the Great White North, to an invasion of Galactic aliens.

The system covers the use of psionics by both players and monsters, as well as all aspects of White and Black magic. An interesting element is the addition of the "magic" of religion, again divided into good and evil factions. As with Tri Tac's other games, **Stalking The Night Fantastic** has an easy to use combat system which allows crossovers with their other games (Fringeworthy, FTL 2448, and Invasion USA.)

Play time with **Stalking** is usually fast, furious, and fun. Any situation in the Game Masters' mind can be brought into the game for the enjoyment of the players. The rules lend themselves to single adventures which can be played out over several sessions and then strung together for a serial-type storyline. Since themes can run from the exorcism of a poltergeist to dealing with the fish-men in the local swimming hole, boredom is rarely a factor. To aid the new GM, **Stalking** lists 100 such encounters, as well as a beginning scenario for the adventurers. Supplementary modules include **Hell's Night**, which provides more than half a dozen **Stalking The Night Fantastic** terror fests.

Greg Sherwood

Conquering BATTLETECH

M. Brenshaw

The relative peace of the silent desert military outpost is broken as several electronic techs read on their screens the signature of a huge battle force approaching orbit from deep space. Immediately, alarms go off everywhere as the few and fearless aerospace fighter pilots and Mechwarriors climb into their respective weapons to repel the invaders. The opposing side is ready for them as standard orbital defenses are breached and dozens of Dropships come screeching in at nearly a kilometer per second. As the Dropships skim the planet's atmosphere, their cargo is released; the powerful and deadly Battlemechs! For two whole minutes, the invading 'Mechs are helpless. But when they do hit the earth, their planet-bound cousins are ready to face them with all the destructive capabilities that modern science can provide for them. This is war!

Over the past year, we've seen the gaming industry flooded with a multitude of high-tech robot games, movies, comics, and everything else. A prime example is the **Robotech** cartoon, already three comics and one game. Each system has points in its favor, but the one game that really stands out is **BATTLETECH**, published by **FASA**. The game is the first in a series of games which center around the final development of the period in history known as the **Succession Wars** (c. AD 3025), when the fates of major political powers are determined not by politics and ambassadors, but by combat.

Battletech (Battlefield Technology) is a game which simulates the fights which take place between the **Battlemechs** (or **'Mechs**), the ultimate weapons of conquest. A typical **'Mech** stands 10 to 12 meters tall; the lightest weighs about 20 tons, while the heaviest can weigh 80 tons or more. Just one of these immense machines has greater firepower and mobility than an entire battalion of late 20th Century tanks, and possesses much greater survivability as well. In fact, the only weapon which has any hope of defeating a **'Mech** is another **'Mech**.

The Battletech Game

The game itself is almost everything that a beginning or veteran wargamer can ask for. It includes a full color hex map of respectable size, 48 color playing pieces depicting the various types of **'Mechs** available in the game, two six-sided dice, a superbly written 40-page rule booklet that includes descriptions of each **'Mech**,

and both the basic and advanced versions of the game. The rules are laid out so that one needs to learn new rules only when the players are ready to go on to the more complex aspects of play. Being a **Star Fleet Battles** veteran, I know enough to be grateful when someone develops a game system that can be played with ease while keeping all of the excitement of the larger and more regulated wargames.

'Mechs are essentially provided in the text, but the game also includes rules for designing your own machines if you are interested. The choice of weapons is not extensive, but is sufficient for the creation of a decent **Battlemech**. **'Mechs** are allowed to fight at melee ranges using punches, kicks, and picked up weapons (even parts of other **'Mechs**). Movement rules allow for running and even **Jump Jets**, which can upgrade one's mobility by 50% if used wisely.

One of the most unusual aspects of **Battletech** are the rules for heat buildup. You see, the **'Mechs** have to be heavily armored in order to absorb and deflect the blows of the enemy. An unfortunate side effect of this armor is that the heat shielding that very effectively keeps the heat out also happens to be very good at keeping excess heat inside the **'Mech** as well. During a battle, the heat levels inside a **'Mech** can sharply reduce the machine's abilities...as well as incapacitate or kill the pilot. **'Mechs** can dissipate this excess heat through the use of heat sinks and terrain, but it still calls on the player to allow for this event in his or her battle plans. And in this game, tactics are everything.

The Battletech Universe

The real beauty of **Battletech** is the fact that it stands as part of a plethora of games that all tie into each other as a complete system. **Mechwarrior**, which is the 145 page book that presents the **Battletech RPG**, contains all the information needed to run a game in the **Battletech** universe. This includes a full history of the years 2000-present day, an overview of the family houses, merchant clans, and political factions that rule the galaxy (or try to).

The **Battletech** universe is essentially a military one. The once-great empires have all but fallen to the conflicting and numerous military powers, who have gained power over most of the structures of government. The center of all this conflict is the **Battlemech** and the **Mechwarriors**, the special pilots of the giant



machines. The past attempts to stop or limit the wars have instead resulted in a set of "Rules of War" which make war very easy to start; civilians and non-military targets are not allowed to be attacked. Unfortunately, the final rule of **Mechwarrior** codes is that life is cheap, but the machines are everything. (Most high technology was lost with the onset of the **Succession Wars**, so that spare parts are very difficult to find. When a **Mech** is destroyed, its entire unit suffers.) Most units would rather surrender to the enemy rather than sacrifice their **Mechs**.

Other Games

Although **Battletech** is the main game in the series, there are supplements to allow conflict in outer space and in urban areas. **Aerotech** and **Citytech** cover these options respectively.

Aerotech

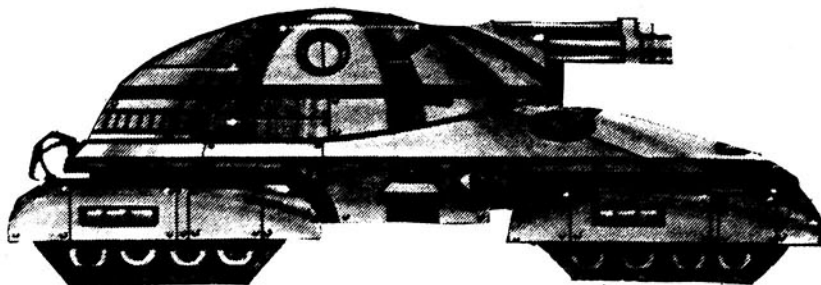
Aerotech covers the period of time that takes place just before a **Battletech** conflict, when **Mech-carrying** dropships leave their starfaring jumpships and proceed toward the objective, usually a planetary base. Each dropship carries (in addition to **BattleMechs**) **Aerospace** fighters, which are capable of incredible speeds and can carry as much firepower as a conventional **Mech**. Remember the two minutes of time mentioned in the introduction? Well for that short time, dropping **Mechs** are completely unprotected by their carriers, becoming fat targets for defensive fighters and gun emplacements. **Aerospace** fighters may be their only hope.

Similar in many ways to **Battletech**, **Aerotech's** rules are easy to understand and are laid out according to the player's requirements, not the editors' moods. The movement rules are slightly trickier, since they've been adapted for a zero-gravity environment. Another addition which lends itself to tricky maneuvers allows the fighters to enter the atmosphere and do what comes naturally. Both outer space and low altitude mapsheets are included in the game. Separate rules are provided for dropships, and a new type of **BattleMech** is introduced: the **Land-Air Mech**. The weapons tables have been enlarged somewhat, and the heat buildup rules have been modified for the fighters. In addition, new rules are given for the construction of fighters and **AirMechs**. The game is a little more difficult than **Battletech**, but no less enjoyable.

Citytech

Citytech, the third book in the **Battletech** series returns to the standard **Mech** battles. However, as I'm certain that fans of **Robotech** will recall, not all exciting battles take place on mutually accepted battlefields. Some of the most dramatic combat sequences on that show took place in urban settings, and **Citytech** does its best to capture that excitement through **Mech to Mech** combat.

This game is essentially "**Expert Battletech**"...it is meant primarily for those players who have mastered the first two books in the series. The rulebook is slightly larger than the others, but don't be put off; much of this is simple duplication from the original **Battletech** rulebook. Many of the old rules have been expanded, but not quite enough to clutter the game's playability to any great extent. Some of the new rules given are very interesting, such as the introduction and use of infantry in modern **Mech** warfare. There are special sections describing the new terrain, the use of vehicular combat, and the so-called dirty fighting of the concrete jungle defenders. Again, this all contributes to a genuinely fun battle-gaming experience.



Captain Eo

continued from page 33

Too short? Yes. Too familiar? Certainly. Corny? A bit. But **Captain Eo** has a kinetic quality that makes its ILM effects shine. That most of this has been seen elsewhere is made up for in the passion of its confrontation and combat scenes - Jackson, with his magical beams of powerlight, really has it out with these guys! With Lucasfilm gearing up to begin production on **Star Wars: The Clone Wars** in February of this year, **Captain Eo** provides an entertaining, well choreographed 3-D appetizer. Providing, of course, that you can get to Orlando, Anaheim, or Tokyo....



FANTASY'S TOP TEN DRAGONS

Whether you believe that **Dragons** exist or not, if you are reading this magazine chances are that (one way or another) **Dragons** are very real to you. And Dragon-fancier or not, every-one knows what a **Dragon** is. The International Edition of the **Encyclopedia Americana** defines **Dragons** as "*...mythical animals composed of diverse elements, but generally including the body of a snake, wings, lions claws, a crocodile head, often represented as spitting fire. [They] appear in the myths, folklore, and art of many peoples, taking on various forms and playing a variety of roles.*"

Trying to pick a "Top Ten" was a very difficult and very personal choice. To insure that our list would give credit to as many sources as possible, no more than one Dragon (or one group of Dragons) from each source has made it on to the final list. We distinguished our finalists by the scope of their powers, the range of their influence, their professed domain, and the strength of their "personalities". There is no #1, but we shall begin the list with those Dragons whose powers are of the greatest magnitude; the Dragons whose physical selves are transcended by their effect on the course of Destiny.

One such Dragon is known as **Iormungander**...and also as the Midgard Serpent. Iormungander, one of the earliest personifications of sin, had alarmed Odin, the father of the Norse gods, by his rapid growth. Odin tried to destroy Iormungander by throwing him into the sea, but that tactic failed. The great Dragon continued to grow until he encircled the globe when he took his tail into his mouth. During **Ragnorok**, the Norse Mythology's end of the world, Iormungander is (or will be) slain by the god Thor.

Another mythically potent Dragon is the **Leviathan**, a formidable behemoth whose presence was overcome in order to allow the Biblical creation of the world. Leviathan must be defeated again (you can never keep a good Dragon down) at Armeggedon, our own (western) version of the end of the world.

The Tolkien Dragons, in particular **Smaug**, **Ancalgon**, and **Glarung**, were of a race created by an enemy god, Morgoth. They were ruled by him, and were directed to the destruction of all that was good in the world. These were large, armored, fire-breathing Dragons, fortified by guile and magic both. They were able to take people's memories away, and

cause their enemies to fight among themselves. These Dragons were fully evil and malicious, and took great pleasure in hoarding precious metals and gems. Yes, they were grand, classic Dragons. Smaug, being the best known of the Tolkien Dragons, and (argument has been made) the best known of all Dragons in modern-day literature, will serve to represent these Dragons on the list. But we know that it just wouldn't be complete without mentioning all three.

The Dragons of Earthsea, specifically **Orm Embar**, **Kelessin**, and **Yevaud**, were also hoarders and fire breathers. And while they bore no particular good will toward mankind, neither were they tools of any greater evil being. These Dragons are the oldest race on their world, very wise and reclusive. Few are the men who have any genuine business with them. They are the keepers of the old speech, the language of Creation, and know much about the workings of the world and the true names of the beings who walk the lands. Though the services they performed for the other races of the world were great, the Dragons motives were always self-serving.

On the other hand, the Dragons of Pern (**Mnemoth** is the one we shall name as our representative), are virtually selfless. They were bred by scientific means to serve a specific purpose; to eliminate Threadfall. While in many cases, they take a back-seat to their riders, they are all individuals expressing a tremendous amount of personality. Unlike most other Dragons, the Dragons of Pern seem to fully understand how humans think. The mystical bond between human and Dragon is essential to the continuance of life on Pern.

Now, at the halfway point on our list, we are going to examine the more personable Dragons--individuals who are not necessarily representative of any particular race or group. These may not be Dragons of myth and legend, but they are Dragons whose personalities, private motives and spectacular appearances (among other things) make them all the more interesting. Sometimes a good sense of humor will get you as far as an epic effect upon destiny.

Ssrzza (Sizzle for short), from the Polish branch of the family, is a charming Femme Fatale. She has a penchant for cute young men, which leads her to strike a bargain with each one she meets. In exchange for the young man's attention and companionship, she will make him the undisputed leader of organized

crime, effectively putting him in control of an entire city. And you'd better believe that a huge, invisible, fire-breathing Dragon can do just that!

Speaking of taking control of a city, nobody does it better than Godzilla. Godzilla, a charming (if somewhat violent) fire-breathing Dragon, is the star of dozens of Japanese movies.



And although it can be argued that he is in fact a dinosaur, who ever heard of a dinosaur who breathed fire? And while most Americans view Godzilla as a campy, comic monster, the Japanese treat these movies very seriously, as morality plays. The different monsters represent different human qualities, and the confrontations in the movies are interpreted as struggles between the good and bad characteristics of people: between the righteous and the depraved, the egotistic and the altruistic, between self and society. To them, a comprehension of the essence of Godzilla is useful in the "real" world.

Which conveniently brings us to the only Dragon you might actually get to meet one day, (outside a game, that is). Nessie, the Loch Ness "Monster" (read Dragon), as far as a large number of people believe, is very real! Though her personal appearances are few, there is actually some evidence that Nessie and her kin are Plesiosaurs that were trapped in the Loch when the oceans receded. Of course, the muddy waters of the Loch prevent a full investigation; would you want to be discovered after millions of years of hiding? Nessie remains the modern days' tantalizing link to the mythic Dragons, and who's to say she isn't one? Perhaps a group of Twentieth Century adventurers should go and find out...

Stanley Steamer, the memorable Gap Dragon, is one of the largest and most savage of all the creatures in Xanth. Stanley inhabits the Gap Chasm, the Forget spell that is on the Chasm keeping him from recalling the secret exit out of it. Stanley is a scaly, low-slung, six-legged green Dragon who breathes out great blasts of steam...hence his name. He is a savage Dragon (most of the time), and he shows this trait in his eating habits. He relishes chasing down terrified victims, steaming them to a half-cooked state and then chowing down on what's left. Not a Dragon to fool around with.

A drastically smaller Dragon, but one who is formidable in his own right is **Pip**, an Alaspinian miniature Dragon. Pip is somewhat snake-like; his cold-blooded blue and pink diamond-backed body is only about a meter in length. His belly is a dull golden hue, and his butterfly like wings are matched to his body. Of all the Dragons on this list, he is the most colorful when unadorned. The main thing which makes this beautiful creature a Dragon not to be reckoned with is his ability to spit acid. And not just any acid, but a powerfully corrosive neurological poison. Pip is also capable of mental projection, and he uses this empathic communication to form a mental link with his human symbiote, a youth to whom he formed a strong and possibly lifelong bond.

Thus, our Top Ten Dragons are:

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1) Iormundgander | from the Elder Edda of Norse Mythology |
| 2) Leviathan | from the Book of Revelations, Psalms 74, Isaiah 51, and Job 41 |
| 3) Smaug | The Lord of The Rings, J.R.R. Tolkien |
| 4) Orm Embar | Earthsea Trilogy, Ursula K. LeGuin |
| 5) Mnemeth | The Dragonriders of Pern, Anne McCaffrey |
| 6) Sizzle | Vinces Dragon, Ben Bova |
| 7) Godzilla | of Vast Movie Fame |
| 8) Nessie | The Cretaceous Period, Scotland |
| 9) Stanley Steamer | The Xanth Series, Piers Anthony |
| 10) Pip | For Love of Mother-Not, Alan Dean Foster |

Honorable mentions go to the following Dragons, many of whom we would have included if we had a Top Twenty listing:

Puff (Peter, Paul and Mary); Cecil the Seasick Sea Serpant (OK, not really a Dragon, but we all loved him anyway), by Hanna-Barbara; Falcor the Luck Dragon (Never Ending Story); Ouroborous (Greek Mythology); Fafnir (Nibelung); Beowulf's Foe (Beowulf); Tiamat (Babalonian Goddess of Chaos); Dart (That George Business); Gleep (Myth Adventures); Morkeleb (Dragon's Bane); Vermothrax (Dragonslayer); and of course, Spot (The Munsters)

Sydney Elise Barouch is a freelance artist and writer who lives in New York.

Jeff Grossman is a working researcher and writer.



A FLASHY SOURCEBOOK FOR TREK IV

With FASA's usual punctuality and love for detail, it was expected that the Star Trek IV update would be a useful part of their role-playing game system. We knew that Paramount had given FASA some cooperation in the making of this new edition, and we had expected to see some standard photos of the crew, and maybe a ship or two.

We were wrong. This latest addition to the well researched and developed role-playing game is one of the better gaming supplements we've seen this year. Note that it is not a gaming scenario or module, although it definitely would give game masters plenty of material with which to construct one or several of their own. This is a step forward for FASA, yet it follows their in-depth looks at other societies (like their Klingon supplement) with a logical ease.

Released the same week as the movie, the Update contains an exhaustive timeline detailing every important date from the establishment of the Federation to events happening after Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. For those game masters who have collected FASA modules, the dates of the events outlined in those adventures are provided as well. This might not serve the GM who is running an alternate universe campaign, but it does lend a sense of direction, cause and effect, and history to the Federation and its enemies and allies.

The sections devoted to the races we glimpsed in the movie are tantalizingly short, and invite expansion. The illustrations of these new and old races leave much to be desired, but the stills from the movie are appreciated, especially since we saw so little of these characters in the edited version. Since Vulcans are covered elsewhere in FASA's system, we are given a brief look at their history, which is always interesting to know. Even non-gamers liked to flip through the book, and a sharp reader will be able to get hints about the future of Star Trek through close interpretation of the Federation Top-Secret papers. An enjoyable and useful addition to almost any gamer's library.

Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home
Sourcebook Update
A supplement for use with the Star Trek
Role-Playing Game
FASA Corporation

Battletech Irregulars

Now that we have accepted that **Battletech** is a good game system, we must take a look at the game as a whole. **Battletech** has great potential for entertaining aspiring adventuring players...but does FASA play up to that potential in their supplements? What use is a great system without great support? Not much! So here's a brief look at two **Battletech** modules.

The first gaming scenario released by FASA (for use in a **Mechwarrior** game) was **Tales of The Black Widow Company**. Here is a good example of what the **Succession Wars** were all about, with timelines and no less than fifteen scenarios all suitable for exciting gaming. The module deals with the history and exploits, both on and off the battlefield, of Captain Natasha Kerensky, the leader of the Black Widow Company of Wolf's Dragoons. Entertaining descriptions of the Widow's personnel are included, along with attractive graphics and additional rules for easier play. All in all, a satisfying addition to the game.

Similar in format, yet every bit as interesting is the module entitled **Cranston Snord's Irregulars**. This module introduces more new characters for the game master to have fun with, and shows just how detailed and complex a **Battletech** character can be. The title figure, **Snord**, was a professional member of **Wolf's Dragoons**, until his odd habit of collecting artifacts from earlier ages got him booted out. In a poker game of incredible stakes, he managed to win his own company of **'Mechs** and a dropship, and thus created his own unit.

Just as in the previous module, each member of the unit is given a detailed personal history and an interesting portrait. Given their leader's hobby, it would not be too much of a surprise to discover that they also collect artifacts, and will often wander away from combat to chase after some special prize. With the wealth of information supplied, even the most novice of players would find it easy to get into character when given one of the **Irregulars** to play.

Both modules are packed with information, both for the GM and for the players. Instead of the usual "one story per module" format, each one supplies over a dozen storylines or outlines, making them a terrific bargain when compared to other supplements on the market. A very good show of support from FASA, one that we hope will continue.

Gateways Classifieds

Gateways introduces a regular feature for fantasy role-players, Game Masters and all fans of the Genre...Gateways Classifieds Every issue, on this page, you may insert or peruse messages which will reach gamers throughout the known world. It's very simple! Find the category your message belongs in, write your words down, mail them to us, and we'll print them! And remember--to help gamers keep in touch, **Player/Game Master Wanted Ads** are free!

The categories are: **Merchandise for Sale** -- please include your telephone number with your ad. No dealers, please. **Merchandise Wanted** -- be specific. Don't say "old Dragons wanted", say "Dragons 35 through 58 wanted". **Events** -- you can advertise conventions, tournaments, concerts, special screenings, etc. **Personals** -- have fun! Anything goes under personals: secret messages, congratulations, gloating, rave raves, announcements, even challenges! **Services Offered/Needed** -- Model painting, mapping, drawing, arts and crafts, module design, any service of use to gamers. And finally, those free ads, **Player/Game Master Wanted** -- please be specific! Mention 1) Type of game 2) the location at which it will be played or how far you can travel, and 3) age/level of experience required.

And remember, **Gateways Classifieds** are cheap! At one dollar per twenty words, this will be an offer limited to our earliest issues. Take advantage of it while it lasts!

For your information, **Cordon Sanitaire** is a GAME, not a style of cooking chicken.

Congratulations to **Warrior Devon Lastarren**, called the **Freerider**, the latest addition to **Lord King Kristan's** mighty army. Hey, at this rate, we just might win this one guys!

Fat chance. Love, **Tiamat**. P.S. Boy, do I have a surprise for you! It's gonna be reunion time in my neighborhood, chilluns! Heh, heh, heh.

PLAYERS WANTED:

Experienced GM wants experienced or talented novice players for a high-quality **Marvel Superheroes Role-playing game**. Should be 17 and above, be roughly familiar with the **Marvel universe**, and able to travel to **Queens, N.Y.** on a regular basis. Contact **Serge Clermont c/o 134-20 218th Street, Laurelton, New York, 11413** or call (718) 527-6269.

Thlana - whomever your king, I'm ever your champion
Dragonscar

Hey **JC** in **Coral Springs** and **TK** in **North Miami** - get me the hell out of here! - **TA** in **Flushing**

Buddy, **Cindy**, **Bandit**, **Pete**, **Cassie**, **Misty**, **Tron** and **Charlie** wave their paws and wings farewell to **Apache** and **Freddy**.

VSA and the **Bronx Blues** - making a difference.

To **Matt**, **Bob**, **Kevin**, **Christine** and the **Fisher King** an exuberant thanks - **GPI**

Many thanks to the **Computer Experts** at the **MH store**. Nice folks.

Macross, **Megazone 1&2**, **Nausicaa** and **Odin** - got 'em all, love 'em! **Anime 4-ever!**

To get by in this world, you need some **COMMON SENSE!**

WANTED:

Gateways wants material for new columns which examine media with the roleplayer in mind. These include **Howling At The Moon**, **Comic Book Forum Screen View**, **The Tome**, and **International Scene**. Features expressing innovative approaches to gaming will be carefully considered.

WANTED:

Gamer/Author is looking for first hand knowledge of the popular **Dragonlance** series...DM's especially welcome to share their views on the hottest seller of the past two years. Is this the future of gaming? Does it work? Can it be played with other PC's? Does it have a good ending? Selected views will be used in a giant **Dragonlance retrospective** which will appear in **Gateways**. Write to **Gateways Publications, c/o Assistant Editor**.

WANTED:

Good quality **VHS tapes** of **Crime Story** and the **Halloween episode of Miami Vice**. Send a list of what you have with reasonable prices to **Kelly Gomez, 355 8th Ave. Apt. 1B New York, N.Y. 10001**

PERSONALS

R.I.P. **Duffin Relial**, slain by vile sorcery! His comrades shall avenge him!

Bye-bye, **Duffin**, you schmuck. I win. **Geldor Mun** And just you try, you wimps.

You really *have* gone where no man has gone before.....

Gryandir told me to do it...it's not my fault.

I'm not stupid, I'm not expendable, and I'm not going!

Any **Blake's Seven** fans out there? **Avon** rules!

Does **K-9** eat **Kibbles** and **Bytes**?



RAK GRAPHICS. For information contact: 241 E Thornton St. Akron, OH 44311

Trek Bits

Trek Bits

Trek Bits

Trek Bits

School Is In Session

Gene Roddenberry was not exactly trusting of the network executives when he presented *Star Trek* for their approval. Even after his "Western in outer space" line, he still had to work and fight to keep creative control and to carry out his mission. Says the creator of *Star Trek*, "I realized that I could talk about wars, sex, religion (things that really interested me), if I could only disguise it so that it would go over the heads of the network censors."



Trek In The Funnies

For those who have been following the excellent DC *Star Trek* comic book, it's time to take notice. In a bold and ah, fascinating move DC is going to continue the *Star Trek* Saga from the point that *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* leaves off! Issue 37, ominously entitled "Choices" will be the start of a series of stories which may lead us all the way to the next movie! (Or, dare we say, a quick glance one hundred years ahead of that? Stay tuned!)

Trek on Your Wall

The Pocket Books *Star Trek* Calender is every Trekker's guide to the "Star Dates" of 1987. Retailing for \$7.95, it contains photographs drawn from some of the cast's favorite episodes along with the birthdays of everyone who has ever appeared in the series. Each star gets a chance to explain why that particular episode was chosen, and some of the stills are impressive.

NEXT ISSUE:

ELFQUEST



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The Watchmen

The Cosmic

Streetcorner

"I'd love to write or draw, or run some of these games, but I've got no imagination!" Oh really? Well, why don't you climb up onto my telephone booth and tell me about it. You're on my turf now, the Cosmic Streetcorner, and around here you don't hold back. *No imagination*, huh? Paul Reubens once said that children have better imaginations than grown-ups. You know, that they can play with sponges, tin cans and blocks of wood and keep themselves occupied for hours. That they can be weird and strange, whoever they wanted to be whenever they liked. That as a rule, they lose that ability when they become teenagers, when going with the crowd is every-thing. (Reubens is better known as Pee Wee Herman; I guess he must think he's some kind of specialist on child behavior or something.) Well, I say no way.

See, while it's true that you start to wish, dream and pretend when you're a kid, you've really only got what's going on around you to start with. You play Superman, Lion-O or Grandmaster Flash to your little heart's content, but when exactly do you start creating your own heroes, your own universes? Gene Roddenberry was in his 40's when *Star Trek* began taking to the sky, and George Lucas with his *Star Wars* was in his 20's. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby created the Fantastic Four and the Incredible Hulk while lumbering out of their teens; Middle-Earth emerged from the typewriter of a Tolkien during his 30's and through his 50's. Frazetta, Heinlein, Bakshi, none of these guys were exactly toddlers in their Huggies when they started painting, writing and animating their ways into our lives.

Look, let me put it to you in another way. In most role-playing games, the number of adventures you have with your party and the confrontations you win with them brings you experience with which you rise through levels of skill and power. Well, games aren't the only places where experience points count. In karate, when a young white belt joins a *dojo*, all he can hope to do at first is copy the higher ranks and show as much courage and spirit as possible. He learns to punch and kick the proper way, she learns her balance and her *kata*. In the process, the way of the art becomes clear and

BROADWAY



understandable. Then, the white belt is traded for a yellow belt - an experience level is gained - and the youngster has grown stronger, smarter, and more formidable for it. The same thing can be found in school, a career, and even something as intangible as imagination.

When you dream at night, what's happening is that your mind is sorting out what happened to you the day before. Your imagination is turning your experiences into symbols and pictures, filing them so you can wake up refreshed and peaceful the next morning. Like dreams, a fantasy universe won't work properly unless you put your own experiences into it. And here's a bet: the more experienced a Game Master is in his personal life, the more original and exciting the game will be! Count on it.

"I've got no imagination...." Bologna. You dream at night, don't you? You've got no imagination? Go out and get some! Four walls and all the books, posters and videos on earth just may not be enough to cut it. But when life is filtered through your own unique eyes and you've taken the risks and felt a touch of the pain your characters sometimes have to feel when they leave the safety of their hobbit-holes and computer consoles - then there will come all the creativity and imagination you'll ever need. And remember: George and Gene rarely did it all by themselves... they had parties.

Be aware.

Jeffrey Gomez
Publisher

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Next Issue...

Elfquest, GURPS

...and Romance...



R. Whetz