



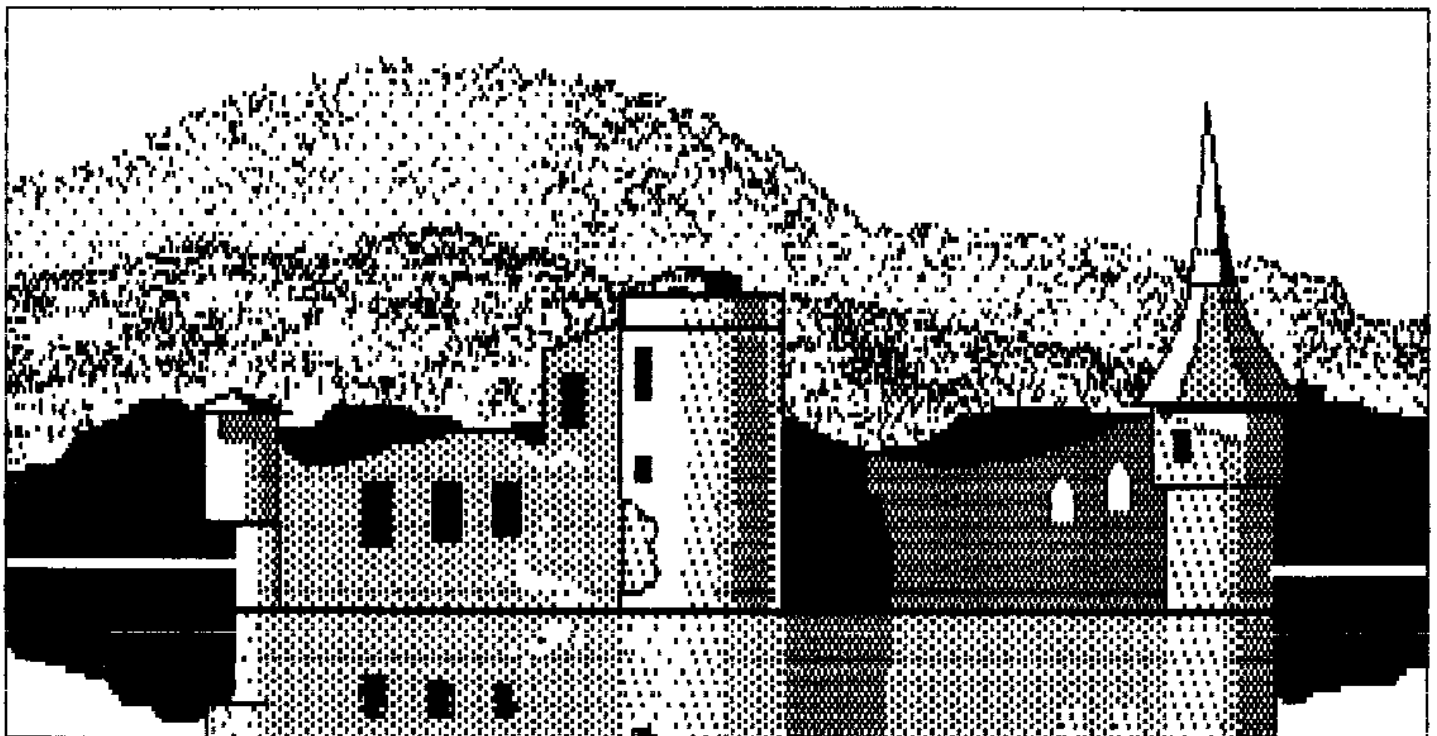
PAPYRUS™

2815 Lund Ave. #6
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Papyrus™ #10
In this issue (Spring '93):
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Papyrus #10

Spring 1993



What do you think of our new format?



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SCRIBBLES FROM THE SCRIBE

Just a little bragging, but after 3 years of waiting, your illustrious chief scribe's article "Ecology of the Dakon" appeared in the Nov'92 issue of Dragon Magazine (187). Check it out!



I just saw a new book at the store that was interesting and eye catching (not to mention expensive, \$35). It's called "Dinotopia" and it describes what appears to be a continent where man and dinosaur live in peaceful coexistence. Excellent art, but I didn't read enough of it to comment further. In any case, it looks like it has some interesting campaign possibilities. Does anyone know anything about this?

Palladium is suing Wizards of the Coast over conversion material in The Primal Order rules supplement!?!?

They've got a lot of nerve considering the origins of their systems' "originality". I can understand TSR being aggressive due to their size and not wanting "D&D" to become public domain like "Kleenex" has (they have much more to lose), but this is uncalled for. What is Palladium afraid of, crossover business? There are all sorts of inter-system conversions in published material on the market (Fantasy Hero - AD&D/GURPS, Polyhedron - Gangbusters/CoC and Spelljammer/S1889,

Roleplayer - Hero/GURPS, V&V adventures - V&V / Champions / Superworld). WoC will certainly fold under the strain.

What is Palladium after, Talislanta and/or TPO? Both would make big Munchkin-mulla as part of Palladium's D&D-borne system library. Why does Palladium take such pains to remain isolated from the rest of gaming (re previous zine cmt on "requesting" non-inclusion in JJ magazine)? This is truly sad.

AD&D 3rd edition, the next permutation ... some thoughts:

My mind wandering, I gave some thought to the inevitable next edition of AD&D and then it hit me! It is not beyond reason to foresee a gravitation toward a DragonQuest-like system. The ground work is already laid, the 2nd edition involves some skill based system premises as add-ons to the classic character class based system. The magic system has divided into colleges, weapon specialization and the formally huge collection of alternate classes has been reduced to a core list with skill packages for modification.

Maintaining most of the systems within the game (combat, creature stats, weapon states, etc) I see a further mutation towards skill based character generation. Just like DQ, xp would be used to by levels of increasing ability in: weapons, spells, proficiencies and skills. The simplicity of this change is incredible, needing only a balanced cost system for levels of advancement in the various weapons / spells /

prof. / skills. In fact, I would be highly surprised if this is not already a conscious plan for the future of AD&D. For example, a character may attain: 4th lvl in thief skills, 6th lvl in the use of the long sword, 8th lvl in the use of the short bow, be an adept in the college of Divinations with 2nd lvl skill in a spell (or spells) and have gained 2 lvls of proficiency at forgery.

In the end D&D would remain basically the same and finally attain a visible separation from AD&D as a simpler, class based, system. Yet, the combat system and such would remain basically the same for easy graduation from one system to the other. While we're at it, Gamma World (or XXVc or Star Frontiers) could become a source book of weapons / psionics / prof. / skills with campaign background and mutation rules. This could create the non-genre specific sys I hinted DQ could've become in my review (see Papyrus #3).

Once again I may be putting my foot in it, so be gentle with the comments. These are some quickly transcribed thoughts that may not seem so terrific in the morning but right now it makes sense. Maybe someone else has some predictions or feelings about the future editions of AD&D or other game systems?

MORE DUNGEON FOR YOUR \$

PERILOUS LANDS, campaign source material for Avalon Hill's, Powers & Perils game.

An old pirate like myself just couldn't resist it at half its cover price of \$20. A unique game world in a box, "what a bargain".

The box contains 3 booklets, the first of which is the map book. It provides 25 detailed maplets of the campaign continent, detailing terrain, political/cultural entities and places of interest. The booklet's cover provides the only cohesive picture of the continent which looks vaguely like a combo Europe/Asia/Africa/Australia. Excellent graphics but the cover is a sad substitute for a world map.

The next book, the culture book, describes nearly 100 "civilized" and

barbarian cultures of the human race. Actually it's not a bad resource, discussing: politics, religion, history and demography. Each entry is less than a page so detail is slight but even if you weren't going to adopt all of the perilous lands into your campaign there are some unique peoples here to chose from.

The last book is called the site book and it provides info on 17 locations with adventure potential, and short bits on: adventure design, world politics, deities and calendars. Again the adventure seeds here are good but they all lack enough detail for use without some major work.

The lack of depth, and insistence on using too many different calendars to reference dates, makes this supplement difficult to recommend. As a complete campaign it fails, as a resource for campaign creation/expansion it works well. At the \$10 price I paid I find myself feeling disappointed, but this is a bargain to be had at \$5.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES & OTHER STRANGENESS, by E Wujcik for Palladium books.

Since this is to be a generic/multi-use review, I will not rehash any info on the game itself. Suffice to say that as a game itself it appears enjoyable and true (?!) to its genre. A fine piece of work I received in a trade with a pen pal, but of course I did not get it for the game, I chose its possibilities as a supplement to other games.

The Palladium sys as it appears here is very compatible with AD&D/D&D, Lands of Adventure, Gamma World 4th ed, Hero System and V&V in 3 areas. The list of weapons (modern and martial arts) are compatible, as is, with all of the previously mentioned systems save LoA (though there is enough info to work out stats). The skills, alignment tables and insanity rules are graphable without changes to all of them.

The greatest use of this book is its mutant animal creation rules. With these rules, the creation of animal based races/mutants is possible for any of the fore mentioned games. Although GW4 does the same in a

simpler fashion (providing for humanoid, mansized races only), TMNTs provides rules for more detail and originality of character: making creations more animal than human (or intelligent animal) and for changing physical characteristics (like size and hand manipulative ability). The list of animals with which to base characters on also exceeds that provided in GW4 both in detail and length. It does however lack anything like GW4's mutation or psionics rules, both of which would work well in a TMNT campaign (as would many other rules and tidbits from the above listed games).

I don't think you can lose with this one, even at the cover price. A good game on its own and a valuable resource for other RPGs of any genre as well.

Quicky... AFTER THE BOMB, TMNT supplement by E Wujcik for Palladium

This will make an excellent supplement for TSR's new GW4, adding a part of the US northeastern seaboard to GW4's midwest campaign info. The systems are similar and the genre is identical.

HARDWARE HANDBOOK, for DCHeroes, by Troy Denning for Mayfair

As I stated lastish, I got this \$10 supplement at a \$1 store for... you guessed it, \$1. It details new, and reportedly improved, gadget handling rules. Description, construct and use of gadgets are all described in a simple manner. The gadgetry skill, use of labs and conversions to and from DCHeroes original gadget rules are also covered. Although DCHeroes is the least compatible SHRPG I've ever seen, all of this info is useful if you understand the game system's basic attribute score relationship. Each numerical increase in an attribute constitutes a doubling of that ability. Forex, a character with a strength score of 6, is 2x as strong as a character with a score of 5.

The remaining 2/3rds of the book contains descriptions of various hero's equipment. With the above info, the DCHeroes stats become useful

in understanding each gadgets capabilities. Even so, the written descriptions alone make this supplement useful to Superhero, Scifi, Espionage and Post Holocaust RPGers alike. I gave my brother his own copy and he now has a V&V villain in his campaign that uses pool cues with capabilities that parallel Green Arrow's arrow. Other examples include equipment, weapons and vehicles belonging to: Batman (including his utility belt), the Legion of Super-Heroes' (including starships), and the Teen Titans. Other tidbits are included and range from mundane items to claws like Wolverine's.

I would say that at \$5 or less any SHRPGer will get their money's worth. The other genre mentioned above will need to gauge their campaigns tolerance for such gadgets before deciding.

JUST A LITTLE BIT ...

DQ : 5th Cycle stat conversion

PS : STMD : HM AG : AG

MA : MA EN : EN FT : FP

WP : CS PC : IN PB : CL

(DQ has no equivalent for EL)

OTHER POINTS OF VIEW

New gaming mags to check out:

GREY WORLDS, although I've never seen one, I have an info flyer. It appears to be a pro-fanzine/APA for Rolemaster/ICE games, accepting sys generic material on an individual basis. About \$5/issue. For more info: Grey Worlds, 1008 Hillwood Drive, Lewisville, TX 75067.

THE GUARDSMAN, a brand new fanzine of excellent print and graphic quality. The first issue contained a good short fantasy story, AD&D support for the story and a trap suggestion (looks to be a regular feature). The 2nd issue had more articles, all for AD&D. \$1.50 cover price. For more info: The Guardsman, 21611 Park Green Dr., Katy, TX 77450.

VISION Magazine, TFC Interactive Adventures. P.O. Box 7658, Tacoma, WA 98407-0658. I found this pro-zine very satisfying and very The Scroll-like. Articles in #3 (Halloween '92) included: TFC's RPG and world material, CoC artifacts,

Vampire/Werewolf adventure, Ravenloft adventure, BattleTech background material, BBS reviews, fiction and a comic strip. All good stuff, check it out. #4 is supposed to include material for Champions, Primal Order, Twilight 2000 and TFC's RPG.

VORTEXT - I remember when Barry Osser advertised in a Polyhedron that he was starting a magazine. Looks good and covers a broad spectrum of RPG genre. Vortex, 5506 Beaudry Street #C, Emeryville, CA 94608

PECULIAR PERSONALITIES

Sir John Falstaff, for GURPS by Michael Hopcroft, whom is the editor and chief review writer of The Scroll which is published by Sage Lore. Here he models a character from literature into a GURPS character. We hope to see further work by Michael grace our pages.

ST 9, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 10, Move 5.5
Advantages: Charisma +2, Literacy (for TL3 campaign)

Disadvantages: Alcoholism, Cowardice, Fat, Gluttony, Lecherousness, Odious Personal Habit: Braggart (-10).

Skills: Area Knowledge/London-12, Broadsword-12, Carousing-16, Fast-Talk 16, Gambling-12, Bard-15, Streetwise-12, Knife-12.

Quirks: Complains constantly about food and drink, then doesn't pay for it. Likes people to think he's important. Fond of jokes, that go wrong. Doesn't understand why robbing travelers isn't legal. Status hungry. Equipment: Broadsword and dagger.

Sir John is a large, loud, drunken rouge of dubious noble blood. In the early 1400s he cultivated a relationship with Henry, the Prince of Whales, whom he called "Hal". He hangs around a tavern in Eastcheap, a run-down village on the outskirts of London that Hal frequently visits. Falstaff revels in jokes about his own immorality, which includes various illegal means he uses to get money (to spend in taverns and whorehouses). He believes his connection to Hal will get him anything he wants (and he wants a lot) when Hal eventually

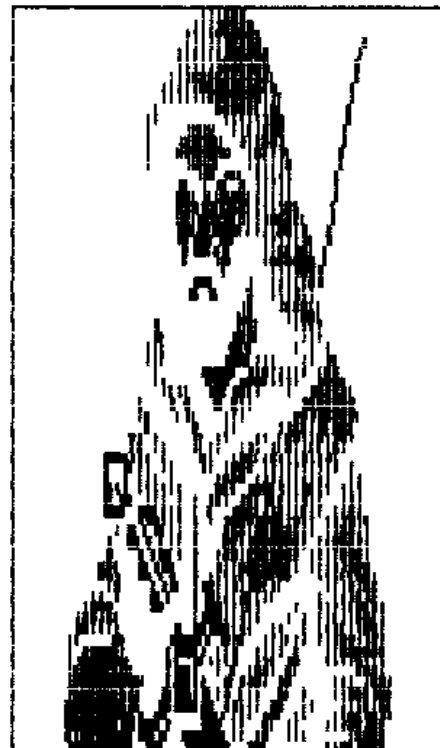
becomes King.

Falstaff has a small gang of robbers in his employ as

"servants", and he even asks the Prince to go on highway robbery missions. The most notable of these servants are Ancient Pistol (who

is a worse braggart than Sir John himself) and Bardolph (a coward who loves comfort and illicit pleasures). Occasionally he goes to war for the Prince, where he defrauds (and sometimes sacrifices) the soldiers he hires and keeps himself well out of danger. He places absolutely no value on honor, courage, nor any chivalric concepts and he has little respect for those who do. Sir John's one redeeming feature is his humorous nature. His schemes almost always backfire on himself, but he keeps trying to pursue his earthly desires and he is still able to laugh at himself when he fails.

Falstaff can be comic relief in an oppressively stuffy fantasy campaign. His schemes can put adventurers on side trips that can be amusing. He might also be encountered trying to rob the PCs, but if a fight is offered he will bluster then try to flee, and if that fails, plead plantively for his life. He can also be the PCs entry to the cheap and tawdry side of London, he knows where all the best alehouses and brothels are. He doesn't have much contact with the real criminal element, who might object to his frequent failures. But he might well have some important item or document mistakenly swiped by Pistol or Bardolph, in which case he will need the protection and



assistance of the PCs to get the thing returned to its original owner before necks are put in the noose.

His connection to Prince Hal is also potentially useful. Anyone who is "Falstaff's friend" is likely to be a non-person at court, as well the high officers and courtiers openly despise him and look forward to seeing him hang. Even the Prince, who Falstaff cultivates eagerly, is merely using the rogue to thresh out the wildness of his youth and gain him introduction to a commoner's life. A person introduced to the Prince by Falstaff will eventually have to break away from the mold and do something actually brave and noble if he wishes to impress the Prince. If he do, he will be a faster friend to them than he ever was to Falstaff.

Falstaff appears in three of Shakespeare's plays, the two parts of King Henry IV and the farcical Merry Wives of Windsor. His death is described in Henry V, with his spirit broken by Henry's final rejection of his friend. Two scenes with him were spliced on to Kenneth Branagh's recent film of Henry V, and those brief scenes give a hint of the character's spirit and charisma.

ENTITY ENCOUNTERS

This issue ends our series of alien races for GURPS, downloaded from Steve Jackson Games' Illuminati BBS at 512/447-4449.

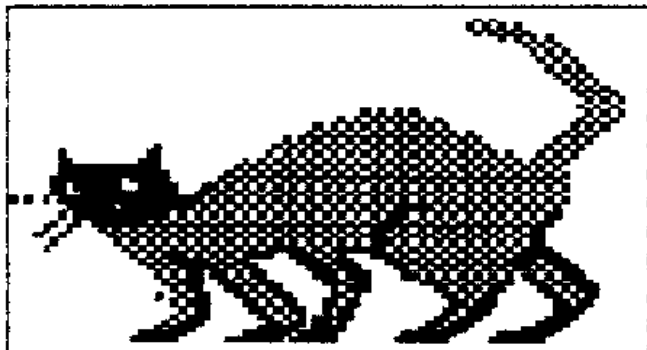
CATS AND LIZARDS: A SYMBIOTIC RACE-PAIR, by Caradon, 2-25-89

Approximately 750 light years closer to galactic center, circling a yellow-white star, is the planet Tkiff. This planet is unusual, because it is the native world to not just one sapient race, but two: the Halzden and the Tyborians. Since before recorded history, these two races have been living in symbiotic harmony.

The Tyborians (Tybors for short) are the powerhouses of the pair, having great strength and amazing constitution. Yet they are slow, both mentally and physically. They resemble huge humanoid lizards,

covered with thick scales.

As a contrast, the Halzden are extremely intelligent and quick, but their very small size (about as big as a Terran house cat) makes them weak and fragile. In fact they highly resemble their Terran counterparts, with the obvious difference that they have six legs.



HALZDEN: 15 pts.

-4 ST	-30
-2 HT	-15
+3 IQ	30
+3 DX	30
Chemical Dependency*	-10
Move +1	5
Telepathy**	25
Prehensile Tail	5
Mute	-25
Peripheral Vision	15
Overconfidence	-10
1/2 Carrying Capacity	-5

TYBORS: 20 pts.

+3 ST	30
+2 HT	20
-4 IQ	-30
-2 DX	-15
Chemical Stimulation*	30
Scales (PD 1, DR 1)	20
Berserk	-15
Honesty	-10

* - The Tybors' attributes can be increased temporarily when a Halzden injects certain chemicals from its body to the Tybor's (+1 ST, +1 HT, +2 DX, +2 IQ). This increase diminishes at a rate of +1/attribute/hour (after the first hour, there will only be a bonus of +1 to DX and IQ) unless the Tybor remains with a Halzden (not necessarily the same one), who can give him another injection.

For their part, the Halzden require certain chemicals in order to remain healthy. When the stimulating

chemicals enhance a Tybor, they change into the chemicals vital to the Halzden. Without these chemicals, the Halzden lose HT at a rate of 1 pt./24 hours. This damage cannot be healed by normal means. Cheap replacement chemicals are available (\$5/dose), but they only slow the loss down to 1 pt./48 hours. Only about an ounce of chemical-laced Tybor blood is required. A Halzden will normally ride about on a Tybor's shoulder, near the base of the neck which is the optimum place for chemical injection/removal (the area, naturally, has no pain sensors). The injection and removal is performed with a hollow, sharpened tube, located under a Halzden tongue.

** - The Halzden are Telepathic (see GURPS Horror or Horsecians for more info), but this ability is limited; they have a Power of TP7 when communicating with other Halzden, but a Power of only TP3 when communicating with other races. As against this, a Halzden can temporarily "take over" another being's vocal chords in order to be heard over a distance. This takes no skill roll if the subject is willing; otherwise it requires a Telesend roll at -6.

Normally, Halzden and Tybor children are "bonded" shortly after birth. A bonded pair normally remain together for all their lives, but may go separate ways if they so choose. Due to their relatively low intelligence and speaker/steed double function to the Halzden, Tybors are usually referred to as "mounts" by persons of all races (i.e. "that Halzden and his mount..."). They are, however, capable of individual thought, although they sometimes prefer their Halzden rider to do the thinking for them.

Halzden are not able to carry much equipment; their Encumbrance ratings are reduced to one-half normal (No encumbrance=ST pounds, Light=2*ST, etc.). A Halzden's prehensile tail is able to lift objects up to ST pounds, and is easily able to manipulate such objects (a laser pistol, for instance...). Halzden normally remain

on all sixes, though they can stand upright for short periods of time. Their front paws are capable of fine manipulation of objects (+2 to Surgery and Lockpicking skills). Also, their long necessity of climbing up to a Tybor's shoulder (among other things) has given them a +2 to Climbing skill.

Editorial

Keepin' Busy (Role Playing in the College Atmosphere)

by Jeff J. Craigmile

Most of us, with any luck, were introduced to role-playing at an early age. This leads some to continue with their hobby into their college years and beyond. However, college is a very important part of one's life and is not to be taken lightly.

At the end of a recent gaming session I asked around to see what schedules looked like for the rest of the week to better plan and prepare for the next gaming session. Most either had to work or had a night class. There is also the problem of having a "significant other" who will undoubtedly want to spend time with you if they do not game. With these factors, one can imagine how hard it is to get five or six people, together on the same evening at the same time, to do any serious gaming.

I think the biggest problem with gaming in college is time. It is probably best to not limit the group in such a way that certain players have to be present to play a certain game. For instance, in order for our group to play Rifts, we need three very important people who have been campaigning since the beginning. We need Akira, the Glitter Boy Pilot, a spherian Excaliber pilot borrowed from Robotech, and it doesn't hurt to have the Wolfen Warlock or Stone Mage characters handy, just in case. Since it is hard to get these characters and corresponding players together, we didn't get to play Rifts much. Since then, a more open Rifts campaign has been established with different characters.

In light of the time problem, here are a few simple solutions. One, an open campaign can be set up to run

whenever the GM is available and run with whoever is present at the time. This does create a few headaches for the GM who always has to have something ready and figure out where and why characters often disappear temporarily. Another easy solution is to play strategy games that can be set up and only take a few hours. Gamma Knights, Battle Tech and Star Fleet Tactical are good for this as well as others.

Another problem facing the college gamer is money. Role playing material costs a little less than most college texts. Students need not despair or quit gaming, make the best of what is at hand. Most GM's only touch a fraction of the source material in the books. When all else fails, try to borrow the book and photocopy as much as you need. Sure photocopies aren't always free, but it is often cheaper than buying an entire book for a small amount of usable material. Another good way to go is buying second hand materials.

Just because you've started college, there is no reason to quit gaming. You may have to cut back a bit or take a break for awhile, but role playing games are ageless as is continually proven by the people who have been gaming since the original D&D came out some 25+ years ago. More mature gamers have more fun because they have already uncovered many of the basic plot lines that challenge younger players. Also as your knowledge of history and other subjects grows, the more detailed and complex some plots grow. Keeping up on current events can also help for modern role playing.

A good education is important. I have heard of people playing too much, seeing their grades drop and flunking out. It is important to have one's nose stuck in a text book first and in a role playing game book second. It is also important to pay attention to one's girl/boyfriend or spouse as role playing is time consuming and, along with school, it is easy for someone to get left out. Sometimes it doesn't hurt to buy flowers, go out to dinner, etc., instead of gaming. The group doesn't

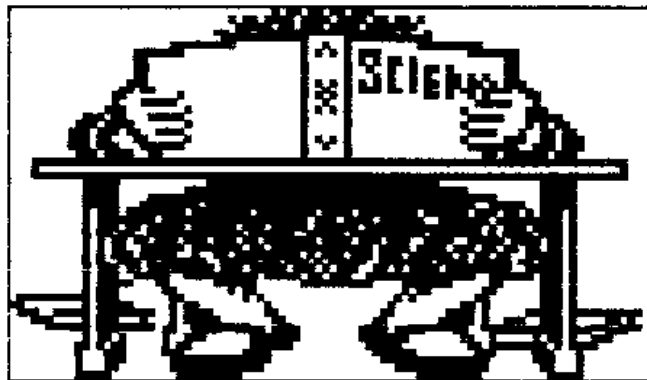
always appreciate it when you skip out, but most of the time they are pretty understanding.

On another note, for those of us far away from home (and away from old gaming groups) college offers a chance to meet new players either through casual acquaintances at school or through an ad placed in the school newspaper. However, new friends don't always come easy, and it may take awhile to find a new group. Through my own experiences with these situations, I have found that publications like this, the RPGA, and a lot of pen pals, help pass the time.

I also think that gaming groups are large enough on some campuses to start up their own fraternity. The only problem being that along with the college atmosphere there are always "those people" who think that role playing should be banned for religious or other reasons. Of course, most of us know that this is hog wash and you would think that there would be enough open-mindedness in a college environment that role players would at least be accepted. Apparently that is not always the case.

A lot of other good advice on gaming in college can be abstracted from the 2nd edition AD&D Campaign Guide. A lot of the section entitled "Uses of Judgement" has been very helpful. Sporadically, an article will appear in Polyhedron or Dragon that can also be of importance to a college gamer.

An education is important. So is sticking with a life long hobby and making new friends that you can share it with. My final advice for college gamers is "Don't get discouraged".



"Tales From the Floating Vagabond"
a review of the new RPG from Avalon Hill, by Gareth Jones, editor and

publisher of Black Mole, a UK fanzine. This review originally appeared in BM#5, Gareth can be reached at: 69 Atherley Road, Shirely, Southampton, SO1 5DT, England.

This is a new, and silly, game. I suspect that the basic idea came from the title of Spider Robinson's excellent book "Callahan's Cross-Time Saloon", though none of the details did.

It tries to be sort of a cross between "Rifts" (using these rules you should be able to game in any genre, or mix genres you like together) and "Toon" (ie it aims to be funny rather than serious).

The basic idea is that all characters start off at the bar after which the game is named. This is in another dimension and the owner has installed a sort of space/time warp generator, which means that when you walk through the door of any bar in any universe you can end up hear instead of where you expected. From then on the adventures can take you to just about anywhere you can imagine.

The game itself is contained in a 98 page large soft-back book. It's nicely illustrated in a cartoon style appropriate to the feel of the game, with a color cover. Also included are various business cards from such luminaries as ACME rent-a-thug. Characters have various stats, skills, etc and a shtick (personal characteristic) which is meant to be amusing, eg. the Roy Rogers Effect allows the character to describe some ludicrous way out of a scrape, which may just come true. Most of the humor seems to lie in giving things silly names, eg. hit points are "oops" points (as in "oops, I've been shot"), large missile weapons range from "Really Big Gun" to "Don't Point that at my Planet".

The rules allow for the creation of various alien/fantasy races, with several examples given, such as elves and rhino men. There are some nice rules ideas here, for instance, to accomplish a task: roll a die and score your skill or lower, but the die used depends on the difficulty of the task: eg d4 for "Pitifully Easy" tasks to a d100 for a "Nigh Impossible" one.

Each section of the rules is introduced by an NPC who hangs out at the bar, which is an interesting concept. All are more powerful than a beginning PC is allowed to be.

The rules are written in a way which is intended to be amusing. Sometimes it is, as a disclaimer at the beginning "Any resemblances to actual persons living, dead, nearly dead, kind of living, undead, foul tempered, invisible, ectoplasmic, frictionless, violent or internal combustion driven is purely coincidental.". More often it seems to be trying too hard. This is some of what the rules say about the GM for example, "He also dreams up all the little nasties to toss at Players (Ooops! Sorry, Patrons) to make life difficult for them. Game Masters in this game are called "Bartenders". Aren't these guys just too clever?



I'm in two minds about this game. On the one hand, the rules (once you get passed the wisecracks) seem neat and workable, light enough to enjoy play. They could probably be used as the basis of a fairly amusing campaign. On the other hand, I think the whole will only be actually funny (which seems to be the intention) if the GM (Ooops! Sorry, "Bartender"...was that funny?) has an excellent imagination and a better sense of humor than the writers. The example adventure given looks playable enough, but I couldn't see anything funny about it. Sure it's a little off-the-wall, but not all that amusing. I would enjoy playing this game with the right people, in an adventure which is intrinsically funny. Otherwise, I can't see it as outstanding in any way.

The idea of mixing "Toon"-type laughter with noncartoon roleplay is an excellent one, and ought to provide some really memorable adventures, but I don't really think they've brought it off successfully. Perhaps if they bring out some highly amusing adventures, it might save their bacon. There was one in Challenge magazine #52, called "The Night Was Fluffy", which was basically a monster encounter (appropriate as that was the special "Bestiary" issue). The PCs accept a mission from a mad scientist which involves them with any number of cute, fluffy, and lethal, soft toys.

Although I'm not too impressed with what's been done with it, I like what's been done with it, I like the basic idea of the game, and I'm certainly going to keep my eye on this one, it has a lot of potential.

Modules include: Bar Wars, The Adventure With No Name, The Reich Stuff and various others.

So, to sum up: a nice idea, a nice game system, worth watching. Buy it if you think you and your players will be able to bring sparkle to the game that it needs to make it actually funny. Don't expect the sessions to be automatically hilarious just because this is a "joke" system.

AN INTERVIEW with Mark Arsenault, editor of The Gamer's Connection

1. What started you publishing TGC and what inspires you to continue? I intended it to be a prop for my Champions campaign. But, one after another, ideas started jumping into my head. "What if I did a fanzine?", "What if I could list players seeking players in Sacramento?", etc. Before I knew it I was setting out a thousand copies of TGC#1 in local game shops.

What keeps me going are the readers. The response has been great, and the feedback positive, since I decided to market TGC as a fanzine. TGC is about gamers sharing ideas, and our readers are in no short supply of those!

2. How do you approach a product review you are writing for TGC? What do you look for, likes and dislikes.

You're making me think now

(ouch). When I review a product I read through it and then ask myself, "Self, what do you think?" I try to put my initial reaction into words. I don't bother dissecting it because prospective buyers won't. I figure all the "professional" reviewers will put the flouroscope to a new product, so I can concentrate on the real questions; Is it fun? Is it thorough? Is it coherent? If it's not all three then I'm not going to recommend it. Supprisingly, a number of less successful products meet the criteria but fail because people go for the flash and fluff. Too many people confuse pretty pictures and fancy packaging for content and playability.

3. What game systems are you most fond of or inspired by, and why?

Champions, hands down. I've been with it since the first edition came out in '81 (remember the one that looked like it was cranked out on a school typewriter?).

For inspiration, it's hard to say. I assume you mean inspiration for writing and/or role-playing. I guess Champions again, but several games have really stimulated those creative juices, like the original Top Secret, Aftermath and Paranoia. Yeah, those would have to be my choices. We had some excellent campaigns for those way back.

4. TGC's NPC Corner is a regular feature that's pretty self explanatory. What other features, or types of articles, do you run regularly in TGC and what should potential contributors know about them?

TGC has a classified ad section for readers called "The Merchant's Guild", an event/con listing called "What's Going ON?", a letter section called "Thought Projection" and occasional Product Reviews to give TGC a semi-pro look, as well as provide a service to our readers.

As far as real meat, I write a short feature article for each issue. They are typically 300-500 words; Just enough to get you thinking about the topic. The rest of each issue I try to fit in as many submissions as I can like guest articles or reviews, NPCs, etc.

Our bottom line for contributors is; No profanity, nudity, slurs, plagiarism or descriptions of rituals/ceremonies (except in game terms). The other, mundane, guidelines are in our Writer's Guidelines.

5. I am a huge proponent, and practitioner, of mixing and matching game supplements with different systems. In your experience, what systems and types of supplements are most inter-compatible (generic)?

GURPS, of course. After all, it stands for "Generic, Universal...", you know. With the GURPS rules you can create (or re-create) anything. The Hero System also comes to mind. Hero has most of the bugs worked out by now, and allows for a faster paced game (ie; combat) than GURPS. GURPS on the other hand, is more detailed in its representation of "real" things. I prefer Hero, but either is good for translating other products into your existing campaign.

I'd have to say that the D&D dynasty of games is the worst. It's too genre-specific, and self-limiting for my taste. I'll stop there.

6. In your opinion, what are the most innovative or exciting products to hit the gaming market in the past few years?

Exciting? Take your pick! There have been some hot releases, and the market has been flooded with new products. I'd say the selection alone is exciting. Innovative? Amber takes it. Still, while there have been good products on store shelves, I find that most of them are just old cars with a new paint job. Too much emphasis is placed on details of game mechanics. I mean, "Oh, wow! This game uses 5 sided dice! How innovative!", it's pure crap. A different combat system and holographic maps are nice, but how the game plays is what counts, not how it looks.

7. In its beginning, our hobby was rich with small companies and fanzines. Now, after a long dry spell, I perceive an explosion of interest and expansion. What do you feel caused this and how long do you expect it to last?

I think it's self-perpetuating. With more products out there you're

more likely to have one catch someone's eye. Presto! a new gamer! Now, with more gamers you have companies releasing more products to grab a share of this larger market. It's circular and it can be vicious.

A major contributor are the increasing number of licensed products hitting the scene. From TSR's flop Indiana Jones RPG, to Marvel Superheroes, DC Heroes, Aliens, Star Trek, Star Wars, the licensed GURPS books, etc. I think they have attracted a crossover crowd, if you will, that may not necessarily become gamers.

I think we'll see a lull in a few more years, once the bandwagon is pretty much full, but I don't think gaming will really decline in popularity anytime soon. It's becoming more recognized by the public as something other than a secret Nazi coven of pagan pro-cyborg anarchists. Gamers are just people (albeit people with an incredibly adhesive stigma), and I think non-gamers are finding that out.

8. TGC is published by MTA Graphics. What else does MTA do and what would you like it to accomplish in the future?

We've done some silk-screened T-shirt designs and some small scale ad designing, but TGC is our primary project at the moment. It brings little or no cash flow but it's the most rewarding for me.

I want to do some writing of game materials for an established company (perhaps doing something for and existing game system, under license), and eventually I'd like to publish our own products.

9. Tell us about your favorite character you have role-played.

Whew! It's a toss up between my Champions hero, White Dragon, or any of my Champions villains (take your pick). I love the flexibility and variety of running my NPCs. But if I had to narrow it down to just one I'd have to say White Dragon. He's a Chinese immigrant and a martial artist. I've been playing him since 1982 (with a small break for a stint in the USAF), so needless to say he's gone through quite a few changes. For

instance, he's still a hero but that code against killing went out the window a while ago.

ENDORSEMENTS

Alarums & Excursions, the largest and predominant RPG Amateur Press Association (APA). Published by Lee Gold (ICE Vikings, GURPS Japan, Lands of Adventure, Land of the Rising Sun). Don't just read, participate! For more information send a SASE to, Lee Gold, 3965 Alla Road, Los Angeles, CA 90066.

Silver Griffin, a semi-pro, independent magazine on RPGs. For more information send a SASE to, Devlin Janax editor, Silver Griffin, P.O. Box 1751, St. Paul, MN 55101.

The Scroll, a bi-monthly RPG magazine by gamers, for gamers. For more information send a SASE to, Bob Anderson, The Scroll, Sage Lore Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 14616, Portland, OR 97214.

Silver, Swords & Sorcery, a new FRPG fanzine looking for subscribers and contributors. For more information send a SASE to Silver, Swords & Sorcery, c/o Scott Mash, 11685 SR 691, Nelsonville, OH 45764.

The Gamer's Connection, a small press publication looking for subscribers and writers. For more information, and writers guidelines, send a SASE to: The Gamer's Connection, P.O. Box 278331, Sacramento, CA 95827.

Abyss Quarterly, Ragnarok Enterprises magazine of RPGs. Coverage includes Ragnarok's Ysgarth and To Challenge Tomorrow RPGs and many others. For more info, send a SASE to: Abyss, Ragnarok, P.O. Box 140333, Austin, TX 78714

NEW PC/NPC RACES FOR AD&D, Halfbreeds (final install)

Downloaded from Smasher Land BES 614/593-8359, by DRAKE 9-FEB-1992

This is some stuff some of you have seen before, and some of you haven't. Most of these deviant races are of my own creation while some are from "official" AD&D sources (Dragon magazine, etc). Pass these along to

others. Give me responses, what do you think? Enjoy.

HALF-IMP

Initial Requirements-- 3/17 S, 3/18 D, 6/18 C, 3/17 I, 3/16 W, spec Ch
Ability Modifiers-- -3 S, +1 D, +1 C, -2 W, 1d4 Ch

special abilities--

- 30' infravision
- regenerate 1 hp/5 rounds
- 10% magic resistance
- save as if 1 level higher
- unable to reproduce

Level Cutoff-- Can advance to level 15 mage, level 5 priest (must be evil), level 5 specialist wizard

Movement Rate-- 9

Initial Languages Learnable-- common

Notes: Birth tends to kill the mother, exceedingly ugly, must be evil unless blessed before birth by a high (18) level priest of a good religion. Tend towards lawfulness.

HALF-QUASIT

Initial Requirements-- see half-imp

Ability Modifiers-- -2 S, +1 D, +1 C, -1 I, -2 W, 1d4 Ch

Thief Ability Modifiers-- +5% HS

Special Abilities-- see half-imp

Level Cutoff-- can advance to level 12 mage, level 5 priest (must be evil), level 5 specialist wizard, level 5 thief

Movement Rate-- 9

Initial Languages Learnable-- common

Notes: See half-imp, tend towards chaos.

MONGRELMAN



Initial Requirements-- 9/18 S, 9/18 D, 9/18 C, 3/18 I, 3/18 W, spec Ch

Ability Modifiers-- +1 D, +1 C, -1 I

Thief Ability Modifiers-- +5% MS,

+5% DN, -15% F/RT, -15% OL, -25% RL
 Special Abilities--
 - 30' infravision
 - can imitate creature sounds they've encountered (perfect accuracy, no special sounds)
 - natural thief abilities: 70% PP, 80% HS (use these as base for thief characters)
 Level Cutoff-- can advance to level 7 fighters, level 9 thieves
 Movement Rate-- 9
 Initial Languages Learnable-- mongrelman

HALF-NYPH

Initial Requirements-- 3/18 S, 6/18 D, 3/17 C, 3/18 I, 3/18 W, 9/18 Ch
 Ability Modifiers-- -1 S, -2 C, +1 I, -1 W, +3 Ch
 Thief Ability Modifiers-- +10% HS, +10% MS, +5% DN, -10% F/RT, -10% OL, +5% CW
 Special Abilities--
 - sight of them does NOT cause blindness or death
 - immune to effects of looking at a nymph
 - save at +2 vs. effects of merely looking at something (gaze attacks)
 - get 2 bonus hps at first level
 Level Cutoff-- can advance to level 4 fighter, level 12 ranger (males only), level 10 enchanter (not mage), level 7 priest (of love, beauty, nature, etc), level 12 druid (females only), level 4 thief, level 7 bard
 Movement Rate-- 12
 Initial Languages Learnable-- nymph, common

Notes: Offspring of human and nymph or elf and nymph, makes not fundamental difference - one oddity: 85% are female.

HALF-OGRE

Initial Requirements-- all special
 Ability Modifiers-- d6+13 S (add 25% to exceptional Str if warranted), 3d4 D, d6+13 C, 3d4 I, 2d6 W, 2d4 Ch (if S or C comes up 19 its an 18)
 Special Abilities--
 - 60' infravision
 - -4 to hit size S creatures
 - -6 to hit size T creatures
 - effective Cha is doubled vs. ogres and half ogres
 - original rules give them 2 hit dice



at first level, but to fit in with 2nd Ed. rules they get a bonus 4 hit points at first level

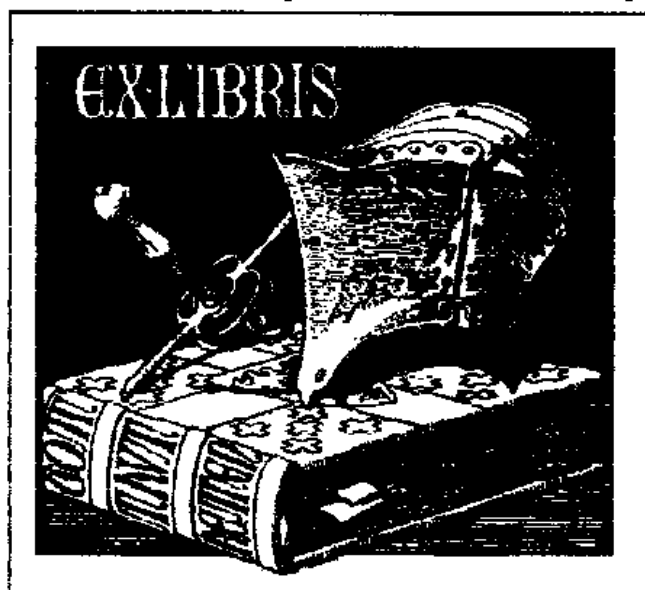
Level Cutoff-- can advance to level 4 cleric, unlimited fighter advancement
 Movement Rate-- 12
 Initial Languages Learnable-- ogre, human

HALF-ORC

Initial Requirements-- 6/18 S, 3/14 D, 13/18 C, 3/17 I, 3/14 W, 3/12 Ch
 Ability Modifiers-- +1 S, +1 C, -2 Ch
 Thief Ability Modifiers-- -5% PP, +5% OL, +5% F/RT, +5% DN, +5% CW, -10% RL
 Special Abilities-- 60' infravision
 Level Cutoff-- can advance to level 13 fighter, level 5 cleric, level 9 thief
 Movement Rate-- 9
 Initial Languages Learnable-- orc, common, goblin

THE DICTIONARY SAYS ...

anlace (an' lis) n. A 2 edged medieval dagger [Middle English anlas, anelas].



Calthrani

High, arid plains present their inhabitants with many unique problems. Unlike the deserts common in most regions, the high desert combines the usual lack of water with frigid temperatures. This combination of environmental factors has produced a peculiar breed of elf.

Culture: These elves, called the Calthrani by some, have evolved a unique culture specially adapted for the cold, dry climate of the high desert. They highly revere the virtues of endurance and stoicism. This belief, combined with the constant challenge of survival, has inhibited the normal Elven appreciation of art and music. The Calthrani tend to produce very utilitarian items rather than objects of art. There are, however recurring themes within their crafts. The huge eagles that inhabit the mountains around the high desert are often depicted on household items. The Calthrani admire the way the eagles have mastered the terrible winds that plague the Elves. This admiration has even been translated into the formation of a cult dedicated to the worship of the eagles. To be admitted to the cult, a young elf must journey to the mountains, scale them and retrieve a bundle of feathers from the huge eagles. After that is done, the elf must construct a glider using the feathers and glide back down the mountain. Many young members of the clans have perished in the attempt to enter the Order of the Eagle, but the clans see this as a way to weed out the weaker youngsters.

Physique: The Calthrani' build has also adapted to the cold climate of the high desert. They are stockier than their sylvan cousins and tend to

be nearly as tall as humans. The Calthrani have also developed a profusion of body hair, including facial hair. Because of this, they are sometimes able to pass for human if their ears are covered. These physiological changes have resulted in the loss of the normal +1 to Dexterity that other elves get. However, the harsh conditions in which the Calthrani live have toughened them considerably. This has resulted in a +1 to their Constitution.

Role Playing: To some, the Calthrani may seem to be a type of half-elf, this is untrue. The Calthrani receive all of the traditional benefits of being an Elf, with the exception of the Dexterity bonus. Most of the class and level restrictions placed on elves also apply to the Calthrani. The major difference between the Calthrani and the traditional Elves is their attitude toward life. The Calthrani have been beaten down by circumstance, but have refused to yield. In this respect, they can easily find kindred spirits among Dwarves and often trade with them. The Calthrani give players a chance to play a sort of "Norse" Elf. The Calthrani tend toward the more Lawful alignments, but are always Good or Neutral. If a Calthrani child shows signs of evil alignment, they are abandoned by the clan. Other good-aligned races in the high desert put a high value on the word of the Calthrani. Members of the Order of the Eagle are able to become Paladins if their ability scores are high enough.

Written by: Douglas M. Warren

