



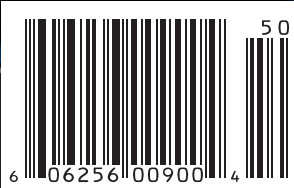
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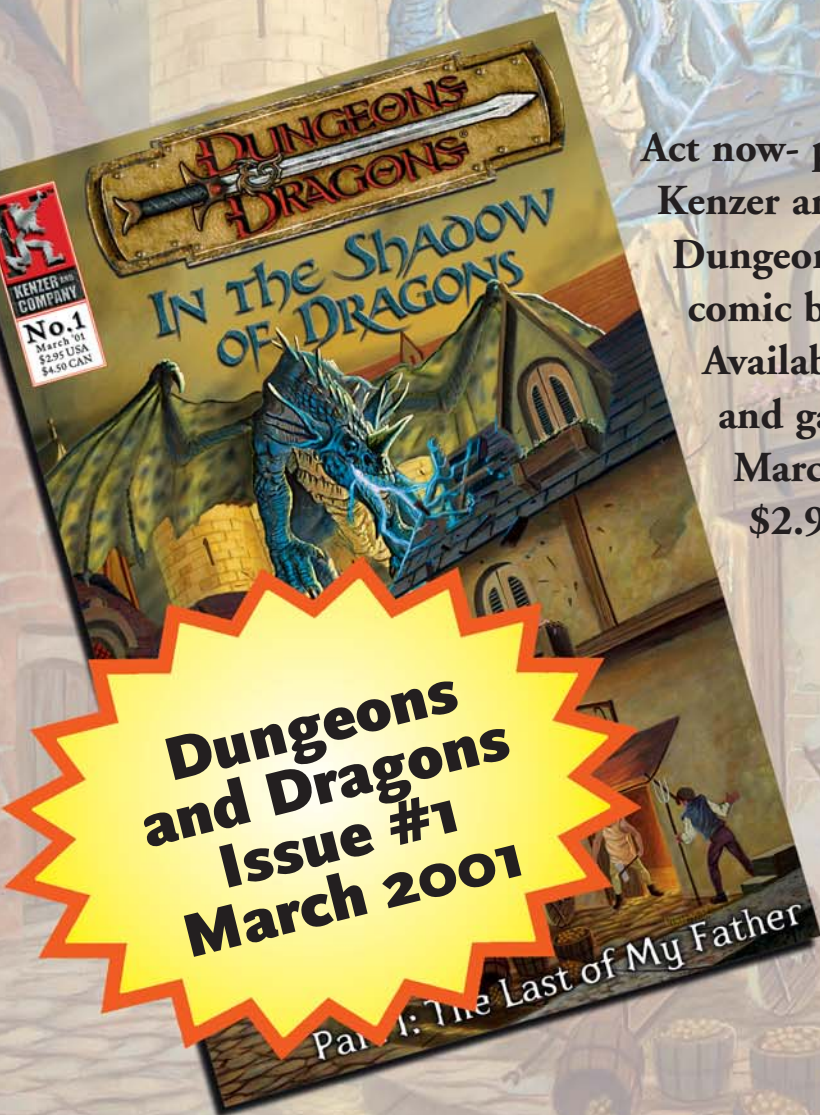
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KENZER AND COMPANY

Knights of the Dinner Table #50
WE'VE NOT YET
BEGUN TO FIGHT

December, 2000

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Submissions: We accept submissions for strip ideas, jokes, cartoons, etc. We are interested in running anything that other gamers and fans would enjoy. Check out our website for writer's guidelines.

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Knights of the Dinner Table™ MAGAZINE

"WE'VE NOT YET BEGUN TO FIGHT"

THE KODT DEVELOPMENT TEAM IS

JOLLY R. BLACKBURN • BRIAN JELKE • STEVE JOHANSSON • DAVID S. KENZER
Cover Art by George and Jackie Vrbanic • Editorial Assistance: Barbara Blackburn

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KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE™ was accidentally created by Jolly R. Blackburn way back in 1990 as 'filler' for his small press magazine, SHADIS™. It was something of a 'creative burp' and Jolly really didn't give it much thought. Perhaps that's why he was just as surprised as anyone that soon KODT was overshadowing everything else he'd ever done and that the *created* was now controlling the *creator*. Fortunately, writing and drawing KODT strips isn't the lonely job it was in the past. Hundreds of fans have contributed to the beast over the years and since joining the ranks of KENZER AND COMPANY and the formation of the KODT D-TEAM, the Knights have gone far beyond anything Jolly or fellow D-team members, Steve, Dave or Brian ever imagined. It's been a wild ride and the D-Team looks forward to seeing where the gang takes them next.



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Editorial-of-a-Madman™

"KODT is a celebration – not of gaming but of gamers themselves."

From the Editorial of Bundles of Trouble Volume I

Well, here we are -- the big Five-O. Hard to believe that I've sat down over fifty times to write these editorials and (based on the ever-rising distribution levels) folks are still buying and reading KODT. In the immortal words of one game manufacturer who stopped by our booth at GenCon a few years ago, "Who would have thunk?"

Indeed, who would have thunk that a crappy little comic strip in the back of a small press zine would go so far? Certainly not I (After all I'm the guy who tried in vain to kill the strip several years ago. -shudder-) Those crudely drawn characters, however, dragged me screaming down a career path I really had no intention of taking. Now, in hindsight I thank God they did. And thank God I crossed paths with Dave Kenzer, Brian Jelke and Steve Johansson along the way. Not only have they made the journey more enjoyable but KODT has greatly benefited from their creative input. Trust me when I say this — without their involvement KODT would have gone the way of the Dodo a long, long time ago. (Thanks, guys!)

Now, I'm told a fiftieth issue is a really big mile-stone in the world of comics — a cause for great celebration. It means you're a survivor in a very tough market. (A market, I might add, that finds KODT to be a very strange animal and not quite sure what to make of. Is it a gaming product or a comic?)

Celebrating sounded like a darn good idea, so we've pulled out all the stops on this issue. We're doing a double-issue. Twice the normal helping of KODT-strips. Twice the fun. Twice the work. (And, hopefully, half the typos.)

Besides forty pages of KODT strips you'll find the most up to date and complete index to the strips ever attempted. (Many thanks by the way to the members of clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/knightsofthedinertable for their help with



What's wrong with this picture? World's worst drawn strip finds an audience? — Who would have thunk?

the index. If you haven't checked out this KODT forum yet - do so. We have over 600 members and growing. If you're a fan, you'll be in good company).

Also in this issue, you'll find bios for all those KODT characters we haven't covered yet in the back of the various volumes of Bundles of Trouble. You know who I'm talking about — folks like Crutch, Patty and so on who never had their own listings. You'll also find bios for those characters who have been mentioned but (until now) never seen. (Bridget Keating, Sheila Horowitz, Whitey Moran...)

Perhaps it's fitting that the 50th issue of KODT is also the issue where we make the announcement fans have been waiting to hear 'officially' for years — the release of HackMaster: the RPG. (For more details turn to this issue's installment of GameVine.) It's something readers have been demanding for a long time so we know expectations are high. (No pressure, here)

So....with all thing considered there really is A LOT to celebrate.

By the way, this issue is dedicated to our fans. You guys RULE!!

Jolly R. Blackburn

Jolly R. Blackburn



Hey Gang,

The first 50 ISSUES was a WILD RIDE!! Every day we're reminded that YOU, the reader, are the real heroes -- You're the most important part of the KODT equation. Without you - what would be the point? (Know what we mean?)

Your support and overwhelming enthusiasm has allowed us to live the 'dream'. We owe you - dudes!!

Many, many thanks from the KODT D-Team!!

Jolly R. Blackburn

David Kenzer

Brian Jelke

Steve Johansson

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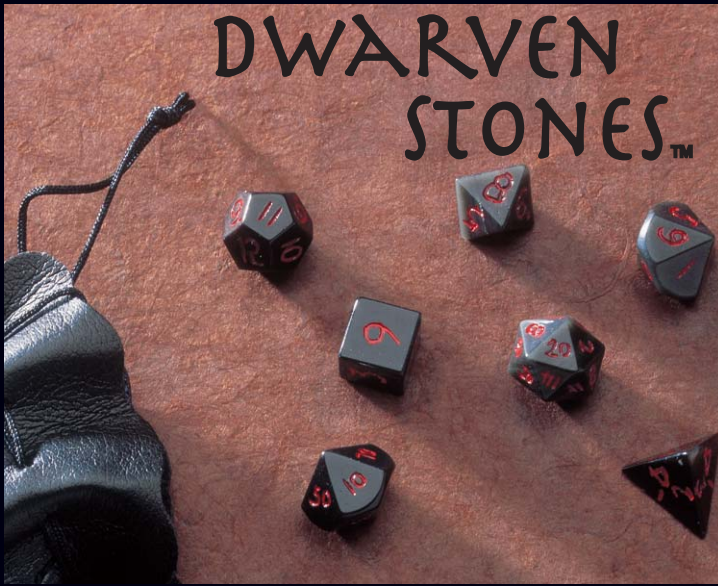


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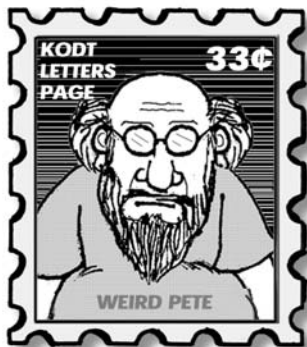
SEEN 'EM? I ALREADY GOT MYSELF **ALL TEN SETS!!** YOU'RE IN TROUBLE TONIGHT SCREEN MONKEY. YOU AND ALL YER GRUDGE MONSTERS! THESE BEAUT'S ARE JUST **OZZING** WITH LUCK.

I HEARD THEY'RE MADE OF REAL GEMSTONES. IMAGINE THAT. IT'S LIKE JEWELRY THAT YOU CAN PLAY GAMES WITH.

WOW. LOOK AT THOSE NEW COLORS. AND THE QUALITY LOOKS LIKE THEY HAVE REAL DWARVEN GEMSMITHS PAINSTAKINGLY CRAFTING EACH AND EVERY ONE.

HEY BOB, I'LL TRADE YOU A SNOW OBSIDIAN EIGHT SIDER FOR A RED JASPER SIX SIDER. I THINK THE RED JASPER IS INCREASING THE STRENGTH OF MY FIREBALLS.





Dear KODT,

I have been eagerly awaiting the sequel to the game of the year, *Baldur's Gate*. Well, BG2 is out and it is QUITE awesome.

However, there was something I noticed during gameplay that had me rolling out of my chair with laughter...

During the quest you get from *Hendak* in *Baldur's Gate 2*, you can gain access to a talking sword. This sword has a lot of funny things to say, but during a battle with the slavers later on, the sword proclaimed that *'My brother is a hackmaster +12!'*

I just HAD to tell you about this, apparently some folks at *Black Isle* are reading your comic!

Keep up the great work.
The Biggest KODT Fan,

Ross Watson
via E-mail

Thanks Ross for pointing out this particular KODT-sighting outside the comic. About a dozen readers wrote in to tell us about the "HackMaster +12!" reference in BG2. How kewl is that? Now....if we can just talk the folks at Interplay into doing the HackMaster edition of Baldur's Gate, our lives would be complete.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

First, let me grovel by saying that KODT is the only magazine I ever buy (well, an occasional *Dragon*, but I don't think you mind). Second, let me ask: *Fairy Meat*...can I order it online? And, if I can't, where can my distributor get it from you all? There is a little 4 or 5 person campaign going on in which we have begged for *Fairy Meat*, but one store says they can't get ahold of it while the other store asks for the info on it. So, how can I get hold of the game?

Your devotee,

Mr. Bucket (*POP*)
Montclair NJ

We obviously underestimated demand for Fairy Meat. The game was a surprise hit and the first print run sold out in a matter of weeks.

By the time you read this the 2nd print-

Our Readers Talk Back!

ing will be available and your local gameshop(s) should have no problems ordering it from the game distributors they work with.

Yes, you can order KenzerCo product online or by calling the home office. As is evidenced in most every issue of KODT, we encourage our fans to support their local shops. However, we do realize that many folks no longer have a game shop in their area and that some retailers, for whatever reason, may not stock our entire product line.

At any rate, if you want Fairy Meat it should be readily available by the time this sees print.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Oh wow, I don't even know where to start. My name is Aaron, I have to say I am easily *Knights Of The Dinner Table's* biggest fan. I LOVE you guys and all your work. I know you have a lot of emails to read and all so I won't bother with a lot of your time. I just wanted to say I am leaving for the Army soon and will be cut off from the wonderful comic books you guys produce. I was wondering if you could do something special for me before I leave. If not, no problem, I'll still be your #1 fan. Thanks a lot and I love you guys.

Aaron
via E-mail

Don't fret, Aaron. At least two of the developers (Steve and myself) have served in the Army and we're proud to report that gaming is alive and well among the ranks. I expect you'll run into a KODT fan or two in no time. So chin up.

You neglected to send a snail-mail address otherwise I would have dropped a signed copy of KODT in the mail to you. Then it occurred to me that that's really not that 'special'. Surely we can do better.

I made a few phone calls and struck paydirt. I talked with Gary Jackson and he's agreed to send you a waiver for 10,000 experience points to be applied to your next player character. Just present it to your next GameMaster (accredited by the HMPA of course) and you'll be on the back-track to gaming splendor again in no time.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

I'm wondering if Jolly will be at the games fair in Essen, Germany, this year? Jolly, I saw you last year, but I was a bit frightened to speak to a greater god of humor without permission. (*We're not worthy! we're not worthy!...*) but I was very amazed to see you standing there with a hand full of german paper money without having a clue, what worth the notes you have. You gave the women in front of me less change money back and she asked you for the rest and when the turn came to me

to pay for the two comics, you gave me too much exchange so I had to return you some of it - very funny!

I have never read a better comic series than the *Knights*, the simple reduction of hilarious line art mixed with that sometimes very subtle insider humour is greatest (*my english is not good enough for really expressing how much I love these*). The drawings remind me of the good old days, when I was doing my first black and white computer illustrations with my AtariST.

I wonder where I can buy that "Hack Master GM ToolKit" for my Macintosh? (smile).

The "Sprechen Sie Dwarvish"-strip was very cool (*especially for me as a german*). but I thought it was unfair from B.A., that Bob and Dave got no experience points for developing their own language. (*I laughed my lungs off when they did the gagging*). They should be awarded an extra 5000 exps. for that.

I was very pleased to hear your new games review policy. I am a very small games editor here in Germany (www.FlyingGames.de) and it's nice to hear that there are more people who think that "small games" need some support. In the last few years too many little or medium sized game companies have died away.

But the good idea always wins! Therefore best wishes for a glorious future of the *Knights*.

Markus Still
Karlsruhe, Germany

Sadly I won't be attending the Essen show this year, Markus. (Since this issue will hit the streets well after the Essen-show you'll already know this.) My schedule wouldn't allow me to go last month but I hope to make it back soon.

Brian Jelke will be representing us this year. As an engineer he can make change a little better than I can. (Converting U.S. prices to D-Marks caused me to blow the few ciphering-fuses I had left.)

I did have a great time last year and it was wonderful to meet our german friends and to realize we have so much in common.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Just thought I'd take a moment and compliment you on one of the funniest, most dead-on takes on RPGs and gamers I've ever seen. KODT never fails to crack me up, and bring back pleasant memories of games past.

I especially appreciate watching "*Patty's Perps*" take on the education of Crutch in all things *HackMaster*. I've been there many times myself, as a DM or as a player, helping to bring new gamers into our world. Maybe *Patty's* group should try something I've done in the past.

Several years ago, a friend of mine had

asked if he could be included in our weekly D&D campaign. He was very excited about playing, but had little or no concept of "playing in character" and what that meant in a high fantasy setting.

To help him, I prepared a "viewing list" (It would have been a "reading list", but he claimed he had no time to "do homework"). Over the course of one snowy weekend, several of us (including our new recruit), rented a bunch of movies we felt were "gamesque". As we watched, we pointed out character archetypes that our new player could aspire towards.

It worked wonders, and he began role playing in earnest. (Although there were occasional out-of-character disasters. His advice to the party after being trounced by a Death Knight - "Guys, don't tell this dude to "Eat it". He doesn't like that.")

Some suggested viewing includes (and this in no way implies that these are good movies) - Willow, Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves, Dragonslayer, The Hobbit, Krull, Cutthroat Island, The Mummy, Legend, and Monster Squad.

Thanks for your time. You keep writing them, and I'll keep reading them.

Travis Holyfield
via E-mail

Great idea, Travis. I was surprised, however, that one movie in particular wasn't on your list. Several issues ago I asked readers to vote on what flick they felt was the ultimate 'gamer movie'.

A lot of readers responded to that request. The hands-down winner? *Excalibur!*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

First of all, my roleplaying group and I are great fans of your mag. (We sometimes even jokingly refer to ourselves as "the Lords of the Supperable"). Thank you guys for keeping it fun! You rock big time!

Now I seek your wise council in a very grave matter. Last week I visited a nice little gaming store in Gouda (Netherlands) where I found the miniatures of the **Knights of the Dinnetttable**. Hoo-di-hoo! Alas, not only was it the last set, the set was incomplete as well, it contained two B.A.'s, and NO DAVE! AAAAAARRRGGHH. I decided to buy Brian, one B.A., Sarah and Bob anyway, cause I figured, four frikkin' Knights is a hell of a lot better than none at all. But here disaster strikes; the miniatures turned out to be impossible to get anywhere else in the Netherlands.

Wise and Noble Knights, how do I come by a single Dave miniature? Could you send me one? Pa-leeeeezeeee? (Of course I am willing to

cover the expenses involved).

By the way, I've read a lot of the letters that other gamers have sent to you. For reasons beyond my scope of understanding there seems to be a lot of prejudice against female roleplayers. This a small attempt to clear things up:

I am a female gamer myself but,

1. I am not ugly.

2. nor am I a complete sociopath (although I do own a Magic deck and a bat leth)

3. My characters are not having babies, not even the female ones.

I hope you can answer my question and solve my problem.

Best wishes,

Nicole Helwes Tuinman
Zaandam, Netherlands

Thanks for your letter Nicole. As far as your problem - that part's easy. A 'Dave figure' is on its way to you. He'll probably be hungry when he arrives so be sure to feed him.

As for some folks' attitudes toward female gamers? I have to confess - I'm as confused as you are by such behavior. Most of the guys I've gamed with over the years tended to languish over the fact that there aren't ENOUGH females at the gaming table. As a matter of fact our idea of the perfect woman was a 'girl who games'. (I even married a gamer - making me one of the lucky ones.)

I can't tell you how many married friends I have who would give their lucky ten-sider for a way to kindle a little interest in gaming in their spouses. So I'm afraid I don't have an answer for you.

Since you've touched on the subject, however, you may want to flip to the Back Room in this issue. Hillary Dodds' article on "Gamer Grls" in issue #48 has been drawing a lot of response.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

I would like to testify for the prosecution in the case "Knuckles v. the DM" (in issue number 48: *Stoned Again*). I cannot sit idly by and watch poor BA be tricked by bad mathematics, so I will demonstrate that Bob's charts are incorrect, and that he did in fact have a very good chance of seeing the medusa from his vantage.

The defendant's chart shows, and Bob's own testimony about Knuckles reveal that the Medusa stands at seven feet tall, and Knuckles at 3.5 feet. Knuckles' eyes are then approximately 3.5 feet off of the floor, and the medusas' eyes are about 7 feet off of the floor. This establishes a right triangle whose base is 12 feet long, and whose adjacent height is 3.5 feet (between Knuckles' eyes and the medusa's eyes). Thus, if we invoke a little basic trigonometry, and take the ratio of the opposite over adjacent right triangle lengths, we can learn the tangent of the angle between Knuckles' eyes and the medusas. We now take the inverse tangent of the ratio .29167 and learn that the angle between Knuckles eyes is in fact approximately 16.26 degrees, not 28.75 as the defendant previously stated.

In conclusion, even a hat with a 3.25 inch protrusion from the brow would allow a simple eyeball movement to see the medusa at the shallow angle of 16.26 degrees. Bob's poor mathematics have tricked BA, there needs to be retribution. I was suspicious from the outset when Bob tried to make the 12 feet between

Knuckles seem like a very long distance, "Grand Canyon" if I recall. If the medusa were somewhat closer, it would have increased the eye-contact angle and maybe then his argument would be valid.

Travis Willingham
Physicist in Training

Dear KODT,

We LOVE your game **Fairy Meat**. We is me, my daughter (18) and son (16). The kids have been avid roleplayers (and SCA participants) since almost day one. They both like S/F and Fantasy. Especially comical things.

We purchased the game at a gaming store (Sorry, I can't remember the name) in Santa Rosa (CA) Plaza.

I have a question. Will the game be featured on your web site soon? Will there be updates and added scenarios and weapons? We haven't had a chance to play much so haven't added anything to it ourselves. (Not yet, anyway.)

Thanks for a FUN game. We love it.

Mike
via E-mail

The answer to all your questions is a resounding, "YES!" Players began demanding more Fairy Meat supplements from day one and we've stepped up to the challenge in a big way.

Official Fairy Meat miniatures will be released this month as well as the Fairy Meat Accessory Pack. Several Fairy Meat supplements are on the way as well.

ClockWork Stomp brings Gnomes-with-attitude to the game. Other supplements include Wicked Things and Sugar and Vice.

If that doesn't scratch your itch for more Fairy-Fodder just let us know.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Hey I was just wondering - How long do you plan on keeping this up? I mean, it's the greatest comic I've ever read! But, isn't it hard-thinking of several strips each issue? So far you've written around 200 comics (not counting the extra ones in the end of the **Bundle of Troubles**). Will you be going to 100 issues, or even farther?

Marguerite Ashley
via E-mail

Good question. We figure once we've beaten this gig into the ground so far that no one even bothers showing up to read the next issue, my work here is done. Our goal is to become the Archie Comics of gaming.

Okay, I'm kidding of course. We love what we do and we're thrilled KODT has managed to entertain so many fans for so long.

If you would have asked me five years ago if the creative-juices would have sustained the comic (and readership) for fifty issues, my answer would have been a blunt, "No!" But hey - who knew?

Will we still be here fifty issues from now? I've stopped guessing. For now we're content to continue enjoying the ride and trying to entertain as best we can. We leave it to you, the reader to tell us, "Enough already!"

Jolly

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

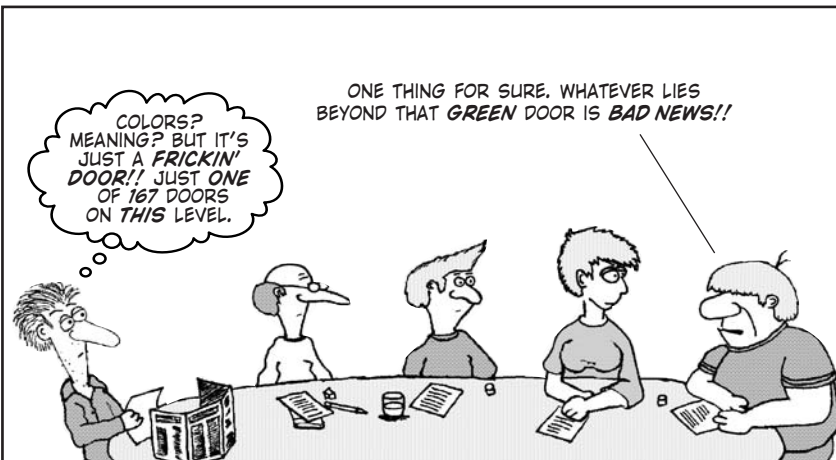
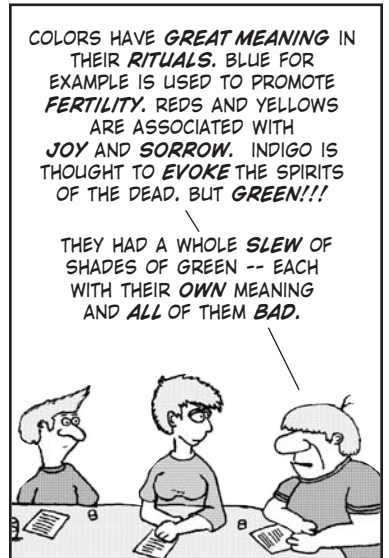
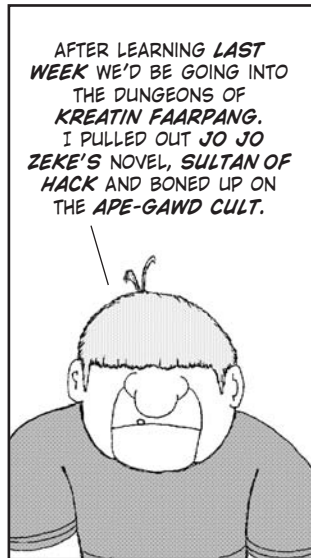
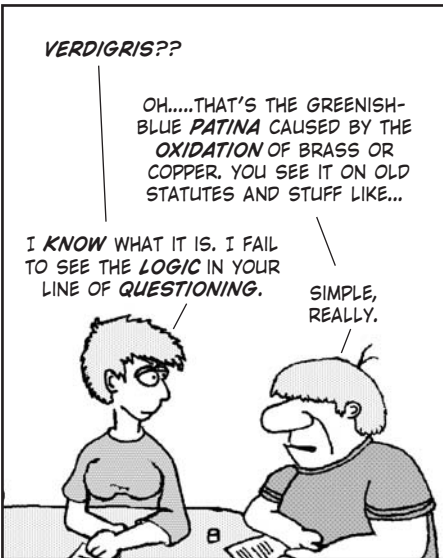
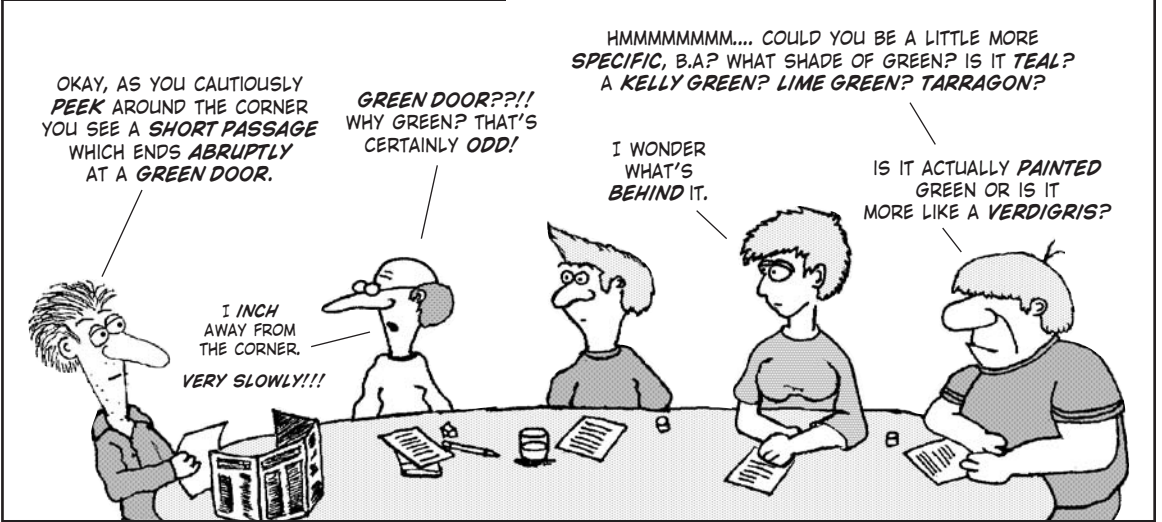
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Behind the Green Door

BY JOLLY BLACKBURN,
BRIAN JELKE & STEVE JOHANSSON

DEEP IN THE DUNGEONS OF 'KREATIN FAARPANG'...



TWENTY MINUTES OF 'CAUTIOUS DEBATE' LATER...

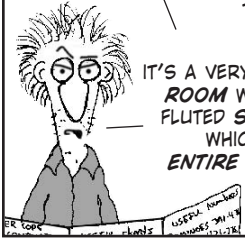
OKAY, OKAY, BRIAN'S *UNSEEN SERVANT*, SLOWLY PUSHES THE DOOR...I MEAN THE "GREEN DOOR". AS IT OPENS AN *INNER GALLERY* IS REVEALED. THE ROOM IS *BRIGHTLY ILLUMINATED* BY A MYSTERIOUS *UNKNOWN SOURCE*.

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RESTING ON THE *PALMS* IS A MAT WOVEN FROM DRIED *SEA GRASS* UPON WHICH LIES A FINELY CRAFTED '*BRONZE CONCH*' OF INCREDIBLE *BEAUTY*. YOU SUDDENLY REALIZE THE *CONCH* IS THE SOURCE OF *ILLUMINATION* IN THE ROOM.



HEY DID YOU *HEAR THAT?* A *BRONZE CONCH!!* THAT MUST BE THE *QUEST-ITEM* WE CAME FOR.

THAT'S THE *BRONZE CONCH OF ARRNZ* ALRIGHT!! IT'S JUST WHERE THAT *ROGUE PRIEST** SAID IT WOULD BE.

WHAT A *RELIEF!* AFTER THAT *AMBUSH* WITH THOSE *FECES-FLINGIN' LEMURS* ON *LEVEL ONE* I DIDN'T THINK WE'D *MAKE IT*.

LOOKS LIKE HE WAS TELLING THE *TRUTH* AFTER ALL.

THANK GAWD WE *FOUND IT!* THAT *LITTLE BABY'S* OUR *TICKET* TO GETTING OUR *FULL EXPERIENCE LEVELS* BACK.

SWEET! LET'S *GRAB* THE DAMN THING AND *MOVE ON*. I GOT A FEELING THE *DEEPER LEVELS* OF THIS *DUNGEON* ARE GOING TO BE *CHOKED* WITH *MAGIC AND TREASURE*.



* See *Knights of the Dinner Table* issue 49: "Why Didn't You Say So?" [Justina strikes a deal with a Rogue Priest in order to have her comrades resurrected. El Ravager, Teflon Billy and Knuckles are restored to life at only half their experience levels. The deal is that once they've retrieved the Bronze Conch of Arrnz from the Dungeons of Kreatin Faarpang they will be fully restored to their original experience levels.]

GRAB THE DAMN THING???! WHAT? ARE YOU DEAF? DIDN'T YOU GUYS HEAR THE TORRENT OF FLAVOR TEXT COMIN' OUT OF THIS GUY'S MOUTH?

GOOD LORD! -- THIS PLACE JUST REEKS TO HIGH HEAVEN OF TRAPS. I'M NOT TAKIN' ANY CHANCES -- NOBODY GOES INTO THIS ROOM UNTIL I'VE HAD A CHANCE TO CHECK IT OUT FOR TRAPS.

OH....RIGHT. GOOD CALL, BOB.

DAMN! WHAT WAS I THINKING? YEAH, YOU BETTER CHECK THINGS OUT.

OKAY, I'M KINDA SPOOKED WHAT WITH THAT GREEN DOOR AND THE EXCESSIVE LENGTH OF THAT ROOM DESCRIPTION. THIS 'CHECK FOR TRAPS' CALLS FOR THE APPROPRIATE DIE.

HMMMMMMM...LET'S SEE. I THINK I'LL GO WITH ONE OF MY 'SPECIALIZED' LUCKY TWENTY-SIDERS HERE -- 'BENZINE THE BLUE' IS PROBABLY MY BEST CHOICE.

JUST PICK A DIE AND ROLL IT, BOB. SHEESH!

YER PULLIN' OUT BENNIE?

BENNIE'S NOT WORTH A DAMN IN BATTLE - DOESN'T HOLD HIS LUCK PAST THE FIRST ROLL BUT HE'S ALWAYS "HOT" COMING OUT OF THE BAG!!

YEAH, YEAH, THAT'S NICE. GO AHEAD AND MAKE YOUR CHECK.

GIMME SOME THROWIN' ROOM THERE, DAVE. BENNIE'S A 'BOUNCER'. I DON'T WANT ANY INTERFERENCE.

WOW! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE ACTUALLY USIN' BENNIE! I THOUGHT YOU BANISHED HIM TO DICE BAG HELL AFTER HE LOST YOU THAT BATTLE WAGON TOURNAMENT AT HACKCON AKRON.

WASN'T HIS FAULT. I PUSHED HIM TOO FAR THAT DAY.

SHOOKA! SHOOKA!

OH BROTHER!

ONE ROLL LATER...

WHOAH --WHOAH, LITTLE FELLA!!!! HAR HAR!!!! BOY, HE IS A BOUNCER ISN'T HE?

HEY, HEY!!!! BE SURE NOT TO TOUCH HIM!! JUST READ ME THE RESULT.

WHICH COLOR DO YOU READ AS HIGH NUMBERS, BOB? RED OR WHITE? I CAN'T TELL IF IT'S A SIX OR A SIXTEEN?

SIX?? I THINK IT MIGHT BE A NINE. BUT THEN AGAIN... I CAN'T BE SURE. IT'S ONE OF THOSE REALLY CRAPPY TWENTY SIDERS THAT CAME IN THE BOXED SET OF 2ND EDITION HACKMASTER

UH...ER... GEE, OFF HAND, I'M NOT REALLY SURE.

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE USED BENNIE...

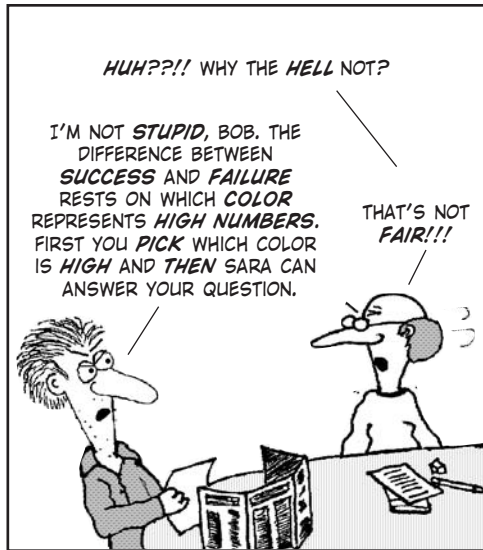
I THINK I USED TO CALL THE HIGH COLOR BEFORE EVERY ROLL.

HMMMMMM... LEMME THINK ON IT FOR A MOMENT...

SAY, WHAT COLOR'S SHOWIN' ANYWAY?



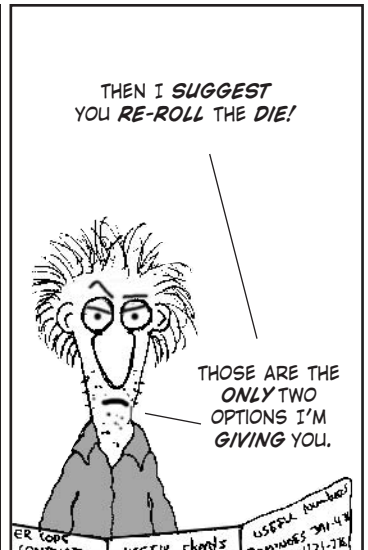
HOLD ON, SARA!!! DON'T ANSWER THAT QUESTION!!!



HUH??!! WHY THE HELL NOT?

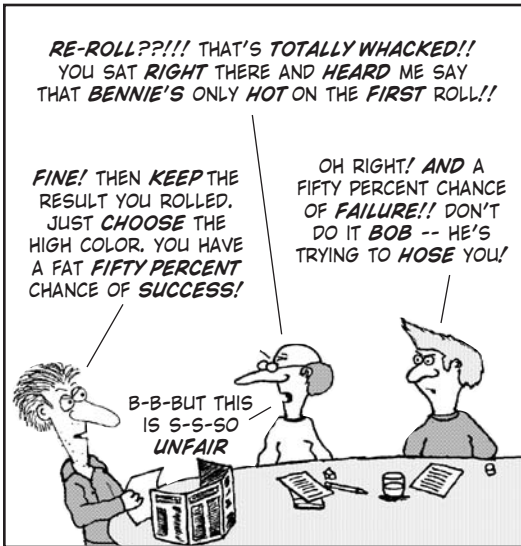
I'M NOT **STUPID**, BOB. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN **SUCCESS** AND **FAILURE** RESTS ON WHICH **COLOR** REPRESENTS **HIGH NUMBERS**. FIRST YOU **PICK** WHICH COLOR IS **HIGH** AND THEN SARA CAN ANSWER YOUR QUESTION.

THAT'S NOT **FAIR!!!**



THEN I **SUGGEST** YOU **RE-ROLL** THE **DIE!**

THOSE ARE THE **ONLY TWO** OPTIONS I'M **GIVING** YOU.

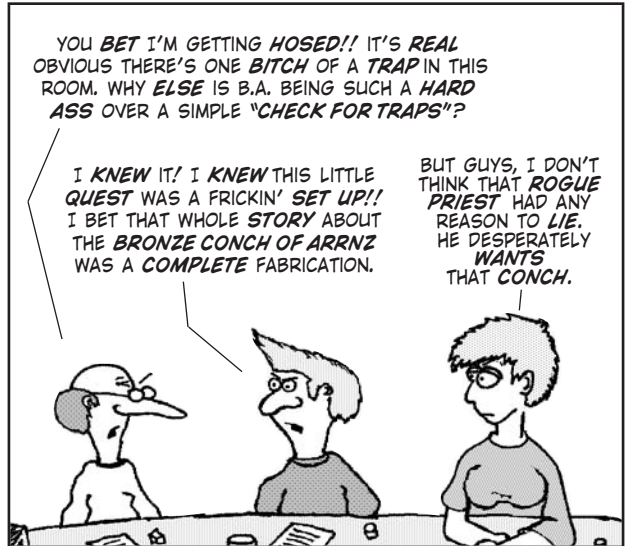


RE-ROLL??!! THAT'S TOTALLY WHACKED!! YOU SAT **RIGHT** THERE AND **HEARD** ME SAY THAT **BENNIE'S** ONLY **HOT** ON THE **FIRST ROLL!!**

FINE! THEN **KEEP** THE RESULT YOU ROLLED. JUST **CHOOSE** THE **HIGH COLOR**. YOU HAVE A **FAT FIFTY PERCENT** CHANCE OF **SUCCESS!**

OH **RIGHT!** AND A **FIFTY PERCENT** CHANCE OF **FAILURE!!** DON'T DO IT **BOB** -- HE'S TRYING TO **HOSE** YOU!

B-B-BUT THIS IS S-S-SO **UNFAIR**



YOU **BET** I'M GETTING **HOSED!!** IT'S **REAL** OBVIOUS THERE'S ONE **BITCH** OF A **TRAP** IN THIS ROOM. WHY **ELSE** IS B.A. BEING SUCH A **HARD ASS** OVER A SIMPLE "CHECK FOR TRAPS"?

I **KNEW** IT! I **KNEW** THIS **LITTLE QUEST** WAS A **FRICKIN' SET UP!!** I **BET** THAT **WHOLE STORY** ABOUT THE **BRONZE CONCH OF ARRNZ** WAS A **COMPLETE FABRICATION**.

BUT GUYS, I DON'T THINK THAT **ROGUE PRIEST** HAD ANY REASON TO **LIE**. HE **DESPERATELY WANTS** THAT **CONCH**.



DAMMIT SARA!! WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT SOME **STUPID NPC**! WE'RE TALKING ABOUT **B.A.!!** HAVEN'T YOU **NOTICED** WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON? **HUH?** ARE YOU **BLIND??** EVER SINCE WE **MURDERED LORD FLATAROY*** THINGS HAVE BEEN GOING **DOWNHILL** AROUND HERE.

B.A.'S OUT TO **GET** US!! HE'S HOLDING A **GRUDGE** BECAUSE WE **SPOILED** HIS **PRECIOUS LITTLE CAMPAIGN**.

YEAH, HE'S BEEN GETTING **REALLY SNEAKY** LATELY.

I THINK IT'S CALLED **JUST REWARDS**, GUYS.



THE **BOTTOM LINE** IS IT **STOPS HERE!!** I'M **TIRED** OF BEING **WHITTLED** DOWN EACH WEEK -- **CHIPPED** AWAY. MY **GAWD**, WE'VE LOST **HALF** OUR **EXPERIENCE LEVELS!** DAVE'S LOST HIS **HACKMASTER**. BRIAN'S LOST ALL HIS **MAGIC ITEMS** AND **SCROLLS**. YOU THINK IT'S JUST A **COINCIDENCE??** **HUH???**

HMMRRPPPHH!!! I'M GOING TO **DO** WHAT I GOTTA **DO** TO GET MY **HACKMASTER** BACK!!

-SIGH-

* See *Knights of the Dinner Table* issue 41: "A PLACE OF THEIR OWN" [B.A. has an NPC of high-standing (Lord Flataroy) invite the Untouchable Trio (+1) to visit his estate with the hopes of inspiring them to give up their lives of hack-n-slash and embrace higher ideals. The plan backfired. After murdering Flataroy and his staff, the group takes over his manor house and casts Garweeze World into a state of war.]

HEY, HEY **CALM DOWN** BOB. THERE'S NO NEED TO GET ALL **'RED'** IN THE FACE ABOUT THIS THING. JUST BECAUSE **B.A.** IS TREATING YOU LIKE A **'RED'** HEADED STEP CHILD DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO **'LOSE'** YOUR COOL. KNOW WHAT I MEAN? GO AHEAD AND CALL **'HIGH COLOR'** AND **TAKE THE RESULT.**

BRIAN??!!!! WHADDA YOU THINK YOUR DOING?

WHAT THE.... YOU'RE TAKING **B.A.'S** SIDE ON THIS? WHERE DO YOU GET OFF?

HUH? DOING? I'M JUST TELLING BOB TO CALM DOWN - THAT'S ALL.

DON'T GIVE ME THAT. YOU'RE TRYING TO **FEED BOB CLUES** ON WHICH COLOR TO PICK. IT'S **WRONG** AND YOU **KNOW IT!!**

HUH? CLUES? WHY I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

FOR CRYING OUT LOUD, BRIAN -- IT'S JUST A **TRIVIAL** SKILL CHECK.

GEE, I'M TURNING **'RED'** WITH EMBARRASSMENT HERE -- WHY THE VERY **THOUGHT!**

HEY....WAIT A **SECOND.** YOU JUST **JOGGED** MY MEMORY. OF COURSE --IT'S **ALL** COMING BACK TO ME. I USED TO **ALWAYS** CALL **RED** WHEN ROLLING **BENZINE THE BLUE!!**

BUT I THOUGHT YOU ALWAYS CALLED A **DIFFERENT** COLOR FOR **EACH** ROLL.

NO, NO, IT WAS **RED.** THAT'S THE COLOR I **ALWAYS** CALLED.

OKAY B.A., YOU **WIN!!** I'LL DO IT **YOUR** WAY. I WANT TO **KEEP** THE RESULT AND CALL **HIGH COLOR.** I **CALL...**

OH NO YOU DON'T!! NO WAY. FOR YOUR INFORMATION **BRIAN** JUST **INVALIDATED** THE RESULTS OF YOUR ROLL.

SAY WHAT? **INVALIDATED?**

THAT'S RIGHT! YOU MIGHT AS WELL ROLL **AGAIN.** AND JUST SO THERE'S NO **CONFUSION** THIS TIME, YOU'LL USE **RED** AS THE **HIGH COLOR!**

CRIPES ALMIGHTY!! YOU'RE REALLY OUT FOR **BLOOD** AREN'T YOU? **FINE!!!!** THEN HOW 'BOUT WE DO THIS -- I KEEP THE **RESULT** I ROLLED BUT WE **DICE** FOR THE **COLOR.** **HIGH ROLLER** GETS TO DETERMINE WHAT THE **HIGH COLOR** IS. HOW'S **THAT** SOUND?

-GROAN- IF IT'LL GET US **PAST** THIS **NONSENSE** THEN THE ANSWER IS **"YES!"**.

I'LL **DICE** YOU FOR IT.

NOW YER TALKIN'.

BUT SINCE **YOU** MADE THE **CHALLENGE,** **-I-** GET TO CHOOSE THE **TYPE** OF DIE.

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME! WHAT'S YOUR **POISON?**

TWENTY-SIDERS!

FINE! LET'S DO IT.

DO YOU HEAR WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?
YOU'RE GOING TO ROLL DICE TO DETERMINE THE RESULTS OF YET ANOTHER DIE ROLL?

YOU DON'T STAND A CHANCE IN HELL!
THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND ME. I'M USED TO LIVING AND DYING ACCORDING TO THE TOSS OF THE DIE. IT'S IN MY BLOOD!
TALK IS CHEAP, BOB! SHOW YER PIPS!
SHOOKA SHOOKA SHOOKA SHOOKA SHOOKA SHOOKA

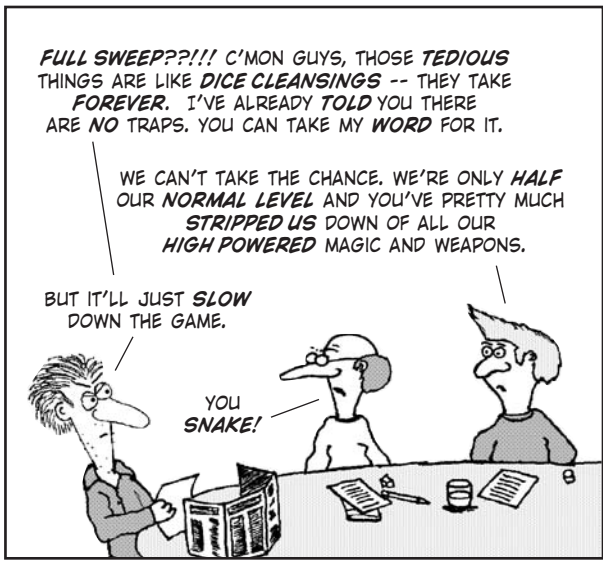
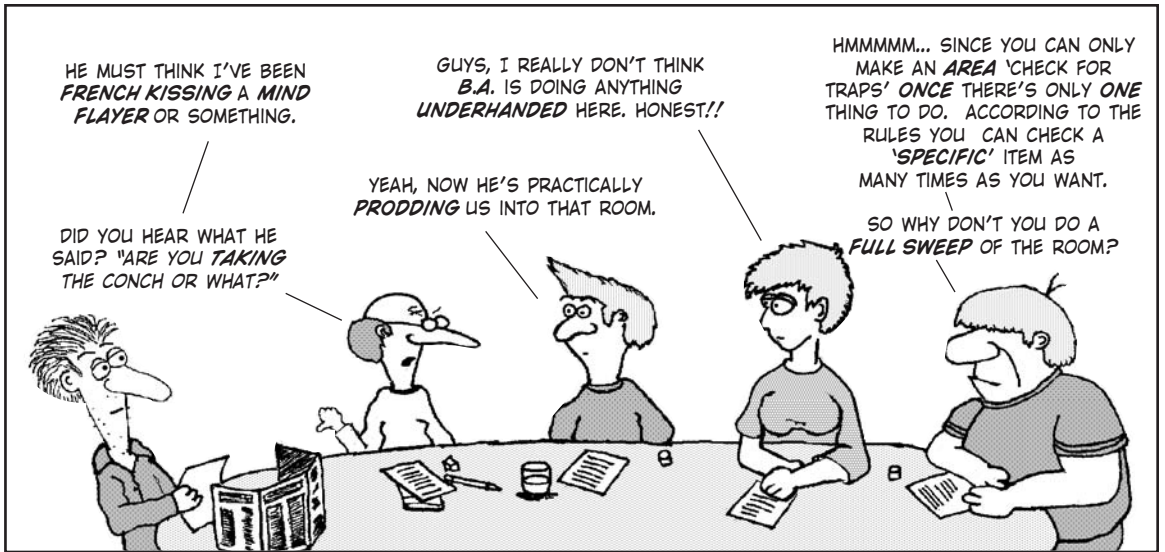
SECONDS LATER....
HA HA!!!! A NINETEEN!!! THINK YOU CAN BEAT THAT??
WHAT THE.....??? A ONE!! I ROLLED A FRICKIN' ONE??!!
OH NO! DUDE YOU ROLLED BENNIE BY MISTAKE!

DAMMIT!! THAT'S BECAUSE B.A. GOT ME ALL WORKED UP AND FLUSTERED! I NEVER WOULD'VE MADE THAT KIND OF STUPID MISTAKE IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE.
HMMRRPPPPP! I BET HE DID IT ON PURPOSE!

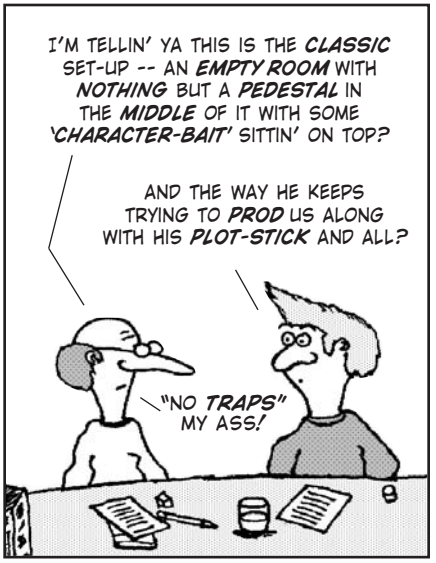
I'M GOING TO BE VERY GRACIOUS BOB AND GO AHEAD AND SAY THE HIGH COLOR WAS INDEED RED -- HENCE YOUR CHECK FOR TRAPS SUCCEEDED. AFTER ALL YOUR FINAGLING AND WHINING YOU DON'T FIND ANY TRAPS IN THE ROOM.
HUH? YOU'RE LETTING ME SUCCEED!!! WHAT'S UP WITH THAT? YOU GOT SOME KIND OF ANGLE ON THIS OR SOMETHING?
YOU JUST DON'T GET IT, BOB -- I'M THE GAMEMASTER. I'M IMPARTIAL. I'M NOT OUT TO GET YOU.
IT'S SOME KIND OF TRICK, BOB.

PART OF MY JOB IS TO MAKE SURE THE GAME IS RUN FAIRLY. DICE ROLLS ARE SACRED. I COULDN'T SIT BY AND LET YOU MANIPULATE THE RESULTS.
NOW THAT THAT'S SETTLED LET'S MOVE ON.
ARE YOU TAKING THE CONCH OR WHAT?

OH... I GET IT. SO, YOU WANT US TO BELIEVE THERE ARE NO TRAPS IN THIS ROOM. THEN WHEN OUR GUARD IS DOWN -- WHAM!!! WE GET SQUISHED LIKE SO MUCH ROTTEN FRUIT BY A TEN TON BLOCK OF GRANITE OR SOMETHING.
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME? YOUR SKILL CHECK SUCCEEDED. THERE ARE NO TRAPS IN THE ROOM.
HO HO!!! YOU CALLED IT, BOB. HE'S GOT SOMETHING UP HIS SLEEVE. NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.
YOU'D REALLY LIKE ME TO BELIEVE THAT - WOULDN'T YOU?



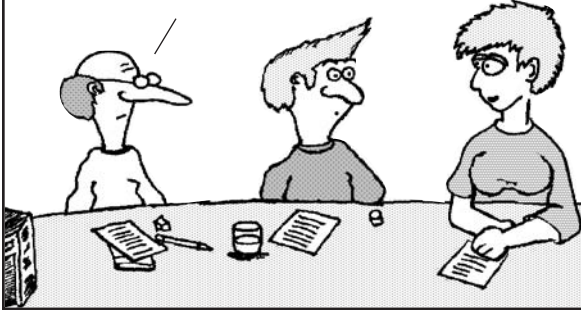
TWENTY MINUTES OF 'CHECKING FOR TRAPS' LATER...



GUYS, WEREN'T YOU LISTENING? **B.A.** JUST TOOK OFF HIS **GM'S CAP** AND TOLD US THERE ARE "**NO TRAPS**". SO LET'S **GRAB** THE GOODS AND **MOVE ON!**

I ADMIRE YOUR **SAND**, **SARA** BUT SNIFFING OUT **TRAPS** FALLS UNDER **MY** JOB TITLE. I'D **THANK YOU** NOT TO **TELL** ME HOW TO DO **MY** JOB.

NOW YER JUST BEING **SILLY**.



I'M **SURPRISED** AT YOU, **SARA**. ARE YOU FORGETTING WHAT **GARY JACKSON** WROTE IN HIS **FOREWARD** TO "**MAKING EVERY DUNGEON KRAWL A MAJOR HAUL**"? "IT'S ALWAYS THE **TRAP** THAT GOES **UNDETECTED** WHICH ENDS UP **DOING YOU IN.**"

BUT **BRIAN**, HE WAS SIMPLY SAYING YOU SHOULD **ALWAYS** CHECK FOR **TRAPS** - REGARDLESS. WE **DID** THAT WITH **NO** RESULTS.

TSK TSK...



YOU JUST DON'T GET IT. YOU **NEVER** SHRUG OFF THE **GUT-FEELING** OF A FELLOW **PARTY MEMBER**. IF **BOB** FEELS THERE'S SOMETHING **AMISS** ABOUT THIS ROOM THAT'S **GOOD** ENOUGH FOR ME. I'VE COME TO **TRUST** HIS INSTINCTS OVER THE YEARS.

SO WHY DON'T WE JUST **STEP BACK** AND LET THE MAN DO HIS JOB UNTIL HE GIVES US THE **ALL CLEAR?**



BUT **B.A.** JUST **GAVE** US THE '**ALL CLEAR**' WHEN HE ANNOUNCED THERE WERE **NO TRAPS** IN THIS....

YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE **B.A.'S** WORD?

FOR CRYING OUT LOUD **SARA** WHEN WILL YOU **EVER** LEARN?



I CAN THINK OF A **THOUSAND** WAYS FOR THINGS TO TURN REAL **UGLY** - REAL **FAST!** WEIGHTED PRESSURE SWITCHES, COLLAPSING CEILINGS, TELEPORTING-TRAPS, BODY HEAT ACTIVATION SPELLS, CARNIVOROUS BRAIN MITES, SLIP-FER-SURE FLOOR TILES, CONTACT POISON-RESIN, RUNES OF EYEBALL IMPLOSION....

OKAY, OKAY, I GET THE POINT. -SIGH-



FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...

OKAY, LET'S DO THIS **AGAIN**. FIRST I'M CHECKING THE **PEDESTAL** FROM **TOP TO BOTTOM**. THEN I'M CHECKIN' THAT **SEA GRASS MAT**.

AGAIN???! FIRK DING BLAST!!! FOR THE LOVE OF...

YOU CAN'T FOOL **ME**, **B.A.** THERE'S SOMETHING **HERE** AND I'M GOING TO **FIND** IT.



OKAY **SMART GUY!!** YOU WANT A **TRAP** SO BAD... I'LL **GIVE** YOU ONE.



GEE, **BOB**, I GUESS YOU'RE JUST TOO **CLEVER** FOR ME. I REALLY THOUGHT I COULD PULL THE **WOOL** OVER YOUR EYES.

AS IT TURNS OUT, THERE **IS** A **POISONED** **NEEDLE** TRAP HIDDEN IN THE **SEA GRASS MAT**.





AH HA!!!

I *KNEW* IT!! VERY *SNEAKY*, B.A. YOU ALMOST HAD ME *BELIEVIN'* THERE WEREN'T ANY TRAPS!!

GEEZE LOUEEZE!! HE REALLY *WAS* TRYING TO PULL A *FAST* ONE ON US!

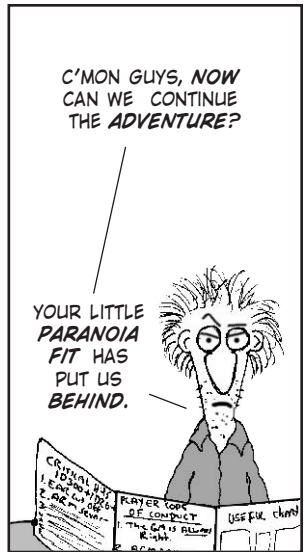
OH *PA-LEEZE!* GIMME A BREAK.



THERE! YOU *SEE*, SARA? IF *BOB* HAS A *GUT-FEELING* YOU BETTER *BANK* ON IT. HE'S *SELDOM* WRONG.

YEAH-- *SURE*, BRIAN. *SURE*.

THE *LITTLE* GUY JUST SAVED OUR *BUTTS!*



C'MON GUYS, *NOW* CAN WE CONTINUE THE *ADVENTURE?*

YOUR *LITTLE PARANOIA FIT* HAS PUT US *BEHIND*.

CRASH! BILLY'S OUT OF CONTROL! THE GUY'S BILLY! USEFUL! CHIMP!



NOT SO FAST, *SCREEN MONKEY!!!* I'M GRABBIN' THE *CONCH* AND....

NO!!! BOB, *WAIT!!*

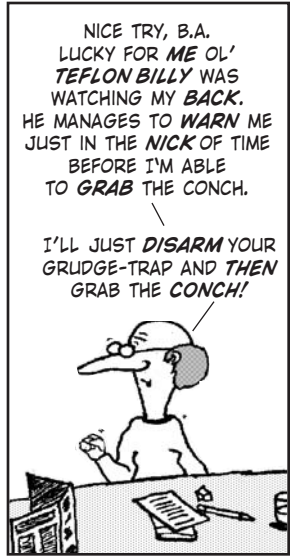


HUH?? WHAT'S THE *PROBLEM?*

DUDE, YOU'RE *LOSIN'* IT!! YOU ALMOST PLAYED INTO *B.A.'S* HANDS!! YOU *FORGOT* TO *DISARM* THE TRAP YOU *DOOFUS!*

ACCKK!!! DAMN - YOU'RE RIGHT!! I *AM* LOSIN' IT.

GOOD CATCH, BRIAN. IT TOTALLY *SLIPPED* BY ME AS WELL.



NICE TRY, B.A. LUCKY FOR *ME* OL' *TEFLON* BILLY WAS WATCHING MY *BACK*. HE MANAGES TO *WARN* ME JUST IN THE *NICK* OF TIME BEFORE I'M ABLE TO *GRAB* THE *CONCH*.

I'LL JUST *DISARM* YOUR GRUDGE-TRAP AND *THEN* GRAB THE *CONCH!*

A FEW SECONDS LATER...



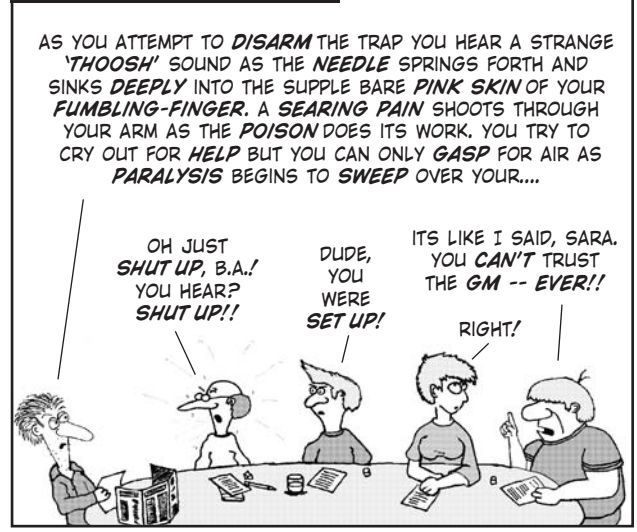
HEH HEH!!! LOOKS LIKE I ROLLED A... *FIRK!!!* A *ONE??!!* A *FRICKIN'* ONE?

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS *CRAP!* I *FUMBLER* -- *AGAIN!!*

OH MAN!! THIS IS GOING TO BE TOO SWEET. -SNICKER-

HOLY MOLY! YOU DID IT AGAIN, DUDE. YOU ROLLED *BENNY* BY MISTAKE.

A FEW SECONDS LATER STILL...



AS YOU ATTEMPT TO *DISARM* THE TRAP YOU HEAR A STRANGE '*THOOSH*' SOUND AS THE *NEEDLE* SPRINGS FORTH AND SINKS *DEEPLY* INTO THE SUPPLE BARE *PINK* SKIN OF YOUR *FUMBLING-FINGER*. A *SEARING* PAIN SHOOTS THROUGH YOUR ARM AS THE *POISON* DOES ITS WORK. YOU TRY TO CRY OUT FOR *HELP* BUT YOU CAN ONLY *GASP* FOR AIR AS *PARALYSIS* BEGINS TO *SWEEP* OVER YOUR....

OH JUST *SHUT* UP, B.A.! YOU HEAR? *SHUT* UP!!

DUDE, YOU WERE *SET* UP!

ITS LIKE I SAID, SARA. YOU *CAN'T* TRUST THE *GM* -- *EVER!!*

RIGHT!

The Bronze Conch of Aaaaaahhhh...

BY JOLLY BLACKBURN,
BRIAN JELKE AND STEVE JOHANSSON

OKAY SARA, YOU MANAGE TO **REVIVE** BOB. YOUR **MOSS** AND **HONEY** CONCOCTION APPEARS TO HAVE **NEUTRALIZED** THE POISON BUT IT REALLY DID A **NUMBER** ON **KNUCKLES'** INTERNAL ORGANS. HE HAS ENOUGH **STRENGTH** TO GET UP AND MOVE ABOUT BUT THAT'S ABOUT IT.

BOB, UNTIL YOU GET SOME **REAL** MEDICAL TREATMENT YOU'RE **MAXED** OUT AT **TWO HIT POINTS!**

TWO HIT POINTS! DUDE YOU ARE **SO** SCREWED. YOU GOT ABOUT AS MANY **HIT POINTS** AS A **SHREW MOUSE!!**

SORRY BOB, I DID MY BEST.

ACTUALLY, DAVE...

...THE **COMMON SHREW MOUSE** HAS 3 **HITPOINTS** ON AVERAGE. YOU'RE PROBABLY THINKING OF THE **SHREW KLUTCHER** WHICH ONLY RATES 1 TO 2 **H-PEES!**



OKAY THAT'S **IT!!** WE'RE GOING TO **GRAB** THE FRICKIN' **CONCH** AND GET THE HELL OUT OF **DODGE!!**

I'VE **HAD** IT ABOUT UP TO '**HERE**' WITH THIS **STINK HOLE** OF A **DUNGEON**.

GEE, ARE YOU **SURE** YOU DON'T WANT TO CHECK FOR **TRAPS** FOR ANOTHER **HOURL** OR SO?

JUST GIMME THE GAWD DAMN **CONCH!!**



WHOAH! HOLD ON DUDE. DID YOU SAY, "**GET OUT OF DODGE**"? YOU MEAN **LEAVE**??

AFTER COMING **ALL** THIS WAY? YOU HEARD BRIAN - THE **LOWER LEVELS** ARE PROBABLY **FILLED** WITH TREASURE AND STUFF.

WHO CARES!!? WE GOT WHAT WE CAME FOR. NOW LET'S **VAMOOS!** I'M HANGIN' BY A VERY **THIN** THREAD HERE.

TO HELL WITH YOU!! I DIDN'T **BATTLE** MY WAY THROUGH ALL THOSE FRICKIN' **LEMURS** ON LEVEL ONE TO **TURN AROUND** AND LEAVE **EMPTY HANDED**. IT'S NOT **OUR** FAULT YOU WENT AND GOT YOURSELF **POISONED**.



FINE!! DO WHAT YOU WANT. BUT I'M TAKIN' THE **CONCH** AND SKEDADDLING **BACK** TO THAT **ROGUE PRIEST** SO HE CAN RESTORE ME TO **FULL LEVEL**. I COULD CARE **LESS** WHAT THE **REST** OF YOU DO.

NOW **THAT'S** A FINE **ATTITUDE**. I THOUGHT WE WERE IN THIS **TOGETHER**.

WELL I'M WITH **BOB!** WE GOT WHAT WE **CAME** FOR. MAYBE WE **SHOULD** HEAD BACK. WE CAN **ALWAYS** COME BACK LATER.

HRRMMMMFFFF!



I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION YOU'D ONLY LOST A FEW **HIT POINTS**, BOB -- NOT YOUR FRICKIN' **SPINE!!**

IS **THIS** WHAT THE '**UNTOUCHABLE TRIO PLUS ONE**' HAS BEEN REDUCED TO?

KNUCKLES IS HURTIN', MAN -- HE'S **HURTIN' BAD!**

OKAY, WE MIGHT AS WELL GO THEN. YOU'RE NO **GOOD** TO US THE WAY YOU ARE.

GAWD THIS **BLOWS!**



Story suggested by Anita Everson

MOMENTS LATER...

YOU *EASILY* MANAGE TO GRAB THE *CONCH* WITH THE *ICE-TONGS* AND *JUMP* BACK FROM THE *PEDESTAL* WITHOUT *INCIDENT*.

GREEN?? CAREFUL, BOB! IT COULD BE DESIGNED TO *SUMMON* MONSTERS OR SOMETHING. REMEMBER THAT *HURDY GURDY OF OWL-BEAR SUMMONING* I WON IN THAT *POKER* GAME THAT ONE TIME?

KEWL BEANS! AND YOU SAY THIS THING IS MADE OF *BRONZE*? SEEMS LIKE A *LAME* METAL FOR SUCH A HIGHLY-PRIZED *ITEM*.

EEWWWWW, IT'S DEFINITELY *MAGIC*. I WONDER WHAT THE HELL IT DOES? HOW COME THAT *PRIEST* WANTS IT SO BAD?

YES BUT IT HAS AN *UNUSUAL* GREENISH *SHEEN* TO IT.



DO I REMEMBER? HELL YES I REMEMBER! *SARA* INSISTED ON PLAYING "*WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH A DRUNKEN SAILOR*" ON IT 'ROUND THE *CAMP FIRE* ONE NIGHT. ALL *HELL* BROKE LOOSE!

FOR THE *LAST TIME!* I WAS A *BARD*. THAT'S WHAT *BARDS* DO - THEY *PLAY* INSTRUMENTS. HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW IT WAS *CURSED*?

I *STILL* CAN'T LISTEN TO THAT SONG WITHOUT GETTING THE *SHAKES*.

WE WERE *LUCKY* TO GET OUT OF THAT *SITUATION* ALIVE.



BRIAN BRINGS UP A *GOOD POINT*. I'M GOING TO EXAMINE THIS *CONCH* REAL *CLOSE*.

IS IT EMBOSSED WITH ANY *PRECIOUS STONES*? ARE THERE ANY *RUNES* OR WRITING ON IT?

AS A MATTER OF FACT THERE ARE SOME REALLY *FAINT* CHARACTERS ON THE *NECK* OF THE *CONCH*.

OH, OH!! I *SPIT* ON THE *CONCH* AND TRY TO *BUFF* THE AREA WHERE THE WRITING IS WITH THE *SLEEVE* OF MY *TUNIC!*



OKAY, SO READ ME THE *BILL OF GOODS* THERE, B.A. WHAT'S IT SAY?

AS SOON AS YOU BEGIN *RUBBING* THE *CONCH* IT BEGINS TO *GLOW* BRIGHTLY!!

SUDDENLY THE *SERENE* VOICE OF A *WOMAN* BEGINS TO *WHISPER* INSIDE YOUR HEAD!

HUH? A VOICE?

A *WOMAN??!!* I DRAW MY *HACKMASTER PLUS...* CRAP!! I DRAW MY *SHORT SWORD* AND ASSUME MY *BATTLE STANCE!*

OH MY! LOOKS LIKE IT MAY BE *MAGICAL* AFTER ALL.

SWEET!

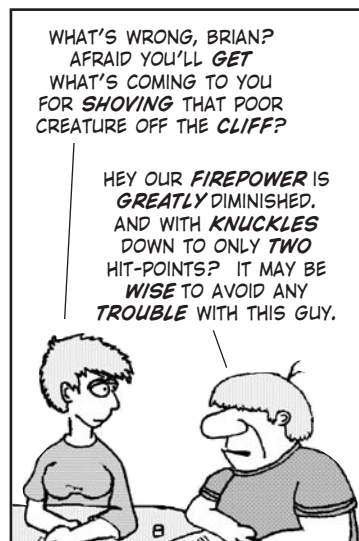
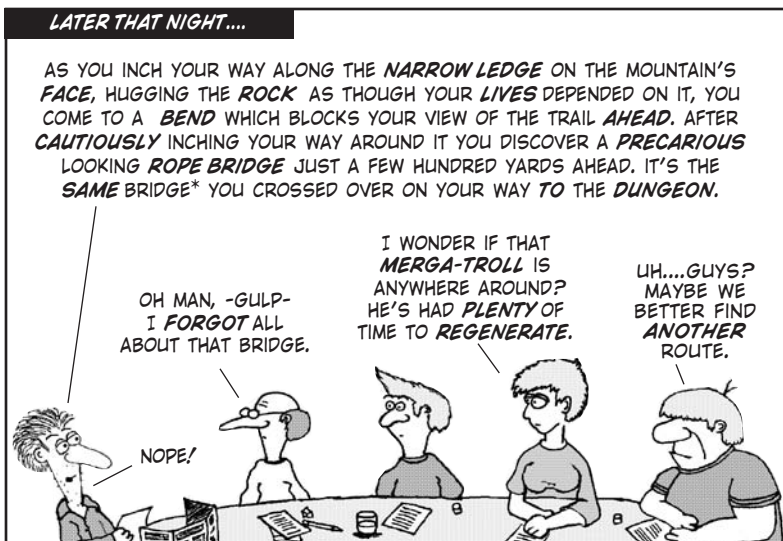
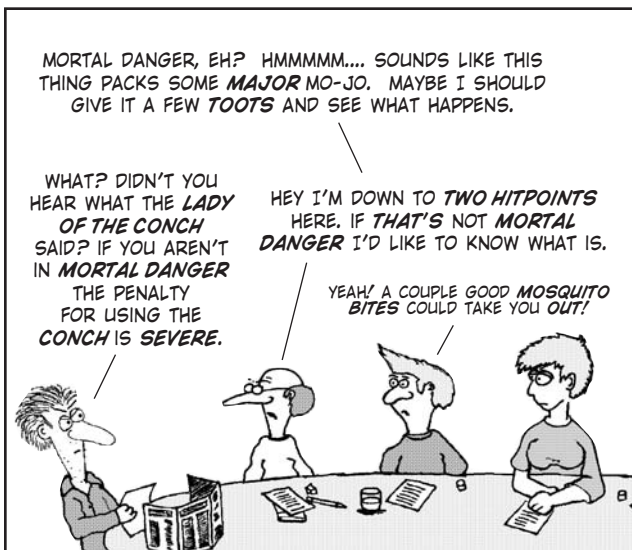


IN A VOICE ONLY *BOB* CAN HEAR, THE *WOMAN* SAYS,

"*BRAVE WARRIOR*, YOU ARE INDEED *WORTHY* IF YOU HAVE FOUND THE WHEREWITHAL TO *CLAIM* THIS *CONCH!* KNOW YE THAT IT IS A *GIFT* FROM THE *APE GAWD* HIMSELF!! USE IT *WISELY* IN YOUR HOUR OF *GREATEST NEED!*"

"FOR THE *PRICE* CAN BE GREAT LEST YE BE IN *MORTAL DANGER!*"





* See *Knights of the Dinner Table* issue 49: Heavens to Merga-Troll: On the way to the Dungeons of Kreatin Faarpang the party meets a Merga-Troll who turns out to be an incredibly friendly host who has been assisting travellers on the treacherous mountain trail. After being fed and entertained by the Troll, Teflon Billy (Brian) shoved the Troll off a cliff commenting, "That just ain't natural."

AS YOU NEAR THE BRIDGE YOU SEE A SHADOWY FIGURE EMERGE FROM THE **TROLL'S LAIR** ON THE FAR SIDE. IT'S THE **MERGA-TROLL BRIAN** SO RUDELY **SHOVED** BEFORE. STRANGELY ENOUGH HE LOOKS **HAPPY** TO SEE YOU. HE WAVES AT YOU AND HOLLERS, "**HA-LOOOOOOO!!!**"

THE **TROLL** IS ABSOLUTELY **GIDDY** WITH DELIGHT. HE MOTIONS FOR YOU TO COME ON ACROSS.

HE DOESN'T APPEAR TO BE. NOT IN THE **LEAST**.

REALLY? HE'S NOT **PISSED**?

BRIAN WAS RIGHT! THESE GUYS JUST AREN'T **NATURAL!!** THAT DUDE SHOULD BE **FIT TO BE TIED**.

I DON'T GET IT.

"I **JUST** COOKED UP A **NEW** BATCH OF MY **GROSS** ONION STEW!!!"

AFTER TOPIC RE-CONDUCT THE GUY IS ALLYWAY R-right.
USEFUL charms
USEFUL (numbers)
DOMMONES 301-44
WOTC 421-78
GARY 612-301
GARY 911

"OH... AND I HAVE A KEG OF GOOD **STOUT ALE!!** THE **FIZZY** KIND. I'LL **SHARE** IT WITH YOU. COME INSIDE! I'D **LOVE** TO HEAR ALL ABOUT YOUR **ADVENTURE!!**"

OH GAWD! THIS IS SO **AWKWARD!!!** HE WANTS US TO STAY AND **VISIT**.

MAYBE HE DOESN'T REALIZE **BRIAN** PUSHED HIM. LET'S GET OUR **STORY** STRAIGHT -- TELL HIM HE **SLIPPED** ON A **BANANA WORM** OR SOMETHING.

I'LL LET **YOU** DO THE TALKING. I DON'T THINK I CAN **LIE** TO HIM.

IT COULD BE A **TRICK!** EVERYONE **ACT** LIKE YOU HAVE **FULL HITPOINTS!**

OKAY, SOUNDS LIKE THIS GUY IS **CLUELESS**. I **COULD** USE A LITTLE **REST**. WHO KNOWS - - MAYBE HIS **STEW** HAS SOME KIND OF **MEDICINAL VALUE** AND YOU'LL SEE FIT TO GIVE ME BACK A FEW **HITPOINTS**.

STRANGER THINGS HAVE **HAPPENED** IN THE WORLD OF **HACKMASTER**, I SUPPOSE.

YEAH, LET'S GRAB SOME **FREE GRUB** AND **DRINKS** BEFORE **WASTING** HIM- AGAIN.

OKAY, WE'LL CROSS THE **BRIDGE** AND ACCEPT HIS **INVITATION**.

AS YOU HEAD OUT ACROSS THE **BRIDGE** YOU NOTICE THE **TROLL** IS STILL **WAVING** AND **SMILING** AT YOU.

AS YOU REACH THE **HALF-WAY** POINT, HOWEVER, HIS **DEMEANOR** SUDDENLY CHANGES. THE **SMILES** TURNS TO A **MENACING SNEER**.

HIS HAND REACHES DOWN TO A **LEVER-LIKE** DEVICE ON THE SIDE OF ONE OF THE **BRIDGE'S** SUPPORT-BEAMS. WITH AN AUDIBLE "**KA-KLACK!!!**" HE PULLS IT.

SUDDENLY A LARGE SECTION OF THE **BRIDGE-PLANKING** BENEATH YOUR FEET **DROPS** AWAY REVEALING THE **VALLEY FLOOR** NEARLY **1,000 FEET** BELOW. IT'S A **BEAUTIFUL VIEW** -- ONE WHICH YOU'LL HAVE **PLENTY** OF TIME TO APPRECIATE ON YOUR **CANNONBALL-PLUNGE** DOWNWARD.

AS YOU **FALL**, THE **TROLL** YELLS DOWN, "**SHOVE ME** WILL YOU??!"

OH MY **GOODNESS!**

NOW **THAT'S** THE WAY A **TROLL** SHOULD **BEHAVE!**

ER TOPIC RE-CONDUCT THE GUY IS ALLYWAY R-right.
USEFUL charms
USEFUL (numbers)
DOMMONES 301-44
WOTC 421-78
GARY 612-301
GARY 911

B.A., I USE MY **SEEKING-GRASPING HANDS** SKILL TO GRAB ONTO SOME PART OF THE **BRIDGE!!** ANYTHING WILL DO. A FRAYED ROPE, A BIT OF **PLANKING**.

GOOD THINKING, SARA. YOUR **BARBARIAN** MANAGES TO CATCH HOLD OF THE **ROPE-LASHING** ON ONE OF THE **PLANKS** WHICH DROPPED AWAY BUT IS STILL **ATTACHED**.

I FOLLOW SUIT AND DO THE **SAME THING!**

YOU DON'T HAVE THAT **SKILL**, BOB.

WE'RE **TOAST!**



WADDA WE DO? WADDA WE DO?

I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE WE SHOULD... UH... **DUDE!!!** THE **CONCH!!!** BLOW THE FRICKIN' **CONCH!!!**

GOOD THINKING, DAVE.

HUH? OH... YEAH!!!



I **BLOW THE CONCH OF ARRNZ!!!**

IT SHOULDN'T BE A **PROBLEM** EITHER SINCE I SPECIFICALLY SAID I'D HAVE IT AT THE **READY AT ALL TIMES**.

THE **CONCH?** YOU'RE CALLING UPON THE **CONCH'S** POWERS?

WHILE YOU'RE **FALLING?**

THAT'S **EXACTLY** WHAT I'M DOING!



HMMMMM... THIS SHOULD CERTAINLY BE INTERESTING



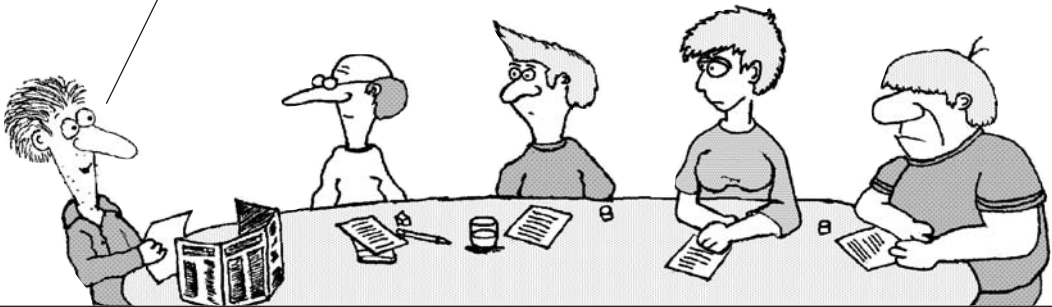
YOU **PUCKER UP** AND **BLOW INTO THE BRONZE CONCH**. THE SOUND WHICH **REVERBERATES** FROM IT IS **ASTOUNDING!!!**

THE SOUND IS LIKE **THUNDER** TO THE EARS. YOU CAN **'FEEL'** IT **POUNDING** ON YOUR **CHEST**.

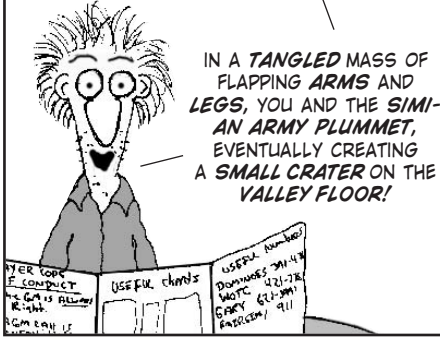


ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THE **CONCH** BEGINS TO **RESONATE** IN YOUR HANDS AS IT EMITS A **BRILLIANT WHITE LIGHT** FOLLOWED BY AN **EERIE SILENCE**. EXCEPT FOR THE **WHISTLING** OF THE WIND ON YOUR EARS, AS YOU CONTINUE YOUR **PLUMMET** DOWNWARDS THERE IS **NARY A SOUND**.

THEN IT HAPPENS... TWO THOUSAND AND THREE **APE-SHAMAN WARRIORS** ISSUE FORTH FROM THE **CONCH** TO **RESCUE** YOU FROM HARM. EACH **SIMIAN-WARRIOR** IS FULLY ARMORED, BRANDISHING AN **OBSDIAN BLADE** AND CHATTERING OUT A **WAR CRY** WHICH WOULD MAKE THE **BRAVEST** OF MEN **QUAKE AT THE KNEES!!**



UNFORTUNATELY THE **WAR CRIES** ARE QUICKLY REPLACED WITH TWO THOUSAND AND THREE **SHRIEKS OF HORROR** AS THE **WARRIORS** REALIZE THERE IS NO **GROUND** BENEATH THEIR FEET AND THAT THEY ARE, IN FACT, **FALLING TO THEIR DEATHS!!!**



OH MAN, THIS IS **FREAKIN' HILARIOUS!!** CAN YOU **VISUALIZE** IT?
-SNORT- THE **LOOK** ON THOSE **APE WARRIORS'** FACES AS THEY **POURED** OUT OF THAT **CONCH??** -SNICKER- -CHORT- OH MAN...

ABOUT AS **FUNNY** AS THE LOOKS ON **YOUR** FACES RIGHT NOW...
-HAR--
THIS IS **CLASSIC!!!**

-GIGGLE- YOU KNOW...
IT **IS** KIND OF FUNNY WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT.



FUNNY??!! JUST WHOSE **SIDE** ARE YOU ON?

I'M SORRY, BOB. REALLY. DON'T WORRY. I'LL **CLIMB** DOWN AND SORT OUT THE **MESS** -CHUCKLE- SOMEHOW.

HEY, AS I WAS **FALLING** I ATTEMPTED TO **CLIMB** UP ON **TOP** OF THAT **MASS** OF **TANGLED BODIES**. DID THEY BREAK MY **FALL?**

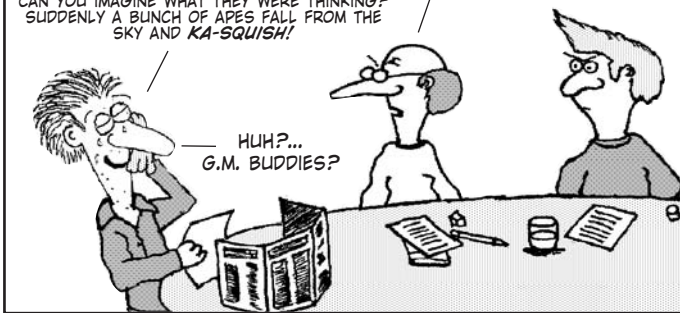
OH NO!!!!
-CHOKE- -CACKLE-



I **ROLLED** TO SEE IF THERE WERE ANY **WITNESSES**. **HA HA!! HO HO!!** THERE WERE **TWO GOAT-HERDERS**. -CACKLE- AND YOU **LANDED** ON THEIR **HERD!! HAR HAR!!!**

OH YOU THINK IT'S REAL **FUNNY** DON'T YOU!! I BET YOU JUST CAN'T WAIT TO GET TOGETHER WITH ALL YOUR "**G.M. BUDDIES**" AND TELL 'EM HOW YOU **BONED** US AND **TRASHED** OUR CHARACTERS. **REAL PROUD** OF YOURSELF AREN'T YA?

CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT THEY WERE THINKING?
SUDDENLY A BUNCH OF APES FALL FROM THE SKY AND **KA-SQUISH!**



HUH?...
G.M. BUDDIES?

YEAH-RIGHT, **BOB!!** LIKE ALL US **GAMEMASTERS** GET TOGETHER AFTER HOURS AND **COMPARE NOTES** AND TELL **STORIES**.



PA-LEEZZEE!!

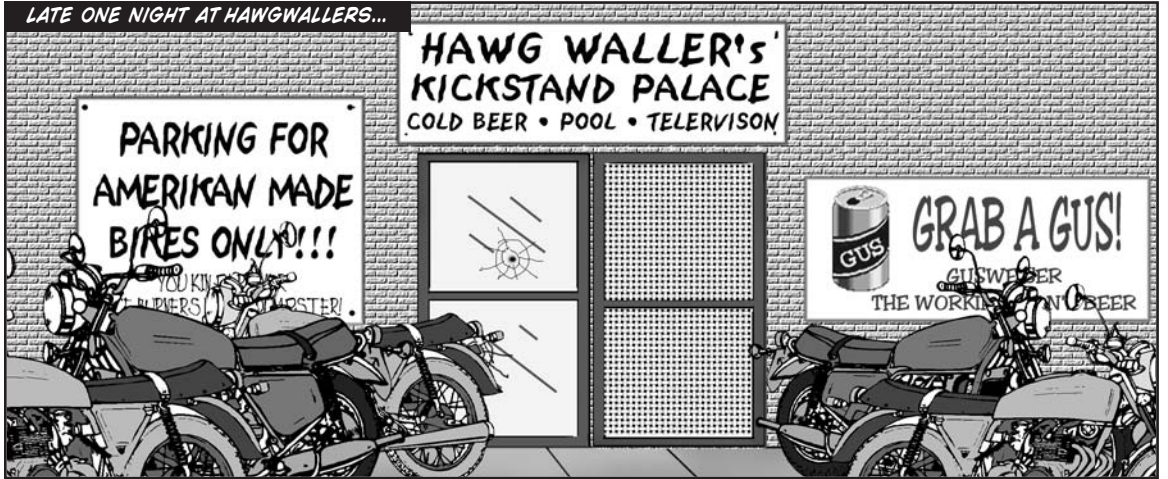
WE **DO** HAVE **REAL LIVES** YOU KNOW.



After Hours

BY JOLLY BLACKBURN,
AND STEVE JOHANSSON

LATE ONE NIGHT AT HAWGWALLERS...



...OH MAN THAT'S **HILARIOUS!!** YOU MEAN BOB HOSED HIMSELF BY ROLLING THE WRONG DIE? **TWICE??!!**

HE WAS **FROTHIN'** AT THE MOUTH. I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM SO **TORQUED!** BUT **WAIT** -- YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE **BEST** PART. SO THEY TAKE THE **CONCH** YOU SEE AND LATER THEY COME TO THIS BRIDGE AND...

YOU MEAN IT GETS **BETTER?**

HEY FOLKS!!!

THAYY **NITRO!!** TELL 'WIM WHATCHA DID TA POOR **GORDO** TAN-IGHT! GO AHEAD -- TELL 'WIM



HEY **EARL!!!** **PATTY!!!** 'BOUT TIME YOU TWO SHOWED UP. YOU GET **LOST?**

SORRY WE'RE LATE. WE CAUGHT THE **MIDNIGHT** SHOWING OF "**HAWK THE SLAYER**" THE 'DIRECTOR'S CUT.'

AWH MAN! YOU SHOULD'A SAID SOMETHING! I WANTED TO **SEE** THAT.

DID WE **MISS** ANYTHING?

'LO **PATTY!** HEY, **EARL!**



B.A. WAS JUST TELLING US HOW HE **CLEANED** HOUSE TONIGHT.

BOB REALLY GOT **HOSED**. AND GET **THIS** -- HE DID IT TO **HIMSELF**.

I WANT **EVERY** DETAIL. LEAVE **NOTHING** OUT!!

LIKE I WAS TELLING **NITRO** HERE. THE **GLYS** COME TO THIS **GREEN** DOOR AND...



CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

WAR IN THE HEAVENS:

Hegemony

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HEY DAVE, WHAT'S WITH THE GET UP??

OH, IT'S MY NEW VAU MANDARIN OUTFIT. TURNS OUT THESE GUYS AREN'T THE WUSSÉS WE THOUGHT THEY WERE.

SO, MR. KNOW-IT-ALL. HOW'S IT FEEL TO BE DAVE'S ERRAND BOY?

THEY JUST NEEDED A LITTLE PUSH IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE INS AND OUTS OF VAU SOCIETY. I LEARNED ALL ABOUT IT IN THE NEW **WAR IN THE HEAVENS: HEGEMONY** BOOK.

HMMRRRRFF! BEGINNER'S LUCK.

CAN I BE ON YOUR SIDE?

I'D BETTER GET MY HANDS ON THAT BOOK - QUICK!

I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE PAID WEIRD PETE THAT HUSH MONEY TO HAVE HIM KEEP THIS NEW RELEASE A SECRET FOR JUST ONE MORE WEEK.



TWENTY MINUTES LATER...

WOULD YOU LIKE ANOTHER DRINK, PATTY?

...SO HE BLOWS THE FRICKIN' CONCH AND OUT POUR TWO THOUSAND APE SHAMAN WARRIORS WHO OF COURSE PLUMMET TO THEIR DEATHS ALONG WITH BOB, DAVE AND BRIAN. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE LOOKS ON THEIR...

PLEASE! A BOHEMIAN LEMONADE THANK YOU.

CONCH OF AARNZ, HUH? I THOUGHT GM QUARTERLY LISTED TWO THOUSAND AND THREE WARRIORS INSIDE THAT THING.

RIGHT. MY BAD. THAT'S EXACTLY HOW MANY I TOLD THEM. ANYWAY, SO NEXT SARA CLIMBS DOWN TO...

I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY YOU SUBSCRIBE TO THAT. I CARRY IT IN THE SHOP.

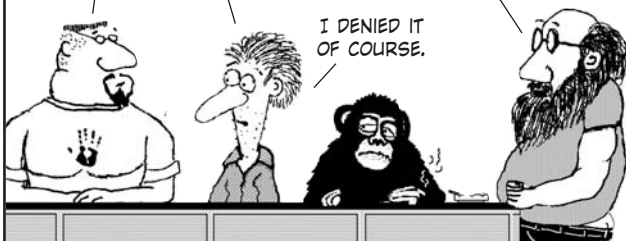


I HAVE TO ADMIT, I WAS A LITTLE RATTLED WHEN BOB SAID SOMETHING ABOUT ME GETTING TOGETHER WITH MY "GM BUDDIES" AND SHARING STORIES.

W-W-WHAT??!! HE SAID THAT?

WELL YOU DIDN'T LET ON DAT HE MIGHT BE RIGHT OR ANYTHING DID YA? -HIC- YOU THINK HE SUSPECTS SUMTHUN?

I DENIED IT OF COURSE.



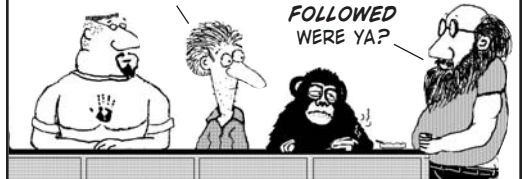
I DON'T THINK HE REALLY KNOWS ANYTHING, PETE. IT WAS JUST SOMETHING HE BLURTED OUT.

YOU DON'T "THINK"? FOR CRYING OUT LOUD, B.A.!

IF DA PLAYERS EVER GOT WIND OF OUR LITTLE 'AFTER HOURS' GET TOGETHERS...

GUYS, WE'RE KEWL!! REALLY!!

YA WEREN'T FOLLOWED WERE YA?

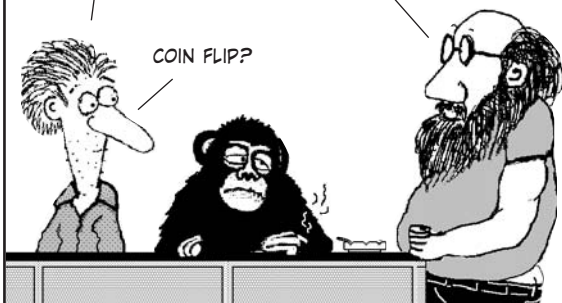


NO, I WASN'T FOLLOWED. EVERYTHING'S FINE, PETE.

HEY, WHAT'S WRONG WITH SQUIRRELY TONIGHT, ANYWAY? HE USUALLY HITS THE POOL TABLE PRETTY HARD.

AWWWWW, HE'S JUST POLTING. HE LOST A COIN FLIP EARLIER AND HE'S MOPIN' ABOUT IT.

COIN FLIP?

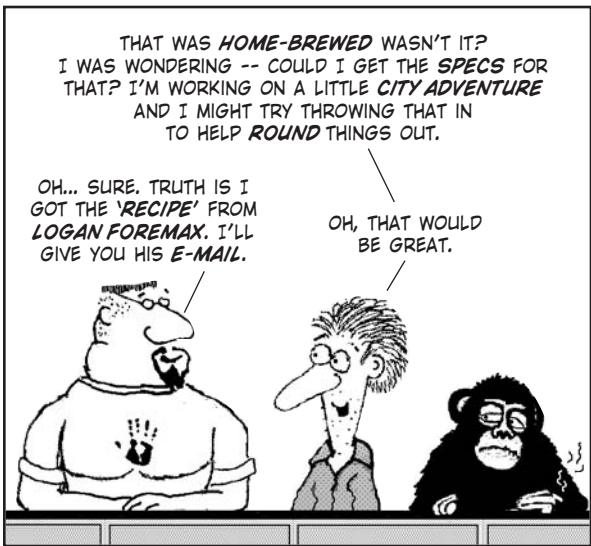


SAY, DIDN'T I HEAR SOMETHING ABOUT GORDO WHEN I CAME IN? HE STILL PLAYIN' A PIXIE-FAIRY?

NAAAA, I GOT THE BOYS PLAYIN' SPACKHACK FOR A WHILE. I'M LETTIN' EM COOL THEIR HEELS AFTER THAT LITTLE 'SAUNA OF SAP EXPERIENCE LEVELS' TRAP I THREW ON THEM A FEW WEEKS AGO.

OH, THAT REMINDS ME...





THAT WAS *HOME-BREWED* WASN'T IT? I WAS WONDERING -- COULD I GET THE *SPECS* FOR THAT? I'M WORKING ON A LITTLE *CITY ADVENTURE* AND I MIGHT TRY THROWING THAT IN TO HELP *ROUND* THINGS OUT.

OH... SURE. TRUTH IS I GOT THE '*RECIPE*' FROM *LOGAN FOREMAX*. I'LL GIVE YOU HIS *E-MAIL*.

OH, THAT WOULD BE GREAT.



OH *PWEEZE!* -HIC- LO... -HIC- *LOGAN* GOT DAT *TWAP* FROM *GRIMOCK'S TWAPS* AND *PERWILS* -ERP- DAT BOY AIN'T HAD AN *ORWIGINAL* THOUGHT IN *TEN YEARZZZ* -HIC-

OH BOY... WHEN PETE STARTS TALKING LIKE *THAT* IT'S TIME FOR ME TO HIT THE ROAD.

I EVER TELL YOU WHAT DAT *SUNUVABITCH* DID TO ME BACK IN *85*? HUH? DID I? -HIC- HE DOUBLE-ROLLED A *TO-HIT* AGAINST MY *DWARVEN THIEF!*

'*COURSE* HE *DENIED* IT. -ERP- BUT I *KNEW!*

AS THE NIGHT DRAWS ON...

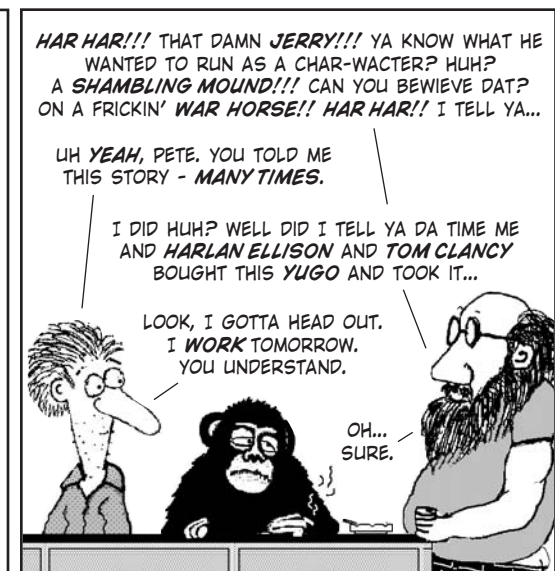


...OOOOOOOH, LEMME TELL YA, *B.A. DOZE* WERE DA DAYS, THEY WERE. THERE WAS ONLY *ONE* GAME IN TOWN AND *EVERYBODY* KNEW HOW TO *PWAY*. -SIGH-

YOU DON' BEWIEVE ME? YOU ASK *BRIAN!* HE KNOWS. HELL-BELLS!! WE USED TA CARRY OUR *DICE BAGS* WITH US *EVERYWHERE* WE WENT. *SHEEEETT!* YOU NEVER *KNEW* WHEN A GAME WAS GONNA POP UP.

UH... REALLY? THAT'S NICE, PETE. VERY NICE.

WHY I ONCE RAN A GAME FOR *JERRY GARCIA* ON THE *GRATEFUL DEAD* ROADY BUS!



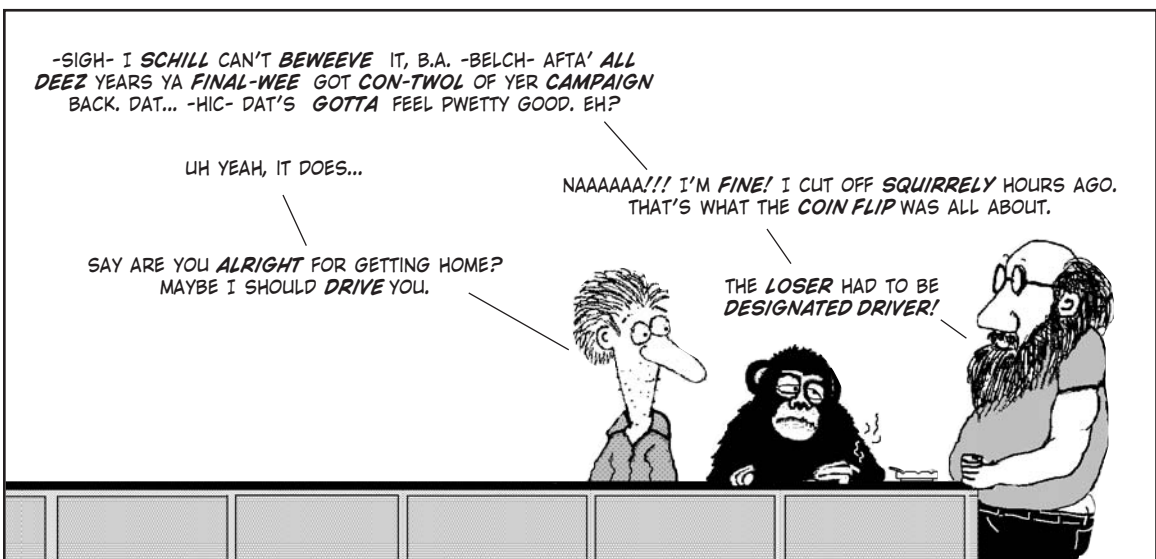
HAR HAR!!! THAT DAMN *JERRY!!!* YA KNOW WHAT HE WANTED TO RUN AS A *CHAR-WACTER*? HUH? A *SHAMBLING MOUND!!!* CAN YOU BEWIEVE DAT? ON A *FRICKIN' WAR HORSE!! HAR HAR!!* I TELL YA...

UH *YEAH*, PETE. YOU TOLD ME THIS STORY - *MANY* TIMES.

I DID HUH? WELL DID I TELL YA DA TIME ME AND *HARLAN ELLISON* AND *TOM CLANCY* BOUGHT THIS *YUGO* AND TOOK IT...

LOOK, I GOTTA HEAD OUT. I *WORK* TOMORROW. YOU UNDERSTAND.

OH... SURE.



-SIGH- I *SCHILL* CAN'T BEWEEVE IT, *B.A.* -BELCH- AFTA' *ALL DEEZ* YEARS YA *FINAL-WEE* GOT *CON-TWOL* OF YER *CAMPAIGN* BACK. DAT... -HIC- DAT'S *GOTTA* FEEL *PWETTY* GOOD. EH?

UH *YEAH*, IT DOES...

SAY ARE YOU *ALRIGHT* FOR GETTING HOME? MAYBE I SHOULD *DRIVE* YOU.

NAAAAA!!! I'M *FINE!* I CUT OFF *SQUIRRELY* HOURS AGO. THAT'S WHAT THE *COIN FLIP* WAS ALL ABOUT.

THE *LOSER* HAD TO BE *DESIGNATED DRIVER!*

A Legacy in Ruins

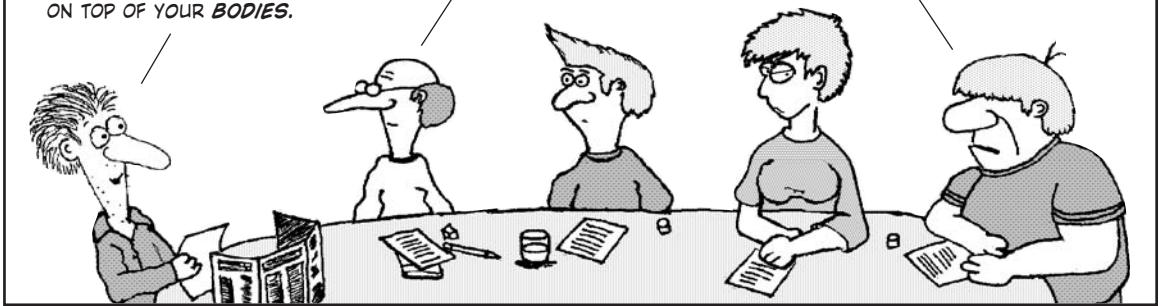
BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

OKAY, **SARA** MANAGES TO **DRAG** YOUR CARCASSES BACK TO THE **ROGUE PRIEST** IN THE **GOAT HERDER'S CART** BUT, AS YOU **SUSPECTED**, THE **CONCH** IS USELESS TO HIM -- IT'S **POWERS** HAVING BEEN **DISCHARGED**.

HE REALLY SEEMS TO BE DISAPPOINTED AS HE **TOSSES** THE **CONCH** INTO THE CART ON TOP OF YOUR **BODIES**.

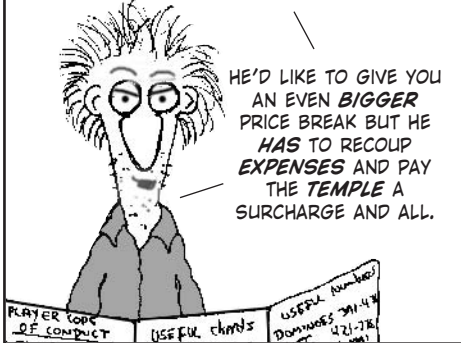
YEAH YEAH, WHATEVER- BUT HE'S **STILL** GOING TO RESTORE US, **RIGHT?** A **DEAL'S** A **DEAL!**

DON'T JUST **STAND** THERE **SARA**. MAKE **NICE** WITH THE MAN. GIVE HIM A LITTLE **MOTIVATION!**



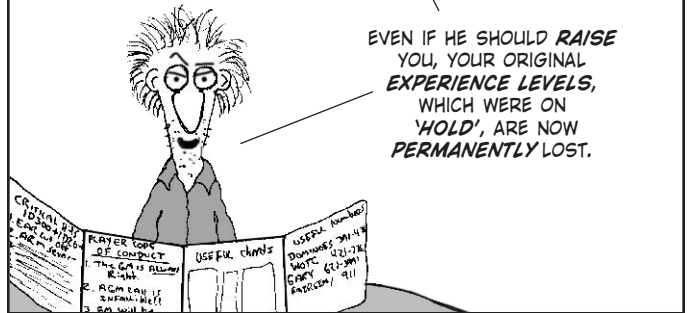
THE **ROGUE PRIEST** INFORMS **SARA** THAT SINCE YOU WERE **KILLED** ATTEMPTING TO FULFILL A **QUEST** ON HIS BEHALF, HE'S WILLING TO FOREGO HIS **USUAL** RATE AND **RAISE** YOU FOR ONLY **13,250** GOLD PIECES **EACH**.

HE'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU AN EVEN **BIGGER** PRICE BREAK BUT HE **HAS** TO RECOUP **EXPENSES** AND PAY THE **TEMPLE** A SURCHARGE AND ALL.



BUT AS FAR AS "**THE DEAL**" GOES, IT'S OFF! YOU WERE TO BRING HIM THE **CONCH** IN "**WORKING ORDER**". BESIDES... I DON'T THINK YOU **REALIZE** THE **FULL** RAMIFICATIONS OF YOUR **DEATHS**.

EVEN IF HE SHOULD **RAISE** YOU, YOUR ORIGINAL **EXPERIENCE** LEVELS, WHICH WERE ON '**HOLD**', ARE NOW **PERMANENTLY** LOST.



LOST!!!!

P-P-PERMANENTLY? YOU MEAN **FOREVER?**

WHAT THE **HELL** ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT?

SORRY GUYS. THAT'S WHAT THE **RULES** SAY ABOUT **DIMINISHED** RITES!

UH OH!!

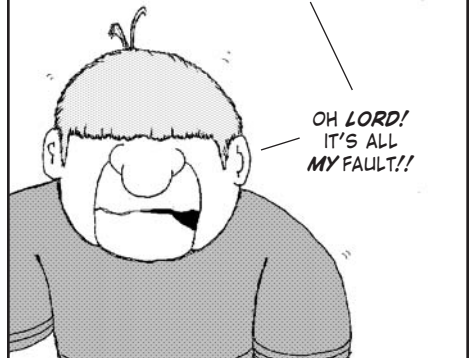
FIRP!!

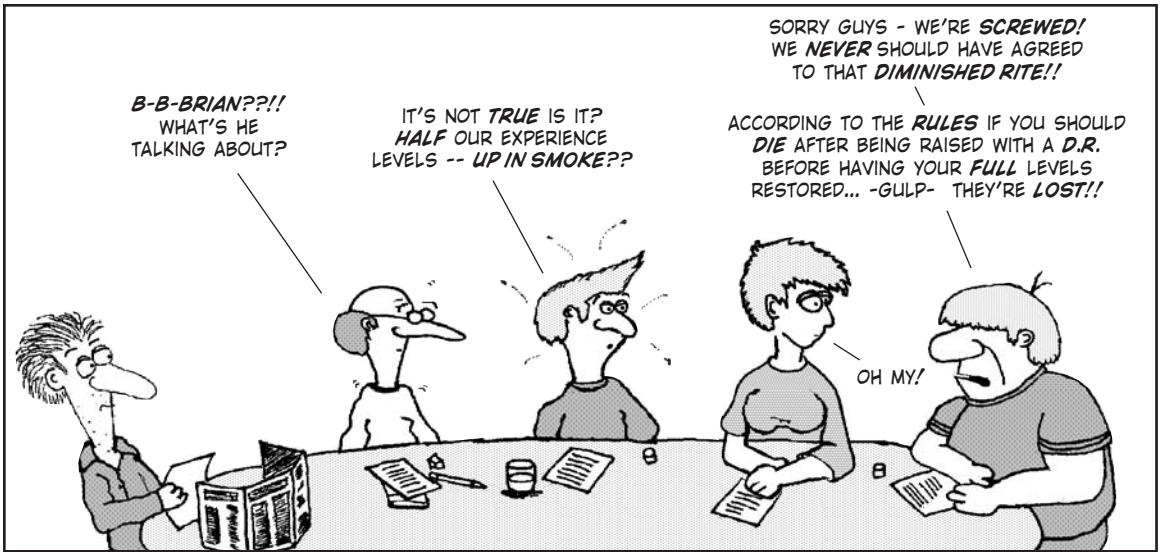


OH SWEET MOTHER OF...

-CHOKE- IT'S **MY** FAULT GUYS. I SHOULD HAVE **CAUGHT** THAT.

OH **LORD!** IT'S ALL **MY** FAULT!!





B-B-BRIAN??!!
WHAT'S HE
TALKING ABOUT?

IT'S NOT TRUE IS IT?
HALF OUR EXPERIENCE
LEVELS -- UP IN SMOKE??

SORRY GUYS - WE'RE **SCREWED!**
WE **NEVER** SHOULD HAVE AGREED
TO THAT **DIMINISHED RITE!!**
ACCORDING TO THE **RULES** IF YOU SHOULD
DIE AFTER BEING RAISED WITH A **D.R.**
BEFORE HAVING YOUR **FULL** LEVELS
RESTORED... -GULP- THEY'RE **LOST!!**

OH MY!



THIS **BLOWS!!** YOU MEAN I JUST
LOST OVER **EIGHT** LEVELS OF
EXPERIENCE?? JUST LIKE THAT?

I'M AFRAID SO, GUYS. THE
RULES ARE **VERY** CLEAR.

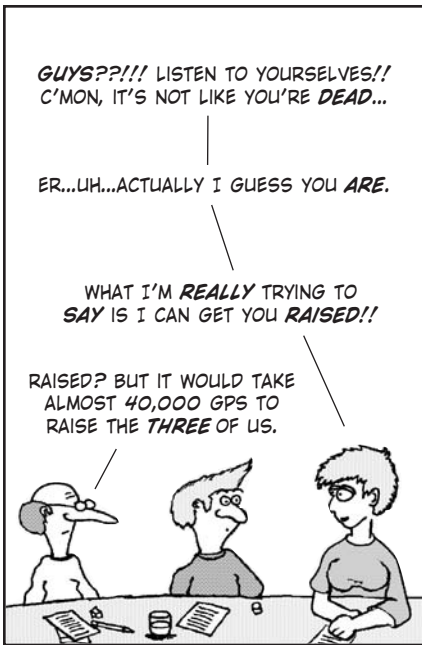
OH MY **GAWD!!!** HOW WILL I BE
ABLE TO FACE MY **FRIENDS??!!**

B.A. HAS US
DEAD TO RIGHTS!



THIS IS **TERRIBLE!** WE
WON'T BE ABLE SHOW
OUR **FACES** AT THE
P-MASTERS* ICE CREAM
SOCIAL NEXT MONTH!

WE'RE
RUINED!

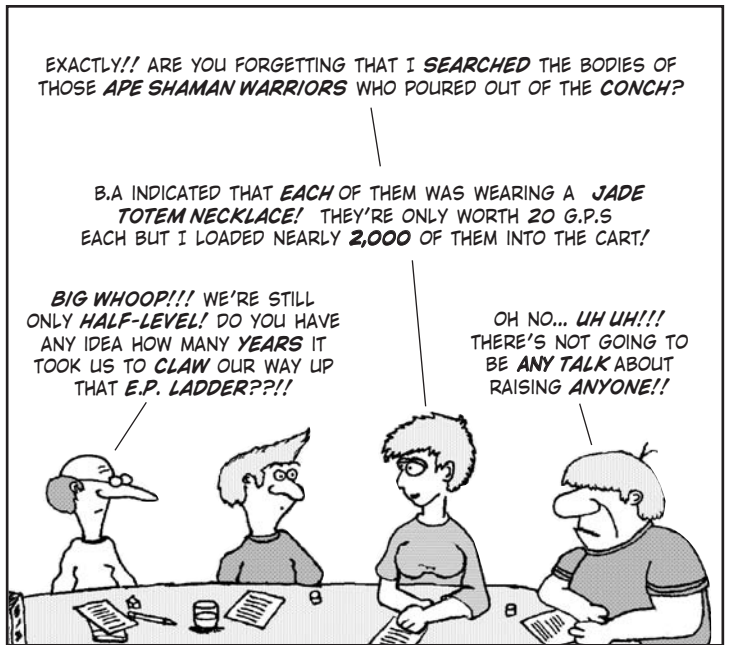


GUYS??!! LISTEN TO YOURSELVES!!
C'MON, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE **DEAD...**

ER...UH...ACTUALLY I GUESS YOU **ARE.**

WHAT I'M **REALLY** TRYING TO
SAY IS I CAN GET YOU **RAISED!!**

RAISED? BUT IT WOULD TAKE
ALMOST **40,000** G.P.S
TO RAISE THE **THREE** OF US.



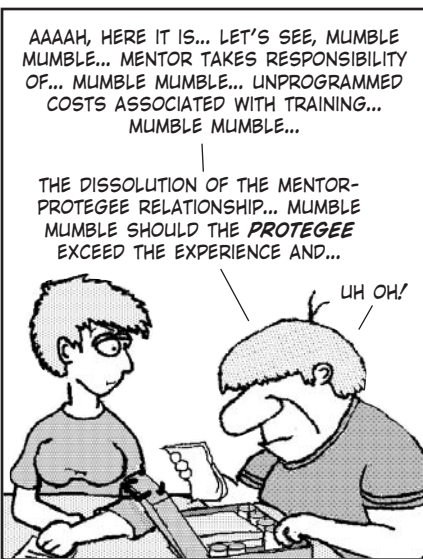
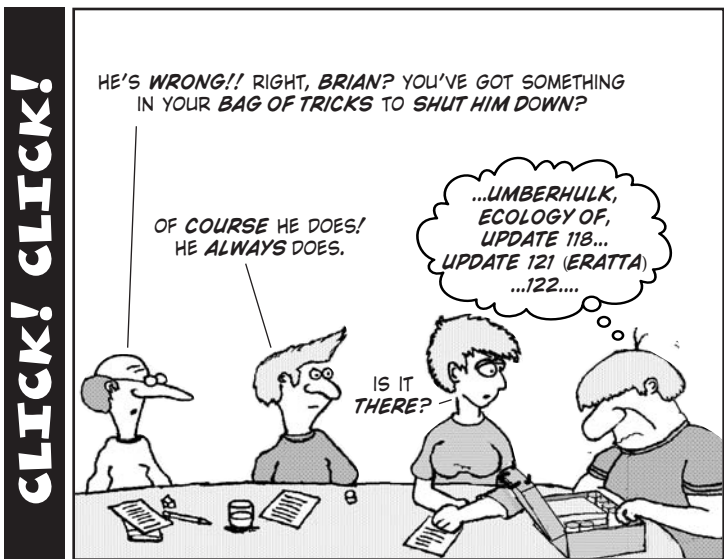
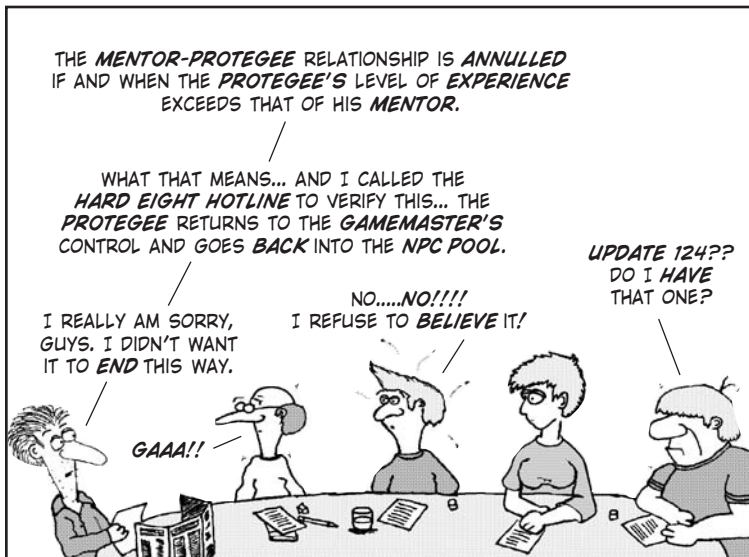
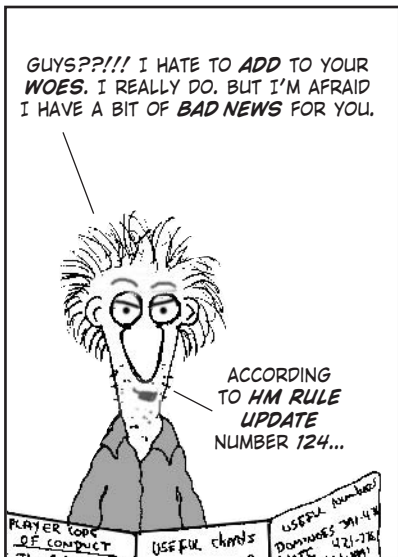
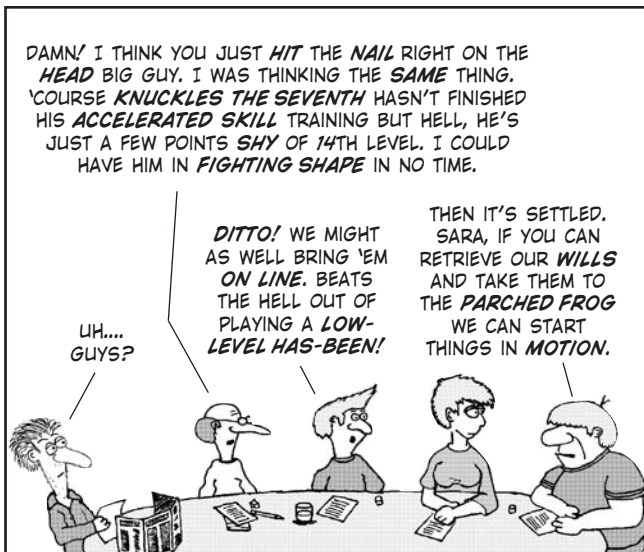
EXACTLY!! ARE YOU FORGETTING THAT I **SEARCHED** THE BODIES OF
THOSE **APE SHAMAN WARRIORS** WHO **POURED** OUT OF THE **CONCH?**

B.A. INDICATED THAT **EACH** OF THEM WAS WEARING A **JADE**
TOTEM NECKLACE! THEY'RE ONLY WORTH **20** G.P.S
EACH BUT I **LOADED** NEARLY **2,000** OF THEM INTO THE **CART!**

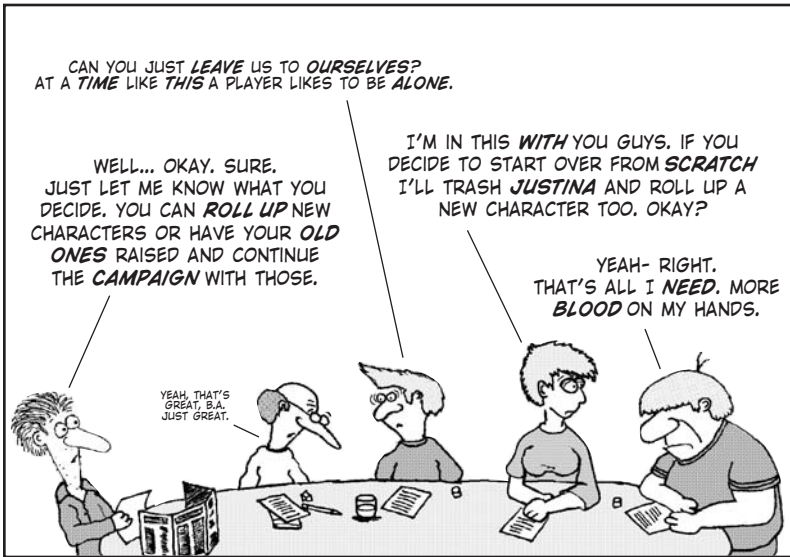
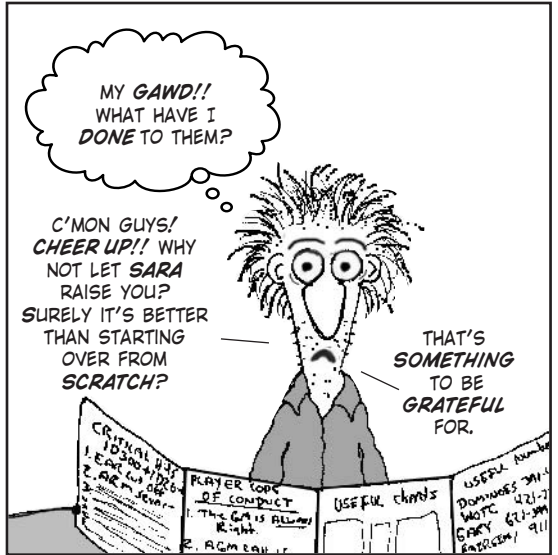
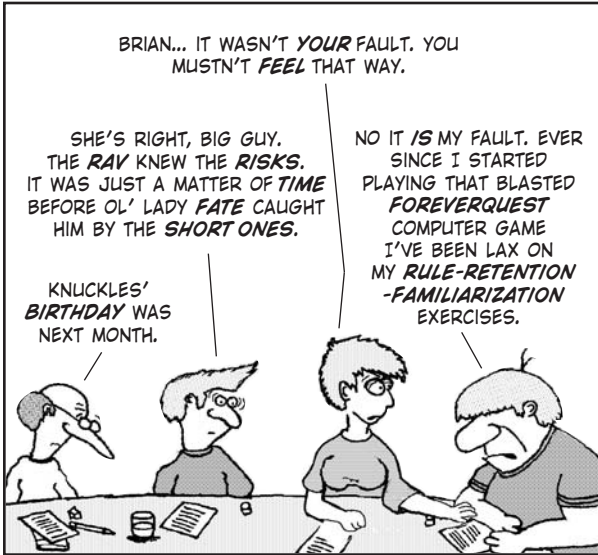
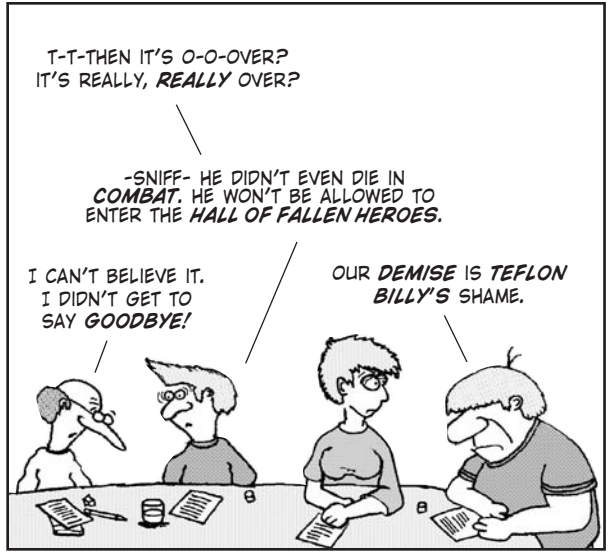
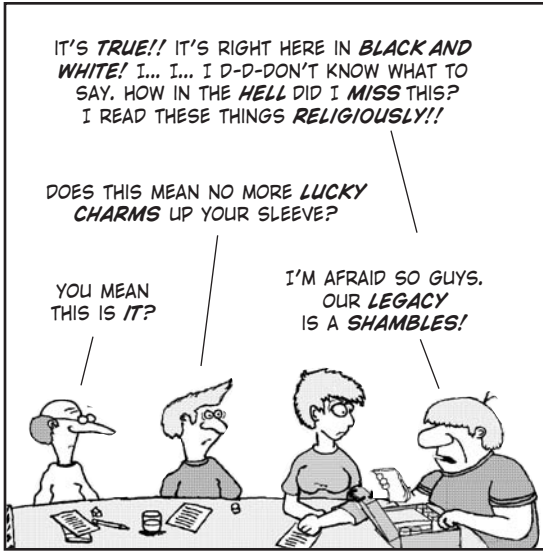
BIG WHOOP!!! WE'RE STILL
ONLY **HALF-LEVEL!** DO YOU HAVE
ANY IDEA HOW MANY **YEARS** IT
TOOK US TO **CLAW** OUR WAY UP
THAT **E.P. LADDER??!!**

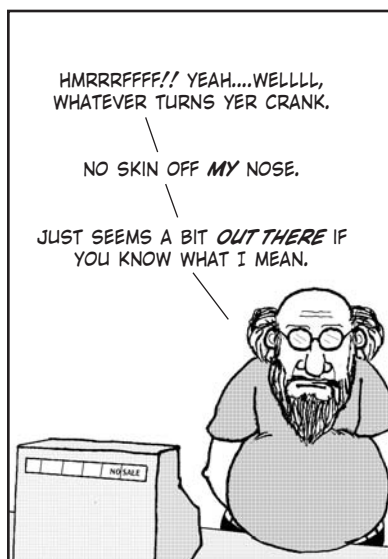
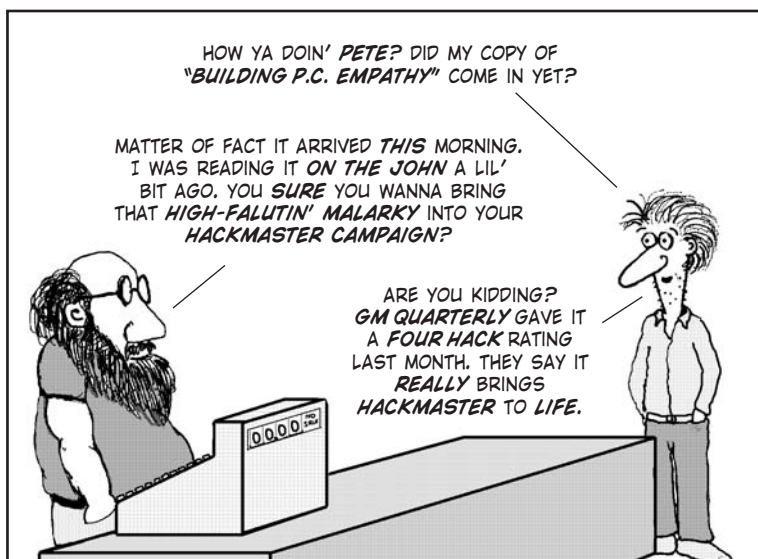
OH NO... **UH UH!!!**
THERE'S NOT GOING TO
BE **ANY TALK** ABOUT
RAISING **ANYONE!!**

* P-Masters (Player-Masters): A private club associated with the HackMaster Player's Association (HMPA). Membership is by invitation only and to qualify, the nominee must have an active (and certified) HackMaster player character of at least 12th level or above.



* Proteges (Character Prepping/Pep-Pool) See *Knights of the Dinner Table: Bundle of Trouble, Volume Six: Blood lines*. The Mentor/Protegee system allows players to enter into mentor/protegee relationship with certain NPCs. This allows the player to pump experience points, treasure and accelerated training into their 'proteges'. Prep-Pools were proposed by Norman Bowser so that players wouldn't have to start over from scratch when a long-running character dies. The Prep-Pool system has been greatly abused as seen here.





¹ Richard, if you are reading this your Compuserve E-mail address bounced all attempts to reach you.

You neglected to include a last name along with your idea. What were you thinking?

² See *Bundle of Trouble: Volume Five* "Return to Sender"

LATER THAT SAME NIGHT...

GOOD!! LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S HERE. WE CAN GET STARTED.

YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO KNOW THAT I HAVE SOMETHING SPECIAL PLANNED FOR TONIGHT.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND AND THIS SHOULD BE LOADS OF FUN.



HEY... WHAT'S THIS? HACKERJACKS??!! WHAT ARE THOSE?

THAT'S THAT REALLY LAME 'GAMER SNACK FOOD' GARY JACKSON CAME OUT WITH SEVERAL YEARS AGO. THEY BOMBED HORRIBLY!!

WHERE ON EARTH DID YOU FIND THEM, B.A.?

GOOD LORD! GET A LOAD OF SOME OF THESE FLAVORS. "ELVEN RANGER CANDY APPLE"?

DIDN'T THEY PULL THOSE BECAUSE THEY CAUSED ABDOMINAL CRAMPS?

I'LL EXPLAIN THOSE IN A MINUTE, GUYS.

"IRON RATION SURPRISE"?

ONLY THE "MAGE MEDLEY MIX" DID THAT SARA.



FIRST I WANT TO TELL YOU WHAT'S UP. WE'RE GOING TO TRY SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT TONIGHT. I PICKED UP NORMAN BOWZER'S NEW BOOK, "BUILDING PLAYER CHARACTER EMPATHY". IT'S JUST PACKED WITH GREAT IDEAS ON HOW HELP PLAYERS MORE INTIMATELY IDENTIFY WITH THEIR PLAYER CHARACTERS.

NORMAN BOWZER? HEY, IS THIS BASED ON THOSE P.C. EMPATHY SEMINARS HE RUNS AT GARYCON EVERY YEAR?

HEY... I ATTENDED THAT SEMINAR LAST YEAR. IT REALLY WAS ENLIGHTENING.

CRUD! I SKIPPED THAT ONE SO I COULD MAKE THE CAGED RULE LAWYER DERBY!

THAT'S RIGHT. AND HIS BOOK IS GETTING RAVE REVIEWS.



IT'S REALLY CUTTING EDGE STUFF. NORMAN ADVOCATES THE USE OF PROPS AND VARIOUS TECHNIQUES AIMED AT HELPING THE PLAYER MORE READILY ASSOCIATE WITH WHAT HIS CHARACTER IS GOING THROUGH.

INTERESTING IDEA. WHAT'S HIS APPROACH?

WELL, FOR EXAMPLE MY CHARACTER WAS STUNG BY A GIANT SCORPION IN HIS ADVENTURE. I WAS TOLD SHE WAS IN AGONIZING PAIN AND IN NEED OF TREATMENT. NORMAN TOOK A CLOTHES PIN AND CLAMPED IT ON MY PINKY. THE DISCOMFORT WAS A CONSTANT REMINDER OF THE PAIN MY CHARACTER WAS ENDURING. FUNNY AS IT SOUNDS -- I WAS REALLY IMMERSSED IN THE GAME.

OH MAN, I'M HAVING FLASHBACKS OF MY HAZING DAYS.

SOUNDS TO ME LIKE THAT NEW AGE FREE-FORM CRAP BISON HEAD GAMES HAS BEEN CHURNING OUT.

NOT AT ALL!



IT'S JUST **FLUFF** -- SOME **SIMPLE** GIMMICKS TO ENHANCE THE GAME.

WHEN MY **FRIEND** DECIDED SHE WANTED TO **LUG** THIS HUGE **STONE TALISMAN** BACK FROM THE **DUNGEON** WITH HER, **NORMAN** MADE HER WEAR A **HUNTING VEST** THAT HAD ALL ITS **POUCHES** AND **POCKETS** FILLED WITH **PENNIES**.

IT MUST HAVE WEIGHED **THIRTY-FIVE POUNDS!!!**

35 POUNDS? THAT'S A LOT FOR A GIRL.

SHE REALLY WORE IT? WOW.

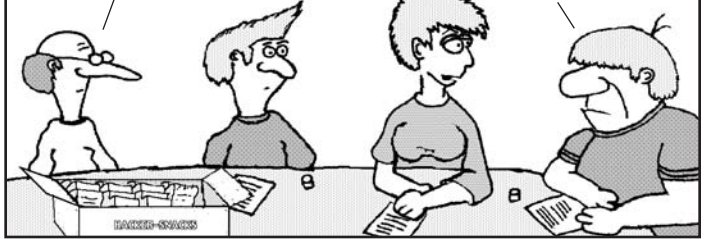


I'M TELLIN' YA -- AFTER **TWENTY MINUTES** OR SO IT **REALLY** BEGAN CUTTING INTO HER **SHOULDER BLADES** SO SHE HAD TO TAKE IT **OFF** AND PASS IT OVER TO **ME** TO WEAR.

I KNOW IT SOUNDS **STRANGE** BUT IT **TOTALLY** FELT LIKE OUR **CHARACTERS** WERE DRAGGING THIS **GAWD AWFUL HEAVY** THING BACK TO TOWN WITH US.

HE **REALLY** DID THAT? I HEARD **RUMORS** BUT I DIDN'T THINK THEY WERE TRUE.

THAT KIND OF STUFF IS **FINE** FOR **GARYCON**. BUT **HERE?** AT OUR **HOME TABLE?**



SARA'S RIGHT, GUYS. I ATTENDED A FEW OF **NORMAN'S** SEMINARS MYSELF. HE'S REALLY **BIG** ON **ROLE-IMMERSION** AND **PUSHING THE ENVELOPE** TO FIND NEW WAYS OF **IMPROVING** THE GAME. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE NICE IF WE **TRIED** A FEW OF HIS **TECHNIQUES**- JUST TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

FINE BY ME. AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T **INTERFERE** WITH MY **HACKING**.

IF **BOB'S** IN -- I'M IN.

I'M **DEFINITELY** IN FOR **IMPROVING** OUR GAME, B.A.

OKAY, OKAY, BUT JUST USE A **FEW** OF HIS IDEAS. OKAY? LET'S NOT GO **WHOLE HAWG**.

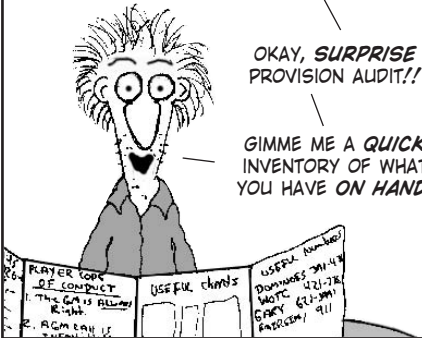


A WEE BIT LATER...

OKAY, WHEN WE **HALTED** THE GAME **LAST WEEK** YOU HAD JUST **LEFT TOWN** A FEW DAYS PRIOR AND WERE **WELL** ON YOUR WAY ACROSS THE **SCORCHING SANDS** OF THE **DESERT OF FLAMAAR!!**

OKAY, **SURPRISE** PROVISION AUDIT!!

GIMME ME A **QUICK** INVENTORY OF WHAT YOU HAVE **ON HAND**.



PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT
1. THE GUY IS ALWAYS RIGHT.
2. ADMIRATION
USEFUL CHARMS
USEFUL CHARMS
DORMERS 2014
WOLF 421-78
GARY 611-301
BARBARA 911

MOMENTS LATER...

DAMN! I GUESS I **GOOFED**. ALL I HAVE IS **TWO** DAY'S WORTH OF **IRON RATIONS** AND HALF A **FLASK** OF **POND WATER**. HOW 'BOUT YOU GUYS?

I GOT SOME **SALTED PORK** AND A FEW **CORN DODGERS**. HMMMMM... AND A BOTTLE OF **WINE**.

I HAVE A **THREE** DAY RATION OF **WATER** FOR MYSELF. AND SOME **IRON RATIONS** AS WELL. THAT'S ABOUT IT.

UH OH...

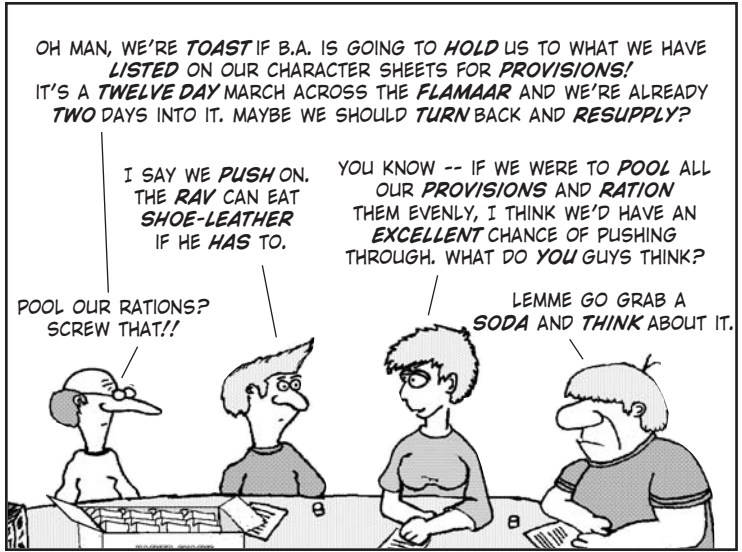




I GUESS WE'VE BEEN GETTING A BIT **LAX** BUYING PROVISIONS. **B.A.** HASN'T **AUDITED** US IN QUITE A WHILE. HOW DID YOU COME OUT?

UH...ER....GULP- ALL I'VE GOT IS A **BISCUIT!**

YOU POOR GUY!



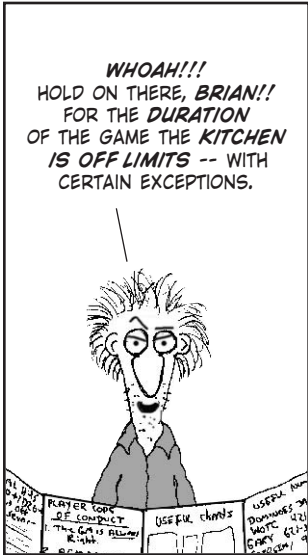
OH MAN, WE'RE **TOAST** IF **B.A.** IS GOING TO **HOLD** US TO WHAT WE HAVE **LISTED** ON OUR CHARACTER SHEETS FOR **PROVISIONS!** IT'S A **TWELVE DAY MARCH** ACROSS THE **FLAMAAR** AND WE'RE ALREADY **TWO DAYS** INTO IT. MAYBE WE SHOULD **TURN BACK** AND **RESUPPLY?**

I SAY WE **PUSH ON.** THE **RAV** CAN EAT **SHOE-LEATHER** IF HE **HAS** TO.

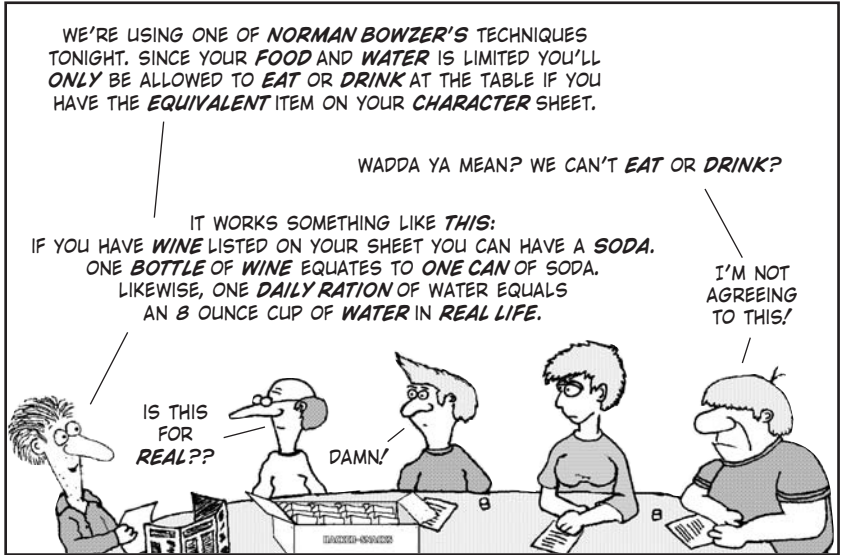
YOU KNOW -- IF WE WERE TO **POOL** ALL OUR **PROVISIONS** AND **RATION** THEM EVENLY, I THINK WE'D HAVE AN **EXCELLENT CHANCE** OF **PUSHING THROUGH.** WHAT DO YOU GUYS THINK?

POOL OUR RATIONS? SCREW THAT!!

LEMME GO GRAB A **SODA** AND **THINK** ABOUT IT.



WHOAH!!! HOLD ON THERE, **BRIAN!!** FOR THE **DURATION** OF THE GAME THE **KITCHEN IS OFF LIMITS** -- WITH CERTAIN EXCEPTIONS.



WE'RE USING ONE OF **NORMAN BOWZER'S** TECHNIQUES TONIGHT. SINCE YOUR **FOOD** AND **WATER** IS LIMITED YOU'LL **ONLY** BE ALLOWED TO **EAT** OR **DRINK** AT THE TABLE IF YOU HAVE THE **EQUIVALENT** ITEM ON YOUR **CHARACTER SHEET.**

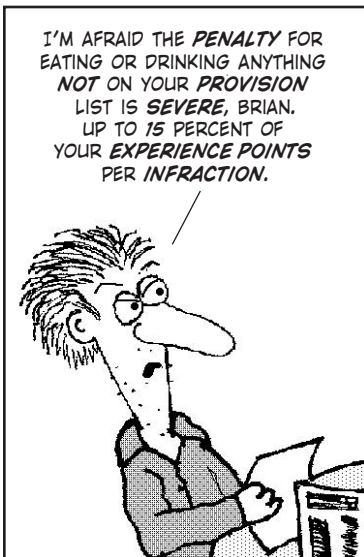
WADDA YA MEAN? WE CAN'T **EAT** OR **DRINK?**

IT WORKS SOMETHING LIKE **THIS:** IF YOU HAVE **WINE** LISTED ON YOUR SHEET YOU CAN HAVE A **SODA.** ONE **BOTTLE OF WINE** EQUATES TO **ONE CAN** OF **SODA.** LIKewise, ONE **DAILY RATION** OF **WATER** EQUALS AN **8 OUNCE CUP** OF **WATER** IN **REAL LIFE.**

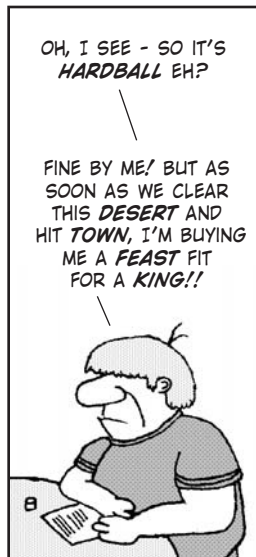
I'M NOT **AGREEING** TO THIS!

IS THIS FOR **REAL??**

DAMN!

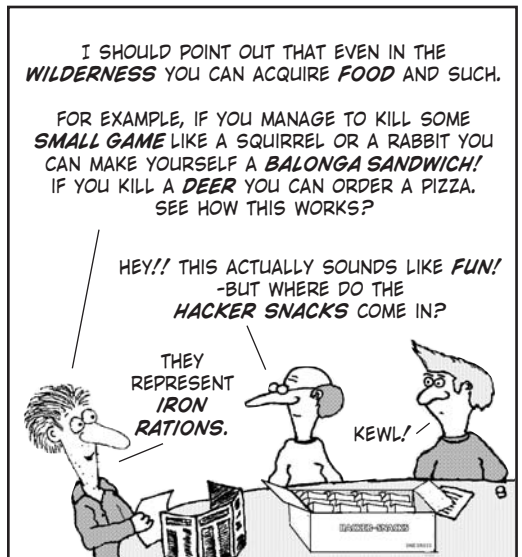


I'M AFRAID THE **PENALTY** FOR **EATING** OR **DRINKING** ANYTHING **NOT** ON YOUR **PROVISION** LIST IS **SEVERE, BRIAN.** UP TO **15 PERCENT** OF YOUR **EXPERIENCE POINTS** PER **INFRACTION.**



OH, I SEE - SO IT'S **HARDBALL** EH?

FINE BY ME! BUT AS SOON AS WE CLEAR THIS **DESERT** AND HIT **TOWN,** I'M BUYING ME A **FEAST FIT** FOR A **KING!!**



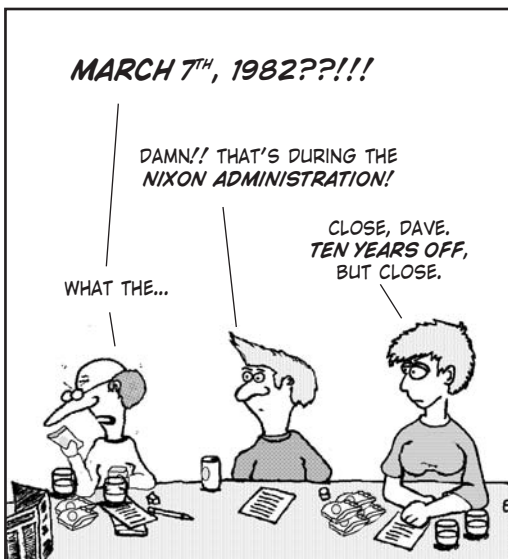
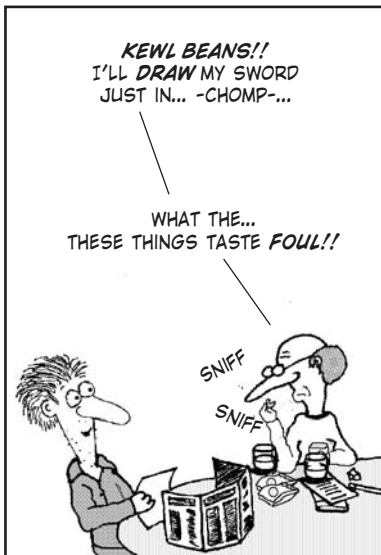
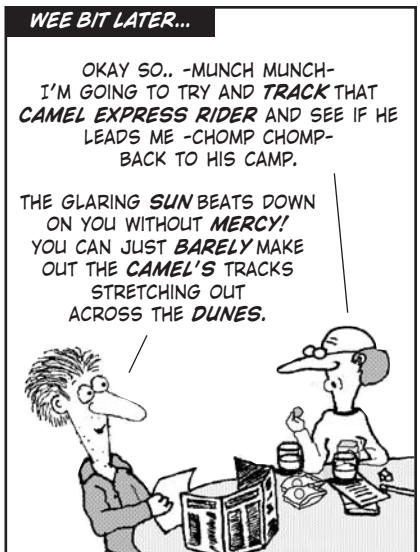
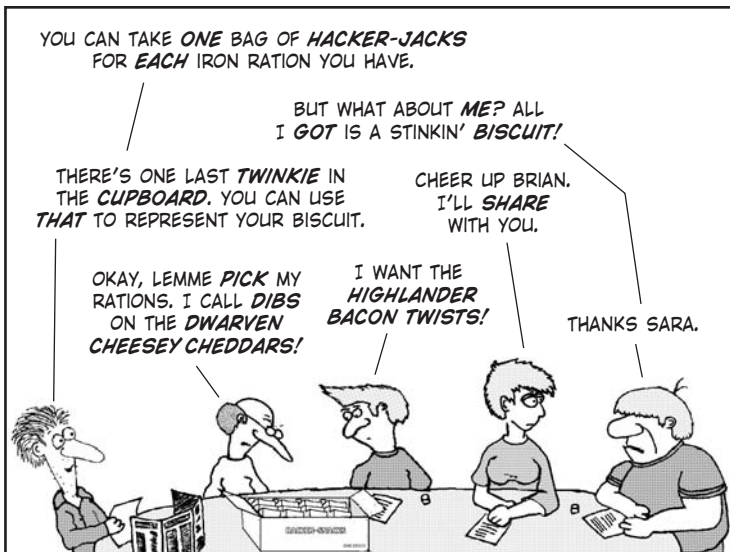
I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT EVEN IN THE **WILDERNESS** YOU CAN ACQUIRE **FOOD** AND SUCH.

FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU MANAGE TO KILL SOME **SMALL GAME** LIKE A **SQUIRREL** OR A **RABBIT** YOU CAN MAKE YOURSELF A **BALONGA SANDWICH!** IF YOU KILL A **DEER** YOU CAN ORDER A **PIZZA.** SEE HOW THIS WORKS?

HEY!! THIS ACTUALLY SOUNDS LIKE **FUN!** -BUT WHERE DO THE **HACKER SNACKS** COME IN?

THEY REPRESENT **IRON RATIONS.**

KEWL!



EVEN LATER STILL...

SORRY DUDE, I COULD ONLY **MANAGE** TO CATCH **ONE SAND RAT**. THERE'S NOT MUCH **MEAT** ON 'EM -- ELSE I'D **SHARE**.

C'MON DUDE! I'LL SHARE SOME OF MY **WINE** WITH YOU.

NAAA! WITH **RAT** I PREFER A HEARTY **BURGUNDY**.

I'LL GIVE YOU **FOUR SWIGS** OF HEALING POTION FOR A **BITE!**



AFTER TWO WEEKS OF BEING 'LOST' IN THE DESERT...

OH **GAWD!!!** I'M SO **PARCHED!!!** -GASP- SARA, CAN I HAVE **ANOTHER GLASS** OF WATER?

BRIAN???! YOU **BIG-GULPED** TWO GLASSES ALREADY!! I THINK MAYBE WE SHOULD **CONSERVE** WHAT WE HAVE LEFT.

BUT I'M **DYING** HERE... THAT **BISCUIT** MADE ME **THIRSTY!!!**



DAVE... **DUDE!!!** LEMME HAVE THAT **SODA...** I MEAN THAT **BOTTLE OF WINE!!!** I'LL GIVE YA **TWENTY GOLD PIECES** FOR IT.

NO WAY DUDE! THIS IS A **FINE VINTAGE!** AND IT'S STILL **HOLDING ITS CHILL**.

OKAY, OKAY, A **HUNDRED GOLD!** YOU HEAR? I'LL GIVE YOU A **HUNDRED GOLD!**

SORRY DUDE. **NO SALE!**

BRIAN, IT'S **ALL** IN YOUR HEAD!

SCREW THIS!!



BRIAN???! WHERE ARE YOU GOING??

I'LL BE **BACK!!** GO AHEAD AND **CONTINUE!**

WHAT ON **EARTH** HAS GOTTEN INTO HIM?



FORTY MINUTES LATER...

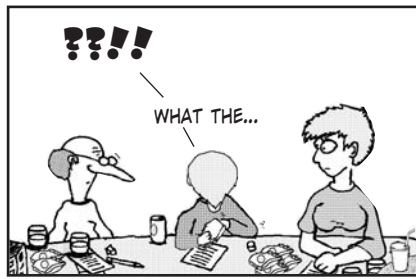
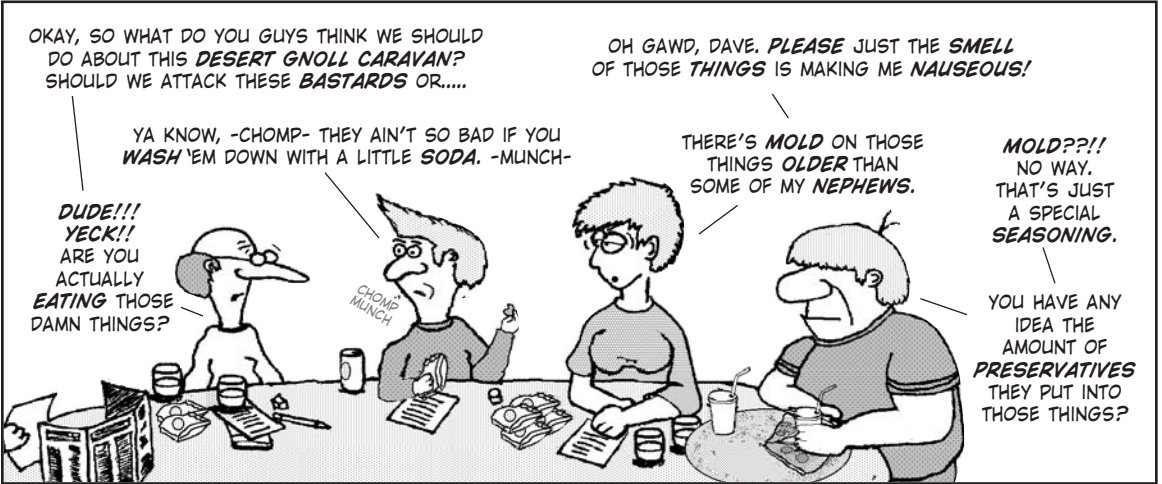
BRIAN???! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE **DOING???**

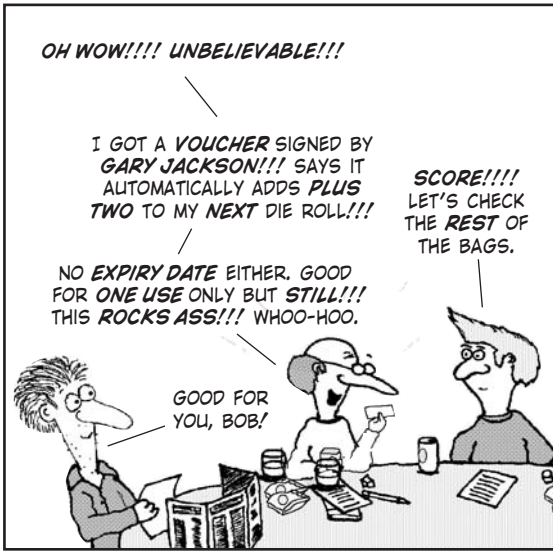
WHERE HAVE YOU **BEEEN???**

OH... -MUNCH- -MUNCH- PAY NO **ATTENTION** TO ME. -CHOMP- I'M NOT **HERE**. -CRUNCH- -MUNCH- I JUST **BURNED OFF** A CHARGE FROM MY **RING OF TELEPORTATION** AND **ZIPPED** BACK TO TOWN.

PLEASE -- **CONTINUE!!** I'LL CATCH UP WITH YA **LATER**.







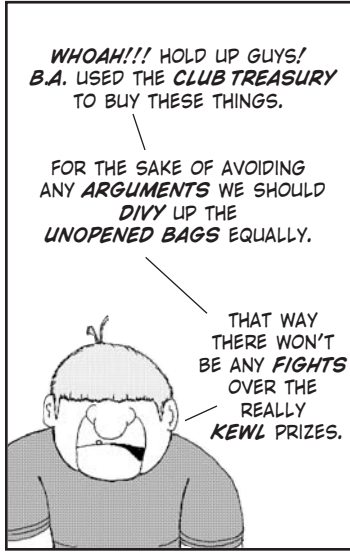
OH WOW!!!! UNBELIEVABLE!!!

I GOT A **VOUCHER** SIGNED BY **GARY JACKSON!!!** SAYS IT AUTOMATICALLY ADDS **PLUS TWO** TO MY NEXT DIE ROLL!!!

SCORE!!!! LET'S CHECK THE REST OF THE BAGS.

NO **EXPIRY DATE** EITHER. GOOD FOR **ONE USE ONLY** BUT **STILL!!!** THIS **ROCKS ASS!!!** WHOO-HOO.

GOOD FOR YOU, BOB!



WHOAH!!! HOLD UP GUYS! B.A. USED THE **CLUB TREASURY** TO BUY THESE THINGS.

FOR THE SAKE OF AVOIDING ANY **ARGUMENTS** WE SHOULD **DIVY UP** THE **UNOPENED BAGS** EQUALLY.

THAT WAY THERE WON'T BE ANY **FIGHTS** OVER THE REALLY **KEWL** PRIZES.



THAT'S AN **EXCELLENT** IDEA, BRIAN.

WE CAN **DICE** TO SEE WHO GOES FIRST AND THEN GO **AROUND** THE TABLE. EACH PERSON TAKES A BAG UNTIL THEY ARE **ALL GONE**.

A WEE BIT LATER....



DARN!! I GOT ANOTHER **GUMMY CARRION CRAWLER!**

WHAT??!! THIS BAG HAD A "**HACK THIS!**" TEMPORARY TATOO!

GEEZUS!! MOST OF THESE PRIZES ARE REALLY LAME! I GOT A **FRICKIN' PAPER CLIP** IN THIS BAG.

A **CANADIAN NICKLE??!**

HEY, I'LL TRADE YA THIS **GUMMY-BEHOLDER** FOR THE **CARRION CRAWLER, B.A.!!**



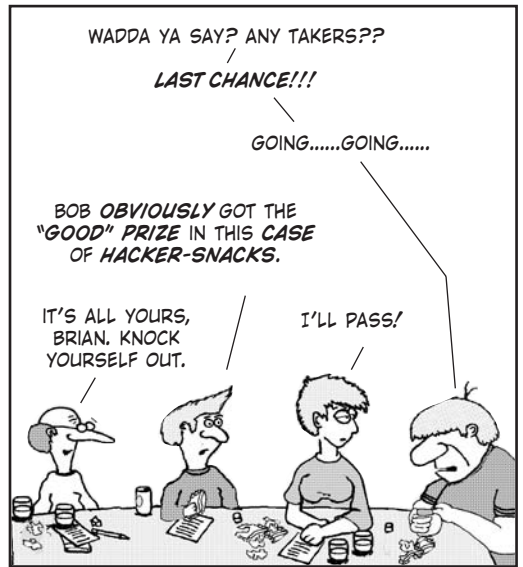
WELL...THAT WAS THE **LAST ONE**. **BUMMER!!** I DIDN'T GET A **SINGLE** DECENT PRIZE.

ACTUALLY, WE STILL HAVE THIS **ODD BAG** THAT WAS LEFT OVER.

I GUESS I GOT **LUCKY** WITH THAT **VOUCHER!!**

WHY EVEN BOTHER?

MAYBE WE SHOULD **DICE** FOR IT TO SEE WHO GETS IT.



WADDA YA SAY? ANY **TAKERS??**

LAST CHANCE!!!

GOING.....GOING.....

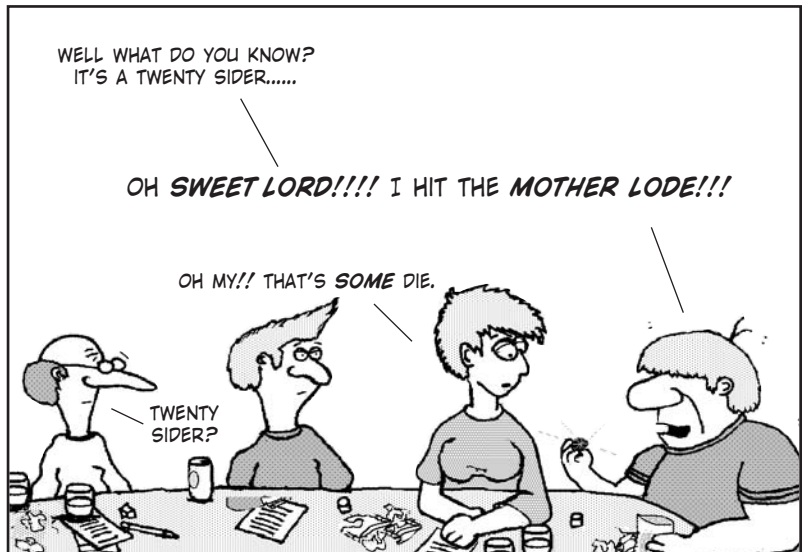
BOB **OBVIOUSLY** GOT THE "**GOOD**" PRIZE IN THIS CASE OF **HACKER-SNACKS**.

IT'S ALL YOURS, BRIAN. **KNOCK YOURSELF OUT**.

I'LL PASS!



OKAY, YOUR *LOSS!!*

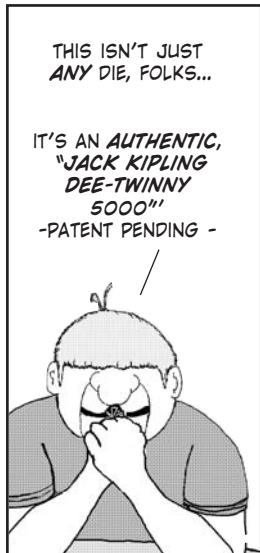


WELL WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
IT'S A TWENTY SIDER.....

OH *SWEET LORD!!!!* I HIT THE *MOTHER LODE!!!*

OH MY!! THAT'S *SOME DIE.*

TWENTY
SIDER?



THIS ISN'T JUST
ANY DIE, FOLKS...

IT'S AN *AUTHENTIC,*
"JACK KIPLING
DEE-TWINNY
5000"
-PATENT PENDING -



THEY WERE MEANT TO BE A SPECIAL PROMOTIONAL ITEM FOR A NEW *DICE-LINE* GARY WAS WORKING ON. UNFORTUNATELY THE *DESIGNER* SKIPPED THE COUNTRY WITH THE *SPEC SHEETS*. ONLY *FIFTY* PRE-RELEASE *DEE-TWINNIES* WERE MADE AND THEY *ALL* WENT INTO BAGS OF *HACKER-SNACKS*. AND I GOT ONE!!

THEY'RE MADE OF AEROSPACE GRADE *LEXAN*. THESE *BABIES* WERE LASER-CUT, AND THE *NUMBERS* WERE PAINSTAKINGLY *ACID-ETCHED!* THE ONLY THING THAT CAN *SCRATCH 'EM* IS AN *INDUSTRIAL DIAMOND!*

S-S-SAY W-W-WHAT???
THAT'S A *JACK
KIPLING?*
ARE YOU *SURE??!!*

'COURSE I'M SURE.
LOOK AT THOSE
LINES! LOOK
AT ITS *SHEEN!*



OH MAN!! WHAT
A BUNCH OF *LOSERS!!!*

THIS LITTLE *BEAUTY* IS
GOING TO CHANGE MY
ENTIRE GAME!!

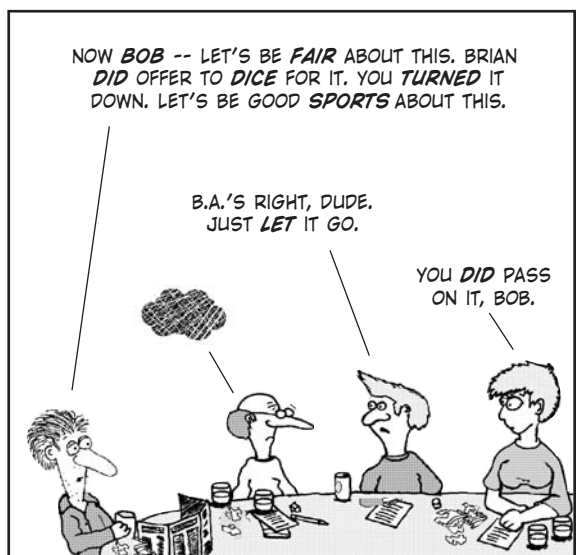


FIRP!!! FWIP!!!! FRAPPPPP!!!!
NOW JUST A *GAWDAMSECUND!* YOU DIDN'T SAY ANY *BLASTED THING* ABOUT SOME OF THE *FREAKIN' PRIZES* BEING *DICE!!*

SO WHAT? YOU GOT A *PROBLEM* WITH ME AND MY *JACK KIPLING?*

I'M CRYING *FOUL!* I *NEVER* WOULD HAVE *PASSED* ON THAT BAG IF I'D KNOWN THERE WAS THE *SLIGHTEST* CHANCE OF GETTING A *DIE* LIKE THAT. YOU *WITHELD* VITAL *INFORMATION.*

OH YEAH?
WELL *DEAL* WITH IT.



NOW *BOB* -- LET'S BE *FAIR* ABOUT THIS. *BRIAN* *DID* OFFER TO *DICE* FOR IT. YOU *TURND* IT DOWN. LET'S BE GOOD *SPORTS* ABOUT THIS.

B.A.'S RIGHT, DUDE.
JUST *LET* IT GO.

YOU *DID* PASS ON IT, *BOB.*

LATER....

BRIAN, I'M *ASHAMED* OF YOU!
LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO POOR *BOB!*

ME??!!! WHAT THE HELL DID I DO?

YOU KNOW HOW IMPORTANT *DICE* ARE
TO HIM. CAN'T YOU JUST LET HIM *HAVE* IT?

ANYTHING I CAN
DO FOR YOU BOB?

HA! AND MAYBE
A *MONKEY* WILL FLY
OUT OF MY *BUTT!*

LEMME
ALONE!



GEEZE LOUEEZE!! I'LL *DICE* YOU FOR IT BOB!

HUH? DICE
FOR IT? REALLY?

OKAY??



AWWWWWW, THAT
IS *SO* BIG OF
YOU, *BRIAN*.
IT *REALLY* IS.

-SNIFF- JUST A *STRAIGHT ON*
DIE ROLL? IS *THAT* WHAT YOU
HAVE IN MIND? GEE, THANKS,
BRIAN. *THAT'S MORE* THAN FAIR.

YEAH, YEAH, WHATEVER. HERE ARE THE *CONDITIONS*. SINCE
THIS IS A *VIRGIN DIE* - LOW ROLL WINS. AND THE *LOSER*
AGREES NOT TO *WHINE* AND *MOAN* ABOUT IT -- *OKAY?*

THANKS
BRIAN.



A FEW ROLLS LATER...

HOODY FRICKIN' HOO!!!! READ IT
AND *WEEP!!*
I ROLLED A
ONE!! THAT
BEATS YER *TWO!*

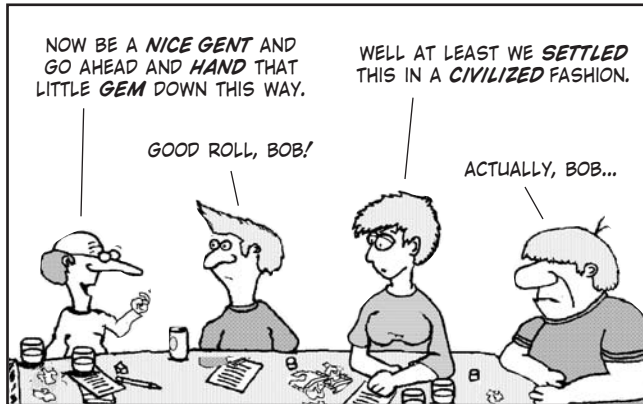


NOW BE A *NICE GENT* AND
GO AHEAD AND *HAND* THAT
LITTLE *GEM* DOWN THIS WAY.

WELL AT LEAST WE *SETTLED*
THIS IN A *CIVILIZED* FASHION.

GOOD ROLL, BOB!

ACTUALLY, BOB...



THAT *DIE* IS GOING
TO STAY *RIGHT*
HERE WITH WHERE
IT BELONGS.



MAYBE IN ALL THE *EXCITEMENT* YOU *FORGOT* BUT YOU GET
A "*PLUS TWO*" TO YOUR "*NEXT*" DIE ROLL. *REMEMBER??*

UH OH....
HE'S *RIGHT!*



AFTER THE FALLOUT....

WELL..... IT WAS
OVER A CERTIFIED
'*JACK KIPLING*'.



THE GARY JACKSON FILES: School of Hard Knocks

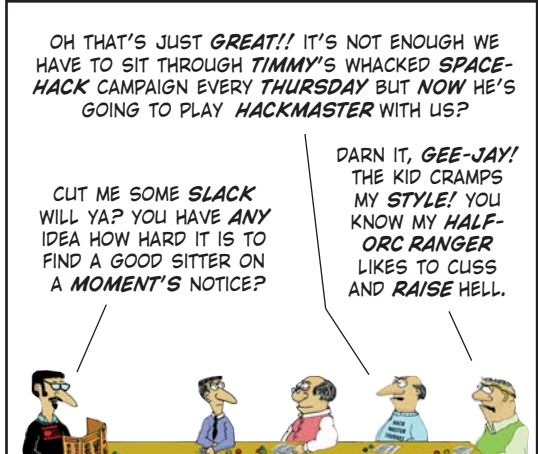
BY JOLLY BLACKBURN
STORY SUGGESTED BY BARBARA BLACKBURN

HARD EIGHT ENTERPRISES: THE WEEKLY SESSION OF HACKMASTER...



LISTEN UP FOLKS, I **TOTALLY SCREWED UP**. I FORGOT IT WAS **MY WEEKEND** TO HAVE THE **KID**.

BOTTOM LINE -- I COULDN'T FIND A **SITTER** SO **TIMMY'S** GOING TO BE **JOINING** US TONIGHT.



OH THAT'S JUST **GREAT!!** IT'S NOT ENOUGH WE HAVE TO SIT THROUGH **TIMMY'S** WHACKED **SPACE-HACK** CAMPAIGN EVERY **THURSDAY** BUT **NOW** HE'S GOING TO PLAY **HACKMASTER** WITH US?

CUT ME SOME **SLACK** WILL YA? YOU HAVE **ANY** IDEA HOW HARD IT IS TO FIND A GOOD **SITTER** ON A **MOMENT'S** NOTICE?

DARN IT, **GEE-JAY!** THE **KID** CRAMPS MY **STYLE!** YOU KNOW MY **HALF-ORC RANGER** LIKES TO **CUSS** AND **RAISE HELL**.

QUIT YOUR **BELLY ACHIN'**. THERE'S NO NEED TO **OVER REACT** HERE. LOOK -- THE **KID** HAS A **FIRM** BEDTIME OF **NINE O'CLOCK**. THAT MEANS HE'LL BE PLAYING WITH US FOR **TWO HOURS** -- **TOPS!!** YOU HAVE MY WORD.

BUT SIR, WE'RE ON THE **BACK-HALF** OF THE **DUNGEONS OF DESPAIR** MODULE. HOW ON EARTH ARE YOU GOING TO WORK HIS **CHARACTER** IN?

HE WON'T BE RUNNING A **PLAYER CHARACTER**. I TALKED HIM INTO SETTLING FOR RUNNING A FEW **ENCOUNTERS** FOR ME. IN FACT, HE THINKS HE'S HELPIN' HIS **OLD MAN** OUT. BESIDES HE'S ALL **EXCITED** ABOUT PLAYIN' WITH THE **BIG BOYS**. IT'LL BE **GOOD** FOR HIM.

ENCOUNTERS? YOU MEAN **MONSTERS**?



SURE. WHY NOT? I'LL BE **ROLLING** THE **DICE**. THE **KID** WILL JUST BE **ROLE-PLAYING** THEM FOR ME. JUST PLAY ALONG AND **PRETEND** YOU'RE **SCARED** AND **STUFF**. HE'LL **EAT** IT UP AND YOU'LL BE HELPING ME **SCORE** SOME POINTS WITH HIM. OKAY?

-SIGH- AND YOU SAY HIS BEDTIME IS **NINE O'CLOCK??**

FIRM!!! HE CAN BED DOWN IN MY **OFFICE** WHILE WE CONTINUE PLAYING.

I GUESS WE CAN PUT UP WITH THE **KID** FOR A FEW HOURS.

A WEE BIT LATER AS THE FIRST ENCOUNTER OF THE EVENING UNFOLDS...

OKAY **EDMUND** AS YOU ARE PICKING THE **LOCK** THERE'S SUDDENLY A **TERRIBLE** CRASH AS A **SKELETAL ARM** PUNCHES THROUGH THE **ROTTEN PLANKS** OF THE ANCIENT DOOR AND **GRABS** YOU BY THE **THROAT!!** NEEDLESS TO SAY YOU ARE **TOTALLY SURPRISED** AS THE **SKELETON** THRASHES YOU ABOUT AND...

EEEEEEWWWWW!!! A **SKELETON!!!** HOT DAMN!! MY **CLERIC'S** FATHER WAS KILLED BY A **SKELETON**. THAT MEANS I GET **PLUS FIVE** AGAINST THIS GUY.

ROTTEN PLANKS? DID YOU MENTION THAT SIR?

LIGHTIN' UP A **FLASK OF OIL** HERE. DO I HAVE A **CLEAR SHOT**?

LOOK ALERT, FOLKS! IT'S TIME TO **ROCK** AND **ROLL!**

OH, OH, NOW **DADEE?**

DADDEE? CAN I PWAY DA **SKEL-WE-TON?**

HUH? WHAT'S THAT? UH...SURE, **TIMMY**. YOU CAN PLAY THE **SKELETON**.

TANKS **DADDEE!**

JUST DO IT THE WAY I **SHOWED** YA. OKAY?

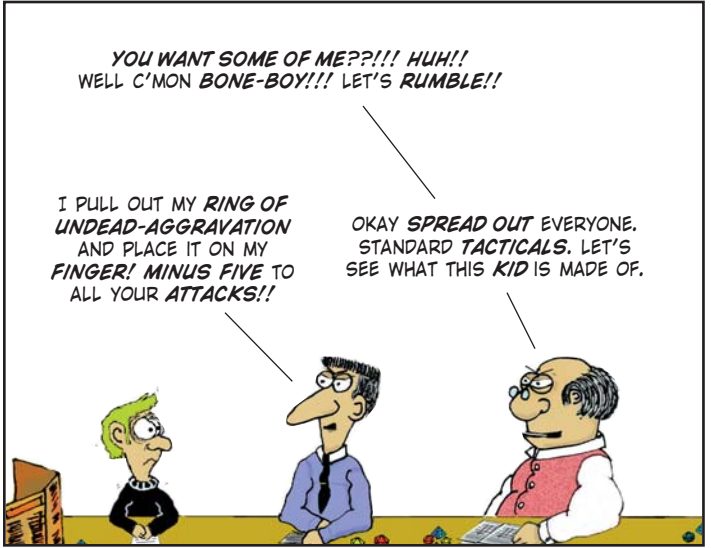
UH HUH. I WILL.





AAAAAHHHHH, LOOK AT 'IM.
-SNIFF- THE KID'S A *CHIP* OFF
THE OL' BLOCK ALRIGHT.

ARRRRRRRRRRRR!!
I WILL DESTROY YOU!
ARRRRRRRRRR!!!!

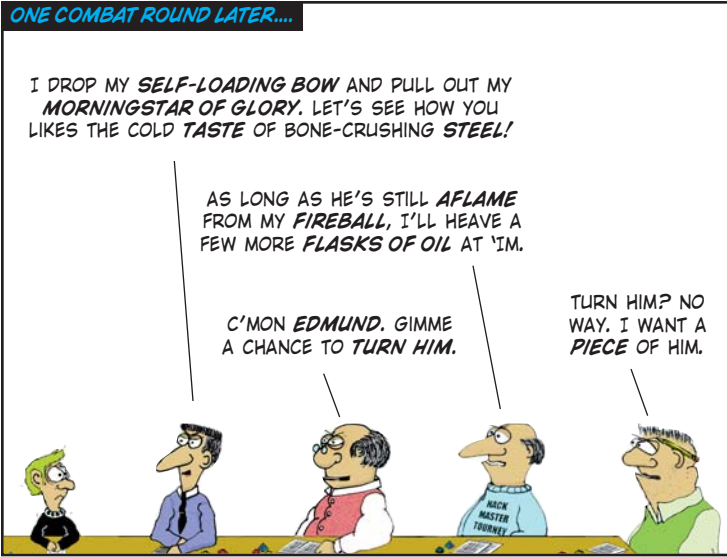


YOU WANT SOME OF ME???! HUH!!
WELL C'MON BONE-BOY!!! LET'S RUMBLE!!

I PULL OUT MY *RING OF UNDEAD-AGGRAVATION* AND PLACE IT ON MY *FINGER!* **MINUS FIVE** TO ALL YOUR *ATTACKS!!*

OKAY *SPREAD OUT* EVERYONE. *STANDARD TACTICALS.* LET'S SEE WHAT THIS *KID* IS MADE OF.

ONE COMBAT ROUND LATER....



I DROP MY *SELF-LOADING BOW* AND PULL OUT MY *MORNINGSTAR OF GLORY.* LET'S SEE HOW YOU LIKES THE *COLD TASTE OF BONE-CRUSHING STEEL!*

AS LONG AS HE'S STILL *AFLAME* FROM MY *FIREBALL,* I'LL HEAVE A FEW MORE *FLASKS OF OIL* AT 'IM.

C'MON *EDMUND.* GIMME A CHANCE TO *TURN HIM.*

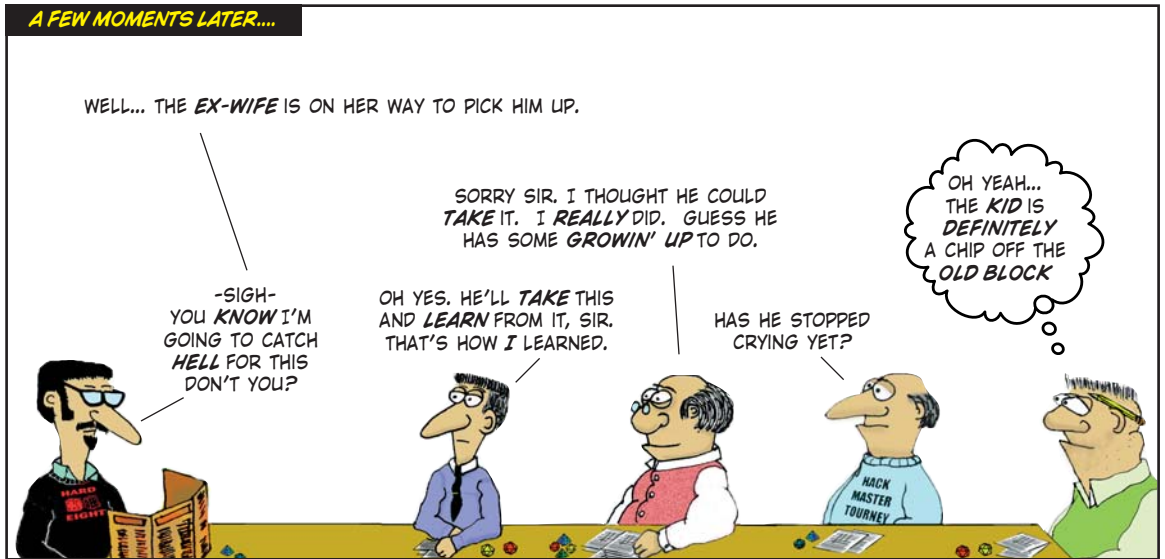
TURN HIM? NO WAY. I WANT A *PIECE* OF HIM.



WAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!

MOMMEE!!
-SNORT-
I WANNA GO HOME!!!

A FEW MOMENTS LATER....



WELL... THE *EX-WIFE* IS ON HER WAY TO PICK HIM UP.

-SIGH- YOU *KNOW* I'M GOING TO CATCH *HELL* FOR THIS DON'T YOU?

SORRY SIR. I THOUGHT HE COULD *TAKE* IT. I *REALLY* DID. GUESS HE HAS SOME *GROWIN' UP* TO DO.

OH YES. HE'LL *TAKE* THIS AND *LEARN* FROM IT, SIR. THAT'S HOW I *LEARNED.*

HAS HE STOPPED *CRYING* YET?

OH YEAH... THE *KID* IS *DEFINITELY* A *CHIP* OFF THE *OLD BLOCK*

SPICE UP YOUR

MEAT



Hunter Fairy



Wild Fairy



Glitter Fairy



Hardcore Fairy

FAIRY MEAT

Miniatures

Beautiful yet designed for rugged gameplay, the five piece Fairy Meat Miniatures Set will be available December 2000 for a mere \$12.50.

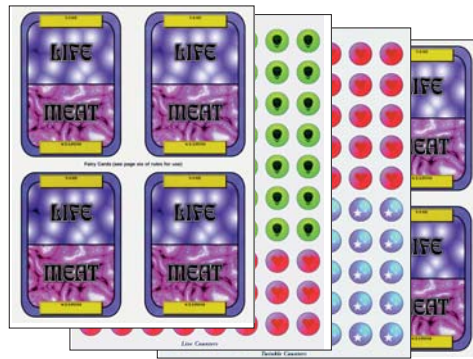


Seasoned Fairy

Fairy Meat is a bold adventure in miniature gaming for two or more players. You get to play cute and cuddly little fairies-- the twist is, they've been warped by evil and now the only thing they care about is whom their next meal is going to be.

FAIRY MEAT

Components Pack



Need more counters for those giant battles you're staging?

The Fairy Meat Components Pack is the answer! It will also be available December 2000 for \$9.95.

If you get a chance to play or demo this game, do it. Trust me -- you'll be hooked.

Rich Spangle, wizards.com

full review at http://www.wizards.com/origins/ORG2K/Virtual_FM.asp

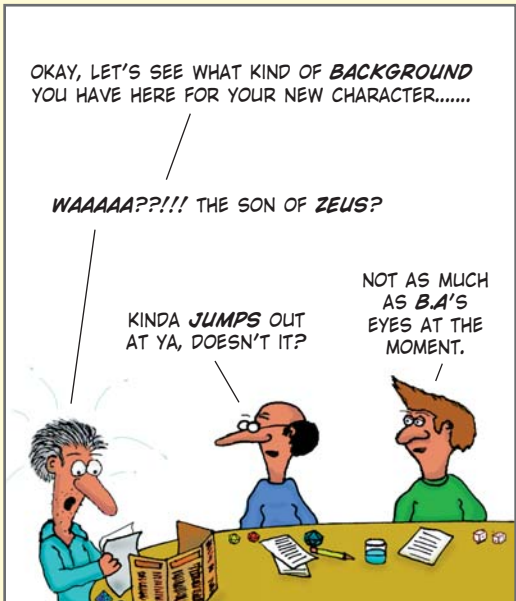


OH MAN THAT **DRAGON** WAS SUCH A **WUSS!** DID YOU SEE HOW HE TRIED TO **RUN AWAY** WHILE I **CLUBBED** HIM WITH THE **BUTT** OF MY CROSSBOW?

BUT GUYS... IT WAS A **KOMODO DRAGON**...

YEAH, LIKE IN HE HAD **KA-NO-NO TREASURE!!** WHAT A **RIP!** A DRAGON WITH NO HOARD?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.... DID WE SUCCESSFULLY **SUBDUE** HIM OR WHAT?



OKAY, LET'S SEE WHAT KIND OF **BACKGROUND** YOU HAVE HERE FOR YOUR NEW CHARACTER.....

WAAAAA?!! THE SON OF **ZEUS**?

KINDA **JUMPS OUT** AT YA, DOESN'T IT?

NOT AS MUCH AS **B.A.'S** EYES AT THE MOMENT.



...SO THEN HE KICKED ME IN THE GROIN SO I THROAT PUNCHED THE DUDE. HE KINDA STAGGERED BACK AND JUST AS HE WAS ABOUT TO REGAIN HIS SENSES I **COLD COCKED** HIM WITH A **TWO-BY-FOUR**. BUT JUST AS HE WAS GOING OVER THE **RAILING** HE MANAGED TO REACH OUT AND **GRAB** THE **LEGGING** OF MY PANTS AND...

SORRY, I'M LATE. I SEE **BOB** IS TELLING **CHARACTER-TALES** AGAIN. WHAT DID I MISS?

OH, THIS ISN'T A **GAMING STORY**. SOME GUY CUT IN FRONT OF **BOB** IN LINE TO THE **D&D MOVIE** LAST NIGHT.

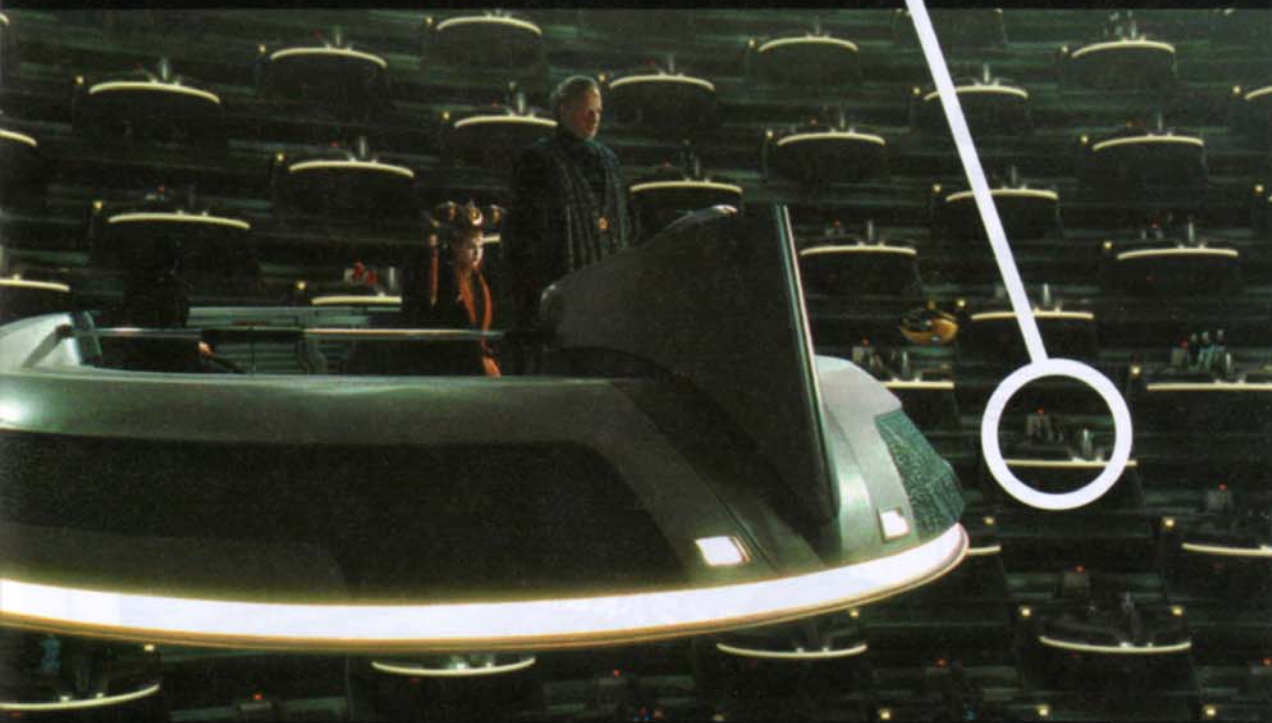


I **HOLD** THE **SCHOOL MARM'S** HEAD UNDER **WATER** IN THE **HORSE TROUGH** UNTIL SHE **COUGHS** UP THE **ARRIVAL TIME** OF THE **NOON STAGE**.

THAT'S IT. I'M **DRAWING** MY **GUN** ON **BOB**.

This home-brewed KODT arrived by Henry Martinez along with the message, "Here's some artwork by way of thanks. Thanks again for the memories."

WHAT'S THIS GUY'S STORY?



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Goth to Get Some!

The sequel to "Lords of Darkness" [Kodi #1/Bundle of Trouble Volume One]

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN
& STEVE JOHANSSON

RECAP: AFTER 'CHECKING OUT' A LOCAL LIVE-ACTION VAMPIRE GAME, DAVE RETURNS TO THE GROUP IN A TRANSFIGURED STATE.

ALARMED AT HIS BEHAVIOR, BOB AGREES TO ACCOMPANY DAVE THE FOLLOWING WEEK TO GET THE FULL STORY. UNFORTUNATELY WHEN BOB RETURNED HE'D GONE JUST AS FAR OFF THE EDGE AS DAVE AND WAS PROCLAIMED "BLACK PRINCE OF MUNCIE".

SEVERAL WEEKS HAVE NOW PASSED AND DAVE AND BOB HAVE ABANDONED HACKMASTER AND BECOME DARK-THRALLS TO THE VAMPIRESS - BRIDGET.

B.A. THEY OBVIOUSLY AREN'T GOING TO SHOW! WHY DO YOU INSIST ON PUTTING OUT THEIR CHARACTER SHEETS AND DICE EVERY WEEK? MAYBE YOU SHOULD JUST LET GO.

REGARDLESS OF WHAT'S HAPPENED, SARA, THEY'RE STILL KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE! UNTIL THEY SAY OTHERWISE WE'LL HOLD THEIR SEATS FOR THEM.

THAT FREAKIN' GAME! IT'S GOT HOLD OF THEM!



OH PA-LEEZE!!! IT'S NOT THE GAME. ARE YOU THAT CLUELESS!!

CLUELESS? I'VE BEEN READING UP ON THIS ON THE INTERNET!



THAT GAME HAS ALL THE CLASSIC ELEMENTS OF A CULT. IT'S REALLY QUITE FRIGHTENING. THERE'S QUITE A BIT OF BRAIN WASHING AND INDOCTRINATION INVOLVED. AND ANIMAL SACRIFICES! LOTS OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES!!!

YOU'RE ACTUALLY BUYING INTO THAT?



MAYBE YOU DIDN'T HEAR ME. I READ IT ON THE INTERNET!!

HOW COULD IT BE ON THE INTERNET IF IT WASN'T TRUE, SARA?

HUH? HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THAT?



BRIAN'S GOT A DARN GOOD POINT, SARA. I SAW A REPORT ON THIS ON REGIS AND KATHY JUST LAST MONTH. THERE WAS THIS KID WHO GOT WRAPPED UP IN THAT GAME AND ENDED UP KNOCKING OVER A SEVEN ELEVEN. LATER HE STOLE A TELEPHONE COMPANY UTILITY TRUCK AND DROVE IT INTO....

R-R-R-REGIS??

FORGET ALL THAT NONSENSE GUYS! THERE'S ONLY ONE REASON AND ONE REASON ONLY THAT BOB AND DAVE ALONG WITH MOST EVERY OTHER MALE GAMER IN MUNCIE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 AND 35 HAS BEEN FLOCKING TO THAT GAME!

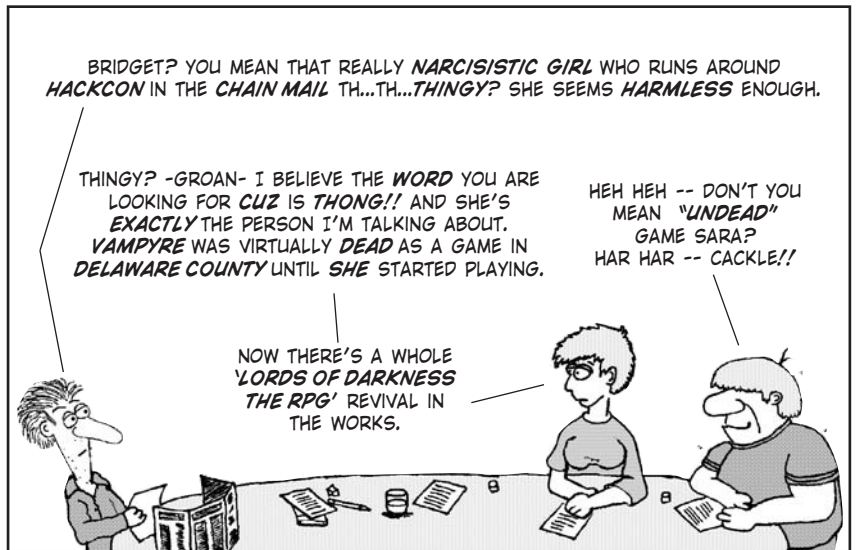
WELL?

WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT SARA?





HER NAME IS BRIDGET!



BRIDGET? YOU MEAN THAT REALLY NARCISSTIC GIRL WHO RUNS AROUND HACKCON IN THE CHAIN MAIL TH...TH...THINGY? SHE SEEMS HARMLESS ENOUGH.

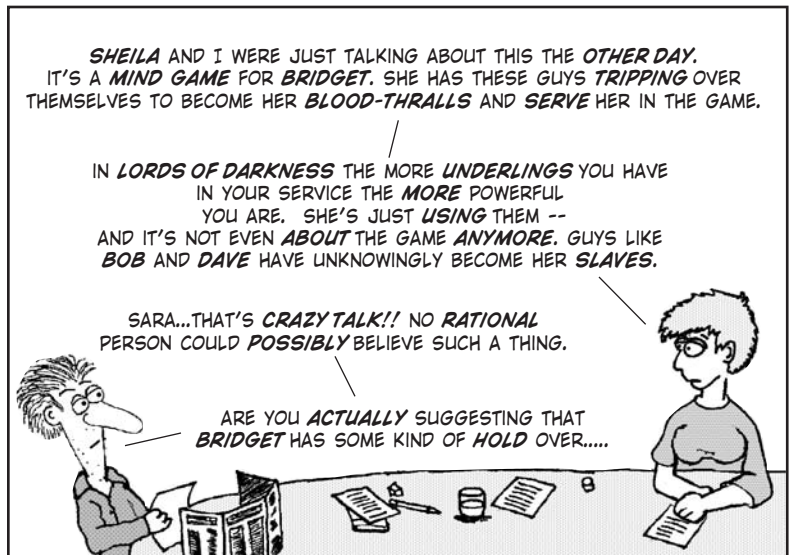
THINGY? -GROAN- I BELIEVE THE WORD YOU ARE LOOKING FOR CUZ IS THONG!! AND SHE'S EXACTLY THE PERSON I'M TALKING ABOUT. VAMPYRE WAS VIRTUALLY DEAD AS A GAME IN DELAWARE COUNTY UNTIL SHE STARTED PLAYING.

NOW THERE'S A WHOLE 'LORDS OF DARKNESS THE RPG' REVIVAL IN THE WORKS.

HEH HEH -- DON'T YOU MEAN "UNDEAD" GAME SARA? HAR HAR -- CACKLE!!



GET IT, SARA? UNDEAD.....-SNICKER-



SHEILA AND I WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT THIS THE OTHER DAY. IT'S A MIND GAME FOR BRIDGET. SHE HAS THESE GUYS TRIPPING OVER THEMSELVES TO BECOME HER BLOOD-THRALLS AND SERVE HER IN THE GAME.

IN LORDS OF DARKNESS THE MORE UNDERLINGS YOU HAVE IN YOUR SERVICE THE MORE POWERFUL YOU ARE. SHE'S JUST USING THEM -- AND IT'S NOT EVEN ABOUT THE GAME ANYMORE. GUYS LIKE BOB AND DAVE HAVE UNKNOWINGLY BECOME HER SLAVES.

SARA...THAT'S CRAZY TALK!! NO RATIONAL PERSON COULD POSSIBLY BELIEVE SUCH A THING.

ARE YOU ACTUALLY SUGGESTING THAT BRIDGET HAS SOME KIND OF HOLD OVER.....

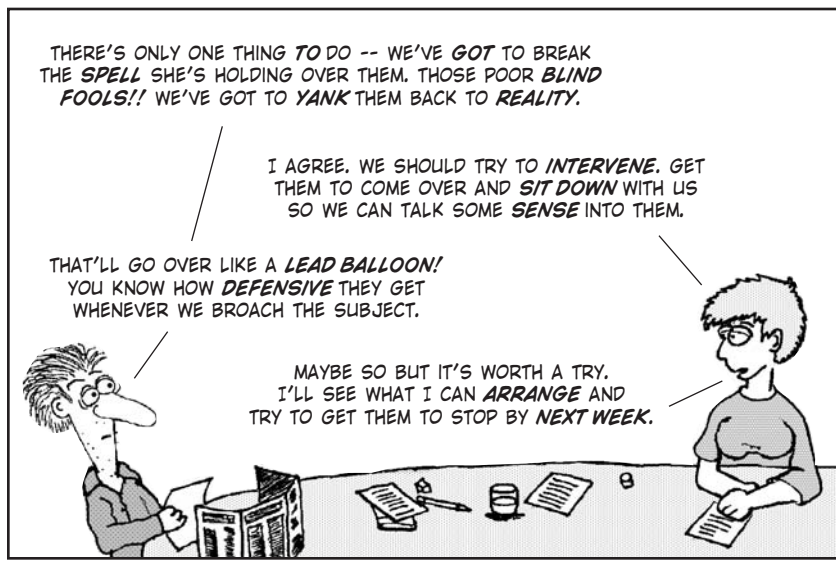
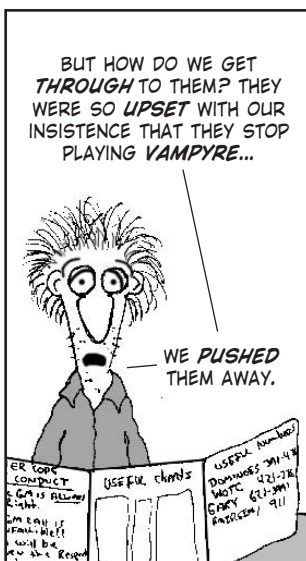
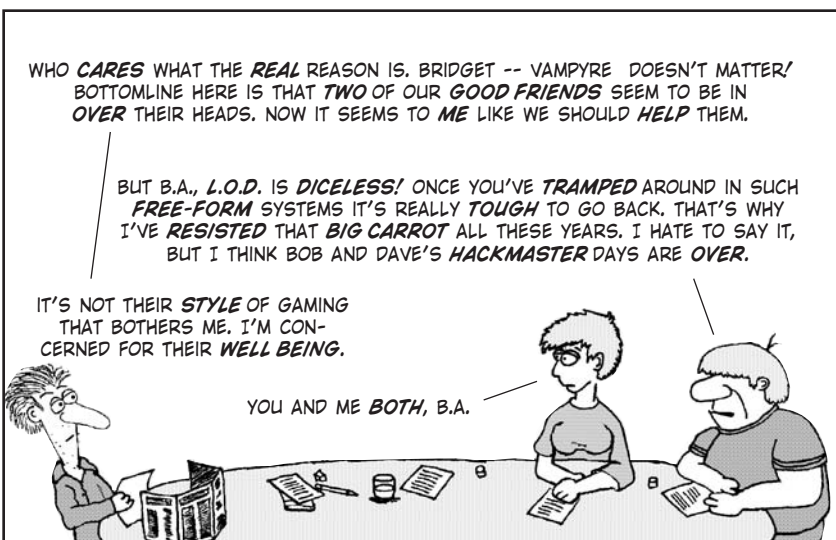
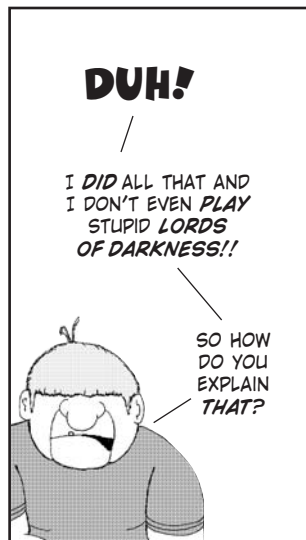
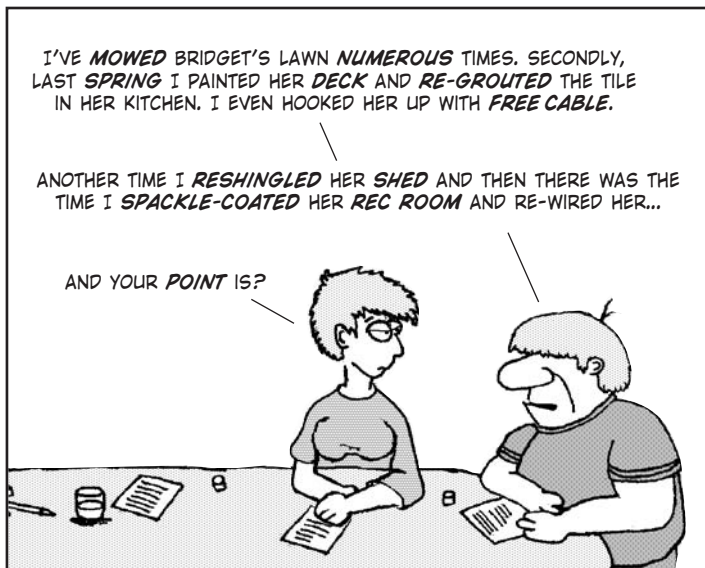


OH MY GAWD... YOU KNOW WHAT? I SAW SOMETHING -- SOMETHING REALLY STRANGE THE OTHER DAY. I DIDN'T PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER UNTIL JUST NOW.

THE OTHER DAY I WAS MAKING A DELIVERY FOR MY DAD AND IT TURNED OUT TO BE AT BRIDGET'S HOUSE. BOB WAS THERE! HE WAS MOWING HER FRONT YARD AND HAULING SOME TRASH OUT TO THE CURB. IT SEEMED A BIT ODD BECAUSE HE WAS IN HIS SUIT AND IT WAS DURING HIS LUNCH HOUR.

I FIGURED HE WAS JUST DOING HER A FAVOR.

WHEN HAVE YOU KNOWN BOB TO DO ANYONE A FAVOR? SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY WRONG, B.A.



THE FOLLOWING WEEK...



HEY GUYS...
GLAD YOU COULD MAKE
IT.

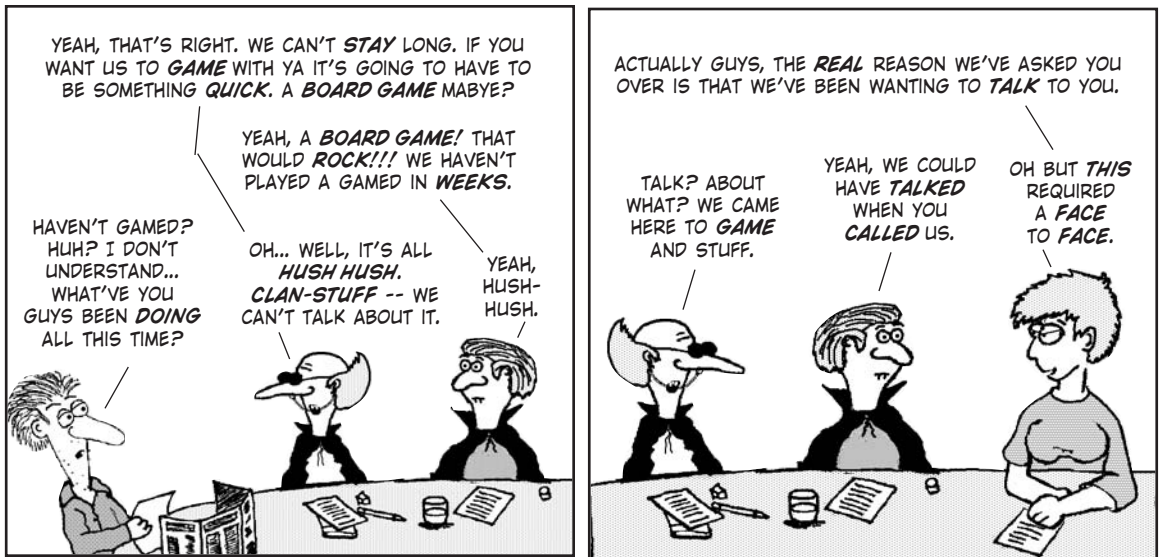
UH...HOW ARE THINGS?

EVERYTHING'S *KEWL!* I KNOW WE SAID WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO *MAKE IT* TONIGHT
BUT IT TURNS OUT THAT AT THE *LAST* MOMENT, *MISTRESS OF THE HORDE* WAS
SUMMONED AWAY FOR THE EVENING -- WE WERE LEFT WITH *NOTHING* TO DO.

ALTHOUGH WE *DO* HAVE TO
LEAVE BY 8:45 TO WALK
THE *MISTRESS'*
POMERANIAN, *SHERPIE!*

HELLO,
BOYS.

SHERPIE? HEY, HOW IS
THAT ADORABLE LITTLE
PUPP? SHE'S SO CUTE.



YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. WE CAN'T *STAY* LONG. IF YOU
WANT US TO *GAME* WITH YA IT'S GOING TO HAVE TO
BE SOMETHING *QUICK*. A *BOARD GAME* MABEY?

YEAH, A *BOARD GAME!* THAT
WOULD *ROCK!!!* WE HAVEN'T
PLAYED A *GAMED* IN *WEEKS*.

HAVEN'T *GAMED?*
HUH? I DON'T
UNDERSTAND...
WHAT'VE YOU
GUYS BEEN *DOING*
ALL THIS TIME?

OH... WELL, IT'S ALL
HUSH HUSH.
CLAN-STUFF -- WE
CAN'T TALK ABOUT IT.

YEAH,
HUSH-
HUSH.

ACTUALLY GUYS, THE *REAL* REASON WE'VE ASKED YOU
OVER IS THAT WE'VE BEEN WANTING TO *TALK* TO YOU.

TALK? ABOUT
WHAT? WE CAME
HERE TO *GAME*
AND STUFF.

YEAH, WE COULD
HAVE *TALKED*
WHEN YOU
CALLED US.

OH BUT *THIS*
REQUIRED
A *FACE*
TO *FACE*.



UH OH! *HELL NO!* I SEE WHERE THIS IS *HEADING*. YOU GUYS *LURED* US OVER HERE SO YOU
COULD *HARP* ON US ABOUT THE *EVILS* OF PLAYING *LORDS OF DARKNESS* AGAIN -- IS *THAT* IT?

WELL *SAVE* YER BREATH, *MISSY!* I'M
EXCELLING AT THIS *GAME* AND IT'S
STARTING TO GET *REAL INTERESTING*.
WHY CAN'T YOU GUYS JUST LET US *GAME*
THE WAY *WE* WANNA *GAME* - HUH?

WE'RE A BIT
CONCERNED
ABOUT
YOU GUYS.

MISTRESS WARNED
US YOU'D TRY
SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

I'M *GLAD* YOU BROUGHT
BRIDGET UP. LET'S *TALK*
ABOUT HER FOR A
MOMENT - SHALL WE?

SECRET *CLAN*
STUFF?
KEWL!

HISSESSSSSSSSSSSS!!



??!

GAAA!!! SHE SPAKE THE NAME!

HOW KNOWS SHE THE NAME??

??!

SWOOSH!

INFIDEL!!! HOW KNOWEST THOU THE NAME OF OUR MISTRESS??!

'COS I SAT BEHIND BRIDGET IN GEOMETRY CLASS IN HIGH SCHOOL YOU DORK!!

HISSES/
HISSES/

AND SHE'S PLAYING YOU TWO THE SAME WAY SHE PLAYED MR. LANCASTER TO GET AN "A" IN HIS CLASS!!

BRIDGET GOT AN "A" IN GEOMETRY?? BEAUTIFUL AND SMART!!

HISSES/
THE NAME!
DAVE!!
YOU SAID
THE NAME!
HISSES!

NO, JUST MANIPULATIVE.

DON'T YOU GUYS GET IT? SHE'S JUST USING YOU TO PERFORM ALL OF HER MENIAL TASKS & CHORES. C'MON, LET'S BE REAL -- WHAT KIND OF VAMPIRE HAS TO HAVE HER THRALLS WEED HER BUSHES AND DROP OFF HER DRYCLEANING? AND DO YOU REALLY THINK SHE'S AT SOME SUMMONING TONIGHT? SHE'S PROBABLY OUT PARTYING IT UP ON THE TOWN WHILE YOU TWO BOOBS BABYSIT HER DOG!

HA!! SHOWS HOW MUCH YOU KNOW. WE WEREN'T WEEDING, WE WERE GATHERING SPELL COMPONENTS FOR THE MISTRESS' 'CHARM OF MAKING'.

HEY... HOW DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THE DRYCLEANING?

WELL YOU DID DROP IT OFF AT B.A.'S DAD'S STORE!!

BY THE WAY BOB, NEXT TIME YOU SEE MISTRESS, LET HER KNOW THAT SHE'S GOT A FIFTY DOLLAR TAB AT MY DAD'S STORE.

OR MAYBE YOU LACKEYS WANNA TAKE CARE OF IT FOR HER.



LACKEYS?! OF COURSE IT LOOKS LIKE WERE JUST LACKEYS TO AN UNINFORMED OUTSIDER. FOR YER INFORMATION I'M THIS CLOSE TO ATTAINING THE COVETED RANK OF DARK PRINCE OF DELAWARE COUNTY: THIRTY-SECOND DEGREE.

THIRTY-SECOND DEGREE? REALLY? WOW! YOU GUYS ARE DOING GOOD - HUH?

C'MON BOB. DON'T YOU SEE SHE'S RUNNING SOME KIND OF LABOR-FOR-FREE SCAM ON YOU?

NICE TRY, B.A. -- MISTRESS SAID PEOPLE WOULD SAY THINGS LIKE THAT TO THROW OFF OUR GAME.

GUYS, C'MON!! YOU CAN'T EVEN THINK FOR YOURSELVES ANYMORE?

WE TALKING POINT SYSTEM OR AGGRAGATE SKILL SET?

YOU SHOULDN'T TALK ABOUT SOMETHING YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT!!

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!



HEY, IT'S 8:45 DARK OVERLORD. WE BETTER BE "WINGING" IT OVER TO MISTRESS' TOWNHOU...ER, GOTHEDRAL AND FEED THE HELL-WOLF.

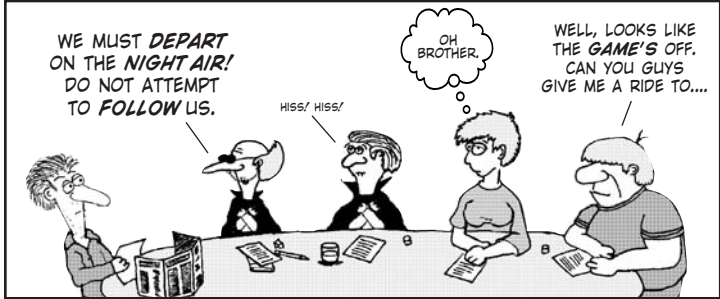
ALRIGHT BLACK PRINCE-DUDE BUT FIRST WE GOTTA GET SOME GAS. I BE RUNNIN' THOUST ON FUMES.

WE MUST DEPART ON THE NIGHT AIR! DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FOLLOW US.

OH BROTHER.

WELL, LOOKS LIKE THE GAME'S OFF. CAN YOU GUYS GIVE ME A RIDE TO...

HISS! HISS!



LATER...

OH LORD! IT'S WORSE THAN I THOUGHT. THAT WOMAN REALLY HAS THEM UNDER HER SPELL. DID YOU SEE THEM? WE GOTTA DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS!

ANY IDEAS?

YEAH, WE COULD PROBABLY GET A THREE-MAN GAME OF UNO GOING.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, I THINK I DO HAVE AN IDEA.

IT COULD BE DANGEROUS - BUT IT JUST MIGHT WORK.



CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE: BRING 'EM BACK, UNDEAD OR ALIVE...

WHO'S WHO IN KODT

Not much is known about this mysterious figure. Many gamers know her by sight even though they've never actually met her.

Bridget was introduced to gaming initially through *Spell-Jacked* by an ex-boyfriend. She later became enthralled with live-action gaming such as *"Vampire: Lords of Darkness."*

Her costumes have made her an icon. "Did you see what Bridget was wearing?" is frequently heard at any con she is attending.



bridget
KEATING

The very first KODT strip had two characters — B.A. Felton and Bob Herzog. Ten years, fifty issues, and 400+ strips later, the cast of characters has swelled considerably. (*While we've never bothered making a detailed list of all the characters mentioned or appearing in KODT, at least one rabid-fan puts the number at close to fifty.*)

Since the beginning, inquisitive readers have wanted to know more and more about their favorite characters in the comic. Our answer was to begin running short bios on the characters in the back of each volume of *Bundle of Trouble* and *Tales From the Vault*.

These "Who's Who" listings (*Which are basically short bios for the Knights themselves, along with members of the Black Hands, Hard Eight Enterprises etc.*) have proved to be popular with readers and are also invaluable to 'neubies' who have just stumbled across an issue of KODT for the first time and need to catch up.

Many fans, however, have been demanding bios for the more obscure members of the KODT family. Every day we receive letters from the curious demanding to know everything from, "What's the story with B.A.'s cat, Prowler?" to "Does Dave have a real job?" One reader recently asked, "Who's the chick on all GaryCon-covers of KODT?"

Okay, Okay, since this special issue of KODT is dedicated to our fans, we decided to answer a few of these questions and many, many more.

Since the original bios appear elsewhere, we decided not to be redundant and run them here. (*For those readers who don't own an issue of Bundle of Trouble or Tales from the Vault, you can download those bios at www.kenzerc.com in Adobe Acrobat format.*) □



morey "pappy"
FELTON

Pappy Felton is B.A.'s 83-year-old grandfather. He served proudly as a 'Fighting Sea Bee' during World War II.

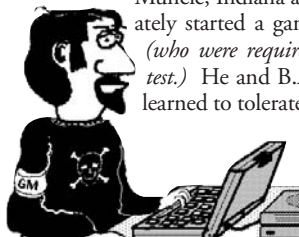
His unit was involved with building airstrips, following the Marines as they island-hopped across the South Pacific.

No one knows the full story, but apparently Pappy was left behind on Tulagi when the Japanese re-occupied the island for a short period. Alone for weeks, he eluded his would-be captors. Later, after being rescued, he was sent back to the 'States a hero.

After the war Pappy started a chain of dry-cleaning businesses in Muncie which he turned over to his son upon retirement.

Pappy now lives in Kissimmee Florida but returns home frequently to visit his kids and grandchildren. It's said he packs a 'mean' right punch.

earl julius
SLACKMOZER



Earl Slackmozer is regarded as a kind of 'local celebrity.' Besides running Tournament level HackMaster events at GaryCon and various local HackCons, he freelanced for *HardEight Enterprises* for several years with four published adventures under his belt (*including the highly acclaimed Module G-7: Gnome Uprising*).

He moved to Muncie, Indiana after transferring to Ball State from Saginaw Tech. He immediately started a gaming group (*Slacker's Hackers*) and began recruiting players (*who were required to take his HackMaster Basic Knowledge and Experience test.*) He and B.A. Felton butted heads several times but it appears they have learned to tolerate each other. There is now a begrudging respect between them.

His home-brewed live-action SlamMaster Professional Wrestling event, "Royal House Rumble" (*Held annually by invitation only*) continues to grow in popularity. Earl is currently writing up the rules and seeking a publisher.

tyrone
FERFEL

Ty Ferfel is the driving force behind the Gamer Temp Corps. He came up with the idea when a campaign he was playing in was wrecked because several regular players dropped out with little notice. Ty and his friends volunteered to fill the occasional 'empty chair' for GameMasters who found themselves in a similar situation. Ty even managed to talk Weird Pete into becoming a sponsor for the program after the local chapter of the HackMasters Players' Association refused to endorse the Gamer Temp Corps. Ty, who happens to be a nephew of Nitro Ferguson, was once a Black Hand but was drummed out after a physical altercation with Stevil van Hostle. (Had he agreed to wear the 'hubcap of shame' as punishment he could have stayed.)



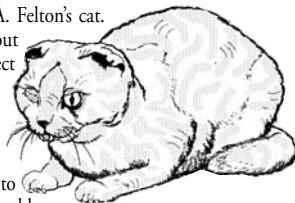
colonel
PROWLER

Colonel Prowler (*also known as "Full Bird"*) is B.A. Felton's cat. Prowler's ferocity and propensity to attack without warning has earned him a great deal of fear and respect from those around him.

Anyone who visits the Felton household is wise to heed the advice, "Best to give him (Prowler) a wide berth."

It is rumored that Prowler was once a loveable, even affectionate pet but after siring hundreds of litters in the neighborhood, B.A. was court-ordered to have him neutered. It is this event which is believed to have caused Prowler's sudden change of temperament. The fifty pound cat has been blamed for the strange disappearances of several neighborhood dogs (*including a Great Dane named Moulder*) but no direct proof has ever been presented to support this.

He has a fondness for dice, metal figures and many other items which, once claimed as his own, are tucked away in his bedding in the corner of the laundry room. It is believed hundreds of 'lost' dice are among his horde.





troy quincy WATSON

Troy became something of a celebrity when he hosted a talk show on BSU's campus radio station. In Troy's own words he's 'not a gamer.' He refuses to sit in as a player and enjoys GMing because it's the only creative outlet he can find time for with his

extremely heavy course load. As a GM he's fairly easy going. Troy is studying Finance and Media Relations. He's also active in the Student Board and Indiana Young Republicans.

Vincent is attending Ball State on a soccer scholarship. During his sophomore year he changed his major from Business Management to Marketing. He openly admits that one of the main reasons he likes role-playing is because he can 'screw around' with people's heads while in character and rattle their cages.

There was a bit of a scandal involving Vince a while back which threatened his scholarship—something to do with photographs.



vincent DWYER

John Lee attended BSU for a while but dropped out because he couldn't decide on a major. He managed to keep his Student I.D., however so he can still use the campus facilities. He considers himself a 'ladies man' and only became involved with gaming because an old girlfriend played and introduced him to Troy and his group.



john LEE

Troy used worked at Big Big Video where he met Sara Felton. The two dated for awhile and John managed to lure Sara away from the Knights of the Dinner Table as a player and convince her to joining Troys Boys. Later Sara discovered she was being used, (Troy's Boys needed a female player for the Hackmaster Tournament) and the two split up.

TROY'S BOYS

a.k.a. "THE BOTTOM FEEDERS"

Troy Watson and his players don't really consider themselves a gaming club. They simply don't take their weekly game that seriously and rarely participate in local conventions or tournaments. (*With the exception of an occasional HackMaster Tournament if a cash prize is involved.*)

They consider their style of play to be superior to those of most other groups and have little interest in socializing or having contact with other gamers who they consider, "weird".

It is for this reason they are largely invisible from the point of view of Muncie's gaming community.

They jokingly refer to themselves as the "Bottom Feeders" because during freshman year they pledged several fraternities but, with the exception of Troy, were never initiated.



pat 'lanky' GROGAN

Lanky learned to role-play as a child when he was forced to sit in on his teenage uncle's campaigns and play the parts of various NPCs. Perhaps it's for that reason he often seems bored with the game and distracted. He takes his gaming even less seriously than the others in the group. He's been know to excuse himself to use the restroom and never return. No one seems to mind though. It's just part of his personality and most people accept him as he is. Lanky is an engineering major considered to be something of a 'wiz kid' when it comes mathmatics. He often makes decisions in the game based on his calculations of the odds and percentages involved in any given situation.

Lanky learned to role-play as a child when he was forced to sit in on his teenage uncle's campaigns and play the parts of various NPCs. Perhaps it's for that reason he often seems bored with the game and distracted. He takes his gaming even less seriously than the others in the group. He's been know to excuse himself to use the restroom and never return. No one seems to mind though. It's

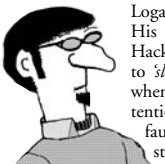
Cody Winkle is a 'floater', one of many HackMaster players in Muncie who just can't seem to find a group where he fits in. Even the Black Hands (who are known for taking those 'black sheep' players no one else will have) will have him. He played with the **Black Hands** for a short time before being given the "big boot" by Weird Pete. (*Describing Cody, Weird Pete once said, "Despite the facts staring him right in the face he thinks very highly of himself -- I find that annoying"*)

Cody is active in community theatre and writes a movie review column for the college newspaper called "As I Saw It..." Except for a few favorable reviews for his portrayal of *Fagin* in the stage production of *Oliver* his acting career has been less than remarkable (*though to listen to him you would think otherwise*). Cody is a huge role-playing fan and likes to combine his acting skills with the game.

Despite his acting career, most gamers know of him because of a rather bizarre event which happened at HackCon '98. Cody was found bound and gagged in a dumpster behind the Con site. It is suspected he was the victim of a form of gamer-style justice called "**Taking Out the Trash**". Cody refused to identify his attackers and has largely dropped out of sight - occasionally popping up to fill in an empty seat. He's listed on the Gamer Temp Corps database.



cody WINKLE



logan FOREMAX

Logan is one of the 'old guard' Gamemasters of the Muncie area. His group, "**Logan's Heroes**" have won more Regional HackMaster Tournaments than any other group. Logan learned to 'sling-dice' under the watchful eye of Brian van Hoose back when he was still GMing. Eventually Brian tired of Logan's prententious attitude - the last straw being his adoption of a haughty faux-british accent - and booted him out. Since no one stepped up to adopt him into their group, he was forced to begin his own. His style is best described as harsh & meticulous, brooking no dissent from 'rules lawyers' (*having been trained by the best in the business, he knows all the tricks of the trade.*) His players have become formidable gaming machines under his "no crap" regime. It's worth mentioning that Logan is widely despised.

After rescuing several gamers who became lost in the BSU steamtunnels while playing live-action HackMaster, Officer Tandy was sent by his department to attend a B.A.H.M. Seminar (*Bothered About Hack Master - an organization whose members are convinced that HackMaster and other fantasy role-playing games like it are inherently evil and constitute a threat to young, impressionable minds.*)

He has taken a personal interest in various Muncie gaming -groups which he feels are "breeding grounds" for trouble.



doug TANDY

HAWG, WALLER'S KICKSTAND PALACE.

This seedy bar on Muncie's west-side has a reputation for being a place 'best avoided'.

It is said that even the Police are afraid to enter. (If duty should require them to do so, they usually show up in great numbers.)

Strangely enough, the bar has attracted the attention of several gamers in the area who have come to the conclusion that the bar and its clientele are more 'bark' than bite.

These days, it's not all that uncommon to see someone rolling up a character at a side table or discussing last night's game with a few friends.



Hawg is the owner of the Kickstand Palace. To hear him tell it, he was just a drifter passing through town until he won the bar in a game of poker.

It's a good story and Hawg is known for telling some tall-ones so it's anyone's guess what the truth really is.

Hawg carries a gun which he claims to have wrestled out of the hands of a would-be

eli 'hawg' WALLERS

burglar one night. After pistol whipping the perp with his own pistol, Hawg let him go.

No one can actually remember Hawg ever using the weapon but few have any doubt that he wouldn't hesitate to use it — After all, he bears numerous scars which testify to the fact that he's not one to shy away from a fight.

Despite his reputation as a tough guy, most customers feel a certain degree of comfort in the fact that he runs a tight ship. He's a no-nonsense type of guy. Keep things peaceful and pay your tab and you'll find he's easy enough to get along with.

Crutch is an ex-con. A two-time loser who's been put on notice. If he screws up one more time and finds himself on the wrong side of the law -- he goes down the river for good.

He's a permanent fixture at Hawg Wallers (*though according to the terms of his probation he's forbidden to even step foot inside a bar. Then again, the police don't exactly do walk-thrus at Hawgs.*)

Even with his record, it's not hard for those who take the time to get to know him that he basically a good heart. He tends to be a loyal friend and is definitely the kind of guy you'd want in your corner during a fight.

It is this blind loyalty, however, that often gets him in trouble. Recently Crutch discovered role-playing and something about Cattlepunk clicked with him. He's now a member of Party's Perps and struggling to win the approval of the other players.



leslie 'crutch' HUMPHRIES

Switch earned his nickname during the great heyday of Farm Implement theft rings which were rampant in America's heartland during the mid 80's.

His speciality was 'switching' serial numbers on combines and thrashers before they were loaded onto flatbed trailers destined (*eventually*) for the Ukraine where they were in hot demand.

Eventually a Department of Agriculture special task force got wind of such doings and threw out its nets. Unfortunately for Switch he was quickly ensared. When the Feds had enough "dirt" [literally AND figuratively] on Switch they tightened their noose and convinced him to "squeal". Once he started it was hard to shut him up.

To avoid prosecution, Switch became an all too willing informant. He did his job well and with great zeal.

Most of his former partners in crime went to prison. (*Including Crutch, who to this day isn't aware that Switch sold him out.*)

These days, Switch is just another petty-thug operating beneath the radar (*for the most part*) of the local police. He manages to work just enough 'jobs' to keep himself in *'walking around money'*.

Switch has a weakness for gambling in all its forms — be it cock fighting, dog racing, horses, craps, slots, bear baiting, or his favorite - Penny Pachinko.

This means he's usually broke.



martin 'switch' WUJCIK

Whitey was once a member of **Knights of the Dinner Table**. He left shortly after Brian VanHoose hung up the GM Screen because he didn't like B.A. Helton's style of play. After drifting from group to group for a few years he founded the **Dorm Troopers** and lured Grover Grundig, Bob Herzog and Brian VanHoose away from the Knights to join his club.

Although Bob and Brian eventually drifted back to B.A.'s table, Sheila and Grover stayed on. Whitey has been censured by the H.M.P.A. on four separate occasions, losing his GM-credentials twice. He has a reputation for being lax when it comes to the rules and too easy on his players.

Grover "*Da Crit Man*" Grundig is perhaps best known for having run the longest-running character in Delaware County (Iron Face Willie.)

When Willie was finally killed the entire gaming community was shaken with the news.

Grover dropped out of gaming for a short time after causing the **Dorm Troopers** to be disqualified from last year's HackMaster Tourney.



whitey MORAN



grover GRUNDIG

THE DORM TROOPERS

The **Dorm Troopers** was originally a splinter-group of the **Knights of the Dinner Table** who broke off to form their own table.

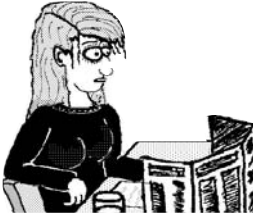
The D.T.'s are highly competitive though in recent months they have suffered from a drop off in membership.



sheila HOROWITZ

Sheila was introduced to role-playing by Dave Bozwell who dated her for a short time. During the relationship, she frequently played with the **Knights of the Dinner Table** but was never allowed to officially join. (At the time the group had a "No Girls" policy) The relationship cooled after Sheila and B.A. got into a fist fight in his front yard. (*B.A. accused her of cheating*). Sheila eventually hooked up with the **Dorm Troopers**. She's generally accepted as one of the guys when it comes to gaming. Sheila stirred up a bit of trouble a few years ago when she tried to run a male character in a regional HackMaster Tournament at **Gaming Dick's Game Emporium**. When Gaming Dick refused to allow her to enter the tournament she lodged a complaint with the H.M.P.A. Her case brought about changes to the Tournament Rules and depending on your position, made her either a hero or a villain.

patty
GAUZWIELER



PATTY'S
PERPS

Patty's Perpetrators are one of the newest sanctioned groups to recognized by the H.M.P.A. in Muncie.

They've yet to win any tournaments but the group has twice been commended for demonstrating "Good Sportsmanship."

Patty majored in Elementary Education at BSU and currently teaches a Kindergarten class at James Whitcomb Riley Elementary. She was an early member of the **Black Hands** before splintering off to form her own group, "**Patty's Perpetrators**" (*more commonly referred to simply as "Patty's Perps"*) She has a reputation for bringing 'positive reinforcement' and other teaching tools from her classroom to the gaming table. Patty had a 'thing' for Dave Bozwell (*who, for a brief time had a 'thing' for her*). The two dated for several months before Dave broke it off.

Mona is a free spirit with plenty of time to game due to the fact that her children have grown and she was left a sizeable inheritance by a great uncle. With her husband gone too, Mona answers to no one — something she openly confesses to being proud of. She speaks her mind and makes no apologies for doing so. Even so, most people seem to enjoy Mo's company. When she isn't gaming she does volunteer work around the community, including James Whitcomb Riley Elementary, where she met Patty.



mona "mo"
WERT



Eddie Ramirez has been known as "Tank" since high school, when he was named League Commissioner for the Fantasy Football League.

He is extremely proud of his unique character -- a Frost Giant Thief named Kraven. He is currently "*tutoring*" Crutch on the finer aspects of roleplaying and "playing well with others".

eddie "tank"
Ramirez

Painfully shy as a kid, Tank was bumped from group to group until he eventually responded to an ad posted on Weird Pete's bulleting board. Patty has been working with him and has slowly coaxed him out of his shell.



chad
Aguilar

Chad is a graduate student at Ball State University majoring in history with an eye toward teaching. To make ends meet he works part time as a disc jockey at fraternity parties and other campus events. He's known for being something of a hothead and quick to anger. This has caused him alot of problems at the gaming table over the years — He spends a lot of time 'pondering the five points' in Patty's time-out corner.

Chad's an ex-munchkin. He began playing HackMaster at the ripe young age of 13. Like most of the other Perps, he found he was welcomed at Patty's table.

When the collectible card game, **Spell-Jacked** first came out, Chad went out of control and blew his savings AND his college tuition on booster packs thinking he was 'investing' his money. He got burned during the 'Card Crash' of '96 and is still dealing with the debt.



S.S.#234-56A-003
SQUIRRELY

Squirrely was one of a dozen chimpanzees who were the subjects of a joint NSA-USAF project which operated in secrecy at the height of the Cold War. Selected after a rigorous screening process the 'subjects' were taught a wide variety of skills of a covert military nature. His exceptional intelligence fast-tracked him even deeper into the shadows of secrecy. It is suspected he, and a dozen other chimps, were trained to fly modified U2 long-range reconnaissance aircraft. [*Wreckage of a U2 crash recently recovered in Sri Lanka lends credence to the theory. The remains of a chimpanzee in flight gear was discovered in the fuselage.*] The details of the project, however, and Squirrely's involvement have never been fully disclosed.

A freedom of information act search uncovered scant details of his military service save for a directive from President Johnson, commissioning "S.S.#234-56A-003 into federal service" and "*assigned to an undisclosed southeast Asian*" base to begin an "operational role in the conflict." Other than that, Squirrely disappears from the record for the next twenty years.

With the collapse of the Soviet hegemony in 1989, the project lost funding and was forced to sell its test subjects at auction. Subject 234-56A-003 was purchased by a P. Ashton of Muncie, IN for the sum of \$586. (The serial number is tattooed on an inner lobe of Squirrely's left ear. Although fluent in lip reading and sign language (English, Russian and Vietnamese), neither his owner nor anyone who frequents the Games Pit shop are aware of it, nor his incredible background. Squirrely is content to live in secluded retirement, working as Pete's assistant and enjoying an occasional burrito.

Over the years, he's become an icon in the local gaming community - often mistaken for a monkey. At times, it appears he is employed by Pete, doing odd jobs after hours, unloading product from the back of trucks, mopping the floor, etc. Although apparently more intelligent than the average chimp, he seems to be accident prone. (*Once he accidentally got caught in the fanbelt of Pete's VW while changing the oil.*)

Unbeknownst to Pete, for years Squirrely had been eating lead figurines (His cage was within arm's length of the display racks) resulting in the strange neurological disorder(s) that earned him his name and made him what he is today - an unbeaten, over-muscled, half-crazed, arm-wrestling, grudge-carrying, lunatic simian.

Weird Pete holds a yearly contest where people attempt to best Squirrely at arm wrestling. Squirrely really seems to enjoy the attention and is apparently proud of the fact he remains unbeaten.

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Your Name is Squa Tront...

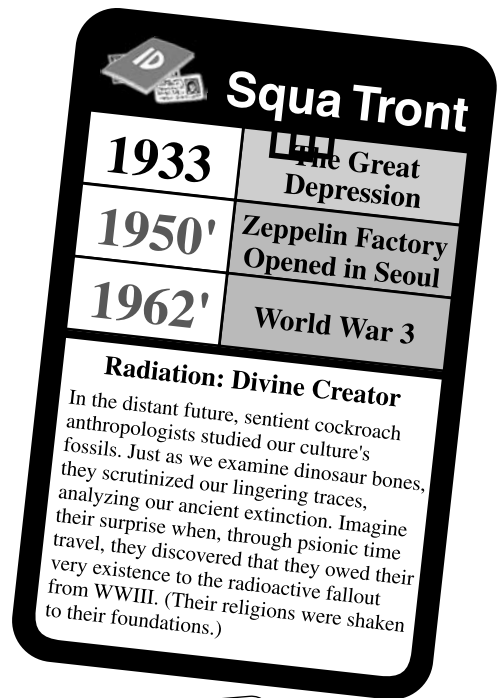
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KODT INDEX

2000 edition

Compiled by Barbara Blackburn, Jim Blanas, Erik Bouchard, Brian Clements, Frederick A. Feltman, Kevin Hall, Paul Hornsby, Stuart McDaniel, Matthew Metcalf, Tom Michael, Brandon T. Morishita, John Patrick, Genevieve Pratt, Joe Rizzo, N. Frances Rodgers, and Forrest Wilson

A COMPLETE INDEX TO EVERY KODT STRIP [ISSUES 1 THRU 49 & VAULTS 1 THRU 3]

Bundle of Trouble Volume One

#1. Not Ready For Syndication

- Lair of the Gazebo A case of mistaken identity
- A Question of Honor B.A. accuses Brian of cheating
- By the Book B.A.'s 'homebrewed dragon' causes problems
- Attack of the Rules Lawyer Brian and B.A. go head-to-head
- Let the Dice Fall Where They May 'Onward and downward'
- The Farmer Wars The Great Radish Wars!
- The Wonderful GaryCon Adventure The group goes to GaryCon
- Diminishing Returns B.A. wheels out the infamous 'fireball generator'

#2. Gluttons for Punishment

- First Impressions First appearance of Sara
- The Cows of War Origin of Dave's Magic Cow
- Lords of Darkness Dave and Bob play a 'Vampyre' LARP
- Angel of Mercy Sara has the 'healing' touch
- Spell-Jacked Card game mania hits the group
- The Great Revolt It's a player uprising as the group turns on B.A.
- Archives reprints of two of the earliest KODT strips

#3. License to Loot

- Dueling GameMasters The group plays a game under Nitro
- A Critical Situation B.A. purchases the 'Critical Mass Rules
- Attack of the Snow Beasts Brian's invisible character gets the shaft
- The Sticky Notes of War Sticky notes make B.A.'s job a living hell
- The Samer it Gets The group tries SpaceHack
- The Guest GM Weird Pete steps in as GM.
- Tough Noogies Brian decides his comrades are expendable
- Death By Repetition Brian and his bag of 'pebbles'
- I Got a Rock Bob finds a rock

Bonus Strip (appeared in this volume of Bundle of Trouble only)

- Dave's First Game Retro-strip showing Dave's very first exposure to role-playing

Bundle of Trouble Volume Two

#4. Have Dice Will Travel

- The Streets of Muskeegie The group tries a game of CattlePunk
- The Old Guard Strikes Back Weird Pete returns
- The Gawd Complex Bob's character inherits a major relic
- Gary Jackson Files A look behind the doors at Gary Jackson's company
- Temptation of the Ring Bob steals Brian's ring
- Uh...Where was I? Everyone is too busy talkin' to think about gaming
- A Hole Lot of Trouble The group finds a portable hole
- Detour Down Memory Lane The group remembers their old characters

#5. Master of the Game

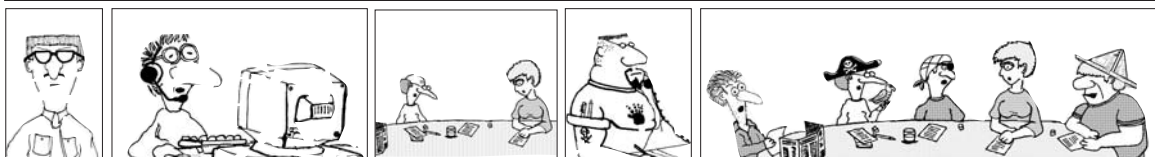
- Spaced Out The group plays SpaceHack, thwarts nuclear device
- Conquer & Deny The gang spoofs Risk
- Beating the Odds An outbreak of 'lucky rolls' brings accusations
- Can't Buy Me Luck Bob suffers an unlucky streak
- Agent of Evil The group stumbles upon the legendary Hand of Vectra!

#6. Plays Well With Others

- Luck of the MaCaw The gang tries a game of HackBeard
- Can We Talk? B.A. attempts to keep the game moving
- Wherever You Go - There You Are Dave maps
- Silver Things Upon His Chest Brian introduces 'gamer medals'
- The Safety Lecture B.A. urges the gang to be safety conscious
- The Great Intervention The group confronts Brian about his 'girlfriend'

Bonus Strips (appeared in this volume of Bundle of Trouble only)

- Carvin' Marvin Retro-Strip: Dave gets a 'big ass' sword with a very bad attitude



#7. The Dice Man Cometh

- Five Green Towels Trouble erupts over the division of treasure
- The Lord of Steam Nitro GMs for the Knights
- The Boy Could Play The group remembers former Knight Johnny Kizinski
- Brian's Challenge Brian matches wits with a dragon
- Armload of Trouble Bob and Dave lose valuable body parts
- Coward of the County Bob and Knobby Foot both show what they're made of

#8. An Orc By Any Other Name

- Orcs at the Gates B.A. invests in the 'best adventure ever
- GameMaster For a Day Dave gets a chance to be GameMaster
- Balance of Terror The gang raises an army of henchmen
- April Fools Dave's HackMaster +12 is destroyed! Or is it?
- An Orc Too Far Bob and Dave are obsessed with an orc

#9. Two Dice For Sister Sara

- Return to Muskeegie A bank robbery goes awry and Brian is a big shot
- The Straight and Narrow B.A. attempts to keep the Knights on track
- GameMaster of the Realm The gang deserts B.A. for famed GM Earl Slackmozer

Bonus Strips *(appeared in this volume of Bundle of Trouble only)*

- The Snack Run Retro-Strip: The group has the munchies and the 'new guy' has to make the snack run
- The Guns of August Retro-Strip: Dave learns of the 'Guns of August Society'
- Turn 54 Retro-Strip: Weird Pete and Brian resolve another turn of their on-going session of The Great War

#10. Let the Dice Fall Where They May

- Let the GM be a Lady Tonight Another Felton as GM
- The Spyder Pits of Queen Krawler The Knights experiment with Virtual Reality enhanced HackMaster
- The Temp Someone must fill Bob's chair after his Dad forbids him to play HackMaster

#11. When In Doubt - Hack!!!

- The Empty Chair A replacement must be found for Bob's consistently vacant seat
- A Little Help? Say it ain't so...the HackMaster +12 breaks?
- Let's Make a Deal A post-adventure treasure squabble
- Blood Bath at the Games Pit Squirrely's revenge
- The Venus Elixir Teflon Billy garners some unwanted attention

#12. The Good, The Bad, and the Unlucky!

- An Overbearing Situation B.A. gains an ersatz advantage
- Just for the Helm of It The debut of Lord Gilead or "I'll choose death before serving an NPC"
- The Price of Passage The Knights discover their very own Dragon Depository
- The Good, The Bad, and the Unlucky There's a new sheriff in town

Bonus Strips *(appeared in this volume of Bundle of Trouble only)*

- De-Meritorious Conduct Retro-Strip: Weird Pete is GMing for the Knights. Bob wants to leave his 'calling card'
- Let Dead Dwarves Lie Retro-Strip: Bob's dwarf dies and Brian refuses to allow B.A. to have him raised.
- Takin' Out Bobarello Retro-Strip: Sequel to "Let the GM be a Lady Tonight"



#13. Men That Hack

- License to Hack B.A. picks up Hard8's new conspiracy RPG - HackNoia
- The Shake-Down Mission The 'Agents of the Dinner Table' have a north of the border experience
- Internally Yours and consequently are summoned to a meeting with internal affairs
- Prying Eyes Who was the narc?

#14. Fistfull of Dice and a Bad Attitude

- The Barringer Rebellion The NPCs revolt
- Go Figure! and a miniatures battle erupts
- The Best Little Warhorse Knuckles obtains a Dwarven Warhorse
- Judgement Day Lord Gilead cuts Knuckles down to size
- Special Bonus!! A 16 page GameMaster's WorkShop pull-out section is contained in this 48 page issue

#15. Mama Told Me Not to Play

- Supply and Demand The Knights petition for a one-legged Dwarf miniature for Bob
- The Trouble with Bob The group's attempts at helping Bob backfire
- The Gary Jackson Files A Sure Thing! Hard8 Enterprises creates the Sturm Pyre miniature
- The Tangled Web The Knights help Bob deceive his dad
- For the Love of Knuckles Bob gets a new miniature for Knuckles
- The Gary Jackson Files: Return to Sender Hard8 overestimates the market for one-legged dwarves

Bonus Strips *(appeared in this volume of Bundle of Trouble only)*

- Troll Story Retro-Strip: The party runs into an army of trolls. This strip takes place just after Barringer's Rebellion
- Hazardous Waste Retro-Strip: The group decides to dispose of their 'troll meat' in Barringer's Bag
- Privacy Required Retro-Strip: Bob buys a Player Advantage Personal Privacy Shield

#16. The Dice of Wrath!

- The Whistling ZephyrB.A. meets Roget
- Where Now Brown Cow?Trouble for Chelsie
- The Gary Jackson Files: Ship in a BoxThe SpaceHack line must be saved
- Ship of FoolsA "Dungeon in Space" SpaceHack misadventure

#17. This Sword for Hire

- Carry a Big Stick (First Black Hand Strip)A peek into the Black Hand gaming society
- It's a Long Way HomeToto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore
- Oil and WaterKnuckles goes out with a bang!
- Nitro's RevengeMr. Ferguson settles the score with Bob

#18. Against All Odds

- The After Action Review (Black Hand Story)Nitro chides the Black Hands for their inability to cooperate
- When Peace comes to ShoveA peace conference? With Orcs? Knuckles and El Ravager are not amused
- Dewin' Hard TimeKnuckles, El Ravager and Teflon Billy are incarcerated in Fangarie Prison
- The Day the Magic DiedIt's payback time. Magic items can no longer protect the Knights
- The Turn AboutB.A. gains the upper hand in a game of SpaceHack

Bonus Strips *(appeared in this volume of Bundle of Trouble only)*

- Bag War FourRetro-Strip: The Treaty is broken and the group finds itself at war with Barringer once again
- The Game AuditRetro-Strip: Suspecting foul play, the group asks for an 'audit' of B.A.'s campaign notes
- The Jackson DocumentRetro-Strip: Brian gets his hands on the legendary J-Doc.
- Dead Man's BluffRetro-Strip: It's a game of bluff and Bob calls
- BloodlinesRetro-Strip: Is Teflon Billy human or a dwarf? Here lies the answer

#19. Heroes of the HackLeague

- Don't Go ThereThe conversation turns to Patty Gauzweiler and [urp] Alexis!
- Dances with PitbullsThe Knights' wardogs bite the hands that feed them
- Got Yer NumberBob gets Gary Jackson's home telephone number
- A Time for HeroesThere's something wrong with this Heroes and Zeroes supplement
- The Sting (Black Hand Story)Newt signs up for Stevil's Group Insurance policy

#20. Hack in Space

- A Novel IdeaSara starts a Book Club. Can any author but Gary stand up to the Knight's scrutiny?
- The Hang Nail IncidentKnuckles wuss-slaps a surly waitress and starts a terrible chain of events
- Brian's EggsBrian develops a freakish avian pendant
- Virtual LiabilitiesBrian gets B.A. to beta test his new computer game
- Have a Little FaithCan Knuckles save the Knights' hide?
- Monday MourningZayre dies
- I Write the Songs, I Write the Songs! (Black Hand Story)Newt's new Bard character annoys Stevil

#21. Home Is Where You Hang Your Dice Bag

- The Evil Among UsSara becomes evil. And likes it
- Out of the RunningB.A. gets flamed by the guys for blowing off GaryCon
- The Incentive Program (Black Hand Strip)Nitro tries to get the Black Hands to cooperate
- The Pilgrimage to GaryConBrian, Bob and Dave relate their adventures on the way to GaryCon

Bonus Strips *(appeared in this volume of Bundle of Trouble only)*

- The Bag Raiders: Best Played Plans...Retro-Strip: The Knights decide to take the war to Barringer
- The Bag Raiders: ...Of Dice and MenRetro-Strip: It's the roll of Bob's career and he pulls out the "Cursed Sisters"
- The Dark Knight ReturnsRetro-Strip: The Sequel to 'A Time for Heroes'

#22. Opportunity Knocks!!

- Dawg Daze AfternoonThe Knights attempt to play DAWG: the RPG
- Through Steam-Tunnels DeepThe Black Hands plan a return to Ball State's infamous steam tunnels
- The Lost One(s)Newt is lost in the steam tunnels and it's up to the Knights to rescue him
- Opportunity Knocks (retro-KoDT)The first RETRO-KODT strip featuring Johnny Kizinski
- The BassMasters of Muncie (retro-KoDT)Gamers will be Gamers

##23. Dice Follies!

- The ScapegoatWeird Pete goes underground after being hounded by the media
- Help Wanted!!Bob begins moonlighting at the Games Pit after Pete leaves town
- The Substitute (Black Hand Strip)Nitro invites Bob to fill in Weird Pete's empty chair
- A Man out Standing in his Field (Black Hand Strip)The Black Hands Raz Bob
- It Takes a ThiefThere's no place like home for good 'ol Knuckles
- The Unexpected EncounterB.A. runs into his nemesis, Earl Slackmozer, at the Games Pit

#24. Hackzilla

- When Worlds CollideB.A. discovers that he and Earl aren't really that different
- The Gary Jackson Files: Gulag 17There's an uprising in Hard 8's work camps, er...summer playtester camps
- Bleating to DeathThe elusive 12 point llama strikes
- Ultimate Treasure!The ultimate treasure is knowledge...or is it?

Bonus Strips *(appeared in this volume of Bundle of Trouble only)*

- To be determined: BOT#8 to be released in February, 2001

BRUNO THE BANDIT

By IAN McDONALD

"PEOPLE OF THE REALM, THE VIOLENCE PLAGUING OUR BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY MUST STOP!! IF YOU DO NOT LEARN TO GET ALONG, IT WILL COST YOU THAT WHICH YOU VALUE MOST: ME!!"

FOR I AM NOW ON A HUNGER STRIKE, WHICH I SHALL STAY ON UNTIL THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN THE MAYHEM....

"TO LENGTHEN MY SUFFERING, I SHALL KEEP MYSELF GOING BY CONSUMING ONLY THE FOODS ON THIS SHORT LIST...."

AND SO...

THERE'S BEEN NO DROP IN THE VIOLENT CRIME RATE YET, SIRE...

I'VE BEEN ON THIS CURSED STRIKE FOR TWO WHOLE HOURS! BURP!! WHAT MORE DO THE SAVAGES WANT?



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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

#25. Secret of the Hackfiles

- Workin' Class Fool The Knights propose RPGin' through the drive up window at Pizza Go Go
- Operation Skim Earl advises B.A. on a way to relieve his players of their ill-gotten booty
- Project Justice Sara "GMS" a little game she brought home from her Psych class

#26. The Mask of El Ravager

- A Hero's Demise The Knights reminisce about a fallen comrade
- Holodeck not Needed The Knights plot to wreak havoc on Garweez World with their Starship
- A Question of Loyalty Can B.A. save his campaign from an onslaught of nuclear armed players?
- Say Goodnight, Raz! Newt finally gets his revenge!

#27 Hackburger Hill

- A Few Good Men Knuckles gets the 'Skinny' on some NPC tricks
- Old Familiar Places The Knights revisit Lyron's Academy
- A Reason to Celebrate Dave and Brian punch Bob's buttons
- A Surprising Situation Sara's out on a DATE and lets Dave run her character

#28. Hoody Freakin' Hoo!

- Complications Continue Sara has a new Beau and it's causing problems at the table
- Should've Been There The boys try to explain to Sara why Thorina is among the naked dead
- The Do-Gooders The group discovers that no "Good Deed" goes unrewarded
- A New Beginning Weird Pete and Stevil introduce their 'new' characters to the Black Hands
- City of the Blind (retro KoDT) It's a case of 'false advertising'

#29. Bad Moon Risin'

- The Black Hands: Working for the Man Pete & Stevil find themselves as unwilling henchmen
- The Dirty Little Secret The boys confront Sara and demand that she tell her boyfriend that she's a gamer
- The Deck of Far Too Many Things The group finds a Deck of Wondrous Things and all hell breaks loose



#30. No Honor

- Takin' Care of Business Weird Pete hawks his wares to B.A.
- And One Got Away Sara bails on the Knights and joins another group? Huh?
- Dirty Politics The gang plays Race for the White House & it's 'politics' as usual
- Clash of the Iron Clads Bob & Dave pull out the classic game Battleship
- Simply Irresponsible (Black Hand Strip) Pete & Stevil continue their efforts to shed themselves of their henchman status

#31. Don't Fear the Reaper

- Pleased to Meet You (Black Hand Strip) The Black Hands travel to Pixie Meet
- Angels of Mercy with Dirty Faces Bob, Dave and Brian aid a sickly gnome
- Missin' Out Big Time Sara misses out on the destruction of Hagley Town
- A Gamer's Brunch Bob confronts Sara during a friendly game of Battleship
- Only the Lonely Brian's Brownie familiar, Hodgy makes a reappearance

#32 Tales From Hawg Waller's

- Takin' No Flak (Black Hand Strip) Flak Jack Monty is back in town
- Then Came Cody A new recruit is trying out for Sara's seat
- Takin the Point Sara finds herself fighting boredom instead of monsters in the new group she's joined
- The Night of Living Dangerously- Part One (Black Hand Strip) Flak Jack Monty is back in town

Index continues on page 69

Beer. Nookie. Roommates.

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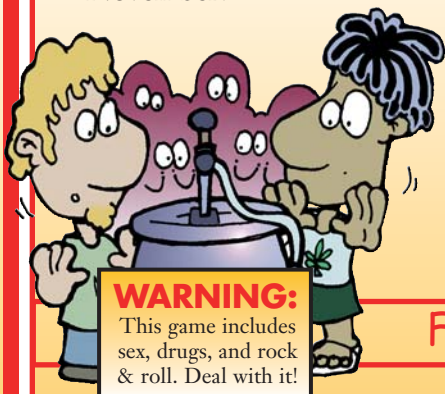
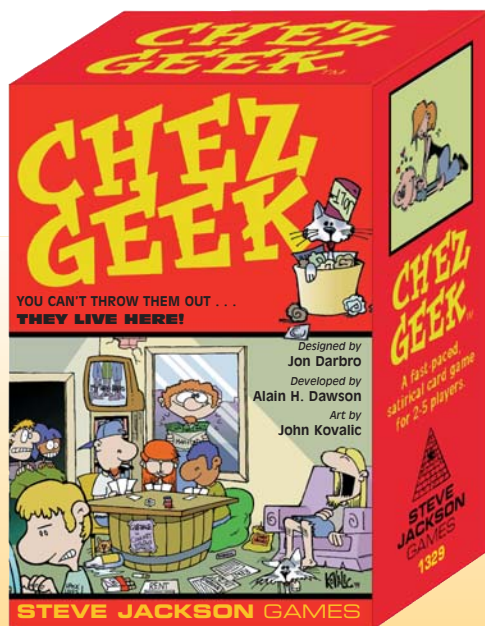
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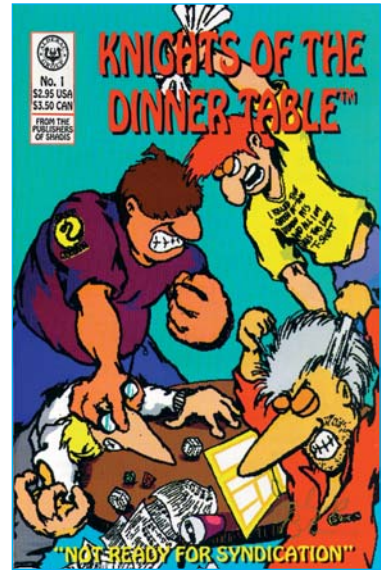
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Knights of the Dinner Table™ COVER GALLERY

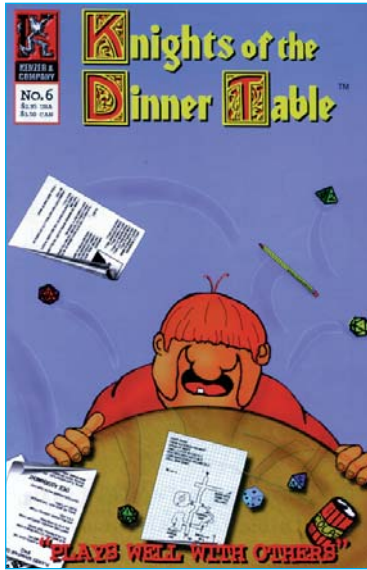
A look at the covers of early issues of KODT.



Issue#1 — July, 1994



Issue#5 — March, 1997



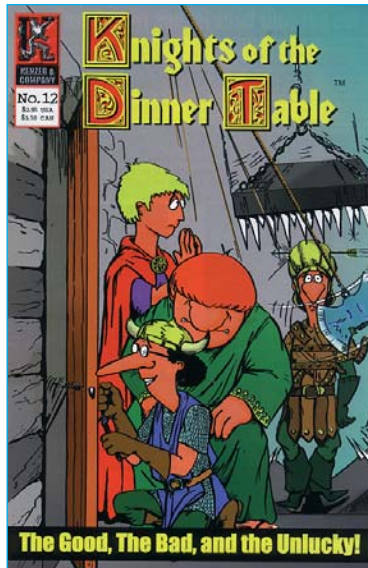
Issue#6 — April, 1997



Issue#7 — May, 1997



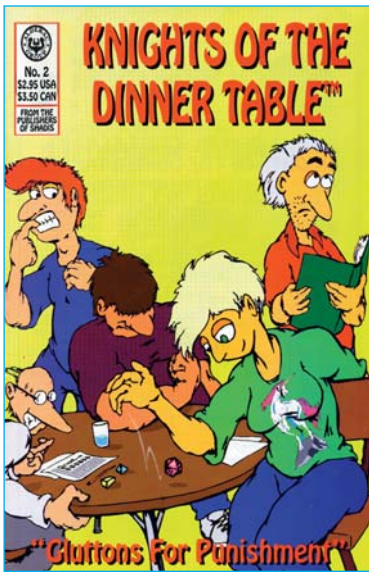
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Issue#12 — October, 1997



Issue#13 — November, 1997



Issue#2 — January, 1995



Issue#3 — April, 1995



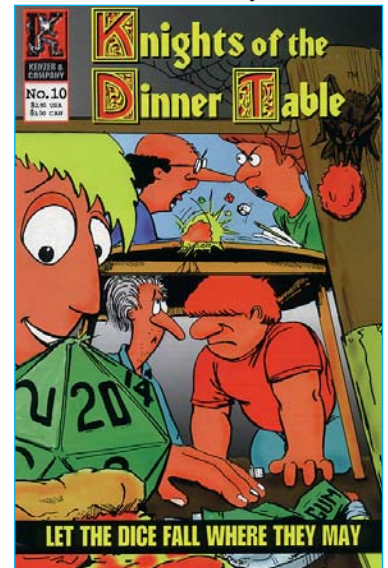
Issue#4 — February, 1997



Issue#8 — June, 1997



Issue#9 — July, 1997



Issue#10 — August, 1997



Issue#14 — December, 1997

In celebration of our fiftieth issue we thought it would be fun to take a look at the first 14 issues of KODT. Who knew? With the first few issues of KODT only having a modest print-run of 3,000 or so issues, many fans have NEVER seen an original issue of KODT #15 or below. This sad situation is mostly due to the fact that early issues of KODT are hard to find and going for gold-camp prices. In addition, those fans lucky enough to own them don't seem to be interested in selling.

Our jaws literally dropped a few months ago when a copy of issue#1 was auctioned off on E-bay for a whopping \$125 smackers. Accckk!!! The much sought after Issue #1 typically sells for over 80 dollars when they do pop up — This sort of demand for back-issues earned KODT a spot on Wizard Magazine's "Top Ten Hottest Back Issues" list last year.

Although Jolly does all the interior artwork on the strips, over the years the covers have been 'farmed out' to various artists. Jason Holmgren was responsible for Covers 1 thru 4. Chris Adams (of Yamara fame) did the cover for Issue five. Jolly reluctantly (we held a gun to his head) did the covers for issues 6 thru 8. Then came George Vrbanic (and his wonderful wife, Jackie) who have been doing the covers for KODT from issue 9 to present. □

Knights of the Dinner Table HACKMASTERS OF EVERKNIGHT

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Listen to what loyal KODT fans are saying about Hackmasters of Everknight:

I am still laughing: the characters, the little sight gags of pop culture trivia! The whole thing was just fun! So please keep this comic coming, it makes being a good gamer girlfriend so much easier!!!!

- P.E.M.

ORIGINAL KODT STRIPS INCLUDED!!

Here's what the critics are saying about the

TONY DIGEROLAMO'S TRAVELERS

"If you like your fantasy sprinkled with a healthy dose of comedy then The Travelers is for you. The Travelers displays a level of comic storytelling skill that many "big three" artists would do well to emulate."

-Creeping Flesh Reviews #6

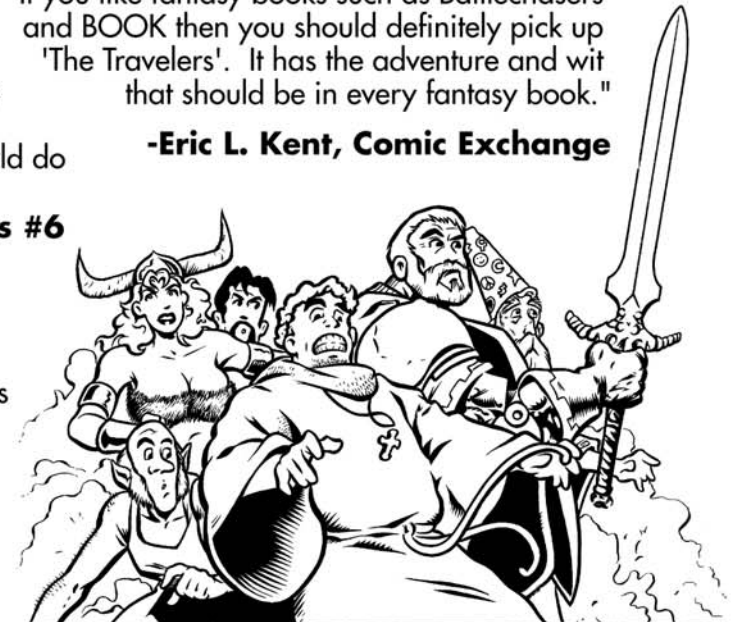
"The Travelers are wonderfully diverse and original. From the Ornerly priest to Barbara the barbarian, they are all characters I'd like to come back and read more about..."

8 out of 10 soapboxes"

**-Brendan McKillip,
Comic Soapbox**

"If you like fantasy books such as Battlechasers and BOOK then you should definitely pick up 'The Travelers'. It has the adventure and wit that should be in every fantasy book."

-Eric L. Kent, Comic Exchange



- #33 Wild Wild Hack**
 The Night of Gaming Dangerously- Part Two (Black Hand Strip)There's never a dull moment at Hawg Waller's Murder Most FoulCody asks too many questions
 A Pressing EngagementBrian is back on the dating scene
 Path of the Righteous (Retro KoDT)Dave plays a Paladin? Surely no good can come of this
- #34 Of Dice and Men**
 Jail House HackThe Black Hands game in the slammer
 Of Dice and MenSara leaves Troy's Boys
 Braggin' RightsCrutch returns to Hawg Wallers
 The Big SurpriseKnights prepare for Sara's return
 Hell Hath No FurySara returns with a vengeance
- #35 Death Awaits**
 Wager Me ThisBrian matches wits with a Flat-Footed Ogre
 Coal-lateralDivine intervention turns Bob into a lump of coal
 A Horse is a HorseDave saddles up a different kind of beast
- #36 HackMaster of Puppets**
 Hammer TimeBrian gains the upper hand with a major relic
 That's My Wish, and I'm Sticking to it!Wishes backfire on the Knights
 Wishful ThinkingAnd the wishes continue
 Clause for CelebrationThe rules lawyer comes out ahead in wish war
- #37 Fifteen Orcs on a Dead Dwarf's Chest**
 Gary, Gary, Quite Contrary"Mister Jackson" arrives for Hack-Tourney Regionals
 Room to ImproveSara analyzes Knights' weaknesses as they head to the Finals
 The Pep TalkNitro gets his team ready for the Finals
 The Lame MasterTimmy Jackson shows up to GM the Knights in Final Round
 Not On My Watch!Jo Jo Zeke holds the line against Black Hands' 'Me-Me-Me' style of play
 Child's PlayThe Knights roll over Timmy to win Finals
 The Prize FightersThe Knights get their reward
- #38 Hack Rogers**
 Let them Eat Bread!Hard Eight goes code yellow
 Overcoming DisabilitiesB.A. "picks" on Bob's disabled character
 Los Caballeros del ComedorThe Knights go bilingual
- #39 The Game Must Go On**
 Talkin' TrashThe Knights avenge Sara
 In the BlackWeird Pete finds a way to turn adversity into cash
 Trading PlacesNitro is forced out from behind the screen
 Has Anybody Seen My Old Friend, Johnny?Johnny's back in town
- #40 Hack in the Saddle Again**
 Virtual CalamityWeird Pete takes another crack at virtual reality
 The Chosen FewWeird Pete hand picks Stevil for new project
 A Hard SaleCarnivorous fairies?
 A Pound of FleshPlaytesters learn the finer points of Fairy Meat
 Hack in the Saddle AgainCrutch and Johnny team up
- #41 Ninety-Nine Gold Doubloons**
 Back in the FoldJohnny rolls dice again
 The Lesson PlanB.A. schemes to keep the Knights in line
 A Place of Their OwnThe Knights take Lord Flataroy's manor
 The Trophy HuntersFantasy big game safari?
 Fumble in the JungleThe Knights' big game hunt goes awry
 The GM Wanna-beA retro KODT where Johnny jumps behind the screen
- #42 A Hack in Time Slays Nine**
 The Kryton PrincipleWeird Pete helps B.A. plot revenge on Knights for Flataroy's death
 A Very 'Delegate' SituationThe Knights remodel, put power ploys in motion
 Return to Fading RealmsBlack Hands prepare to enter the Temple of Horrendous Doom
 The Temple of Horrendous DoomThe Black Hands enter the Temple
- #43 Wasted Days and Wasted Knights**
 A Winning HandBrian gets heavy-handed playing Riskue
 One For AllThe Black Hands are required to work together to survive deadly Temple
 The Power PlayStevil gains valuable information
 Soul ManStevil's pixie liche gets down and dirty



#44 Because I'm the GM

Between a Rock and a Hard Place Bob gets into trouble trying to walk through walls
The Horror in the Wall Something grabs Dave's Hackmaster +12
Pawn takes King Pete tries to make a deal with Stevil
Dead Men Tell No Tales The Black Hands beat the Temple, but can't tell anybody
Formula for Disaster The Knights turn a racing game into a bloodbath

#45 Buddy, Can You Spare a Cure?

The Vacancy B.A. tries to find group for Crutch
The Interview Crutch meets Patty Gauzweiler
The Perp' Walk Crutch meets Patty's Perpetrators
Five Points to Ponder Patty lays down the law to keep group in line
Command Inspection Bob pulls a surprise inspection of the Gnome soldiers

#46 Hack and Roll All Nite

Final Deliberation The Perps decide whether Crutch stays or goes
Hack and Roll All Night The Knights patronize The Bloodied Fist
Erik of the Twelve Scars Bob comes out on the bad end of a challenge
Relinquishing the Screen Pete reluctantly hands GM screen back to Nitro
Sprechen Sie Dwarvish? The Knights delve into fantasy languages

#47 Hooked on Psionics

Uninvited Guests The Knights are forced underground when the Dragon Committee comes calling
A Gnome in the Dark The gang befriends Pewter, the half-gnome living under the manor
Made You Look The Knights try to squirm out from under the gaze of a Greater Medusa
Hackmaster 101 Eddie tries to teach Crutch the finer points of roleplaying

#48 Apocalypse Drow

Stoned Again Brian "turns the tables" as Teflon Billy is turned to stone
The Stone Menagerie The gang is betrayed, face army of Medusa's victims come back to life
One Ring to Fool Them All B.A. finally gets the upper hand
Got You Under My Spell In a retro-KODT Sara finds out the awful truth behind a hireling's loyalty

#49 The Six Million Hit-Point Man

Til Death Do Us Part As the sole-surviving party member, Sara must find a way to raise her comrades
My Grubby Little Friend Dave opts to have El Ravager reincarnated in order to escape death
Why Didn't You Say So? A Rouge-Priest turns out to be a big fan of the Untouchable Trio
Heavens to Merga-Troll The group encounters a Troll who just 'ain't natural'

TALES FROM THE VAULT VOLUME I

Payback Bob owes B.A. money
Quite a Character Dave brings a special character to the table
I am the DM!!! B.A. lays down the law
Collateral Damage Brian's fireball hits Dave
Players' Union The players unite
Hack-n-Whine The players throw a fit
Divine Limitations Luvia falls short
Dangerous Characters There's trouble between the Knights
Memories of the Fallen Memories aren't all they're cracked up to be
Pink Frosting Player Advantage Codes come in handy
Dice Trouble Someone touches Bob's dice
On Borrowed Time Dave lets the guys play El Ravager
A New Girl in Town Sara joins the Knights
Spelljacked The guys play cards
Real Gaming B.A. tries some disastrous home-brewed rules
Thor-Dude The guys taunt Thor
I Wanna Roll Some Dice B.A. tries to talk the guys into diceless gaming
Scream of Kuchooloo The Knights take on creeping horror
The Power of the GM B.A. tries to use a computerized Game Master program
The Face Off: Part One Weird Pete guest GMs, he and Sara face off
The Face Off: Part Two Sara refuses to back down to Pete
Vote of No-Confidence Bob deposes B.A. as GM
Happy Anniversary B.A. celebrates by rerunning his first adventure
Princess Kristina--Rabbit! The Knights meet a girl in frog's clothing
Buckets of Dice B.A. tries aversion therapy to cure the guys of their dice obsession
Brian's Folly Brian lays out Player Proposition 151
The Quality of Mercy An old man and Knobby Foot fall victim to the Knights' version of mercy
Relentless The guys are bent on robbing a bank in Cattlepunk
Puppet Hell Brian uses a puppet to role-play Hodg, his familiar
Great Reward? The Knights fall into a trap as they prepare to be honored
Nuclear Peace The guys playtest Johnny's new game
The Slap Heard 'Round the World Nitro's famous slap of Gary Jackson becomes a topic of discussion
Random Encounters The gang racks up an unusual body count
GM in the House Bob GMs, bases dungeon on his house
The 'Zine B.A. wants to start a gaming magazine
The Gary Jackson Files -- Garycon 25 Gary's on the spot at Garycon 25
The Gary Jackson Files -- Nitro's on the Lam The Antignano Brothers are after Nitro
The Gary Jackson Files -- Emergency Meeting Edmund Finley sells Gary on Abe, Babes and Rollerblades
The Gary Jackson Files -- G.J. Pulls out the Big One Gary plots to pull Hard 8 out of disaster
The Lost Episodes Rare KODT strips from various places

Originally ran in Shadis Magazine (March 1990 to November, 1995)

Originally ran in Dragon™ (Feb 1996 to Jan, 1997)



TALES FROM THE VAULT VOLUME 2

Originally ran in Dragon™ (July, 97 to Dec 98)

Let the Dead Rest in (one) Piece	.....Knuckles dies and Bob finds it difficult to accept?
To Arms! To Arms!	.....Bob and Dave lose limbs in nasty trap
The Wine Test	.....Brian and Ol' Rot Gut battle it out in wine-tasting contest
Out of Alignment	.....Alignment violations end in bloodshed
Random Dungeons	.....The Knights don't take a dead end at face value
The Temple of Kazaar-Freem	.....A run-in with the Gawd of Peace and Tranquility ends in monkey business
Half Heroes	.....The gang makes up characters for Heroes and Zeroes
I am the STRONGEST!	.....The guys fight over who's toughest
A Character with No Name	.....Dave rolls up a new character and refuses to give him a name
The New(t) Guy	.....Newt Forager sits in with the Knights
Most Wanted	.....The gang competes to have the biggest reward on their heads in Cattlepunk
Dunn Reports and Dragons	.....The Knights meet a dragon with a wicked portfolio
Henchmen Woes	.....The Knights get fed up with a henchman
How Much?	.....El Ravager becomes a gnome
The Most Dangerous (small) Game	.....Bob runs into one tough squirrel
Small Town Charm	.....The Knights find a nice little town to settle down in
Desparia	.....Dave GMs, leads Knights down bizarre path
The Rose of Blightdale	.....Sara gets a special rose
No More Nukes!	.....The group play Grunge Warriors
Boxed In	.....Bob GMs, harasses the group with a shoe box
Papers Please	.....The guys have trouble getting past some wily guards
Adventure is in the Bag	.....Mysterious portal results in guys wearing bags on their heads
Sweeping Humiliation	.....Bob gets on the wrong side of some tough chimney sweeps
Looking Out for Number One	.....Bob, Dave and Sara look for revenge after Brian leaves them holding the bag
Run and Fight Another Day	.....Bob is the only survivor of a dragon attack
Various KODT panels	.....A selection of promotional strips
No Act of Kindness Goes Unpunished	.....Sara and Brian learn that sometimes kindness doesn't pay
Get Well	.....The Knights wish a hospitalized Kenzer employee a speedy recovery
Selected panels	.....KODT odds and ends

Originally ran in Rifters (Jan 98 to Dec 98)

TALES FROM THE VAULT VOLUME 3

Originally ran in Dragon™ (Jan 99 to March 00)

Bar Room Blitz	.....The Knights get in a little altercation
Clearance Sale	.....Brian holds a player character auction
Word Perfect	.....B.A. turns the tables on rules' lawyering
A Really Big Belt	.....A kobold wuss slaps Dave
Royal Ripoff	.....The group steals the goblets right from under a king's nose
Scary Monsters	.....The Knights are in danger from a Festering Reaver, and each other
Fiery Negotiations	.....Brian's haggling skills are too hot to handle
On the Way to Castle Lonely	.....The guys destroy Sara, the GMs, adventure
Template for Disaster	.....Dave does a little fine tuning of a spaceship
Caveat Emptor (Let the Buyer Beware)	.....Bob shops for a healing potion
Herd Instinct	.....The Knights find new uses for farm animals
Law of Survival	.....Brian pulls out all the stops to beat B.A.
Doors of Opportunity	.....The gang must choose which door to go through
Blam! Blam! Blam!	.....The guys play Crime Nation the RPG
Rule Stomp Rumble	.....Bob objects to Brian's rules' lawyering
Silent Partner	.....Brian takes desperate measures to protect his secret deal
The Gates of Valhalla	.....Knuckles can't resist the solid gold gates of Odin's home plane
Maid to Order	.....Brian's tinkering with robots has hilarious results
A Turnip Events	.....Bob's character is taken out by a turnip
The Big Stick Policy	.....Brian gets heavy-handed playing Risque

Rifters (April 99 to April 00)

AND THE REST..... [The following KODT strips appeared in the back of the indicated KenzerCo Publication]

HACKMASTERS OF EVERKNIGHT

A Heated Situation (HackMaster #1)	.....A Gelatinous Cube spells doom for Bob
First Taste of Magic (HackMaster #2)	.....Dave gets his 'first taste' of magic and freaks
An Ounce of Prevention (HackMaster #3)	.....There's a bad moon risin' and the Knights are having a 'howling' good time
Pound of Cure (Hackmaster #4)	.....The Knights come up with the bright idea -- willingly get bit by a werewolf
Recipe For Disaster (Hackmaster #4)	.....Bob's a Were-Dwolf (a dwarven were-wolf) and a new hunger stirs in him

THE TRAVELERS

The DeathMaster (The Travelers #4)	.....A retro-KODT. A mule, a wish spell, and some age penalties
It's a Gusher (The Travelers #5)	.....Brian's 'rapid approximation of room geometry' literally backfires
Catching Lightning (The Travelers #6)	.....The group attempt to steal Zeus' thunder...er, lightning

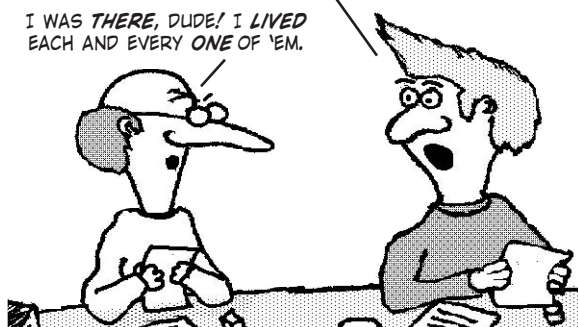
AVELON

Five Shall be Called (Avelon #9)	.....It must be prophesy
One Shall be Chosen (Avelon #10)	.....A Crown of Power -- who shall claim it?
You Are What You Drink (Avelon #11)	.....Sara does a little sleight of hand to bolster Dave's confidence.

KODT STRIPS ALPHABETICAL LIST BY TITLE

Adventure is in the Bag:	TftV#2
After Action Review, The: (Black Hands):	Issue 18/Bot#6
Agent of Evil:	Issue 5/Bot#2
An Ounce of Prevention	HackMaster #3
An Orc Too Far:	Issue 8/Bot#3
An Overbearing Situation:	Issue 12/Bot#4
And One Got Away :	Issue 30
Angel of Mercy:	Issue 2/Bot#1
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Armload of Trouble:	Issue 7/Bot#3
Attack of the Rules Lawyer:	Issue 1/Bot#1
Attack of the Snow Beasts:	Issue 3/Bot#1
Back in the Fold:	Issue 41
Bag Raiders: Best Played Plans., The: (retro-KoDT)	Bot#7
Bag Raiders: ...Of Dice and Men The: (retro-KoDT)	Bot#7
Bag War Four: (retro-KoDT)	Bot#6
Balance of Terror:	Issue 8/Bot#3
Bar Room Blitz	TftV#3
Barringer Rebellion, The:	Issue 14/Bot#5
BassMasters of Muncie, The (retro-KoDT):	Issue 22/Bot#8
Beating the Odds:	Issue 5/Bot#2
Best Little Warhorse, The:	Issue 14/Bot#5
Between a Rock and a Hard Place:	Issue 44
Big Stick Policy:, The	TftV#3
Big Surprise, The:	Issue 34
Blam! Blam! Blam! :	TftV#3
Bleating to Death:	Issue 24/Bot#8
Blood Bath at the Games Pit:	Issue 11/Bot#4
Bloodlines: (retro-KoDT)	Bot#6
Boxed In:	TftV#2
Boy Could Play, The:	Issue 7/Bot#3
Braggin' Rights:	Issue 34
Brian's Challenge:	Issue 7/Bot#3
Brian's Eggs:	Issue 20/Bot#7
Brian's Folly:	TftV#1
Buckets of Dice:	TftV#1
By the Book:	Issue 1/Bot#1
Can We Talk?:	Issue 6/Bot#2
Can't Buy Me Luck:	Issue 5/Bot#2
Carry a Big Stick (First Black Hand Strip):	Issue 17/Bot#6
Carvin' Marvin: (retro-KoDT)	Bot#2
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Caveat Emptor (Let the Buyer Beware) :	TftV#3
Character with No Name:, A	TftV#2
Child's Play:	Issue 37
Chosen Few, The: (Black Hands)	Issue 40

OH MY GAWD!! LOOK AT ALL THE STRIPS ON THIS FRICKIN' LIST!! THERE MUST BE HUNDREDS OF 'EM.



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Clash of the Iron Clads:	Issue 30
Clause for Celebration:	Issue 36
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Collateral Damage:	TftV#1
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Coward of the County:	Issue 7/Bot#3
Cows of War, The:	Issue 2/Bot#1
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Dances with Pitbulls:	Issue 19/Bot#7
Dangerous Characters:	TftV#1
Dark Knight Returns, The: (retro-KoDT)	Bot#7
Dave's First Game: (retro-KoDT)	Bot#1
Dawg Daze Afternoon:	Issue 22/Bot#8
Day the Magic Died, The:	Issue 18/Bot#6
Dead Man's Bluff: (retro-KoDT)	Bot#6
Dead Men Tell No Tales: (Black Hands)	Issue 44
Death By Repetition:	Issue 3/Bot#1
DeathMaster, The	The Travelers #4
Deck of Far Too Many Things, The:	Issue 29
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Detour Down Memory Lane:	Issue 4/Bot#2
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CHARTING THE DIFFICULT WATERS OF CAMPAIGN CARTOGRAPHER

by Kenneth Newquist

ProFantasy's *Campaign Cartographer 2* is a game master's dream tool. It (and its add-ons) give GMs the ability to create professional-quality maps of their worlds, detail every last nook and cranny of their favorite cities, and create expansive dungeons.

And all this comes at the mere price of \$79.95 (more for the extras) and whatever sanity you once had. Yes, while CC2 and its expansion sets *City Designer* and *Dungeon Designer*, are great and powerful tools, none of them are particularly easy to learn and use. Fortunately the net is populated with hundreds of CC2 junkies eager to draw you further into the depths of their addiction.

PROFANTASY'S WEB SITE

A first-visit for any soon-to-be CC2 addict is ProFantasy's Web site, which is one of the few company Web sites I've found that's actually worth visiting. The downloads section holds a veritable horde of goodies from completed CC2 maps, to new icon and graphic sets, to free CC2 viewers. There's a TSR/Wizards of the Coast-specific map area, and *Greyhawk* fans absolutely must grab the full-size wall map of the Flanaess. Venturing over to the Resources area uncovers tutorials, tips and tricks, and links to CC2 Web sites.

CC2 E-MAIL LIST

The ProFantasy's Web site also links to the CC2 E-mail List, which is a must-join for anyone serious about working with the program. The list is frequented by ProFantasy designers and programmers as well as experienced users and just-beginning amateurs. All of them love this program, and go out of their way to help folks solve their CC2 problems. Be warned though -- this is a high volume list, and those who join should expect regular blizzards of e-mail to arrive in their in-boxes.

CC2 WEBRING

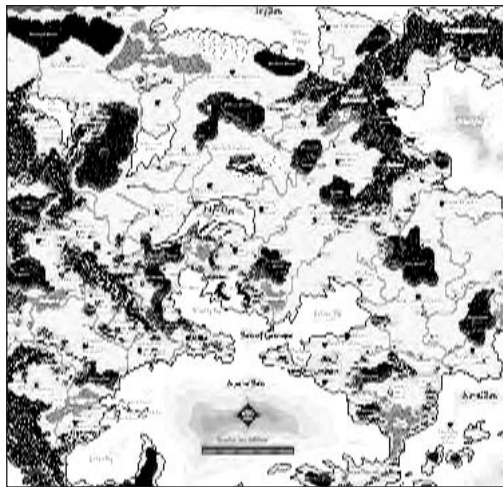
Like most of its kin, the CC2 Webring offers a mixed bag of Web sites, ranging from so-so to the very good. The site has more than 35 member sites, most of which include CC2 maps to one extent or another. The remainder provides links to computerized gaming aids.

BREMINOR

Breminor is a well-done campaign Web site dedicated to a home-grown fantasy kingdom of the same name. It shows what a difference good maps can make both online and off. It details several lands and cities within the realm, and provides neophyte CC2 designers with a source of inspiration. My only complaint is that the site's authors didn't include any notes about how they created their excellent maps; a short page with a few insights into map design would be a welcome addition.

THE MORDENT CARTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

While not as nice-looking as Breminor, The Mordent Cartographic Society is still a great site, and a must-visit for Ravenloft fans. The site's creators -- dedicated cartographers all -- have drafted dozens of beautiful CC2 maps of the Domain of Dread. It has land maps, city maps, dungeon maps -- if you can map it, they've archived it. The site is blessed with frequent updates, and it includes an extensive write-up on the fictional version of the society.



TOPOGRAPHICAL MAPPING FOR CC2 USERS

Those bored with the challenge of mapping nations the old-fashioned way can check out Andy Staple's *Topographical Mapping for CC2 Users* site. It offers a detailed tutorial on how to create topo maps from real-world satellite data.



If you know of a helpful CC2 Web site, or have other RPG sites that you'd like to see featured in this column, please e-mail me at knewquist@nuketown.com.

PROFANTASY

<http://www.profantasy.com/>

CC2 E-MAIL LIST

<http://www.profantasy.com/maillist.html>

CC2 WEB RING

<http://nav.webring.yahoo.com/hub?id=28&ring=cc2ring&list>

BREMINOR

<http://www.breminor.com>

THE MORDENT CARTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

<http://www.gryphonhill.com>

TOPOGRAPHICAL MAPPING FOR CC2 USERS

<http://www.minarsas.demon.co.uk/maps/index.htm>





Real Time Strategy, Munchkins & Age of Empires II: The Conquerors

By Rick Moscatello

Attention gamers: Stop playing **StarCraft** — play **AOEII: The Conquerors**, it's a vastly superior game. Oops, maybe I should put that in munchkin-speak (*also known as idiot-speak*): "Hey l33t d00dz, **StarCraft** suXXors to th3 maXXor, y00z sh00d playz **AOEII: The Conquerors**, it r0x0rs!"

When **StarCraft** hit the market, gamers bought it by the caseload, since it was from *Blizzard*. It was a fine game, without the bugs that plague the typical product, but I never really got into it. The solitaire scenarios were all of the "build up your forces until you have an overwhelming majority, and attack" variety, and I lost interest quickly. I tried multiplayer for a while, but the games were all of the "build up your forces until you have an overwhelming majority, and attack". I know, some people out there claim **StarCraft** is a strategy game, but I've yet to find someone who can rationally explain a significant difference (*beyond the completely obvious*) between building an overwhelming force of one unit over another, and you only have one way to build up your forces. Attacking is very simple minded, and, despite the futuristic setting, none of the races have invented the "wall", an amazingly effective way to defend an area, so defense is pretty limited, too. I'll buy the real time aspect of **StarCraft**, as there's a buttload of clicking going on, especially when it comes time to build things--in the far flung future, military bases won't be able to count higher than five, making building up that overwhelming force a micromanaging nightmare.

Of course, saying anything negative about **StarCraft** in a 'Net message board immediately gets me shouted down by munchkins, who call me all sorts of unpleasant things, using a special language (*like the above*) to cover any native illiteracy. Even though it's been out for years, **StarCraft** is still popular, insanely so in Korea, which is to the detriment of several games that are greatly superior. **The Conquerors**, an expansion to **AOEII**, is such a game.

For those still in the dark, the **Age of Empires** takes combat back to ancient times. **Age of Empires II** covered warfare post the Roman era, and this latest expansion loosely covers the great civilizations up to about the 16th century. Now, realism takes a back seat to the fun factor here, as an "army" in the game is rarely greater than 50 dudes, hardly an army for the real world. Little details such as the comparative lethality and protection of stone vs steel weapons are also ignored (*so the steel wielding Spanish can't trivially defeat the Aztecs and Mayans in the game, unlike real life*).

While the expansion introduces five new civilizations, all the "old" civilizations get some new

technologies (*and some get new units*) to play with, adding greatly to the value of the game. Still, it's the new civs that attract the attention, or at least should. The Aztecs and Mayans are the New World additions, and (*in one of the new nods to realism*), they are the only cultures that don't use horses. Luckily, they get special infantry that move as fast as horses (*so much for the nod!*), and a few technologies to give their foot soldiers the fighting power of the more modernized cultures. The Spanish are a very gold-intensive culture, and generate it directly and indirectly in several ways; they also are a bit gunpowder happy, with special mounted flintlock wielding "conquistador" units and super effective cannon galleons. The Huns don't have to worry about housing (*a major factor in the super high populations of online games*), and the Koreans get lumbering war wagons and turtle ships. Cool stuff, all.

So, I play the game a bit, and have fun with the historical scenarios (*the El Cid scenario is particularly good, even if, like me, you HATE most game scenarios, you'll find this one fascinating and only a bit less frustrating than usual*). I then play some heavy duty "random games", and go online to test my skills against the gaming public.

And I get my buttoXX kiXXord to the maXXor by kewl doodz with skillz. I'd lose repeatedly, and they'd tell me I suXXored. Heck, even when I'd win one of those early games, they'd tell me I suXXored, but that's just the munchkin way.

Looking carefully at my losses, I saw that the skills I learned against the computer are irrelevant online. Against the computer, you need walls as soon as possible, since the computer will organize an excursion fairly quickly in the game. Online, walls are of limited use, since the precious moments and resources used to build them are better spent in setting up amazing production expansion. Anyone who spends the time putting together a major defensive network will be so horrifically outproduced that the walls will do no good. Against the computer, towers are fairly useful as defensive tools, as the low population limits make it hard to put together a force capable of handling towers without sacrificing production. Online, population maximum is set to a staggering 200, allowing you to easily build an army which no static defenses can inhibit, while still keeping a population of villagers large enough to keep up the all-important production.

Ah, production, that's the key to the game, and that's where I was screwing up. Against the computer, I didn't start building an army until I had 35 villagers (i.e., half of the unit maximum). Online, you need 80 villagers at all times, and you should try to

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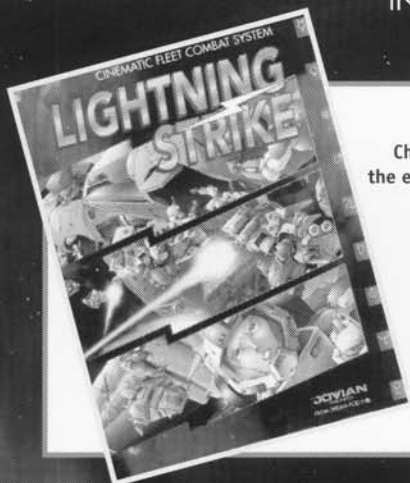
JOVIAN CHRONICLES

LIGHTNING STRIKE™

TACTICAL SPACE COMBAT SYSTEM

IN STORES IN NOVEMBER

2ND EDITION



Lightning Strike is a game of tactical fleet combat set in the universe of the Jovian Chronicles, simulating the numerous space battles fought between the solar powers in the early 23rd century. Players take the part of fleet commanders in the conflict, viewing the battle from above and giving orders to the participating units.

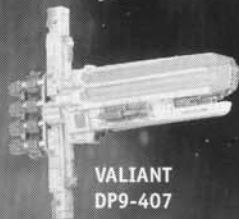
THIS BOOK CONTAINS:

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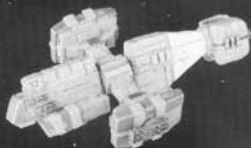
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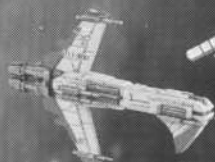
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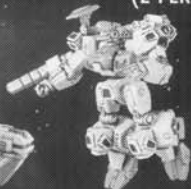
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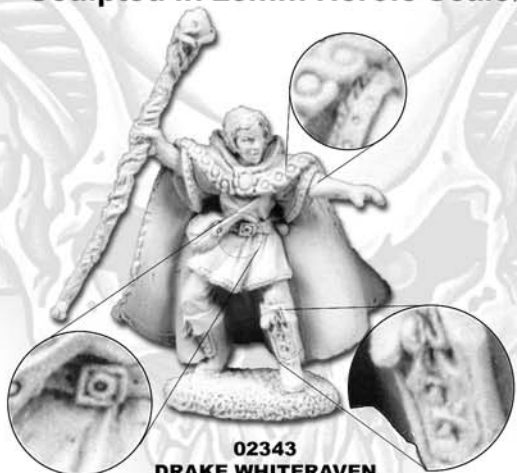
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get to 100 as soon as possible. The big secret to my opponent's insanely fast growth was the building of town centers (*which let you build more villagers*), lots of them. Everywhere. You need to press to the "Castle Age" (*when you can build Town Centers*) as fast as possible, so you can get to the explosive growth period. Luckily you can set town centers up so that the villagers they make will instantly gather resources, a major timesaving tool. There are also hotkeys for selecting center/build villagers (*I press "bcc", i.e. "select center/build two villagers", 40 times a game at least*), another great timesaver.

Armed with the new skillz—I kid you not, I practiced typing "bcc" mindlessly dozens of times before taking it to the online world—I go online. Against people without the precious skills, I saw the same thing here that I saw in StarCraft--combat strategy was irrelevant, since economic superiority meant that my opponent could not possibly do anything to stop the onslaught. Against people with the same skills, a world of strategy opened up. Your forces automatically go into formations when you order them to go somewhere. Archers take the middle, melee guys in front, siege equipment in the rear, and you can set other formations if desired, and the cavalry will slow down to keep the army together. Thus, it makes sense to build a variety of units, as it really is possible, in the heat of combat, for each type of unit to do what it does best. You can build powerful cavalry, but they're expensive, and an opponent can build spear/halberd wielding troops cheaply to stop them. Of course, such troops are nearly worthless for any other purpose, so you can build archers or infantry to hack them down. Rely too heavily on foot sol-

diers, and your opponent might build onagers and ballista, which destroy such forces quickly--unless he has cavalry, which can penetrate your lines and destroy this equipment easily.

And that's just on land. At sea, naval engagements are simpler, but still have enough of the ol' "rock/paper/scissors" factor to them to keep things interesting. This one game, I was attacked on two sides. On land, my Hun enemy was assaulting me with light cavalry and spear users, while my coast was nearly encircled by galleys from my British foe. I quickly built a handful of men-at-arms to smash the spear guys, and some knights and cavalry archers to support them. Meanwhile, my docks constructed a great navy of fire ships (*the counter to galleys*), while my villagers constructed some coastal defenses to protect my docks. Soon, my counter-strategies beat my enemies back...even though together they were easily outproducing me (*although not by much, thanks to my skillz*), superior strategy made the difference.

Now that I'm not a "rookie", I find myself being invited to join clans online. These are little collections of kewl doodz who get together and brag about their amazing skillz and stuff. So far, I haven't accepted....during my newbie days, far too often I was invited to a pickup game, where me and my random teammates would be forced to play (*and get slaughtered*) by a team of clansmen who would soundly trounce us, sometimes hurtling abuses at us like "pathetic" and the like.

So, if you're looking for a game great enough to open whole new worlds of gaming for you, check out *Age of Empires II*, and the expansion. You won't be disappointed. □



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Your master has gotten himself into yet another fine mess, captured by an evil sorcerer! What can you – his animals – do about it? Shadow the cat knows where the Master was captured. Reek the ferret is a contortionist. Penny the falcon is fearless; while Midnight, the Master's steed, has strength and speed aplenty. Isabelle the bloodhound can track a scent anywhere. Barney is a strong, loyal mutt for whom most obstacles prove mere annoyances. Bandit the 'coon is clever with his paws. And Anaxagoras the owl is in training to be a wizard!

This *Animal Companions* adventure is for 3-8 characters. It's ready to run with "All the Rules You Need to Know" and pre-generated characters. (Recommended but not included: percentile dice or *Fudge* dice.) By Ann Dupuis, 32 pages, GGG3001, \$7.95.

Also Available: *Fudge Expanded Edition* Customizable Roleplaying Game. GGG1010, \$19.95.



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Kenzer and Company to Release Long-Awaited HackMaster 4th Edition Spring 2001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 5th, 2000. Mundelein, IL – Today, after years of heavy secret negotiation, Kenzer and Company and Hard Eight Enterprises in conjunction with Gary Jackson, Inc. announced that Kenzer and Company would manufacture and distribute the long-awaited HackMaster 4th edition on behalf of Hard Eight Enterprises.

"We are pleased to be able to offload the low-margin manufacturing and distribution burdens of HackMaster onto KenzerCo so I can focus more on creativity," explained Gary Jackson, Gawdfather of Hack. "Me and my crack Hard Eight team will be focused on cranking out modules, source material and HackMaster rules supplements while our partners at KenzerCo take on the administrative responsibilities and deal with the customers."

"Waco" Bob Forsey added, "We were able to cut staff by 82% with this little move and due to the outlandish licensing fees we're able to keep revenue at almost 64% of past years!"

Mr. Jackson's choice of such a small industry player comes as quite a shock to most industry insiders. "We're obviously pleased with the arrangement," said an excited David S. Kenzer, President of Kenzer and Company. "The terms were a tad expensive, but we feel we can provide a higher level of customer service and thereby increase Mr. Jackson's overall productivity. We also take comfort that per Subsection 14.6 (e) of the licensing contract no more than 6.4% of the material may be submitted by Timmy."

While all releases and scheduling are currently tentative, KenzerCo has provided some insight into their plans. The first 4th Edition product will be the HackMaster Players Handbook. It is currently scheduled for release in April 2001.

KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE ILLUSTRATED MEET THE BROTHERS FRAM!!



Okay, we have some good news....and some bad news. Bad news first. Shortly after GenCon 2000, Aaron Williams, who drew the first three issues of *K.I.L.L. (Knights of the Dinner Table: Illustrated)* called us to say that after 'great soul-searching' he'd come to the conclusion that "something had to give!" — it was becoming a real strain to meet the production schedules, he explained, of both *K.I.L.L.* and his own projects. (We immediately suggested mega-doses of caffeine tablets and getting his 'priorities straight' by cutting out sleep, showering, eating, etc. along with any other time-burning activities but he decided not to take our advice. -- pity). So, that's where the bad news part comes in. Aaron's last issue was *K.I.L.L. 3* (although he did do the 1st transitional page of *K.I.L.L. 4*)

With great reluctance Aaron's shackles were removed and he was wished the best of luck on his other endeavors and given an "Intern bag lunch" for the road. (which consisted of the standard juice-pouch, apple (half) and macaroni and cheese cup with pork rinds) He claims someone patted him on the butt as he was putting on his yak-hide poncho before hitting the road but no one will 'fess up.

Now for the good news — After beating the bushes for someone to fill Aaron's talented shoes (literally -- Aaron wore +4 Shoes of Drawing) we eventually found our man....er....men. Brendon and Brian Fram, who cut their teeth working on such comics as *The Fix*, *The Travelers*, and *The Waiting Place*, will take up the series where Aaron left off.

They've already completed work on their first issue (*K.I.L.L. #4*) and have slipped into *K.I.L.L.* like a comfortable pair of shoes. □



Estimated suggested retail is \$24.95 to \$29.95. The *Hacklopedia of Beasts*, Volumes I-VIII will be priced at about \$19.95 each and will be released every-other week throughout the late spring and summer of 2001. The entire *Hacklopedia* is rumored to hold over 1600 bloodthirsty foes and is the largest bestiary of its kind. Mid to late summer will see the release of the *HackMaster GM's Guide*, the *HackMaster GM's Screen* and two full-length adventure modules written by Gary himself!

Kenzer and Company has separately acquired full rights and control over the *HackMaster Player's Association*. Summer 2001 should see a revamp in the HMPA including revised membership rights, a revised and unified HMPA Player's Code of Conduct and revised tournament rules and home play behavioral guidelines. Along with a small

increase in HMPA dues, KenzerCo plans to revive the *Player Character Memorial*. Kenzer and Company will also handle official GM status and membership cards, the GM and *Player Worldwide HackMaster Rankings System*, and *HackMaster Club and Tournament Registration*.

THIS IS NOT A JOKE (AT LEAST NOT THE 5th PARAGRAPH). KENZERCO FULLY ANTICIPATES THE HACKMASTER LINE TO BE THE SMASH HIT OF SPRING AND SUMMER 2001.

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plucked from the vine for your reading enjoyment

KINGDOMS OF KALAMAR CAMPAIGN SETTING BECOMES OFFICIAL DUNGEONS & DRAGONS WORLD

November, 1 2000 - (Mundelein, Ill) –Wizards of the Coast makers of the Dungeons & Dragons adventure game and Kenzer and Company creators of the astoundingly hilarious Knights of the Dinner Table magazine are proud to announce the latest addition to the official Dungeons & Dragons family: the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting. The two companies have reached agreement on licensing terms for new releases of the Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign setting, related supplements and adventures as official third edition Dungeons & Dragons products. The terms of the deal remain undisclosed.

"The Kingdoms of Kalamar fantasy world joins the Forgotten Realms and Greyhawk fantasy settings as the first three OFFICIAL Dungeons & Dragons worlds," says Cindi Rice, Dungeons & Dragons Brand Manager for Wizards of the Coast.

While the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting's first two editions were generic settings made for use with any rules system, this edition will be based strictly on third edition Dungeons & Dragons.

"We are obviously thrilled with this opportunity to be a part of the Dungeons & Dragons community," said David Kenzer, President of Kenzer and Company. "We have always believed that the Kalamar world was the finest fantasy setting ever created for an RPG and now it is matched with the finest RPG ever created: Dungeons & Dragons."

"This is not just a basic D20 license!" adds Brian Jelke, Vice President of Kenzer and Company. "The new Kalamar products will feature the Dungeons & Dragons logo on the covers."

Additionally, the Kingdoms of Kalamar product will have a new look. Rather than a boxed set with multiple books, the new edition will be released as a trade hardcover. The new Kalamar hardcover will contain approximately 250-300 pages as well as full-color maps included as an insert. Kenzer and Company is aiming for an early spring 2001 release for this product.



Other scheduled products available spring 2001 include: the Kalamar world atlas, and four full-length world supplements and adventures. Summer 2001 releases for the Kalamar line will be announced in December.

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Wizards of the Coast, a subsidiary of Hasbro Inc. (NYSE:HAS), is the worldwide market share leader in the trading card game and tabletop role-playing game categories. Wizards of the Coast is a leading developer and publisher of game-based entertainment products as well as the owner and operator of one of the nation's largest specialty game retail chains. The company holds an exclusive patent on the play mechanics of trading card games (TCGs) and produces the world's best-selling Magic: The Gathering and Pokémon™* TCGs. Wizards of the Coast is also one of the world's leading fantasy and science fiction book publishers and is a publisher of adventure games such as the classic Dungeons & Dragons® games, family card and board games and electronic media products. Headquartered near Seattle, Washington, Wizards of the Coast has international offices in Antwerp, Paris, Milan, London and Beijing. For more information on Wizards of the Coast, visit the company's website and electronic retail store at www.wizards.com.

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KENZERCO MOVES TO NEW OFFICES



Well....it finally happened. Dave Kenzer and his wife finally threw us out of their basement. [The final nail was when Brian took the last diet Grape Faygo from the fridge without telling anyone.] The good news is that by early November, KenzerCo completed the move into the new office/warehouse complex and everyone is back at their desks. With so many new bodies and several new product lines coming down the pipe we needed to acquire extra space, so we suspect that Brian was actually set up and 'baited' with that Faygo.

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YOU'VE GOT SLUMPIN'
ON YER MIND, BOY?
BESS' SAY IT AND
JES' GET ON WID IT!

An Opinion Arena and Open Forum

As the subheading indicates, this is a sounding board where gamers can give their two-cents' worth on whatever seems to rile them. So pull back the curtain and come on in the Back Room. You can leave that thin-skin at the door but be sure to bring your opinions with you.

Last issue we ran Hillary Doda's *GamerGrrl's Manifesto*. The response has been overwhelming. Readers wrote in with some very strong opinions from both sides of the fence.

A few credits were inadvertently left out from the article "A GamerGrrl's Manifesto," in issue #48.

'BESM' refers to 'Big Eyes, Small Mouth,' an anime-genre roleplaying game created by Guardians of Order.

The "World of Darkness" belongs to White Wolf Game Studio, Inc.

"Macho Women With Guns" is a creation of BTRC. All rights belong to their respective creators.

Thanks!

Hilary Doda

I am an avid reader of the Knights, and I love the comic to death, so it disturbs me that I have to make my first letter to you guys one that is not giving you the praise that you so deserve. I am writing in response to Hilary Doda's "A GamerGrrl's Manifesto," which appeared in issue 48.

First and foremost, flat out, I am a girl. Second, I am also the girlfriend of a gamer, and an avid, if fairly new, gamer myself. (I have only been RPGing for a little over a year, now, though I have played the CCG's for a number of years)

Hilary, I do not know where you live, or, and no offense is meant here, if you are a person extremely devoted to feminine rights, but if things are as you say in your manifesto, then, quite frankly, where you live sucks.

Perhaps it is just where I live, or perhaps it is just where you live, and maybe it's just me, I don't know, but I have never once experienced any of the things you mentioned. And, quite frankly, neither

OH, AS A MATTER OF FACT I WOULD LIKE YOU TO EXPLAIN TO ME WHY THE RULES STATE A FEMALE CHARACTER SHOULD GET A -5 MODIFIER TO HER STRENGTH ROLL. PLEASE, BY ALL MEANS -- WHY DON'T YOU EXPLAIN THAT TO ME.

UH...ER...UH...



UH OH BIG GUY, YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE GONE THERE.

has anyone else I know.

To start off with, the male gamers I know down here in Florida, and all the ones I met at this year's *DragonCon* in Atlanta, GA, have been the nicest people I have ever met. From my experience, they tend to take an almost protective attitude towards us female gamers, because there are so few of us.

The saying about "protecting our own" has certainly been in abundance as far as I have seen. They readily help when anyone is having trouble, be they male or female, and generally, as a rule, consider each of us female gamers as "one of the guys," while still recognizing that we are female. I have never met a male gamer who demonstrated the stereotypical 9-year old boy "girls can't do what we do, cuz they are girls, and they suck" attitude. I have also never seen a male gamer trying to harass a female gamer, physically or verbally, when it was not "in-character" or just all in good fun between friends, or the two members of a couple.

As for the atmosphere of the game stores... well, I have never run into any kind of situation like the ones you describe. The store owners are usually gamers themselves, and so are friendly and helpful. I have never had to be afraid of "dark corners," the staff, or any of the other customers, and neither has anyone else I know.

And as for the pictures of women in clothing that is just shy of being illegal, I'm sorry to have to say the obvious, we live in a male-dominated society. Yes, we as women have more rights and "equality" here than a lot of other places, but the human race has been largely male-dominated since, well, since recorded history at the very least. Things can't change overnight, but we here in the U.S. have made tremendous progress. I have to

agree with you in that I wouldn't mind seeing some beefcake up on the walls, BUT I can also look at the pictures of women and NOT take it to heart, the way you seem to have, in that I realize that's what most guys like, and that it is predominantly a male market. I also know of several games that do not restrict how a female character is created. Just because there are pictures of women in little to no clothing, that doesn't mean that you can't make a female character in practical, full armor, or that it isn't a good game. What you are describing seems to me to be along the lines of problems in the attitudes of the male gamers in your area, and not the games themselves. Yes, I am sure that a number of games have pictures of women in hardly anything in their books, however, I'm sorry, but no matter what kind of pictures are in the books, you can't take that to heart and pass up a great game just because you don't like the look of it. Does the phrase "you can't judge a book by its cover" ring a bell?

Now, as for the atmosphere and attitudes of the male gamers, if they make you uncomfortable, don't just sit there and complain and wait for the MALES to make the change. Fudge that. If you are that unhappy about it, and they want to be asses and say you can't play, or say that you have to play a certain character, or certain type of character, just say "Piss off," and take your own gaming group and start gaming in the same store, or wherever, where the guys play, and at the same times. Show the males, instead of just fussing at them, that girls can play just as good as they can. Again, another good phrase comes into play here: "A picture (you starting your own group and whatnot) is worth a thousand words."

Translation: Don't just complain, do

something about it, and the males seeing you and your friends gaming, and doing a good job, are more apt to begin to realize that you can, indeed, play, and can play any kind of character you wish, and start to at least give you a chance, than if you just fuss and complain about it, whereupon they just learn to tune you out.

I sincerely hope that these problems that you are having with the male gamers are isolated to your area, because all the ones I have met have been the nicest, most considerate people I have ever met. And if the males gamers in your area are as you describe (*harassing you and whatnot*) then they aren't worth associating with, and it's time for you to quit being pissed off at them and find "real" gamers that aren't like that. As for the games with, and pictures of, women in "brass bikinis," get over them and stop taking them so much to heart. I have yet to find a game that, even though it may have pictures of women in small scraps of clothing, restricts the making of female characters to fit such images. There are PLENTY of games that do not have pictures like that, or that at least have the pictures like that to a minimum, so stop finding all the bad things and start finding the good things, like the game itself, and not the pictures in its book. I hate to have to break it to you, but the pictures and cover do NOT make the game, Okay?

The whole point is, don't just assume that all (or most) male gamers have that kind of childish bad attitude towards girls, and don't be such a feminist that you miss out on a really cool game just because you don't like the pictures in the book.

DragonMystic
via E-mail

Hilary wrote a great article about how to get more women gaming. As a woman, I agree with 99% of it. The only thing that she lost me on was when she mentioned... "Breastfeeding at the game".

At this point I have to say, Hold on, Hilary--please. Why are you bringing your baby to the game? Many mothers who breastfeed store up some milk for the baby when they have to be away for a few hours. Saying that they are "working breasts, not sex breasts" means nothing at all to the people who are going to get that "flash of nipple".

That Vampirella poster isn't real—but your breasts are, and you're asking people to "just look away" if they don't want to watch you breastfeed. I really think you are being inconsiderate of your fellow gamers, male or female. Why is it necessary for gamer parents to bring a child to a game anyway? Have babysitters become an extinct species these days? Are kids now so frail that they can't endure a few hours away from their mother? Where is Daddy? If he's a gamer too, then the babysitter (or *doting relatives*) is the answer, not bringing the kids to the game.

I'm not saying kids are nasty. I'm saying that they are distracting. It's easy for the parent to tune them out, but everybody else isn't

used to doing that, plus you are asking the store (or *the person whose home the game is at*) to worry about whether your kids are going to hurt themselves, get into something, or otherwise be a problem. If you are spending your time making sure that doesn't happen, you aren't giving your attention to the game.

The ONLY exception would be if the game host were also a parent and the kids were put into a room to play with the host children, with instructions NOT to bother Mom and Dad unless it's serious. If the host doesn't have children, this option is off, of course.

Before you get insulted, let me say that if my baby were sick, or if my baby needed me right there with him, I would be there. I wouldn't expect to bring him to a game, sick or well, any more than I would bring my cats.

On game night, find either a loving relative or a responsible teenager to look after your baby. Bring the cellphone and call home every half hour if you want—I might do that myself. But please, parents—don't bring your kids to the game!

Kettir
via E-mail

I'd like to respond to Ms. Doda's manifesto printed in the **Back Room**. Her generalizations and scatter-gun accusations are both startling and offensive to me. I don't know who she games with, where, or what, but from the number of times she lists being assaulted, insulted, bitten, groped, grabbed, leered at, and made the target of basically everything punishable under sexual harassment laws—I'd recommend she find a new group.

I am male, and like many others, have been gaming since **Chainmail** came out.

In that time, I have never, ever, seen any female assaulted. What cons do she go to? I have seen occasional fights, usually over dice-tossing and undue taunting. Let me also say, before my views are dismissed because I am male (*wouldn't that be ironic?*), that my then girlfriend now wife, and several of my best friends, all female, were equally surprised with her views. There ARE jerks around, we all know it. However, I haven't noticed the percentage any higher among gamers than non-gamers. In fact, I've found it to be lower, on average. To attribute sexist behavior to the gaming community specifically based on the actions of a few makes little sense.

How many people were at **GenCon**? Surely they weren't all leering at her. I was too busy playing the **KenzerCo** team at the **FairyMeat** table to eat, let alone leer (*although I did squint in a dangerous fashion a couple of times when my fairy was getting walloped.*)

I work as a retailer in a comic and game store. I have seen women be ignored by retail staff—in my store, in malls, in department stores, etc.

Assuming that everyone in that facility share world-views is simplistic and insulting. It is the individual doing the ignoring, not everyone in the store. As for making game stores more "woman friendly." I looked

around the store after reading her views. There were women on the covers of some of the books. There were men. There were even more other-worldly things munching on both men and women. I checked the **Previews** catalog. I couldn't find one gaming book cover of a woman with massive breasts. (*Now, there were plenty of comics and posters with that theme — Can't argue with that.*)

However, I can say that I know just as many women as men who buy them. I think it is deplorable that a gaming professional would refuse to peruse a new game or supplement simply due to the cover.

Ms. Doda says she "gets it" that girls are good-looking (*her generalization, not mine.*)

She goes on to say, "*Girls are something of a mystery to a lot of you, or so says the stereotype.*" Isn't her point to quit treating people in stereotypical fashion? Perhaps she should do the same. I know that some gamers are not socially skilled, but I've run into just as many non-gamers with the same problem. Here's a newflash for you, Ms. Doda—guys don't like the blunders of socially inept men and women any more than anyone else. It's embarrassing, and what's more, it's bad for business. Although to be fair, I would like to point out that at **GenCon 2000**, the only annoying people I found were those gleefully yelling "WAAAAAGGGH" for obvious reasons at the game they were playing.

Reading through Ms. Doda's manifesto, it appeared to me that she had some legitimate points, but I was very distracted from them by the large amount of apparently biased thoughts. I would expect a game professional to be wiser than to say "*I've only been gaming for longer than some of you little punks have been alive...*"

Very nice.

Overall, it seems Ms. Doda is quick to take offense, and quick to drop games who are played by people she doesn't like. I found this the most shocking of all. Drop a game because some people who play it annoyed you?

Guess driving is out of the question, then. And eating in diners. And going to movies. And any other function involving more than one person. She has obviously felt mistreated by other gamers—I'd be willing to bet it wasn't all because she was female. Many males, I am sure, can remember being made to feel unwelcome in a group, store, or other gaming event. Mandating that everyone like us equally makes no sense. Nor does asking artists to paint what they don't want to.

Gaming is diverse and in the end, just a way for people to get together and have fun in a defined setting, like a book club on speed. My family and I have enjoyed them for years, and I hope she too one day discovers the bright side of gaming.

Ray
via E-mail
□

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 Love Tasha



SEEKING FAME AND FORTUNE??!!



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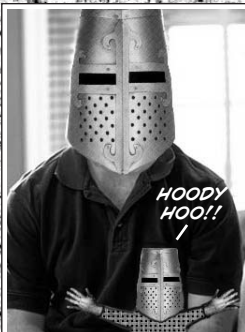
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is a meeting place where readers may pass along information, barter, trade and gossip. Readers are invited to place classified ads, announce group meetings, seek out other players, etc. Subscribers of KODT may place classified ads free of charge with a limit of one ad per issue and a maximum of twenty-five words. Non-Subscribers may place ads at the rate of 50¢ per word with a limit of 25 words. Companies may place ads at the following rates: [5.5" x 2" - \$160], [2.75" x 2" - \$80], [1.5" x 1" - \$40]. Non-profit organizations (serving the gaming community) and Conventions or Seminars may place ads for free. All ads are placed on a first-come first-served basis with subscribers having priority.

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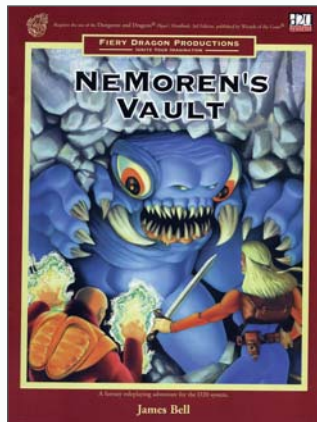
Fiery Dragon Productions

www.fierydragon.com

Wotc opened Pandora's box a few months ago when it announced it's "open game license". The floodgates are open and many companies both large and small scrambled to rework old books (and new) over to the d20 system.

And so it was I anxiously waited for the first third-party d20 system product to arrive in our mailbox for review.

Interestingly enough the first one to arrive hailed from Toronto, Canada. The first thing to hit me when I pulled *Nemoren's Vault* from the envelope was that it looked and felt like one of those old AD&D 1st edition modules from the late 70's early 80's. Whether or not this was intentional — I don't know. But it did score big points with me. It was like slipping into my favorite pair of slippers. In truth, this 32 page adventure is heads and tails better than most of those original TSR adventures. I wish I could say more about this one but, being an adventure, I don't want to give away any secrets. Suffice it to say this one is worthy of any AD&D 3E game.



Brian's Rating: Brian's Rating: Hack Worthy!!

SOVEREIGN STONE GAME SYSTEM

Corsair Publishing • www.sovstone.com

Sovereign Stone is a fantasy role-playing game whose credits read like a who's who of some of the best creative minds in the games industry. With creative forces behind it such as Larry Elmore, Margaret Weis, Tracy Hickman, Don Perrin, Lester Smith, Douglas Niles... How can it lose?

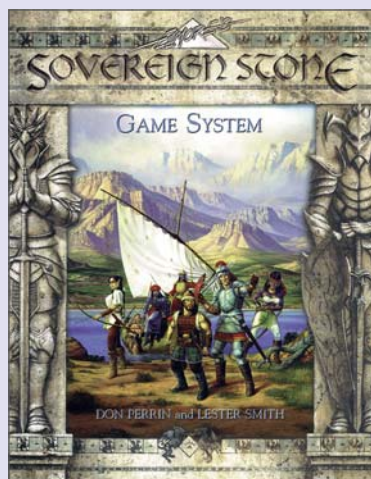
Set in the world of Loerem, a mysterious place created by Larry Elmore, *Sovereign Stone* offers a uniquely rich roleplaying environment, with magic portals, fast and furious combat and champions known as Dominion Lords.

The world is populated by six human races, as well as other races such as the short, peaceful Pecwae, Elves, Dwarves and Orks. If you think some of these races seem familiar, you might want to think again. For example, there are the nomadic, hunter-gatherer Clan Dwarves, and their outcast bretheren, the Unhorsed Dwarves who are traders and skilled in many types of handiwork.

One of the most unique features of the game is that there are no character classes. The game is designed to help players create characters who are set apart from every other character. Key to this are racial traits, advantages and disadvantages and skills.

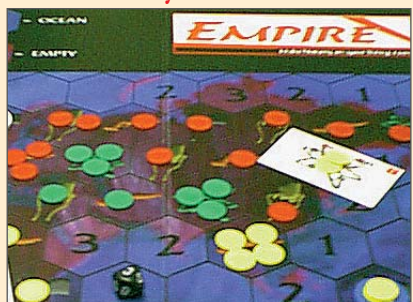
The *Sovereign Stone Game System* is designed for high action. When a character's proposed action is not specifically opposed by another character or situation, the Game Master determines the success or failure by comparing the player's dice roll result to a Difficulty Number. When an action is specifically opposed by another character, both players roll dice. The high roller wins, pure and simple. The same thing occurs when a player character is opposed by a GM-controlled character or monster.

So far it's well supported. Besides the core-rule book there are already two adventure supplements; *The Tann* and *Old Vinnengael: City of Sorrows*. I certainly hope this game finds an audience. With WotC's *Dungeons and Dragons 3E* and the flood of d20 System open-license products on the shelf it'd be a shame for such a promising game to get lost in the shuffle.



Brian's Rating: Grab your dice bags and play!

EMPIRE: Reality Games • www.alternaterealitygames.com



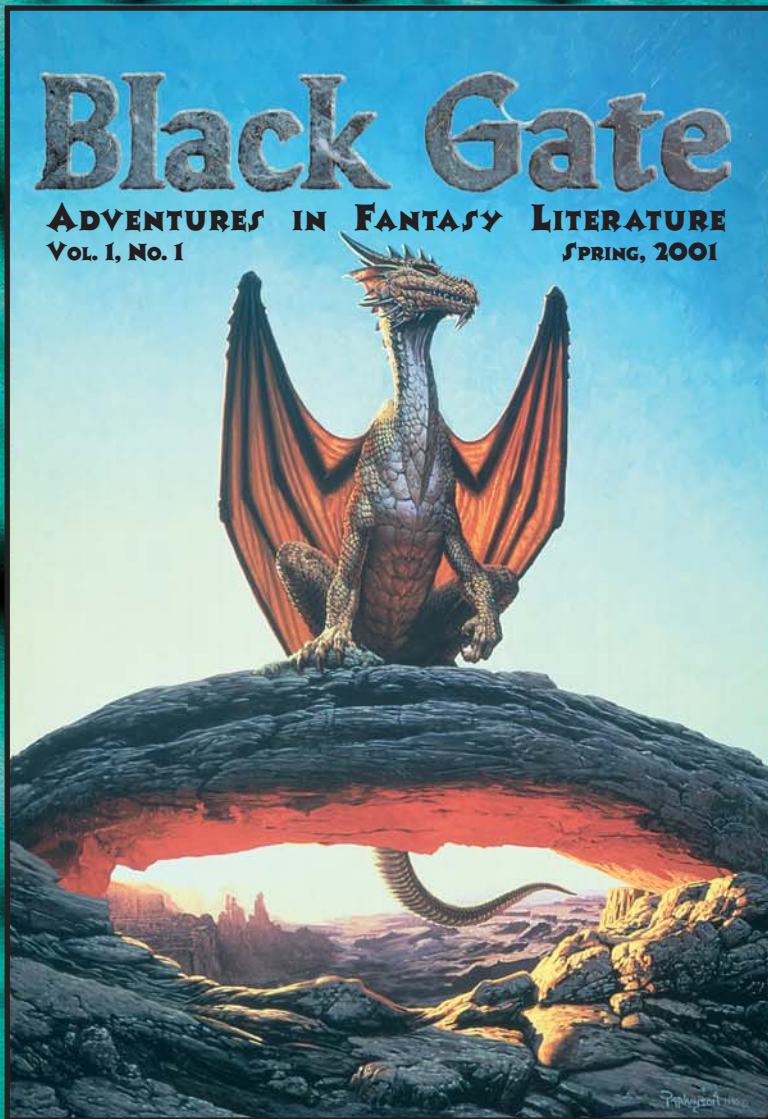
Empire — Make history on your living room floor. This exciting board game is all about world domination and puts me in mind of *Risk*. However this game goes a couple of steps further by adding a timeline and technology tree. Kewl! stuff.

The game starts sometime in the 1800's. During his/her turn each player gets to play cards that represent either scientific or historical events as the time line progresses. In the 1800's a player's Empire might discover the machine gun or maybe the pony express. As the game moves into the 1900's a player might develop an Air Force to 'bomb' his enemies or perhaps use television to subdue others with junk-television. In the final stage of the game players move into the modern/future era. Some options here include space shuttles, and alien invasions (which you can play on an enemy empire). There are 100 different cards in the game, so each game plays out differently. Battle in *Empire* is resolved by rolling 1d10's. (For both attacks and defense) Each die represents one unit. Best attacker roll is compared with the defender's best -- lowest side loses a unit. Up to three dice may be rolled at the same time as long as the player has units to match. Some of the cards in the game modify die-rolls and sometimes even allow re-rolls or otherwise effect combat.

Bottom line, if you enjoy *Risk* you'll like *Empire*. This is one game not likely to collect dust on your shelf.

Brian's Rating: Definitely my kind of game.

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By Kim Eastland

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The heroes must save innocent citizens attending a stand-up comedy festival hosted by a has-been Russian comedian whose comic attempts just won't die.

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(Little known independent work by Gary Jackson before Hard 8 Enterprises produced Hackmaster)

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THE DONEYITCH WHORE

Adventurers run into various nightmarish, one-night encounters from their past who now, having turned to the black arts, attempt to exact revenge for unpaid previous services. Inside illustrations have been blacked out with magic marker.—\$65.00

THE SEED OF ASATHOUGHT

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THE "HE-WHO-MUST-NOT-BE-NAMED" HANDBOOK

A handy, digest-sized periodical featuring over 1001 different references for "you-know-who", such as: "THE GAWD WITH NO-NAME", "The Unknown Blob", "Whodat", and "Shutchurmowf". Fair condition, but comes with a "Kiss Me If You Love Hastur" button—\$60.00

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SCREAM OF KUCHOOLOO ASYLUM MASTER SCREEN

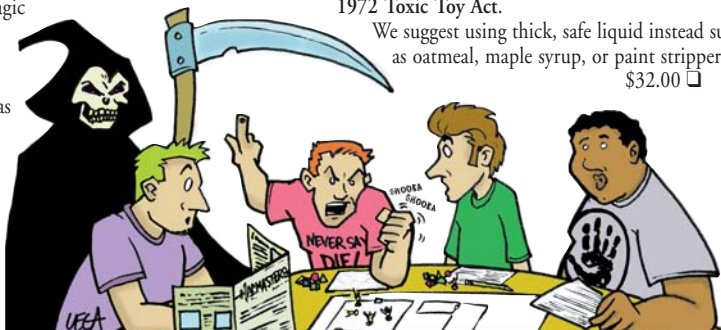
This amazing special Asylum Master's wrap-around gaming screen features every usable table, and a few not so usable ones, found in the game. An 8 foot curved, 5-mil laminated, 16 color, photo quality cyclorama, it completely encloses the Asylum Master from prying eyes and assures his mysteriousness while offering low angle security from polyhedral projectiles cast by those losing their sanity.

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	Passion Play: Live action roleplaying #242

	Star Crusade #239		Star Crusade 2: Lost Worlds #240		War in the Heavens: Lifeweb #235
	Hawkwood Fiefs #236		Al Malik Fiefs #238		Hazat Fiefs #241

FS Players Companion #229/Weird Places #227/ The Dark Between the Stars #230/ Merchants of the Jumpweb #231/Children of the Gods #232/ Sinners & Saints #233/ Sinful Stars: fiction #234/ Legions of the Empire #237/ Byzantium Secundus #275

Coming Soon:
 War in the Heavens: Hegemony #244 (November)
 Li Halan Fiefs #245 (Winter)

	Known Worlders painted miniatures #507
Coming soon: Boarding Parties #508	

		Noble Armada starship miniatures game #500
Capitol Ships #502 Hawkwood & Decados Dreadnoughts #503 Letters Of Marque: Starship Deckplans #501 Letters Of Marque 11: Troopship Deckplans #505	New: Hazat Ships #506	
		

	
	Carnage battle game #900

	Herptar & Brigandish Mages #902	
Also: Skullbrawl #901		New: Orb of Power/ Benny the Bouncer #903

COMBAT ZONE

	Combat Zone #1000		Face Off: Grimm's Troopers vs Gutter Gang #1001
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