

KENZER AND COMPANY
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Knights of the Dinner Table™

M A G A Z I N E



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May 2001**

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KENZER AND COMPANY

Knights of the Dinner Table #54

SPEAK EASY &
CARRY A BIG STICK

April, 2001

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Knights of the Dinner Table™

M A G A Z I N E

“SPEAK EASY & CARRY A BIG STICK”

THE KODT DEVELOPMENT TEAM IS

JOLLY R. BLACKBURN • BRIAN JELKE
STEVE JOHANSSON • DAVID S. KENZER

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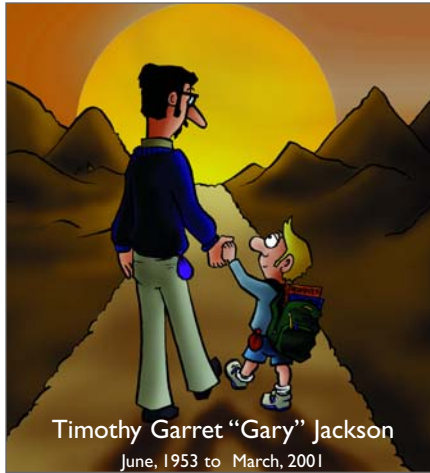
KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE™ was accidentally created by Jolly R. Blackburn way back in 1990 as 'filler' for his small press magazine, SHADIS™. It was something of a 'creative burp' and Jolly really didn't give it much thought. Perhaps that's why he was just as surprised as anyone that soon KODT was 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.



Editorial-of-a-Madman™

"There is an empty chair, at the table this day. A hallowed place where a friend once played. ... We've conquered worlds on the run, he and I but in the name of fun."

GARY JACKSON
Editor of a Gamer



Gary Jackson tribute by Manny Vega

We're still getting over the shock of Gary Jackson's death here at the Kenzerco offices. (Yes, it was a shock even to us). Brian van Hoose once said to Sara (upon the death of her character, Zayre), "The best thing to do with death is to shake off the dust and ride away from it!" Wise words. But I think Gary himself said it best when he proclaimed, "The game must go on!" And so it shall. But before we pick up the dice and move on, I thought we should answer the big question brought up by Gary's death. Namely, "Why?"

Ten years ago, Gary Jackson was created to give the characters of KODT a hero to worship. Anyone involved in gaming back in the late 70's and early 80's knows what I'm talking about when I say it was a time of celebrity game designers. It was the dawn of a new era in gaming, and those who were pushing the envelope were sometimes larger than the game themselves. They were, for lack of a better term, our heroes. But they were more than that. Their personalities were the material from which a game culture mythology was woven. To this day I'm not sure if many of the stories that were being passed around the gaming table were true. I know that many of them were not.

At any rate, as I've stated many times before, Gary Jackson was based on the *mythology* of such game designers and not any one person. This largely explains why, as time went on, Gee-Jay became his own, unique personality, and that there was very little about him (*other than the fact he ran a game company*) that was based on any given person. At least I have no personal knowledge of anyone who, like Gary Jackson, has his own personal jet, makes frequent trips to Reno, dates a lingerie model, or has a summer house in Wabash, Indiana.

So the question remains... Why kill the old man now?

The reasons are several fold. First of all, we just felt the time had come to move on. The majority of our readership are much too young to remember the 'olden days' anyway and the spoof (i.e. the joke) was lost on them. Second, and perhaps more importantly, many readers insisted on speculating who Gary Jackson actually was. (*This, despite the fact it's clearly been stated that he was NEVER based on any single individual.*) I suppose such speculation was, in itself, harmless, but it's never been our intent for Gary Jackson to be associated with a real person. Especially since I happen to admire, and owe so much (professionally speaking), to the three people most often linked to the character.

Gee-Jay recently became an even larger issue for us because of the imminent release of **HackMaster the Roleplaying Game**. Did we really want to put out a 'real' game with Gary Jackson's name on it and add fuel to the speculation?

We were wrestling with the problem recently when someone asked, "Do we really need Gary Jackson?" When no one came to Gee-Jay's defense it was clear what must be done — Gary Jackson must die!

Game designers come and go in our hobby, but the game ALWAYS goes on.

So there's your answer. Gary was killed to end the comparisons and speculation. One of the dividends was a butt-load of story ideas. Who will fill his seat as chairman of the board?

What about HackMaster 4th edition? And what of poor Timmy?

Before you continue reading the issue at hand I want to encourage all of you to pick up a copy of our newest publication; the **Dungeons and Dragons** comic. Shortly before sitting down to write this editorial I had the pleasure of reading the first color proof. All I can say is, "Wow! We got it right." This version of the D&D comic is a much grittier, truer-to-form version of the game than previous incarnations. If you're a fantasy role-player, do yourself a favor and seek out a copy.

'Nuff said. Hope you enjoy the issue at hand. As always, we need your feedback. Reader input is our life's blood. If you like what you're seeing — let us know. If you don't — then by ALL MEANS please let us know so we can benefit from your opinions. We can take it.

Til next issue, may all your hits be crits.

Jolly R. Blackburn

Jolly R. Blackburn
March 2, 2001

Knights of the Dinner Table™

CREDITS

PUBLISHER
Kenzer and Company

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Jolly R. Blackburn
jolly@kenzerco.com

MARKETING MANAGER
Gerda Hansen
gerda@kenzerco.com

ADVERTISING LIAISON
Todd Weaver
todd@kenzerco.com

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
Jennifer "Jiffy" Burke
jiffy@kenzerco.com

COVERT EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE
Barbara Blackburn

STRIP WRITING
Jolly R. Blackburn
Brian Jelke
Steve Johansson
David S. Kenzer

KODT STRIP ART
Jolly Blackburn

COVER ART
George & Jackie Vrbanic

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Vivian Abraham
Erik Bouchard
Doug Curtis
Brian Fraim
Brendon Fraim
James Kaiser II
Mark Metroka
Marc Sachs
Aaron Siddall
Richard Williams

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Christopher Heath
Rick Moscatello
Kenneth Newquist
John O'Neill
Todd Weaver

CHARMED PERSONS (INTERNS)
Don Morgan



**Gee-Jay,
we hardly
knew ye!**



Little things can make a big difference

*Like knowing who
gets the face
full of acid*

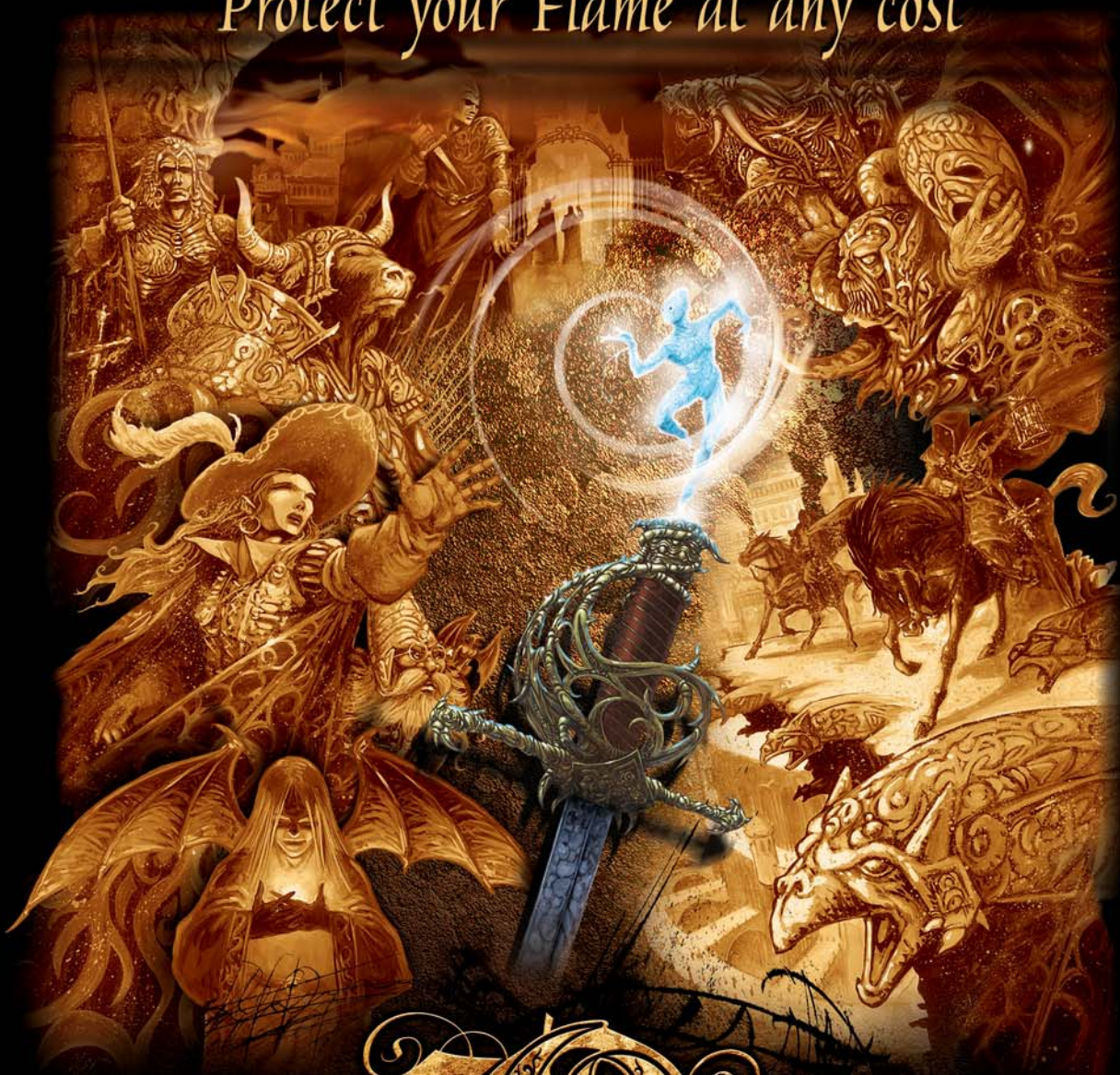


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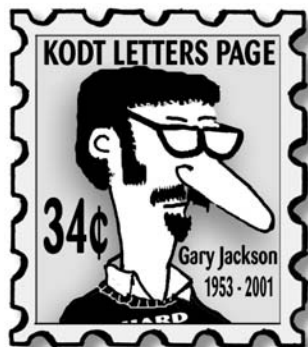


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Our Readers Talk Back!



Dear KODT,

First off I love KODT and all the work and love you guys have poured into the "Knights." You've become the advocates for gaming. Your humor and love of gaming is obvious and has brought a lot of people back into a hobby they left behind as well as introducing a whole new audience to gaming in a very unique manner. Kudos for everything you've done.

With that said, I wish to address another topic entirely. The demise of FASA. I've been a steadfast **Battletech** fan for nearly fifteen years now and the recent news of FASA's end has hit me and a number of my friends pretty hard.

Without wanting to be overly dramatic I have to tell you it was like hearing a close friend had just passed away. Our group have been huge **Battletech** fans for years. Not only for the great game that it is, but also for the rich and entertaining storyline that was the **BattleTech Universe**. Of course it was fun running around in huge clanking mechs and blowing the Bejeezus out of everything in sight. However, the detailed history and the myriad plot twists is what really kept me and my friends interested in the game over the years.

Unfortunately, that may all be over now. FASA is going out of business and the fate of **BattleTech** is an uncertain one. A company called **Wizkids** now has the rights to **Battletech**, as well as **Shadowrun**. **Wizkid's** currently produces a new and popular game (at least in my neck of the woods) called "**Mage Knight Rebellion**" which is a collectible miniatures game.

I really don't know much about it because I tend to shy away from any game that has the word "collectible" in its description and I'm concerned that a similar fate may be in store for **Battletech**.

So for any **Battletech** fans who may read this I have one request. Please contact **Wizkids** and let them know what you want for **Battletech**. They have a golden opportunity with the **Battletech** license, if they don't blow it. As a gaming community we need to let those who make our games know what we want.

I, for one, wish to see the **Battletech** universe to go on, grow and develop as it has been over the years. There is a tremendous fan base out there for **Battletech** and in my opinion **Wizkids** would be amiss to change things to drastically. I really don't savor the idea of pay-

ing beau coup bucks for an ultra-rare Daishi Widowmaker. As matter of fact, I wouldn't pay out the nose for collectible **Battletech** minis. If this happens I will abandon any new **Battletech** products and continue on with the old. This would be a sad development in my opinion and I hope it does not happen. I've enjoyed watching the **Battletech** universe grow and develop over the years and hope to see it continue under a new banner.

Brian Gorham
Dayton, Ohio

I can understand your concerns, Brian. I felt the same way a few years ago when Avalon Hill was bought out Hasbro. It seemed like the end of an era. There's something nostalgic about all those old bookcase games and I miss them.

As it turned out Avalon Hill is still with us (in spirit) and some of the revamped games like Diplomacy, Acquire and Axis and Allies are among my favorites. These games were obviously treated with the kind, loving respect they deserved by the new design house. So many of my fears turned out to be unfounded.

As for Battletech, I think you can breathe easy. Some of the creative minds behind WizKids, are in fact the same talents who created and developed Battletech. So the game line is in very good hands. As for price, WizKids has amazed the industry with their ability to provide high-quality, pre-painted minis for a very decent price. So, again, I think Battletech is in very good hands.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

I just read the latest issue to hit street-level (#52) and I felt the need to comment about Adam Haase's e-mail about drinks. I will readily verify that **Faygo** exists (having enjoyed it in Ohio and Pennsylvania as a kid). I wonder if they get **Mr. Pibb** out west...I doubt it, but you never know. (Southern brand, sorta like **Dr. Pepper** but different too.)

The bizarre thing is I stopped to fuel my car today and saw this other "stuff" being sold on the counter at the station. I would have tried it, but at \$2/can it's a dear way to satisfy mere curiosity. Anyway, you can check them out at www.jonesoda.com/whoopass/index.html

By the way, in theory, a local bottler/micro-brewer could concoct an official KODT **Bohemian Lemonade** beverage that might be an exclusive **Kenzer** product.



My, doesn't that sound refreshing right about now?

Stephen "FPilot" Bierce
Jefferson City, TN

Thanks for turning us on the Whoopass, Stephen. Now we literally open a 'can of whoopass' at the KenzerCo offices whenever the job starts to get us down.

A KODT soda like Bohemian Lemonade does sound promising but probably cost prohibitive. Importing bohemian citrus is very, very expensive.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Well, I took you up on your suggestion, and ordered some **Faygo** online! Things didn't quite work out as I had expected, though. I got a variety pack with eight flavors, 2 liter size, which cost \$11.99. Sounds okay, right? Well, two minor things sort of soured the deal:

1) Shipping was obscene... over \$28! For anyone who can't get it locally, **Faygo's** a luxury drink.

2) Three of the bottles froze on the trip. The others seem okay, but the carbonation seems a bit weak, although that's difficult to judge, I'm not sure how much **Faygo's** supposed to have.

Another complication is that you can only order two different variety packs, or a single flavor, in VERY large sizes. So you can't really pick and choose.

So far, I've only tasted the redpop (one of the survivors of the deep freeze) and it's pretty good! It reminds me of the old strawberry sodas you could make with the 'make your own pop' machines. (Where you carbonate the water and pour flavor syrup in.) Although this is far better than that stuff, better mixed for one thing. (Brian seems the perfect candidate for someone who tries to save some money by making his own sodas.)

If I could buy it locally, you can be assured that I'd probably be a regular **Faygo** drinker. As is, I'll have to just hope **Faygo** expands their distribution to my area, or that there's a distributor closer to me somewhere. I'm going to e-mail the company to see if they'll consider sending me some replacements for the ones that froze. It doesn't seem likely, but it's worth a shot. I'll put in a good word for you too; they should know where they got their free advertising from.

Sincerely,

Adam Haase
via-E-mail

*Bummer! And here I've been taking my **Faygo** for granted all these years. You'll have to let me know how **Faygo's** customer service department responds to your email. I'd hate to have to open a can of whoopass on them.*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

I'm not actually an official gamer (my friends and I get together periodically to play something like *Axis and Allies*) but I still love your magazine. I only have one comment; as a "lady" I am not impressed by the increasing amount of profanity that is starting to pop up on the pages of your magazine. While I understand and don't severely mind the occasional word or phrase, I'm starting to think you are going a bit overboard. So please, if you would be so kind as to try it tone a down a little, it would be greatly appreciated. (*I don't expect you to eliminate it by any means.*)

Thanks

Carrie Homer
via E-mail

Thanks for your letter, Carrie. I always appreciate it when a reader cares enough to drop us a note to let us know we're potentially off track.

Your letter did give me reason to pause and reflect. I know 'profanity' can sometimes be a hard animal to define. What's profanity to one person is oft times perfectly acceptable to another.

At any rate, you didn't cite any specific examples so I'm not entirely sure how to respond. Admittedly, we're a little close to the creative process, so if we've been 'increasing' the use of objectional words and phrases I'm not consciously aware of it.

Since it's not our intent to offend anyone I decided to run your letter and see how our other readers feel on the subject.

How 'bout it gang? Have we offended anyone else out there? If you respond, please give us specific examples of the words or phrases you find objectionable.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

First off let me say how much I enjoy your comic and the spinoff board games, and how much it reminds me of my adventures with my brothers and friends. As a poor Engineering student at UF, KODT is great for relieving the stress of academics.

Second, because I love it so much I decided to spread the knowledge of KODT to others who sorely need it, and I do this through the schools college bowl team. Basically college bowl is where teams for different schools compete with each answering questions ranging in areas such as history, science, etc...and, of course, pop-culture.

Every tournament we compete in requires us to write a pack of questions, and so I decided to include in each pack a question about the *Knights* (much to many peoples confusion), and eventually hope to influence others into reading up on it and writing their own. (*The Simpsons* are commonly asked now in competition).

Below are two of the questions which were read in recent tournaments. Hope you enjoy them!

Can't wait for my next issue...keep up the good work. My only request is that you bring back more stories of *The Black Hand*. Hoody-Hoo!!

Craig Kelley
via E-mail

(10pts) Accompanied by his twin ravens Mishap and Circumstance, he is the blind and so-called 'Wuss-Gawd' in B.A.'s world
Ans - Luvia

We all know that Nitro is one of the strangest DM's and you'll see it by answering these questions on the gods in his world. Here's a hint: They're all dead celebrities of pop culture who achieved cult status after their death.

(5pts) - This musician, before he made the movie *Clam Bake*, is the God of Bards.

Ans - Elvis

(10pts) - Always saying the phrase 'I am the Walrus! I am the Dice-Man! Koo-Koo-Kachoo!', this head god of the pantheon is based off a leading pop-artist.

Ans - Andy Warhol

(15pts) - This magician is the Patron god of magicians and illusionists.

Ans - Harry Houdini

Originally created for the magazine *Shadis* and only dealing with two of the characters, it has grown in so much popularity as to have its own magazine, 2 spin-off comics, one of which illustrates their adventures, 2 board games and one miniatures game. It hosts a huge number of minor characters such as *Hard Eight Enterprises*, *Troy's Boys* and the *Black Hand*.

For 10 points, name this comic turned magazine, telling the misadventures of the 5 role-players - B.A., Bob, Dave, Sara and Brian.

Ans - *Knights of the Dinner Table* (acc. KODT)

Dear KODT,

I just finished reading the *Bundles of Trouble Volume 8* (*The BagWar* conclusion), and I have to say that the *BagWar* storyline was the best you have ever done. The ending was FANTASTIC!

I have been eagerly awaiting each part of this story and I was not disappointed. The boys crying into their beers at the end was classic....

How you guys can top this is beyond me, but I look foreword to your effort.

Good work guys!

Mike Neal
Brewer, Maine

Thanks Mike! The Bag War saga (at nearly 40 pages) ranks as the longest story-arc yet to appear in KODT. Steve Johansson and I spent a lot of nights plotting out those installments so all the positive feedback has been very rewarding.

Of course, as Brian said, Barringers' Bag Zone is 'still' out there somewhere.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Hey love the magazine, the new player in my group borrowed every single one I have and read all 40 in one night. He's now hooked.

Anyway I noticed in previous issues that BA's *Hackmaster GM Toolkit* was "Hacked". In issue 51 is says it is registered to Tammy Felton, I assume that is his mom's name. Did *Hard Eight* enterprises crack down on software pirates? Did BA feel guilty?

Brian T Boonstra
Tampa FL

A lot of folks noticed B.A.'s software is now registered. Frankly, I'm amazed so many people read the fine print. (I think that registration notice is in 4 point type). As for the sudden 'legal status', B.A.'s mother (Tammy) was shocked and dismayed when she learned B.A. was using a knacked/pirated copy of the software package and registered the product in her name.

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Hi, I just got issue 51 of the *Knights* and as I've come to expect, it was hilarious! When I saw Pete Skipowsky telling his story about adding Gary's name to the spam lists, I could stop laughing (*makes me wonder if that's how I get so much!*)

Anyways, I write because I happened to spend quite some time this last week looking for the "perfect electronic DM screen" -- it seems there are quite a few out there, each with great functions. But none that have everything integrated just right. I stopped after downloading and trying out several last night. Well, lo and behold, on the first page of the *Knights*, I see B.A.'s computer program and it hit me, that was exactly what I was looking for! Not only did it have the requisite Dice Bag, but the *Player Stats*, *Monster Gallery*, *NPC Gallery*, *Battle Master*, *Map Builder*, even a *Weather* function! So I was wondering if that was an actual program someone at *Kenzer & Company* had wrote!

If so, would one be able to obtain a copy of it (*even if it is on a mac*). Thanks!

RPG Andrew

*No, the program doesn't actually exist. I'm afraid we gave B.A. our own personal 'dream GM program' when we introduced the *Tool Kit* in the strips.*

*To be honest, I'd love to see what happens when that *Weather Function* button is pushed.*

Jolly

Dear KODT,

Please put out a poster for the KODT with the covers from either issue #39 (*The Game Must go On*) or issue #44 (*Because I'm the GM*). I would SO want to buy either (*or both*) and I'm sure other referees &/or players would say the same.

Barbara
via E-mail

*There have been a lot of requests for more KODT posters. We have no current plans to produce any but it's definitely something we'll toss around. (Our graphic design team just recently cut its teeth on the 'awesome' *HackMaster* poster so I'm sure that experience could be put to good use.*

Jolly ☐

**YOU GOT
SOMETHING
TO SAY?**

Write to **Table Talk**
c/o **KenzerCo**
25667 Hillview Ct.
Mundelein,
Illinois
60060

or E-mail:
mailbag@
kenzerco.com



“Carry the News”

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

LAST ISSUE **WEIRD PETE** HAD JUST LEARNED THAT **GARY JACKSON** WAS **DEAD!!**

THE STORY NOW CONTINUES AS **PETE** RELAYS THE NEWS TO A DISBELIEVING **NITRO FERGUESON...**



HELL NO, I'M NOT JOKING AROUND. WHAT DO YOU TAKE ME FOR?

I GOT IT **STRAIGHT** FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH. THE MAN IS **DEAD!!**

B-B-BUT HOW?

SOMETHING ABOUT A **PLANE CRASH**. APPARENTLY **GARY** WAS ON HIS WAY TO AN **IMPORTANT MEETING** TO FIND SOME **BACKING** TO GET **HACKLOPEDIA 4TH EDITION** OFF THE PRESS.

BACKING? YOU MEAN **MONEY**? BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

HARDEIGHT'S BEEN **ROLLING** IN **DOUGH** THE PAST FEW YEARS.

HMMRRFFF! YOU MEAN **DROWNING IN DEBT**! YOU SEEM TO FORGET THAT **SPELLJACKED** AND THOSE **ONE-LEGGED DWARF KITS** ALMOST PUT THEM **UNDER**!

THERE'S A **REASON** **GARY** MOVED THE RELEASE OF **HACKMASTER 4-E** UP **TWO YEARS!!** HE WAS COUNTING ON **SALES** TO SAVE THE COMPANY.

WELL, I'LL BE... SO THE **RUMORS** WERE TRUE.

DO YOU HAVE **ANY IDEA** WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO **ME** IF **HARDEIGHT** GOES **UNDER**? HUH? **87 PERCENT** OF MY **SALES** ARE FROM **HACKMASTER PRODUCT**!

OH MY GAWD... **GARY** D-D-DEAD? I CAN'T **IMAGINE** IT BEING TRUE.

EVEN IF THE *COMPANY* DOES SURVIVE WHO THE *HELL* IS GOING TO *FILL HIS SHOES*? THE MAN MAY HAVE HAD HIS *FAULTS* BUT HE WAS A *FRICKIN' GENIUS*.

HMMMMMM...
I WONDER IF
THEY STILL HAVE
MY *RESUME* ON
FILE UP THERE.

LORD A'GOSHIN! I DIDN'T
EVEN THINK OF THAT. GAWD HELP
US IF *WACO BOB* ASSUMES
THE REIGNS OF *POWER*.

OR... -GULP-
LITTLE *TIMMY!!*



-SIGH- I'M GOING TO *MISS*
THE SONUVABITCH. I *REALLY* AM.

MAN, THIS REALLY TAKES THE *WIND*
OUT OF MY *SAILS*. LIKE THE *END*
OF AN *ERA*.

YEAH, I KNOW. THIS IS INDEED
A *DARK DAY* IN *GAMERDOM!*

I'LL CATCH YA LATER
PETE. AT A TIME
LIKE THIS A FELLOW
JUST WANTS TO
BE *ALONE* WITH
HIS THOUGHTS AND
TAKE IT ALL IN.



A *WEE BIT* LATER....

NITRO WAS RIGHT. IT
IS THE *END* OF AN *ERA*.

EPPP!!

??



LATER STILL...

NO, NO, LITTLE BUDDY. *YOU* TAKE THE *LAST* ONE.

I'VE GOT TO PULL MYSELF TOGETHER AND GET THE *NEWS*
OUT. FOLKS ARE GOING TO WANT TO *KNOW* ABOUT THIS.

EPP! TEKA-EPP??!!

SURE, I'D BE *GLAD*
TO SPLIT IT WITH YOU.

HUH? A *BEER*???! FOR ME?

AWWWW, THANKS
SQUIRRELY. YOU *ALWAYS*
KNOW *JUST* WHAT TO DO.



New Approaches

BY JOLLY BLACKBURN

OBLIVIOUS TO THE NEWS THAT THEIR HERO, **GARY JACKSON** IS DEAD, THE **KNIGHTS** ARE JUST ABOUT TO EMBARK ON THEIR **FIRST ADVENTURE** WITH THEIR NEW CHARACTERS.

THE **CAMPAIGN** BEGINS NEAR THE SLEEPY TOWN OF **FOWLSWAIN** WHICH SITS ALONG THE BORDERS OF THE **ORKIN FRONTIER**.

THE PLAYERS ARE **SEEKING** THE **ADVENTURE HOOK** WHICH WILL LEAD THE WAY TO **FAME AND FORTUNE**.

AS YOU REACH THE **CREST OF THE HILL**, A WIDE GREEN RIVER VALLEY SPREADS OUT BELOW YOU. A SMALL **WALLED TOWN** SITS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE VALLEY SURROUNDED BY LUSH **ORCHARDS**. EVEN FROM THIS **HEIGHT** YOU CAN SMELL THE SWEET FRAGRANCE OF **APPLE BLOSSOMS**.

ORCHARDS? GREAT, LOOKS LIKE **FOWLSWAIN** IS NOTHING BUT A BUNCH OF **HAYSEED FARMERS**.

THIS BLOWS! THE **EXPERIENCE POINT POTENTIAL** IS LOOKING REALLY **MEAGER**. FARMERS DON'T EVEN HAVE A **TREASURE TYPE** LISTED IN THE **HACKLOPEDIA**.



I **KNEW** WE SHOULD'A HEADED **SOUTH** FOR THE **BARROWS!**

IF YOU'D LISTENED TO **ME** WE'D BEEN UP TO OUR **EYEBROWS** IN **KOBOLD GOO** BY NOW AND **RAKIN'** IN THE **E.P.S** LIKE **TWO-CENT CANDY!**

-SIGH- MAN, THAT WOULD BE **SWEET!** I'M REALLY **ACHIN'** TO USE MY NEW **GROIN STOMP** ABILITY.

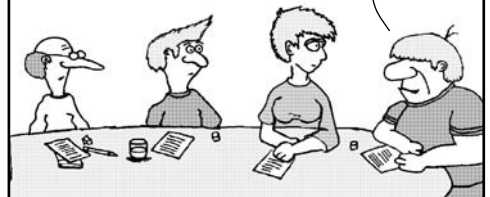
THE BARROWS? SHY'A RIGHT -- WITH OUR CURRENT **FIRE POTENTIAL RATING?**



THE **BARROWS** ARE **CLEARLY** RANKED AS A **HACKFACTOR SIX** REGION BY THE **H.M.P.A.**

GIVEN OUR CURRENT **LEVELS** ALONG WITH OUR **OFFENSE-DEFENSE RATIO** OUR **O.O.S.*** WOULD ONLY BE **23 PERCENT** AT **BEST** IN THAT **AREA**.

TRUST ME! WE DID THE **RIGHT THING**.



LOOK, ALL I'M SAYIN' IS IT MIGHT BE **WORTH THE RISK** IF IT MEANS **BUMPIN'** OURSELVES **UP** A FEW **LEVELS**.

I HEAR YA, **DUDE!** WE GOT **HACKTOURNEY REGIONALS** BREATHIN' DOWN OUR **NECKS** AND WE'RE NOWHERE **NEAR** FIGHTING FORM.

YEAH, AND AS LAST YEAR'S **WINNERS**, FOLKS HAVE **HIGH EXPECTATIONS** OF US. I DON'T WANT TO LET 'EM DOWN!

HOLD UP, GUYS! I THINK YER FORGETTING **SOMETHING** HERE.



WE'VE ALWAYS **TAKEN** OUR **E.P.S** WHERE WE'VE **FOUND** THEM.

SO WHAT IF THIS IS **JUST A SLEEPY** LITTLE **FARMING COMMUNITY?**

I BET WE CAN **SQUEEZE** ENOUGH **E.P.S** OUT OF IT TO MAKE IT **WORTH** OUR **TIME**.



* O.O.S. - acronym for "Odds of Survival"

The 'New' Characters: To help jog your memory here's a list of the new characters and who is playing each; Cudgel Bane-Forger (Human Cleric) — Bob; Harringard (Dwarven Thief Assassin [male])—Sara; Garstang Narvar'staff (Gnome Titan Magic-User)—Dave; Shadowglyph (Elven Ranger) —Brian.

FOR EXAMPLE, IT **JUST** OCCURRED TO ME THAT **TORCHING CROPS** YIELDS 1010 PERCENT OF THE **RETAIL VALUE** OF THE **HARVEST** IN **E.P.S.** I BELIEVE **ORCHARDS** WOULD QUALIFY.

HEY, THAT'S **RIGHT!** WE **CLEANED UP** THAT ONE TIME IN **HAGLEY TOWN.**

THOSE **RUTABAGAS** HAD US **ROLLING** IN **E.P.S.!**

AND **APPLES** LIST FOR A **WHOLE LOT** MORE THAN **RUTABAGAS** ON THE **PRICE LISTS!**

TORCHING CROPS?

AND I GUESS IT MIGHT BE **FUN** THROWING OUR **WEIGHT** AROUND TOWN. AS THE **BIG BOYS** ON THE **BLOCK** WE COULD REALLY GIVE THESE **HAYSEEDS** A HARD TIME.

OH YEAH! **GROIN STOMP CITY, BABY!**

HEH, HEH! IF ONE OF 'EM EVEN **LOOKS** AT ME THE **WRONG WAY** I'M GOING TO **RUIN** HIS DAY!

I'M **SO** THERE, DUDE!

-SIGH-

NOW **THAT'S** THE ATTITUDE TO HAVE!

OKAY, OKAY, LET'S JUST PUT A **STOP** TO THIS **NONSENSE** RIGHT THERE!

BEFORE YOU START PLANNING THE **DEMISE** OF **FOWLSWAIN** LET ME **EDUCATE** YOU ABOUT A **FEW** THINGS.

PLAYER CODE
 60. THE CONDUCT
 1. THE GREAT RULER
 2. RUMOR SPREADER
 3. ONE WHO BEGINS TO DISOBEY
 4. DISOBEY

USEFUL CHARMS
 1. THE GREAT RULER
 2. RUMOR SPREADER
 3. ONE WHO BEGINS TO DISOBEY
 4. DISOBEY

USEFUL SPELLS
 1. THE GREAT RULER
 2. RUMOR SPREADER
 3. ONE WHO BEGINS TO DISOBEY
 4. DISOBEY

THIS CAMPAIGN IS GOING TO RUN A LITTLE **DIFFERENTLY** FROM THOSE OF THE **PAST.** FOR **STARTERS,** I'M GOING TO START **DOCKING** AND **AWARDING** INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE POINTS ACCORDING TO HOW **WELL** OR HOW **POORLY** YOU RUN YOUR CHARACTERS ACCORDING TO THEIR **CLASS.**

FOR EXAMPLE I'D LOOK VERY **UNFAVORABLY** UPON ON A CERTAIN '**LAWFUL CLERIC**' IF HE DECIDES TO GO AROUND **TORCHING CROPS** AND **BULLYING** THE LOCAL **POPULACE.**

GOOD FOR **YOU,** B.A.! I SUPPORT YOU **FULLY** ON THIS.

FOR CRYING OUT **LOUD,** SARA, WHATEVER HAPPENED TO **PLAYER SOLIDARITY?**

HUH? WHY AM I BEING **SINGLED OUT?**

HE'S TRYING TO **BONE US.**

LET ME **REMINDE** YOU THAT YOU'RE ALL PLAYING **LAWFUL CHARACTERS!** AND **YOU,** BOB, YOU'RE A **CLERIC!**

YOU'RE **SUPPOSED** TO BE PROPAGATING YOUR **FAITH** BY WINNING OVER **NEW CONVERTS** AND BUILDING **NEW TEMPLES.**

WELL....YEAH, I WAS GOING TO GET AROUND TO THAT -- **EVENTUALLY.**

UH HUH. **SURE.**

DON'T EVEN WASTE YER TIME, BOB! **ZERO LEVEL** CHARACTERS ARE WORTH **NIL** AS **CONVERTS.**

THAT BRINGS UP **ANOTHER** GOOD POINT. YOU GUYS ARE MAKING THE **DANGEROUS** ASSUMPTION THAT THIS IS A COMMUNITY OF **LOWLY FARMERS.**

MAYBE THIS DIDN'T **OCCUR** TO YOU BUT IT'S ONE OF THE **FEW** HUMAN SETTLEMENTS THAT'S MANAGED TO **SURVIVE** ALONG THE **ORKIN FRONTIER.**

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? THAT THESE **WIMPS** ARE IN **CAHOOTS** WITH THE **ORCS?**

NO, THAT'S **NOT** WHAT I'M SAYIN'.

AAAAH, **SNEAKY BASTARDS.**

IT'S ONLY A **THREE DAY MARCH** TO **GINDLEVILLE**. WE CAN BUY OUR **HORSES** AND **PROVISIONS** THERE.

YOU MEAN JUST **LEAVE**? THERE'S GOTTA BE A **REASON**. B.A. WON'T LET US IN **TOWN**.

I THINK IT'S **WORTH** INVESTIGATING.

DAMN! WHAT I WOULDN'T **GIVE** FOR A GOOD OLD FASHIONED **CHARM SPELL** RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

SPELLS? HEY, THAT **REMINDS** ME. I HAVE **CANTRIPS!** MAYBE THERE'S ONE HERE THAT COULD HELP US GET IN.

CANTRIPS? YOU'RE **JOKING**. RIGHT?

OH GAWD! HANG IT UP, DAVE. THOSE THINGS AREN'T WORTH THE **PAPER** THEY'RE PRINTED ON.

IT'S WORTH A TRY. HMMMM.. HERE'S ONE.

HEY, B.A. I'M GOING TO CAST "**WEAK BLADDER**" ON THIS **GUARD-DUDE**. ANYTHING HAPPEN?

WEAK BLADDER? UH, SURE.

HE STARTS TO SHIFT HIS WEIGHT FROM ONE FOOT TO THE OTHER AS HE **CLENCHES** HIS TEETH.

KEWL! SO I GUESS HE HAS TO GO **PRETTY BAD**, HUH?

C'MON, DAVE. YER WASTIN' YER TIME.

DAVE, **TRUST** ME ON THIS. **CANTRIPS** ARE JUST ABOUT THE MOST **USELESS** THING IN **HACKMASTER**.

I'M NOT **DONE** YET!

OKAY.... LET'S DO **THIS**. I'M GOING TO CAST '**TRUSTING Demeanor**' ON MYSELF.

OH, OH, AND '**AURA OF Legitimacy**'

I THINK THAT SHOULD DO IT.

OKAY, FINE. WHAT DO I KNOW?

GO AHEAD **KNOCK** YERSELF OUT!

HERE'S MY IDEA, B.A. I'LL WAIT A FEW MOMENTS TIL THIS GUY IS **FIDGETING** REALLY GOOD -- THEN I'LL OFFER TO **TAKE OVER** AND **WATCH** HIS POST FOR HIM WHILE HE MAKES A **MAD DASH** TO THE **PRIVY**. SINCE I SEEM VERY **TRUSTWORTHY** AND **LEGITIMATE**, HE MIGHT BE INCLINED TO **ACCEPT**.

DAVE, I'M **IMPRESSED!** THAT WAS VERY WELL **THOUGHT OUT**.

OH GAWD, **THAT** WAS YOUR **PLAN?** WHAT A **JOKE!** YOU'VE GOT A **LOT** TO LEARN ABOUT **SPELL-LOBBING**, DAVE.

STILL.... I'M NOT SURE A **TRAINED GUARD** WOULD FALL FOR SUCH **TRICKERY**.

WHY NOT? **OBI WAN** DID IT TO THOSE **IMPERIAL STORM TROOPERS!**

DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL **LEARN** THE **ROPES** -- **EVENTUALLY!**

WAIT A SECOND, ON **SECOND THOUGHT** I'M GOING TO **RULE** THAT THE **GUARD** ACCEPTS YOUR **OFFER**. THIS IS **JUST** THE KIND OF **ROLE-PLAY** I WAS TALKING ABOUT.

GIVE YOURSELF A **HUNDRED EXPERIENCE POINTS** FOR **CREATIVELY USING** YOUR **CHARACTER CLASS** AND USING **NON-VIOLENT** MEANS TO **RESOLVE A PROBLEM**.

THE REST OF YOU MIGHT WANT TO MAKE A **NOTE** OF **DAVE'S EXAMPLE!**

THE **GUARD** HANDS YOU HIS **LANCE** AND WARMLY **THANKS** YOU. "I'LL **ONLY** BE A MINUTE, KIND SIR. JUST DO ME A **FAVOR** AND DON'T LET **ANYONE** PASS. I'LL BE **RIGHT** BACK!!"

WITH THAT HE **SCAMPERS** OFF AROUND THE CORNER OUT OF SIGHT.

KEWL! WE'LL WAIT A FEW SECONDS AND THEN **ENTER** THE **TOWN** NONCHALANTLY!

MY, MY, THAT WAS PRETTY **CLEVER** OF DAVE. DON'T YOU THINK?

HMMRRFFF! EVEN A **BLIND SQUIRREL** FINDS A **NUT** EVERY NOW AND THEN.

A HUNDRED E.P.S? OH, I AIN'T **BELIEVIN'** THIS.

LIKE I SAID, I'M **REWARDING** GOOD **ROLE-PLAY**.



A WEE BIT LATER AT THE TARNISHED PENNY INN...

THE **SULTRY BARMAID** BRINGS YOU ANOTHER ROUND OF **DRINKS** AND A SIDE OF **ROAST VENISON**. SHE POLITELY POINTS OUT THAT YOU'VE RUN UP QUITE A **TAB** -- THE **BARKEEP'S** A LITTLE **NERVOUS**. HE WANTS YOU TO **SETTLE UP**.

SURE THING, **TOOTS!** WHAT'S THE **DAMAGE?**

BY THE WAY, **THIS** ROUND WAS ON ME, GUYS.

OH, NO. I CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT, **SARA**.

I'M AFRAID MY **ELVEN** UPBRINGING WON'T ALLOW ME TO LET A **WOMAN** PICK UP MY **TAB**.

I COULD LOSE A FEW **HONOR** POINTS IF ANYBODY **NOTICED**.

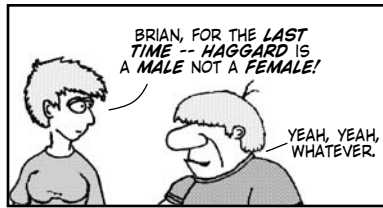


TOOTS?



BRIAN, FOR THE **LAST TIME** -- **HAGGARD** IS A **MALE** NOT A **FEMALE!**

YEAH, YEAH, **WHATEVER**.



HEY, **B.A.** DID YOU MAKE A **NOTE** OF THAT? I WENT **OUT** OF MY WAY TO DO THE **ELF** THING.

IT'S NOT **EASY** THINKING LIKE AN **ELF** YA KNOW.



THE **BARMAID** TALLIES UP YER **TAB** AND INFORMS YOU THE '**DAMAGE**' IS TO THE TUNE OF **575 GOLD PIECES**.

575 GOLD PIECES???!!

GAAAA!!!

OOPS! GUESS WE SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED HER TO BRING US THEIR **BEST WINE**.



WHAT THE HELL ARE WE GOING TO DO? WE DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF **CASH!** WE DONE **BLEW** MOST OF OUR **STARTING MONEY** BETTIN' ON THOSE **BLINK DOG FIGHTS!**

I WARNED YOU GUYS! THAT WHOLE **OPERATION** SMELLED LIKE A **SET UP**.

I'D **STILL** LIKE TO KNOW WHO **ACTUALLY** WON THAT **LAST FIGHT**.



LET ME SEE WHAT I HAVE IN MY **BAG OF TRICKS** HERE AS FAR AS **CANTRIPS**...

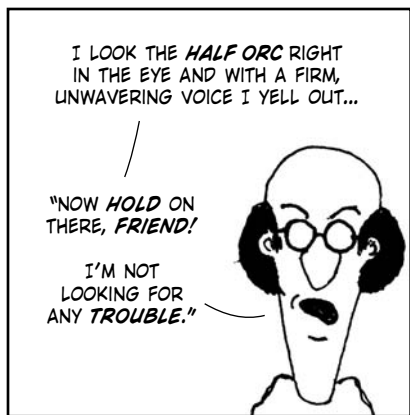
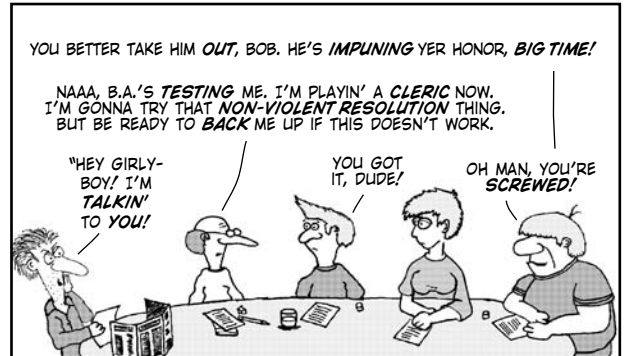
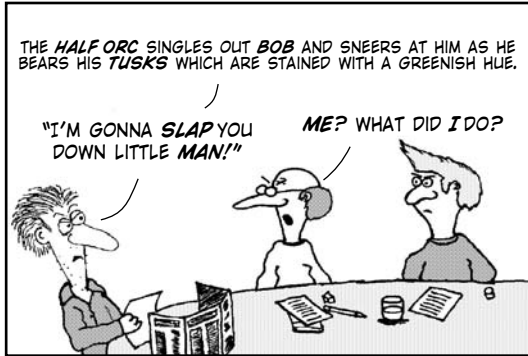
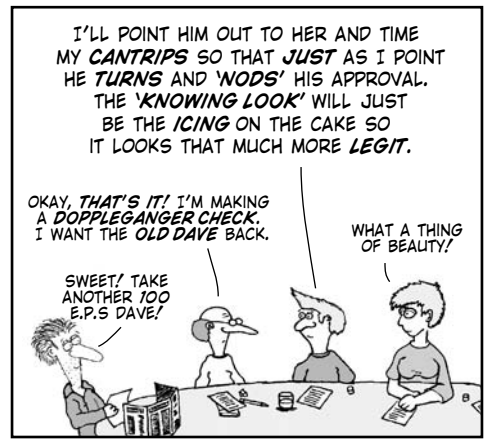
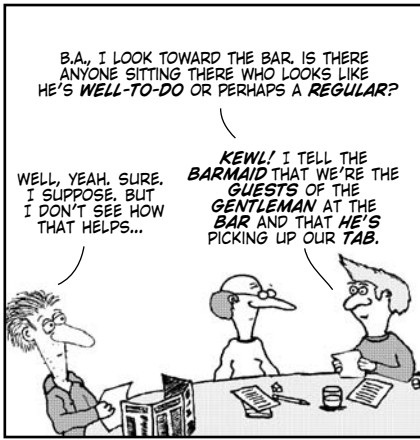
UNLESS YOU GOT ONE CALLED '**TURN BAR NUTS TO GOLD**' WE'RE **SCREWED!**

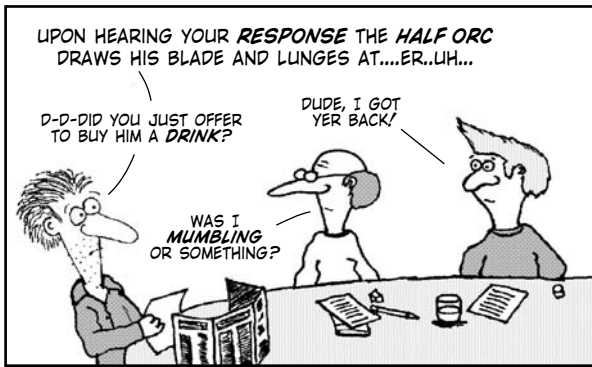
WE COULD TRY MAKING A **RUN** FOR IT.



OKAY, LET'S SEE IF **THIS** WORKS.







LIPON HEARING YOUR **RESPONSE** THE **HALF ORC** DRAWS HIS BLADE AND LUNGES AT....ER..UH...

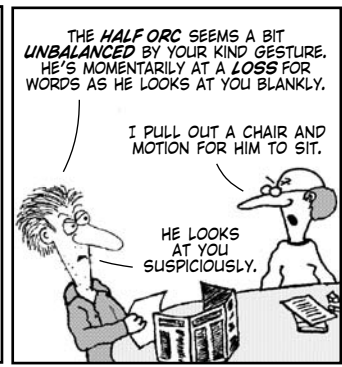
D-D-DID YOU JUST OFFER TO BUY HIM A **DRINK**?

DUDE, I GOT YER BACK!

WAS I **MUMBLING** OR SOMETHING?



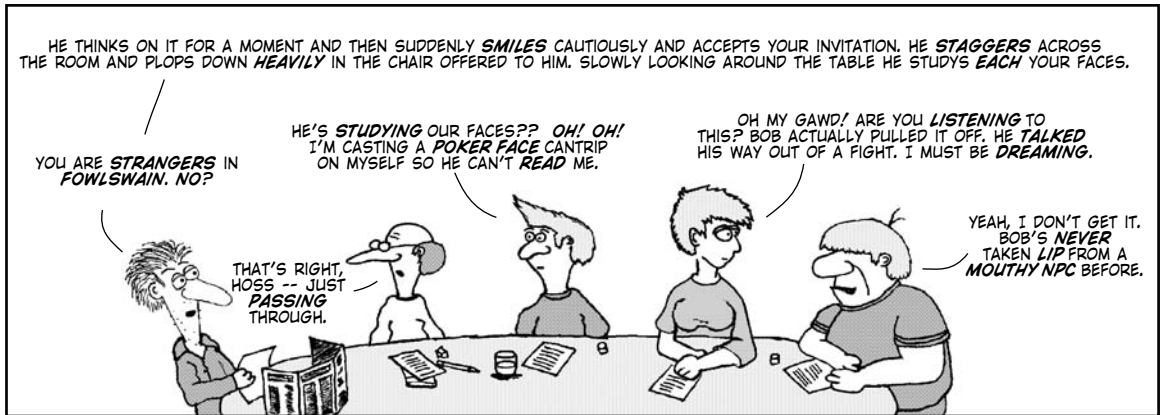
NOW WHAT THE HELL IS HE UP TO?



THE **HALF ORC** SEEMS A BIT **UNBALANCED** BY YOUR KIND GESTURE. HE'S MOMENTARILY AT A **LOSS** FOR WORDS AS HE LOOKS AT YOU BLANKLY.

I PULL OUT A CHAIR AND MOTION FOR HIM TO SIT.

HE LOOKS AT YOU SUSPICIOUSLY.



HE THINKS ON IT FOR A MOMENT AND THEN SUDDENLY **SMILES** CAUTIOUSLY AND ACCEPTS YOUR INVITATION. HE **STAGGERS** ACROSS THE ROOM AND PLOPS DOWN **HEAVILY** IN THE CHAIR OFFERED TO HIM. SLOWLY LOOKING AROUND THE TABLE HE **STUDYS** EACH YOUR FACES.

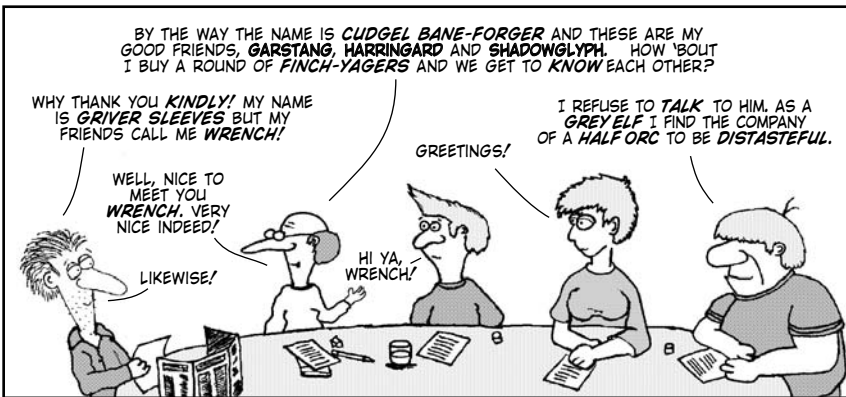
YOU ARE **STRANGERS** IN **FOWLSWAIN**. NO?

HE'S **STUDYING** OUR FACES?? OH! OH! I'M CASTING A **POKER FACE** CANTRIP ON MYSELF SO HE CAN'T READ ME.

OH MY GAWD! ARE YOU **LISTENING** TO THIS? BOB ACTUALLY PULLED IT OFF. HE **TALKED** HIS WAY OUT OF A FIGHT. I MUST BE **DREAMING**.

YEAH, I DON'T GET IT. BOB'S NEVER TAKEN LIP FROM A **MOUTHY NPC** BEFORE.

THAT'S RIGHT, HOSS -- JUST **PASSING** THROUGH.



BY THE WAY THE NAME IS **CUDGEL BANE-FORGER** AND THESE ARE MY GOOD FRIENDS, **GARSTANG**, **HARRINGARD** AND **SHADOWGLYPH**. HOW 'BOUT I BUY A ROUND OF **FINCH-YAGERS** AND WE GET TO **KNOW** EACH OTHER?

WHY THANK YOU **KINDLY!** MY NAME IS **GRIVER SLEEVES** BUT MY FRIENDS CALL ME **WRENCH!**

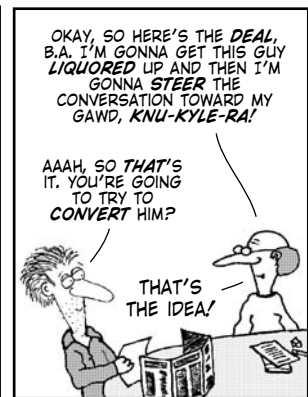
WELL, NICE TO MEET YOU **WRENCH**. VERY NICE INDEED!

LIKEWISE!

HI YA, **WRENCH!**

GREETINGS!

I REFUSE TO TALK TO HIM, AS A **GREY ELF** I FIND THE COMPANY OF A **HALF ORC** TO BE **DISTASTEFUL**.



OKAY, SO HERE'S THE **DEAL**, B.A. I'M GONNA GET THIS GUY **LIQUORED** UP AND THEN I'M GONNA **STEER** THE CONVERSATION TOWARD MY **GAWD, KNU-KYLE-RA!**

AAAH, SO **THAT'S** IT. YOU'RE GOING TO TRY TO **CONVERT** HIM?

THAT'S THE **IDEA!**



I FIGURE THIS GUYS IS WORTH MORE **E.P.S** AS A **CONVERT** THAN AS A **KILL**.

AND ACCORDING TO '**CHARACTERS OF THE CLOTH**' **HALF ORCS** ARE **SUSCEPTIBLE** TO **PERSUASIVE SPEECH**.

WELL, YOU CERTAINLY HAVE HIS ATTENTION.

HEY, I'M GONNA CAST A **VEILED THREAT** CANTRIP ON THIS GUY JUST TO MESS WITH HIS **HEAD**.



WHOAH! STAY OUT OF THIS, DUDE. CAN'T YOU SEE I'M TRYING TO **WORK** HERE?

I WAS JUST TRYING TO PRACTICE SOME OF MY **CANTRIPS**.

WELL BACK OFF, YA **E.P. MOOCH!** THIS **PIGEON** IS **MINE!**

SORRY.

A WEE BIT LATER...

OKAY I LAY IT ON **THICK!** I TELL THIS GUY ALL THE **WONDROUS** AND **INCREDIBLE** THINGS ABOUT **KNU'KYLE RA!** I EXPLAIN THE MANY **PERKS** OF BEING A FOLLOWER AND I **EMBELLISH** SOME OF THE FINER DETAILS TO REALLY MAKE IT LOOK LIKE A **GOOD PACKAGE.**

OKAY, I GUESS YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND MAKE A **CONVERSION ROLL** FOR HIM.

DON'T FORGET, I GET A PLUS 2 MODIFIER FOR HIM BEING A **HALF ORC** AND ANOTHER PLUS 3 COS HE'S **DRUNK!**



HOODY HOO!
I ROLLED A **15!!**

I SUCCESSFULLY **CONVERTED** HIM!



SO THAT'S 500 E.P.S TIMES HIS **LEVEL.** WHAT'S THAT COME OUT TO?

HE WAS A **THIRD LEVEL FIGHTER** SO THAT'S **1,500.**

THIRD LEVEL? **KEWL BEANS!!**



HEY, DID YOU SAY **THIRD LEVEL FIGHTER?**

THAT'S RIGHT.

FRICKIN' A! IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A FIGHTER WITH SOME EXPERIENCE.

LOOKING FOR A FIGHTER?



THAT'S RIGHT. I NEED SOMEONE TO SERVE AS MY **ARMY** SO I CAN PUT ALL MY **LEADERSHIP SKILLS** TO USE!

I LIKE **WRENCH'S** ATTITUDE. HE FITS THE **BILL** PERFECTLY.



-SPUTTER- AS YOUR **ARMY??!!**



NOW LOOK HERE, **BRIAN!!** WE'VE ALREADY **BEEEN** OVER THAT. JUST BECAUSE THE **RULES** DON'T **SPECIFY** HOW MANY MEN CONSTITUTE AN **ARMY** DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN APPLY YOUR **MILITARY LEADERSHIP SKILLS** TO JUST **ONE MAN.**

BESIDES YOU CAN'T HAVE HIM! AS A NEW **INITIATE** OF THE **ORDER OF KNU'KYLE'RA** I HAVE **PLANS** FOR THIS GUY. HE'S GOING TO STAY HERE TO HELP RAISE **FUNDS** TO BUILD A **LOCAL TEMPLE** AND WIN OVER **NEW CONVERTS.**

AWH, C'MON BOB. I **NEED** THIS GUY.



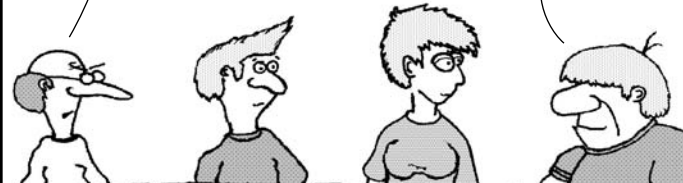
BRIAN, AREN'T YOU FORGETTING SOMETHING? HE'S A **HALF ORC!!** YOU'RE A **GREY ELF!** THERE'S A GREAT DEAL OF ANIMOSITY BETWEEN YOUR TWO RACES.

THE BOND BETWEEN **WARRIORS** TRANSCENDS SUCH BOUNDARIES, SARA.



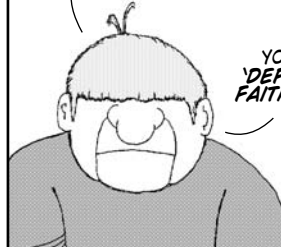
YEAH, WELL YOU CAN **FORGET** IT! **WRENCH** HAS ANSWERED TO A **HIGHER CALLING!** HE'S GOT **BRASS!** JUST THE TYPE OF **NEW MEAT** MY ORGANIZATION IS LOOKING FOR. HE'S NOT GOING TO HAVE **TIME** TO GO **GALLIVANTING** ALL OVER THE **COUNTRY** SIDE AS SOME **ONE-MAN ARMY** FOR YOU TO **LORD OVER.**

C'MON, BOB. LET'S BE **REASONABLE** ABOUT THIS. I DON'T THINK YOU'RE **THINKING** THIS THROUGH.



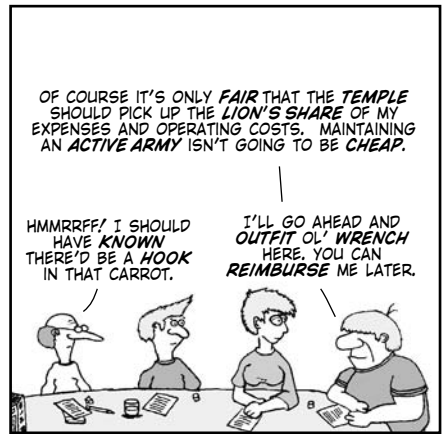
I HAPPEN TO BE A **NEW CONVERT** TO **KNU-KYLE-RA** MYSELF AND I'M TRYING TO RAISE AN **ARMY** HERE. AN **ARMY** WHICH WILL BE **LOYAL** TO YOUR **TEMPLE** AND IT'S MANY **CAUSES.**

AFTER ALL, YOU MADE ME A **'DEFENDER OF THE FAITH'** DIDN'T YOU?²

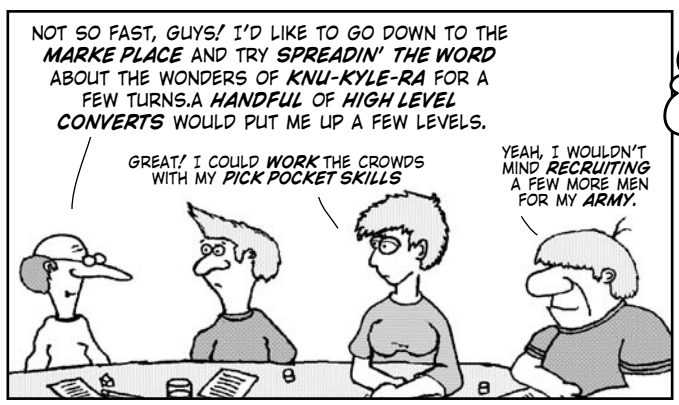
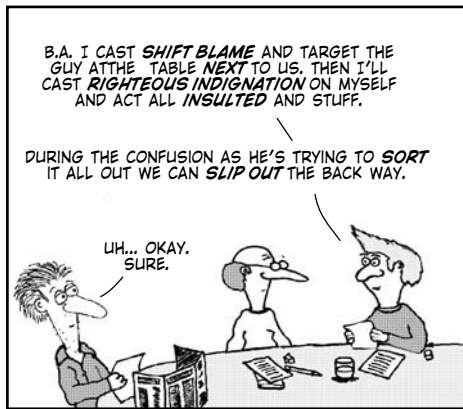
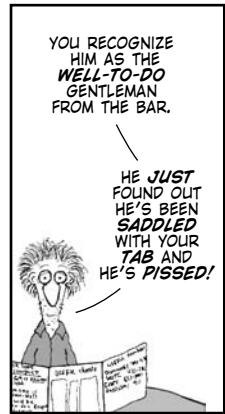


1 See **KODT #53:** "Long Distance Warrior" After failing to pick any melee weapon proficiencies Brian figures out that the HackMaster rules don't specify how many men make up an 'army'. He decides to hire a fighter to serve as an army to fight for him so he can apply his military leadership skills.

2 See **KODT #52:** "Temple of the Unknown Gawd" Bob manages to talk the other players into picking his gawd, Knu-Kyle-Ra as their patron gawd. By bestowing them with the title, "Defenders of the Faith" they only have to pay 5% tithe and are entitled to expense reimbursement on any adventures that happen to further the faith.



A WEE BIT LATER...



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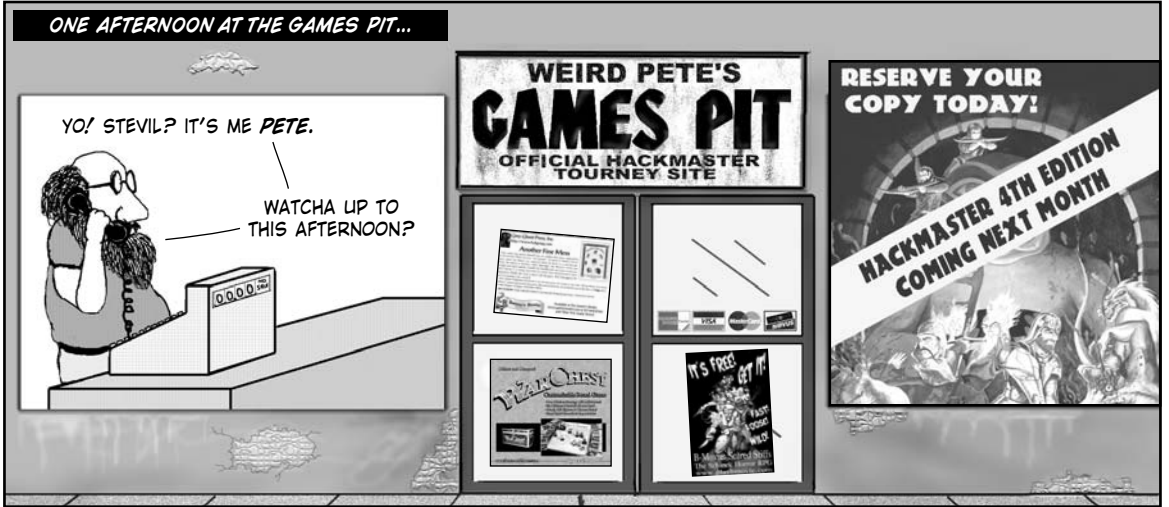


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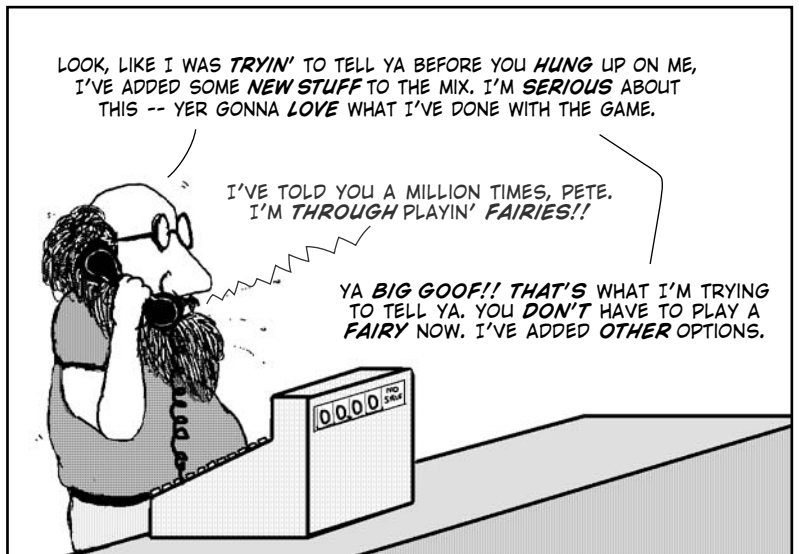
*This strip is a continuation of *A Pound of Flesh* from issue #40



OKAY, OKAY, BUT YOU GOT **FIVE MINUTES** OL' TIMER. AND THE CLOCK STARTS **NOW!!**

GO AHEAD AND SAY YOUR PIECE BUT I'M **WARNING** YOU IN ADVANCE...

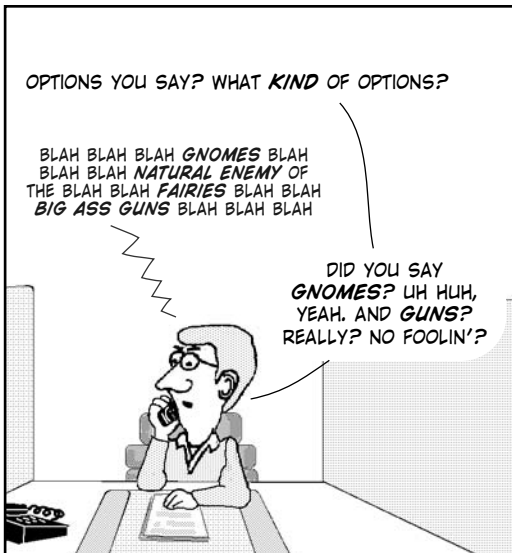
THE **ANSWER'S** GOING TO BE "NO!"



LOOK, LIKE I WAS **TRYIN'** TO TELL YA BEFORE YOU **HUNG UP** ON ME, I'VE ADDED SOME **NEW STUFF** TO THE MIX. I'M **SERIOUS** ABOUT THIS -- YER GONNA **LOVE** WHAT I'VE DONE WITH THE GAME.

I'VE TOLD YOU A MILLION TIMES, PETE. I'M **THROUGH** PLAYIN' **FAIRIES!!**

YA **BIG GOOF!!** THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YA. YOU **DON'T** HAVE TO PLAY A **FAIRY** NOW. I'VE ADDED **OTHER** OPTIONS.



OPTIONS YOU SAY? WHAT **KIND** OF OPTIONS?

BLAH BLAH BLAH **GNOMES** BLAH BLAH BLAH **NATURAL ENEMY** OF THE BLAH BLAH **FAIRIES** BLAH BLAH **BIG ASS GUNS** BLAH BLAH BLAH

DID YOU SAY **GNOMES?** UH HUH, YEAH. AND **GUNS?** REALLY? NO FOOLIN'?



OKAY, I'VE **HEARD** ENOUGH.

GIVE ME **FORTY-FIVE** MINUTES AND A FEW **ODD SECONDS** -- I'M **THERE!**



A FEW MOMENTS LATER....

WHOAH.... **GNOMES** WITH **GUNS???**!!

THAT ROCKS!!

LATER THAT SAME AFTERNOON IN PETE'S BACKROOM...

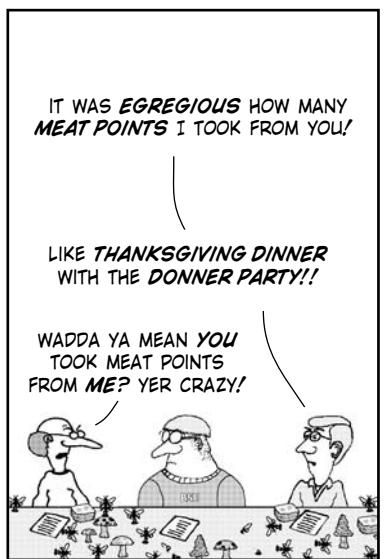


GOOD! LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE'S HERE. WE CAN GET STARTED.

AS YOU RECALL, DURING OUR **LAST SESSION** OF **FAIRY MEAT** THE **FERN-NAGLER TRIBE** WAS WIPED OUT BY THE **GULLY-ROOT TRIBE**. SO I THOUGHT I'D MAKE THINGS **INTERESTING** TONIGHT BY INTRODUCING...

WIPED OUT MY ASS! THE **GULLY-ROOTS** HAD **NOTHING** TO DO WITH IT. I WAS **UNTOUCHABLE** UNTIL THAT **THRALL-SQUIRREL** MADE A **MEAT SNACK** OUT OF ME.

UNTOUCHABLE? DON'T **EVEN** GO THERE, BOB.



IT WAS **EGREGIOUS** HOW MANY **MEAT POINTS** I TOOK FROM YOU!

LIKE **THANKSGIVING DINNER** WITH THE **DONNER PARTY!!**

WADDA YA MEAN YOU TOOK **MEAT POINTS** FROM **ME?** YER **CRAZY!**

MAYBE I SHOULD **REMIND** YOU HOW I RIPPED YER FRICKIN' **WINGS** OUT BY THE **ROOTS**, BUDDY! HUH? OR HOW I PROCEEDED TO **BEAT** YOU WITH THEM. REMEMBER THAT? HUH? REMEMBER HOW I **BEAT** YOU WITH YOUR **OWN BLOODY WINGS??!**

SO DON'T BE **TALKIN'** SMACK DOWN THERE.

GORDO WAS THERE. **HE** CAN TELL YOU HOW IT **WENT** DOWN.

HUH? OH...I UH...ER...

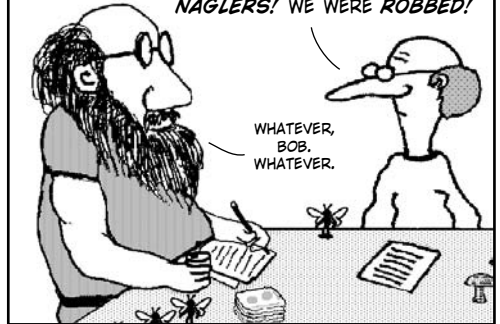
YOU GOT **LUCKY!** THAT'S ALL.



GIRLS! GIRLS!! PLEASE! SAVE ALL THAT **HOSTILITY** FOR THE **GAME** WHY DON'T YOU.

JUST TRYIN' TO GET THE **FACTS** STRAIGHT, **PETE**. NOBODY **WIPE**D OUT THE **FERN-NAGLERS!** WE WERE **ROBBED!**

WHATEVER, **BOB**. WHATEVER.



NOW, AS I WAS ABOUT TO SAY, TONIGHT, WE'RE GOING TO **MIX** THINGS UP A BIT.

I'VE BEEN WORKING ON SOME **GNOME RULES** FOR THE GAME. AND I **THINK** I'VE JUST ABOUT WORKED THE **KINKS** OUT. LEASTWISE, ENOUGH TO DO A LITTLE **PLAYTESTIN'**.



GNOMES? OH GREAT. DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE **DEFILED** THAT **NOBLE WEE FOLK RACE** AS WELL AS THE **FAIRIES**. I SUPPOSE YOU HAVE **THEM** RUNNING AROUND **EATING** EACH OTHER TOO.

DON'T BE **RIDICULOUS!** GNOMES DON'T **EAT** EACH OTHER'S **FLESH**. THAT'S **ABSURD!**

NO? THEN I SUPPOSE THEY **EAT** FAIRIES THEN. IS **THAT** IT?

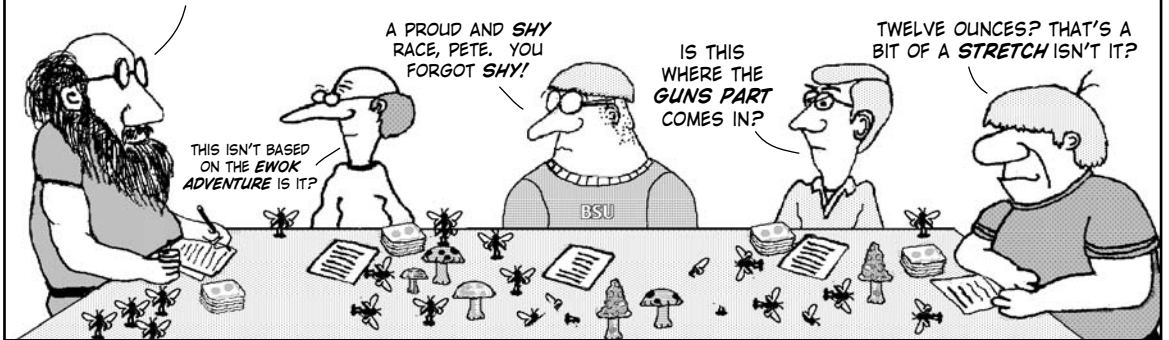
-SIGH- **NO!!** GNOMES DON'T **EAT** FAIRIES EITHER. WILL YOU LET ME **FINISH** EXPLAINING?

YEAH, **SHUT UP**, GORDO. LET THE **MAN TALK!**



HERE'S THE **LOW DOWN** ON **GNOMES** IN **FAIRY MEAT**. FOR A LONG, LONG TIME GNOMES WERE A PEACEFUL BOOKISH FOLK. THEY WERE **CONTENT** TO KEEP TO THEMSELVES FOR THE MOST PART. BUT EVENTUALLY THEY GOT TO LOOKING AROUND THE WORLD AND THEY REALIZED THEY GOT THE **SHORT END** OF THE STICK. BEING A **PROUD RACE** THEY THOUGHT TO THEMSELVES, "WHY THE HELL CAN'T **WE** BE THE ONE'S ON **TOP?** WE'RE SMART! WE'RE PLEASANT TO **LOOK** AT. AND WE CAN **JERK** NEARLY **TWELVE OUNCES** CLEAN OVER OUR HEADS!!!"

NOW IT WAS **THIS** KIND OF SELF EFFACING THINKING THAT STARTED **ALL** THE TROUBLE. SOON THE **GNOMES** BEGAN THEIR **QUEST** TO MASTER THE **SCIENCES** AND MAKE THEMSELVES **SUPERIOR** TO ALL OTHER SPECIES ON **EARTH!**



THIS ISN'T BASED ON THE **EWOK ADVENTURE** IS IT?

A **PROUD** AND **SHY** RACE, **PETE**. YOU FORGOT **SHY!**

IS THIS WHERE THE **GUNS** PART COMES IN?

TWELVE OUNCES? THAT'S A BIT OF A **STRETCH** ISN'T IT?

NOW THE GNOMES, BEING THE WISE AND CALCULATING TYPE THEY ARE, DECIDED THEY SHOULD **PRACTICE** THE ART OF **DOMINATION** ON SOMETHING **SMALL**. JUST TO START OUT WITH, YA UNDERSTAND -- SO THEY COULD **HONE** THEIR SKILLS.

SO WITH THAT GOAL IN MIND THEY **FIRST** SET THEIR SIGHTS ON THE **FAIRIES** AND ENGINEERED AN ENORMOUS ARSENAL OF **ANTI-FAIRY WEAPONRY**.

GAAAA! I **KNEW** IT! YOU'RE TALKIN' **FAIRY GENOCIDE!** I WON'T HAVE ANY **PART** OF IT!

JUST HOW DID YOU COME ABOUT THAT 'TWELVE OUNCE' FIGURE, PETE?



WHOAH, HOLD ON THERE, **GORDO!** WE'RE TALKIN' 'EVEN PLAYING FIELD' HERE.

FAIRIES NOW HAVE A **COMMON ENEMY** TO CONTENT WITH. AND DON'T FORGET, THEY AREN'T EXACTLY **HELPLESS**.



YOU'LL HAVE YOUR **FAESLAYERS**, BLACK WANDS AND TWINKLE SPELLS TO DEFEND YOURSELF WITH. NOT TO MENTION THAT **FAIRY** TENACITY FOR **SURVIVAL** WHICH ALWAYS PULLS THEM THROUGH IN A **PINCH!**

AND BY THE WAY, **GNOMES** CAN'T **TWINKLE!** SO YOU'VE GOT THAT ON 'EM.



NOW HERE'S HOW WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS. **BOB** AND **GORDO** WILL BE RUNNING A **FAIRY TRIBE** TONIGHT -- AS A **TEAM**. MEANWHILE, **STEVIL** AND **BRIAN** WILL BE PLAYING AS A **GNOMIC TEAM**.

WHOAH! HOLD ON. WHY CAN'T I BE A **GNOME?**

'COS **STEVIL** WON'T PLAY UNLESS HE CAN BE A **GNOME** AND I NEED **BRIAN** TO SHAKE DOWN THE **GNOME RULES** FOR ME.

OH GOOD! **BOB** PLAYS AN **EXCELLENT FAIRY**. I **APPROVE!!**



NOW EVERYBODY PAY ATTENTION WHILE I RUN DOWN THE **BASICS** ON GNOMES. I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO **REPEAT** MYSELF.

JUST SKIP AHEAD TO THE PART ABOUT **GUNS**, PETE. THAT'S **ALL** I NEED TO KNOW. AND BY THE WAY, WILL I BE GETTING ANY **TACTICAL NUKES?**

-SIGH- NO, **STEVIL** YOU WON'T HAVE ANY **NUKES**. WILL YOU **PLEASE** LET ME GET THROUGH THIS BEFORE ASKING SO MANY GOSH DURN QUESTIONS?

YEAH, YEAH, SURE. BUT **HURRY** TO THE PART ABOUT **GUNS**.



HMMMMM... **NUKES!** MAYBE I SHOULD ADD THOSE TO THE **LIST**. I **WONDER** HOW THEY WOULD WORK AT **25MM SCALE...**



A FEW SECONDS LATER....

OKAY, I'VE JUST GIVEN THOSE OF YOU PLAYING *GNOMES* YOUR *GNOMIC WEAPON LIST*. KEEP IN MIND IT'S JUST A *WORKING LIST*. I'LL BE ADDING *MORE* LATER. BUT YOU SHOULD HAVE *PLENTY* TO CHOOSE FROM.

OH *FRICKIN' A!!* THIS *ROCKS*, PETE! LOOK AT THIS STUFF. A *THUNDERGUN*, *TORCHEON*, *ARM CANNON?* *PIPEBOMBS*, *HATBOTS*.

AS YOU CAN SEE THE *GNOMES* CAME UP WITH SOME *PRETTY CLEVER* DEVICES OF *DESTRUCTION*.

PIPEBOMBS?

HOODY HOO!! CHECK OUT THE *SECOND COLUMN*, *DUDE!* THERE'S A *CHAINKILLER* AND AN *AUTOCANNON!!*

OH WOW! CHECK OUT THE *LIST ON THE BACK!*

READY TO WEAR *GNOMIC ARMOR!!*

ARMOR AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS?? OH MAN, *PETE* IS A *FREAKIN' GENIUS!*



UH...PETE? NO OFFENSE BUT I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL LIKE THE *DECK* IS STACKED AGAINST US *FAIRY-TYPES* HERE.

YEAH, DID YOU REMEMBER TO KEEP *GAME BALANCE* IN MIND WHEN WORKING UP THESE RULES?

DON'T *FRET* THERE, BOYS!



THE *GNOMES* MAY PACK MORE *PUNCH* BUT YOU'VE GOT 'EM *BEAT* WHEN IT COMES TO *SPEED*. THE BEST THEIR *PUDGY* LITTLE BODIES CAN DO IS *FOUR INCHES* WITH A *SHIMMY*. YOUR *FAIRIES*, ON THE OTHER HAND, CAN *FLUTTER* A FULL *TWELVE INCHES*.

SHIMMY HUH? WHAT ABOUT *FLYING*? HOW FAR CAN THEY MOVE IF THEY *FLY*?

IDIOT! *GNOMES* CAN'T *FLY!*

LESS'IN YOU *THROW* ONE OF 'EM. BUT THE *LITTLE BASTARDS* *HATE* IT WHEN YOU DO THAT. *HAR HAR!!*

FOUR INCHES? IS THAT ALL?

WHO CARES? WE GOT THE *FIREPOWER!*



GNOMES ALSO HAVE TO CONTEND WITH ONE *MINOR ANNOYANCE!* YA SEE ALL THOSE NEW-FANGLED MECHANICAL GIZMOS AND GADGETRY ATTRACTS THE ATTENTION OF *GREMLINS!* THEY JUST LOVE THAT KINDA CRAP. THEY'RE ALWAYS *FIDDLING* WITH *GNOME TECHNOLOGY* AND CAUSING IT TO *BREAK* OR *MALFUNCTION* AT THE MOST *INOOPORTUNE* TIMES.

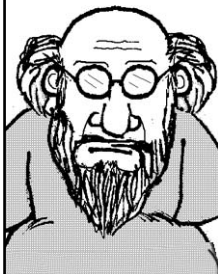
GREMLINS? HEY, CAN I PLAY ONE OF *THOSE* INSTEAD OF A *FRICKIN' FAIRY*?

NO BUT YOU CAN *PURCHASE* THEM FOR YOUR TEAM.

KEWL BEANS!



OKAY SO LET'S TAKE *TEN MINUTES* SO YOU CAN *BUILD* YOUR TEAMS.



BOTH THE *FAIRY TEAM* AND THE *GNOME TEAM* WILL HAVE *100 POINTS* FROM WHICH TO BUILD THEIR ARMIES FROM. USE THEM *WISELY* FOLKS!!

AND JUST TO MAKE THE GAME *INTERESTING* I'M GOING TO PUT UP A *PRIZE* -- WINNER TAKES *ALL!!*

A FROSTY ICE COLD CASE OF *SNAPPLE!*

SNAPPLE? A *WHOLE CASE?* HOT DAMN - MY *NAME* IS WRITTEN *ALL* OVER IT.



WILL YOU FRICKIN' GIVE UP ON THE FREAKIN' GLITTER FAIRIES? THE OTHER TEAM'S GOT GUNS FOR CRYING OUT LOUD -- AND CHAINSAWS!! WEREN'T YOU LISTENING?

BUT GLITTERY FAIRIES HAVE A FOUR TWINKLE! AND THEY'RE CHEAP!

OKAY, OKAY, GO AHEAD AND ADD YER TWO GLITTER-JOCKS TO THE ROSTER BUT YOU JUST COST US A HUNTER FAIRY.

THANKS! YOU WON'T REGRET IT.



...AND I'M GIVIN' UP FOUR LIVE POINTS SO I CAN TAKE TWO CLOCKWORK ARMS, A CLOCKWORK LEG - KICKER MODEL, AND A CLOCKWORK LEG - STOMPER MODEL. THAT ONLY LEAVES ME WITH ONE LIVE POINT BUT I PICKED UP FOUR POINTS OF GNOMIC ARMOR.

HEY YOU POINT MOOCH! LEAVE SOME FOR ME!



RELAX. THERE'S PLENTY LEFT. I'M JUST GOING TO BUY A HATBOT AND A FEW PIPE BOMBS -- THE REST ARE YOURS.

KEWL! I'M DISPENSING WITH THE PERSONAL CLOCKWORK ENHANCEMENTS. I'M BUYIN' A CHAIN-KILLER AND INVESTING THE REMAINDER POINTS IN CLOCKWORK FAIRIES.



CLOCKWORK FAIRIES? ALL YOUR POINTS? YOU BETTER LOAD UP WITH SOME MORE FIREPOWER, DUDE. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT GORDO BUT BOB PLAYS TO WIN! HE'S GONNA COME AT YA'!

I'M NOT WORRIED. WITH MY ARMY OF CLOCK FAIRIES GOING OUT BEFORE ME I'LL BE INVINCIBLE. BESIDES, I'LL HAVE YOU TO PROTECT ME SHOULD THE ENEMY GET THROUGH.

HMMRRFF! AND WHY SHOULD I PICK UP THE SLACK AND PROTECT YOUR ASS??



DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT PETE SAID? WINNER TAKES ALL!!! I HAVE NO PROBLEM CLAIMING THAT CASE OF SNAPPLE FOR MYSELF.

YES, I SEEM TO RECALL YOUR TEAM LOYALTY RAN A BIT SHALLOW LAST TIME OUT. THAT'S WHY I BOUGHT MYSELF A LITTLE INSURANCE.

INSURANCE??



ACCORDING TO PETE'S RULES IF THE CONTROLLING GNOME DIES ANY CLOCKWORK FAIRIES UNDER HIS CONTROL ARE LIBERATED!

THAT MEANS THEY IMMEDIATELY SIDE WITH THEIR FAIRYKIN BROTHERS AND TURN ON ANY OTHER GNOMES.



SO IT WOULD BE IN YOUR OWN BEST INTEREST TO MAKE SURE NOTHING HAPPENS TO ME. COMPRENDE?

TOUCHE! MY COMPLIMENTS, SIR! YOU ARE INDEED A WORTHY ADVERSARY!

HEY, WITH A CASE OF SNAPPLE AT STAKE I TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED.



OKAY, IF THERE AREN'T ANY QUESTIONS WE MIGHT AS WELL GET STARTED. I CAN EXPLAIN THE FINER DETAILS AS YOU PLAY.



BUT FIRST YOU GNOME-TYPES ARE GOING TO NEED SOME MINIATURES TO REPRESENT YOUR CHARACTERS.



KERPLUNK!

MOTHER OF GAWD!!!

T-T-THEY'RE HUGE!!

-GULP- A-ARE T-T-THOSE THINGS TO S-S-SCALE?



GOOD LORD! WHERE THE HELL DID YOU FIND ONE-TO-ONE SCALE GNOME FIGURES PETE? THEY MUST HAVE COST YOU A FORTUNE!!

-GULP- I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL LIKE A JAPANESE SOLDIER IN ONE OF THOSE GODZILLA MOVIES.

WHERE'S GAMMARON WHEN YOU NEED HIM?

KEWL! I CALL DIBS ON THE ONE IN GREEN OVERALLS!!



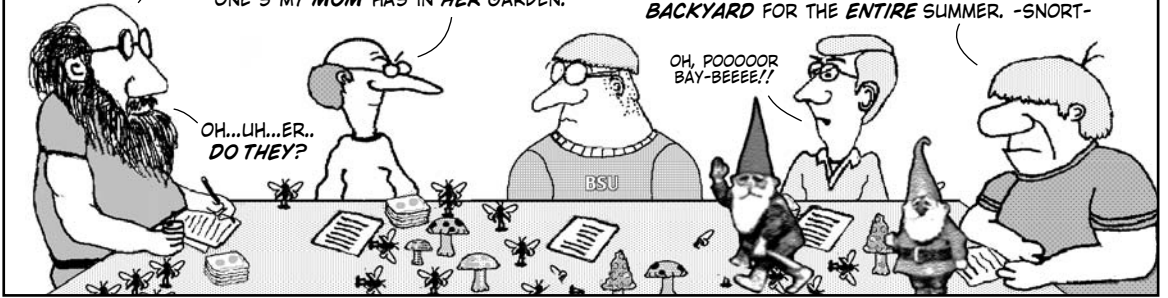
THEY'RE *GARDEN GNOMES!* YOU KNOW, THE *CERAMIC KIND*. PEOPLE PUT 'EM OUT IN THEIR *FLOWER GARDENS* AND STUFF FER GOOD LUCK.

HEY, THEY LOOK *JUST LIKE THE ONE'S MY MOM HAS IN HER GARDEN.*

HEY, THAT'S RIGHT. YOU USED TO BE *AFRAID OF 'EM*. IN *THIRD GRADE* YOU *REFUSED* TO PLAY IN YER *BACKYARD* FOR THE *ENTIRE SUMMER*. -SNORT-

OH, POOOOOR BAY-BEEEE!!

OH...UH...ER.. DO THEY?



BACK OFF, JACK! I WAS ONLY *EIGHT YEARS OLD!* THOSE *CREEPY THINGS* FREAKED ME OUT!! THE WAY THEY KEPT *MOVING* ALL AROUND THE YARD EACH NIGHT OF THEIR *OWN ACCORD*.

YEAH, THEY *MOVED* ALRIGHT -- LIKE THOSE *LOOSE MARBLES* JOSTLING AROUND IN YOUR HEAD.

SNICKER



OH... OH... YOU WANNA *PIECE OF ME*, MONKEY-BOY?

HUH? DO YA?



AS A MATTER OF FACT, I *DO!* IT'S *PAYBACK TIME!* AND I'M GOING TO COLLECT IN *FLESH!!*

FINE! COME GET SOME THEN.

IF YOU'RE ASKIN' FOR AN *EVISCERATION* YOU GOT IT!



SAY "HELLO" TO MY LITTLE FRIENDS!!



LATER, AS THE CARNAGE ENSUES....

DAMMIT *GORDO!* GET UP HERE AND *THROW SOME TWINKLE* ON *BRIAN'S GNOME!* HE'S WREAKING *HAVOC* ON MY BOYS.

-SPIT- -SPUTTER- *NO WAY!!* THOSE *PIPE BOMBS* ARE *BRUTAL!!* I'M *NOT* SUBJECTING MY *GLITTER BRIGADE* TO THAT KIND OF *WHOLE-CLOTH SLAUGHTER* AGAIN. *BESIDES,* I GOT MY *HANDS FULL* WITH *STEVIL'S CLOCK FAIRIES*. THEY'RE *GORGING* THEMSELVES!!

WHAT'S *WRONG* BOYS? DON'T HAVE THE *STOMACH* FOR IT?

C'MON STEVO! *POUR IT ON!!*



LATER STILL....

HA HA!!!! SO SAD -- TOO BAD, *BRIAN!*

ONE OF MY *GREMLINS* JUST USED HIS *MAGIC WRENCH* TO *FOUL UP* YOUR *STOMPING MODEL CLOCK LEG!*

GOOD JOB, *BOB!*



DAMN GREMLINS!!! I'M *DONE FOR!* I GOT NO *LEGS* - I'M *IMMOBILE!*

DON'T WORRY. I'LL SEND SOME *CLOCK FAIRIES* TO COVER YOU.

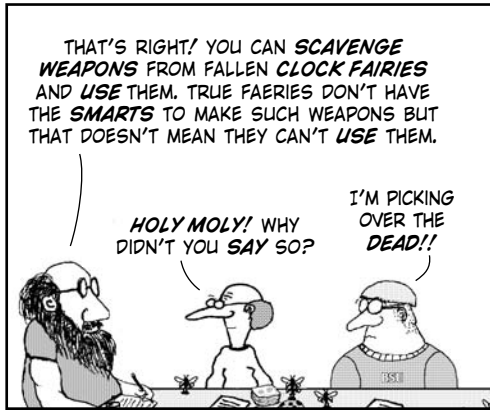
THANKS!



SAY *PETE,* HOW COME OUR *FAIRIES* CAN'T USE *GUNS* LIKE THE *CLOCK FAIRIES?* WE'RE THE *SAME SIZE* AND ALL.

WHO SAID YOU *COULDN'T?*





THAT'S RIGHT! YOU CAN **SCAVENGE WEAPONS** FROM FALLEN **CLOCK FAIRIES** AND **USE THEM**. TRUE FAERIES DON'T HAVE THE **SMARTS** TO MAKE SUCH WEAPONS BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY CAN'T **USE THEM**.

HOLY MOLY! WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO?

I'M PICKING OVER THE DEAD!!



SAY PETE, WHEN I TOOK OUT **BRIAN'S** CLOCK ARM YOU SAID HE **DROPPED HIS LAST PIPEBOMB**.

UH...YEAH. SO I DID. BUT THEY'RE **GNOME SIZED**.

OH... I SEE.



BUT WHAT IF I PUT **FOUR FAIRIES** ON IT? COULD THEY **FLY WITH IT**?

UH...WELL, ER... **SURE!** I GUESS SO.

YESSS!



HOLD ON TO YER **BRITCHES**, MONKEY BOY, COZ WE'RE ABOUT TO MAKE A **KAMIKAZE DIVE** ON YER ASS!

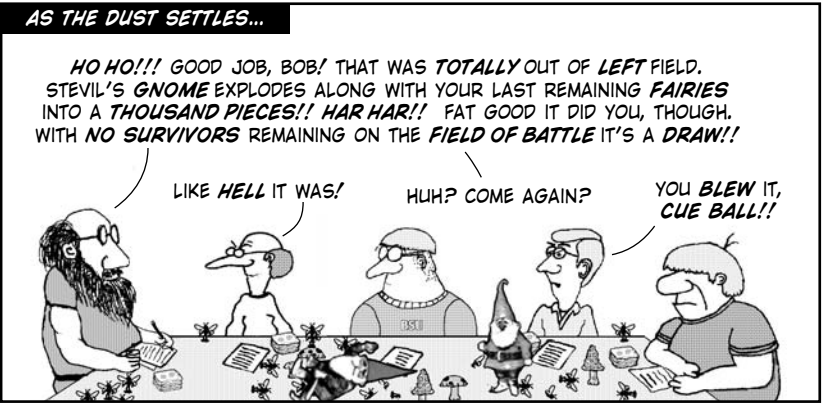
WHAT???!??!



K-K-KAMAKAZE??! BUT THAT'S **SUICIDE!!** WE'LL B-B-BE K-K-KILLED!

EXACTLY!

Y-Y-YOU'RE C-C-CRAZY!



AS THE DUST SETTLES...

HO HO!!! GOOD JOB, BOB! THAT WAS **TOTALLY OUT OF LEFT FIELD**. STEVIL'S **GNOME** EXPLODES ALONG WITH YOUR LAST REMAINING **FAIRIES** INTO A **THOUSAND PIECES!! HAR HAR!!** FAT GOOD IT DID YOU, THOUGH. WITH **NO SURVIVORS** REMAINING ON THE **FIELD OF BATTLE** IT'S A **DRAW!!**

LIKE HELL IT WAS!

HUH? COME AGAIN?

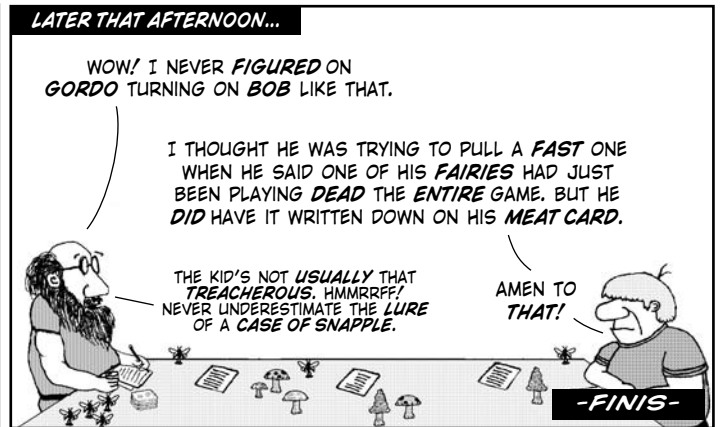
YOU BLEW IT, CUE BALL!!



SORRY PETE, BUT THAT CASE OF **SNAPPLE** GOES TO THE **FAIRY TEAM!!**

AS SOON AS STEVIL'S **GNOME** BIT THE **BIG ONE** HIS **CLOCK FAIRIES** WERE **LIBERATED** AND JOINED OUR **TEAM!!** SO WE'RE IN **CONTROL** OF THE **FIELD OF BATTLE!! WE WIN!!!**

ACTUALLY, BOB....



LATER THAT AFTERNOON...

WOW! I NEVER **FIGURED** ON **GORDO** TURNING ON **BOB** LIKE THAT.

I THOUGHT HE WAS TRYING TO PULL A **FAST ONE** WHEN HE SAID ONE OF HIS **FAIRIES** HAD JUST BEEN PLAYING **DEAD** THE **ENTIRE GAME**. BUT HE **DID** HAVE IT WRITTEN DOWN ON HIS **MEAT CARD**.

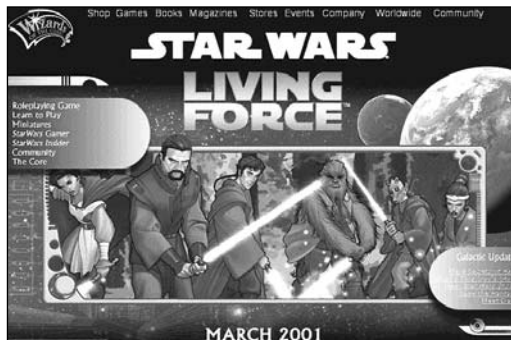
THE KID'S NOT **USUALLY** THAT **TREACHEROUS**. HMMRRFF! NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE **LURE** OF A **CASE OF SNAPPLE**.

AMEN TO THAT!

-FINIS-

THE FORCE IS STRONG AS EVER ON THE NET

by Kenneth Newquist



It is a bright time for the Republic. Two competing gaming systems have captured the hearts of *Star Wars* fans, and spawned enough content to drive a galaxy's worth of campaigns based on either the Old Way (West End Games' d6 edition) or the New Way (Wizard of the Coast's d20 edition).

The lead site for the New Way is Wizard of the Coast's **Official Star Wars RPG Site**. The site announces upcoming *Star Wars* RPG releases, and publishes a few sneak-peaks in support of them. It's also got some decent content for RPGA's new *Living Force* campaign. Living Force is a massively-multiplayer, real-world *Star Wars* campaign at conventions around the country. There are also several helpful articles, including one on how to convert from d6 to d20.

The number of fan sites for d20 *Star Wars* is surprisingly small, but then again, it's been out for less than a year. **Jedi Tiger** is a small but growing d20 site that has a few adventures, monster write-ups and columns, and is designed to be kid-friendly. A more extensive (but much harder to navigate) site is **Welby's Star Wars RPG Resources**. It's got more of the same, but it's also got "d20 *Star Wars*" conversions of the Fembots from *Austin Powers*, *Pinky and The Brain*, and *Futurama's Bender the Robot*. It's very strange, but fun to read anyway.

The Old Way is better represented. West End Games published its version of *Star Wars* for years and generated loads of material based on the original trilogy and its subsequent books. The game has a fiercely loyal following, and it's hardly shocking that many of the SW-RPG sites on the net are dedicated to this version.

The **Star Wars Role-Playing Club** is one of them. It's an online campaign that's been in existence for more than 10 years, the last five of them on the World Wide Web. Most of the site's content is password protected, but it does provide an overview of the campaign and the rules it uses. The **Star Wars RPG Association** is another online gaming group based on the West End edition. Like the SW-RPG Club, the site offers very little in the way of *Star Wars* content to the uninitiated, but it is an active and apparently well-organized campaign.

The **SW-RPG mailing list**, on the other hand, offers lots of archived goodies created by list members and other *Star Wars* fans. Its home page includes instructions for joining the list, and a link to its "Resource Pool." The pool's an FTP-based listing of files that can be time consuming to pick through, but includes gems like character templates, skills, creatures and even oddball content like an Alien (as in *Sigourney Weaver*) conversion to the West End edition. The list itself seems to be very low volume — I only received two messages over three days. It may be worth joining though — you never know when these kinds of communities are going to have a renaissance.

A good resource for both "d6" and "d20" adherents is the **Star Wars Role-Playing Game Resource Library**. On the d20 side the site offers prestige classes, new feats, d6-to-d20 conversions, lots

of starships, vehicles and equipment, and more. The d6 isn't as impressive, but players can still find articles of interest, including house rule tweaks, mass ground combat rules, and starship engineering rules. Fans of both systems will want to check out the site's random plot, cargo, and encounter generators

Another neutral voice in the d6-vs-d20 *Star Wars* world is **Star Wars RPG.net**. The stated goal of the site is to promote *Star Wars* role-playing, regardless of what system is used. The site's true to its word too. Fans can find a regularly published *Star Wars Journal* that includes content for both editions, and hosts a half-dozen game-related web sites. The most impressive of these hosted sites is the **SWRPG Database**

An indispensable tool for those looking for a little *Star Wars* inspiration — or just some cool graphics or sounds to spice up their game — is **Bantha Tracks**. The site's a *Star Wars* specific search engine, and it includes a huge number of categories: Downloads, Fans, Games, Collectibles, Knowledge and more. It's the perfect site to go to when you're tired of trolling through *Google's* 1 million+ *Star Wars* links. All of the 4,000+ sites indexed by the search engine have been rated by its editors and visitors, and each site entry includes graphical icons telling you what sort of resources are available there.

Have a site that will make a game master's life easier? Have a game system or campaign setting you'd like to see featured? E-mail it to me at knewquist@nuketown.com

OFFICIAL STAR WARS RPG SITE
<http://www.wizards.com/starwars/>

JEDI TIGER
<http://www.jeditiger.com>

WELBY'S STAR WARS RPG RESOURCES
www.angelfire.com/oh/shoju/starwarsrpg/index.html

STAR WARS ROLE-PLAYING CLUB
<http://www.starwarsclub.org>

STAR WARS RPG ASSOCIATION
<http://www.swrpga.com>

SW-RPG
<http://drycas.club.cc.cmu.edu/~jae/sw-rpg.html>
mailing list for West End Games

STAR WARS ROLE-PLAYING GAME RESOURCE LIBRARY
www.geocities.com/swrpg_resource_library/index.html

STAR WARS RPG.NET
<http://www.starwars-rpg.net>

SWRPG DATABASE
<http://www.starwars-rpg.net/swrpgdatabase>

BANTHA TRACKS
<http://www.banthatracks.co>



Two Familiar Games That Can't Save

By Rick Moscatello

Electronics Entertainment Expo (E3) is a big event, where all the big computer game companies get together in a huge hall and show off their latest, soon-to-be-released, games. It's a very rockin' place, with loud music, semi-naked girls, and occasionally good games. The little companies get together too, but it's in a side hall, practically a cemetery. Such companies are usually desperate for attention, hoping to attract the eye of a big company, who might help them out.

Two years ago, I saw a little Korean company called *Phantagram* there, showing off their game, *Kingdom Under Fire*. It was a neat little real-time strategy game in a fantasy world. It used nearly every good idea in games at the time, and looked pretty good. Alas, their English was fairly weak, so I really couldn't get all the details I wanted.

It looks like they finally got backing to release their game in the US. I'm happy for them but, alas, two years is a long, long, time in the computer game biz, and the new ideas of two years ago aren't so good now.

The basic idea of the game is you've got these two sides, see, Good Guys and Bad Guys. They don't like each other much and are bent on wiping the other out. To do that they'll need to build bases and units, and that requires resources like gold, iron, and mana...peons collect the resources, yadda, yadda, yadda. I'm sure you've heard the story before.

What sets this game apart from your generic RTS game? Heck if I know. These ideas have been tried elsewhere, and didn't work before.

The first nice idea is to have units gain experience as they fight. This is not a new idea. It was introduced in *Total Annihilation* (and *Total Annihilation: Kingdoms would be the first fantasy RTS game to do this*). It sure seems nice, but in a RTS game, you've got a ton of micromanaging to do (KUF more than most, since it lacks the refinements of more recent games), and combat units tend to be fairly fragile. So, even if you were inclined to devote much time to having a unit survive until its high level, it can still die in a matter of seconds. One curious quirk in the game is you can have your units murder other friendly units and gain experience for it. While this does make it easier to reach high level, it just isn't worthwhile to bother handling experience for rank-and-file troops, and by the time you build super troops (like dragons), the game is pretty much



over anyway.

The other significant feature of the KUF is the inclusion of Heroes. These guys also level up and your best bet is to make them murderers. While heroes also appear in other games, the experience system causes things to go haywire. Heroes quickly become so powerful that they can slaughter legions of enemy troops. Not only does this make combat rather bizarre, you'll find you won't even bother with resources late in the game—all you can do with the resources is to build worthless troops.

You can, sort of, wear down an enemy hero with wave after wave of soldiers, but it generally makes more sense to just micromanage your hero's combats, and only build units so your heroes can murder them for easy experience (yes, *the Good Guys can do this too!*). The same thing happens in a game called "Age of Wonders," with leveled up heroes trampling everything else. It's a real shame *Phantagram* couldn't capitalize on the errors of previous designs.

The unit pathfinding and combat AI are pretty "retro"...in other words, all the flaws that were acceptable years ago in these types of games are here. Nowadays my tolerance for armies that get hopelessly confused by a single tree in their path, or just sit there and get pounded by attackers, is pretty minimal.

While these flaws take it out of the running for a great game, worthy of playing online, there's still some solitaire fun here. Almost. There are two campaigns (*one from each side, of course*), of 13 missions, 3 of which are "roleplaying" (*i.e., dungeon crawls*). They're reasonably fun, but, YOU

Continued on page 31...

THE ONE KINGDOM

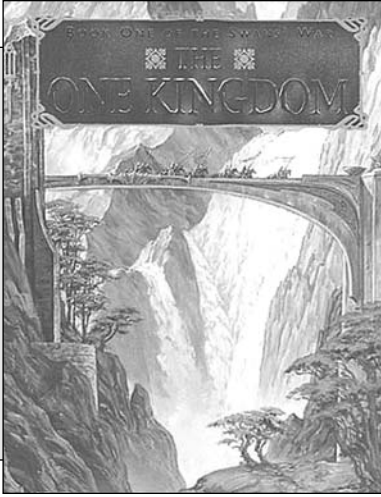
A Book Review by John O'Neill

THE ONE KINGDOM The Swan's War, Book One

Sean Russell

Published by Harper Collins/Eos

463 Issues.



Sean Russell has been publishing tasty-looking fantasy novels for almost exactly a decade, beginning with *The Initiate Brother* in 1991, and most recently the *River Into Darkness* series (*Beneath the Vaulted Hills* and *The Compass of the Soul*). His books have been recommended to me for years but, what can I say, I've been busy.

One thing I've always admired about Russell, though: he avoids trilogies. I like big, fat fantasy epics as much as the next guy – I just hate waiting. I'm not sure if it's deliberate rebellion against stagnant convention or just the way his brain functions, but for whatever reason Russell has bucked the unwritten law of fantasy series – Thou Shalt Write Trilogies, and Only Trilogies – throughout his career. His previous three series have each been exactly two novels long. This is so rare the language doesn't even have a word for it (duology? Biquel? My spellchecker barfs on all of the possibilities).

The One Kingdom is his seventh book, the first volume in *The Swan's War* saga, and near as I can figure out it's not destined for trilogy status either. Which is a relief, because this one is a compelling and wonderful read, and I'm in no hurry to join the teaming ranks of CFS (chronic fantasy saga) sufferers perpetually waiting for the next installment from Robert Jordan or George R.R. Martin.

The One Kingdom is set in the land of Ayr, where more than a century ago the King died without naming an heir. The result has been a ceaseless and cold-blooded conflict between two powerful families, the Renne and the Wills, each with a legitimate claim, and

each willing to stop at nothing – including the brutal sacrifice of one of their own – to further their own ends.

For the Renne, the sacrifice is intended to be their leader Toren, a man who has elected to cast aside a century of conflict and extend the hand of peace to his opponents. His family, seeing only disaster, plots his murder at the upcoming Westbrook tournament... a murder that can conveniently be pinned on the Wills. For the Wills, the sacrifice is to be innocent Elise, a young woman whose rebellious spirit is to be crushed in an arranged marriage to a sinister and extremely ambitious lord.

As the convoluted plots of the noble houses take shape, young Valeman Tam and his fortune-hunting buddies are poking around the old battlefields for relics, such as the weapons and standards of the ancient and mysterious Knights of the Vow. Soon enough they find themselves caught in the mounting violence as a troop of armed men overrun their small camp in the middle of the night in pursuit of a strange traveler... sending Tam and his friends on a river journey into the Wold. And all the while, behind the scenes, the last remnants of the Knights of the Vow make final preparations for the coming struggle, and begin to emerge from nearly a century of patient watching and waiting....

Russell's prose is very lean and his dialog very crisp, a textbook example of a fast read. Especially noteworthy is his gift for romance, something that's usually rather ham-handed in epic fantasy. The portrait of Llyn Renne, horribly scared and cloistered since childhood but still fierce in spirit – secretly attending the family costume ball and charming everyone, especially the noble Dease – is particularly aching.

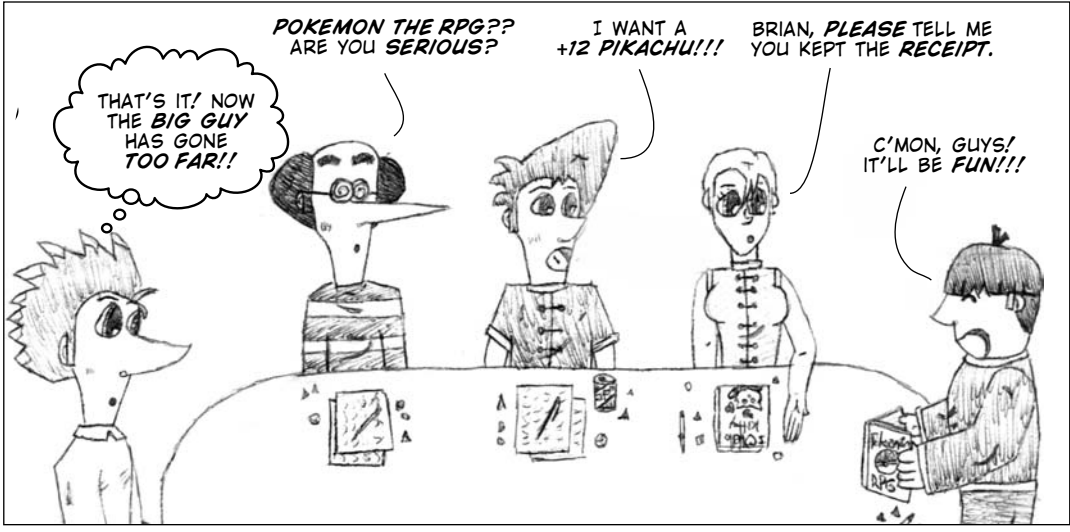
The author bio on the book flap labels Sean Russell "one of the strongest and most influential of the new epic fantasists." While there's the heavy hand of publishing hyperbole here, in this case I think it may well be true. There are crateloads of young hopefuls trying their hand at epic fantasy today, but there are only a few I care to pay attention to. Russell is on that list. His fiction is fast moving, inventive, and – best of all – truly romantic. It's a rare combination.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have six previous Russell novels to read while I wait for the second volume of *The Swan's War*, and not a lot of time before my next column.

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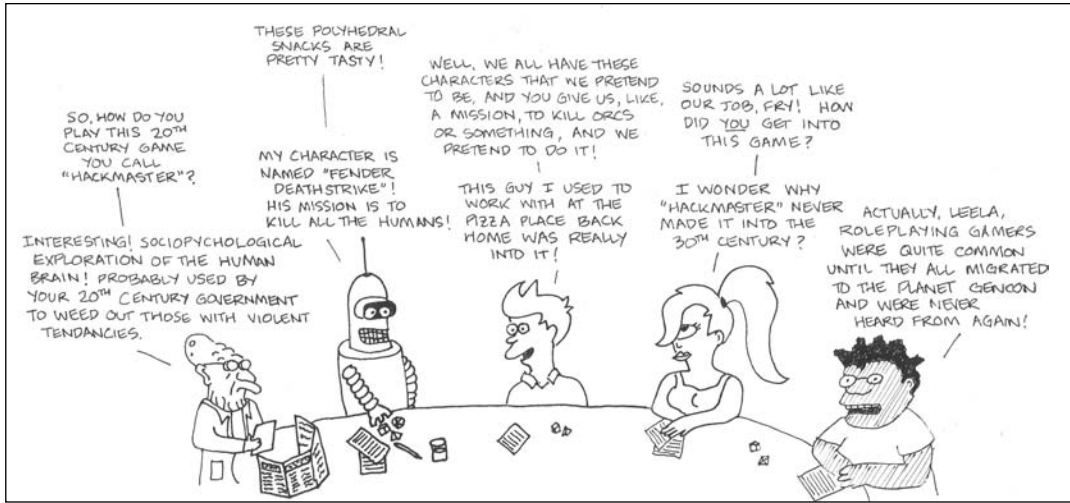
John O'Neill is the publisher and editor of Black Gate magazine (www.blackgate.com). His favorite fantasy saga is Lord of The Rings, though he's also a fan of Roger Zelazny, Dan Simmons, Stephen King, and Lloyd Alexander, none of whom have written a trilogy.

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Richard Williams submitted this home-brewed KODT inspired by the Pokemon craze many months past. It took us a while, but we finally got around to running it. (Meaning, Jolly was cleaning off his desk and found where he had mislaid it.)

Future Hack?



Vivian Abraham of Somerville, Maine sent in this spoof of the Futurama characters trying their hand at HackMaster. In the letter accompanying her drawing, Vivian wrote, "It took me a short time to draw and a really long time to get around to inking and sending it in. However, Gary Gygax's appearance on the animated show was the divine moment that told me it was time!"

BRUNO THE BANDIT

By IAN McDONALD



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Read Bruno the Bandit daily at www.brunothebandit.com

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

CAN'T SAVE! So, you can play all the way through a mission, then get your hero snuffed by a lucky shot at the end, and lose, and you have no choice but to play all the way through again, and hope for no bad breaks at the end.

If you're really dying for a fantasy RTS, you'll get some fun out of this, but wait a few months to see if you can get it a bit cheaper.

Another game that I saw years ago at E3 and finally hit the shelves recently was *Oni*, by *Bungie software*. These are the guys that took RTS games in a new direction with their *Myth* series, and they've more or less done it again, although this time with fighting games. *Oni* is a third person fighting game in a milieu that is strangely rare in computer games: Japanese anime.

It all starts out with the fundamental anime cliché, and it doesn't change much throughout the game. Your character is named Konoko, and, this being anime, she's a winsome young lass with a mysterious past, and, of course, tremendous martial arts skill despite her barely nubile age. While she sports a coil of purple hair, and goes through several colorful outfits during the game, her face is strangely impassive even when she's getting pummeled (*ok, this might be a homage to some of the more minimalist animation of the genre*).

Of course, nobody ever refused to play a game because of poor facial animation, and what really matters in this third person fighting game is the fighting, and it is done very well here. To combat hordes of goons, Konoko has an impressive array of fluid moves, and they're all accompanied with appropriately painful enough sounds. We're not talking just kicks and punches, either, the little lady has a few special moves, such as a spinning chokehold that does serious damage to anyone luckless enough to be caught in it. The goons also look good, both in how they react to getting hit, and in their fighting (*even sometimes taunting you in classic villain fashion*); actually, this is a bit of a problem. It seems like they spent so much time making a goon fight well, that they decided to give ALL goons the same combat AI. So, once you've figured out how to beat one, you've beaten them all. The bosses have a bit more variety to them, but not much.

Thus, combat would get pretty tedious if you only could go hand to hand, but there's a nifty supply of ranged weapons around too (*although, strangely, no martial arts weapons like nunchakus and the like*). You typically confront three goons, one of whom is armed. Your best bet is to nail the guy with the gun first (you don't have to actually kill him, there are a number of disarming blows), then use the gun to kill them all. There are a few other weapons in addition to pistols, with my favorite, as usual, being the sniper rifle, which fires freezing bolts.

In addition to combat, there are a few puzzles to solve, but nothing much more complex than "access terminal A to open door B". Once again, it's just enough to give variety in contrast to the endless fights.

An anime game needs a story, and they seem to follow the anime template well enough. Basically, you need to fight hordes of corporate goons, with reasons given to you at the beginning of

each mission. Most elements are only hinted at, and the explanation of most things is left to your imagination; hey, it's just like real anime! The cut scenes are very cool, often loaded with fights, and sometimes have some very credible dialogue too.

Unfortunately, they let the story drive the locations a bit much. You're going to fight in a wide variety of commercial venues, from offices, warehouses and factories to, well, MORE offices. The opening level, in a besieged airport, is pretty nice, but it's all downhill after that. In a nod to the fighting game mindset, you'll find various powerups inexplicably lying around (*or sometimes handed to you by civilians*). You'll generally need them so badly you won't mind that it doesn't make any sense how you get them. The levels are also very large, but you'll get a compass that helps a great deal.

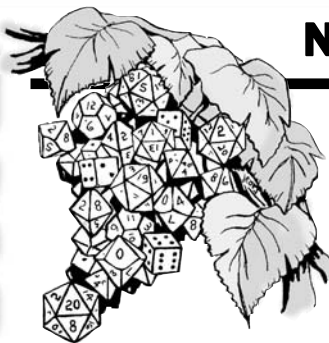
Once again, there's a non-save feature in the game. *Oni* saves only at certain places, and you don't even get a choice about it. So, the game might very well save you when you're just about to die. Oh boy, nothing like loading up and dying 20 times in a row before giving up and going to a (*much previous*) save point. Sure wish I understood why designers keep forgetting to put a save feature in games, especially in large levels. This alone is what keeps this game from getting a great recommendation.

So, *Oni* is an anime-based game without interesting fights, without a save feature, and without much replay value (*no multiplayer*). You can get your money's worth out of it, but it'll be a close thing unless you're a major, major, fan of anime. □

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GAME
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"No! We don't take yak stones as currency!"



Above: When gamers go bad — after pooling their money and buying a 'cube' of dice from the Chessex Booth the spoils are divvied up.



Above: The world's first "Outdoor" KODT Live Reading took place at Game Invasion.



Chris Wiese of Holistic Design (middle) explains the finer details of Carnage while Steve Marsh (left) of Pyramid Magazine fame looks on.

ED GREENWOOD TO AUTHOR 'KINGDOMS OF KALAMAR' SOURCE BOOK

Kenzer and Company is proud to announce the latest addition to the *Kingdoms of Kalamar™* family: *Geanavue: The Stones of Peace*, a sourcebook by Ed Greenwood. Ed has been busily penning a new campaign sourcebook for the *Kingdoms of Kalamar*, Kenzer & Company's official *Dungeons and Dragons®* campaign setting.

Here's what Ed had to say when we gave him the *Kalamar* material he needed to get started on the project. "I'm reading through it with the same old thrill that I used to have in the dear dawn days. I'm pumped! You've got me excited!"

"Having the premier writer of *Dungeons and Dragons* products add another notch to his belt with a *Kingdoms of Kalamar* book just made good sense to us," adds Brian Jelke, Vice President of Kenzer and Company. "Ed has created some fantastic stuff over the years and we're looking forward to combining our strengths with his to come out with a kick-ass product."

The *Kingdoms of Kalamar* core book, a 272 page trade-hardcover with color, will be available this Spring. The new *Kalamar* supplement, *Geanavue: The Stones of Peace*, is planned for a GENCON 2001 release. The *Geanavue* book is a detailed city setting to be used as seed and background material for further adventures. Here are some of the features the book provides: The history of the Basalt Throne and the Emerald Eagle, the common name for the government and ruling house of the city respectively. A detailed accounting of life in *Geanavue* including local laws, customs, festivals, commerce and more. Information on the local guilds and families of power, the holy houses and not-so-holy houses. All this exquisite detail is tied together with adventure outlines, rumors and legends as only Ed Greenwood can do! □

FIELD REPORT: GAME INVASION 2001

The very first *Game Invasion* was recently held in Jacksonville, Florida on the campus of the University of North Florida (February 24th to 25th). Special guests included Chris Wise (Holistic Design), Steve Marsh (Pyramid Online), Steve Long and our very own, Jolly Blackburn.

Jolly reports, "I had a blast! The *Game Invasion* staff were wonderful hosts. Except for getting my butt kicked repeatedly in the game auction, I can't remember when I had a better time."

Besides tons of gaming and good company a few of the highlights of the show were Prince Ally's "All Flesh Must Be Eaten" event and the KODT Live Reading. (Which was held outdoors.) Later, just for fun, Jolly and Lloyd Brown wrestled in a vat of Jello as an angry crowd threatened to do them bodily harm if they didn't stop.

Seriously, Lloyd and his band of merry men (and women) put on a great show. Mark your calendars now and plan on attending next year. This show promises to get better and better. □

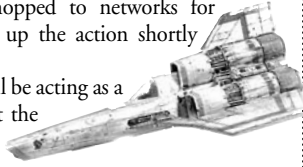
plucked from the vine for your reading enjoyment

• BATTLESTAR GALACTICA REMAKE ANNOUNCED

Bryan Singer (X-Men, Usual Suspects) has signed on to executive produce a new *Battlestar Galactica* series for Studios USA.

The show is being shopped to networks for 2002/2003 and will pick up the action shortly after the original series.

Creator Glen Larson will be acting as a consultant and is to direct the pilot.



• JUSTICE LEAGUE TO WHUP ASS ON CARTOON NETWORK

The CARTOON Network has announced a November premiere for its hour-long animated Justice League series.

• CAT IN THE HAT TO COME TO BIG SCREEN

Seinfeld execs Alec Berg, Jeff Schaeffer, and Dave Mandel (Clerks: The Animated Series) have been hired to adapt Universal's live-action *The Cat in the Hat* feature. Tim Allen is expected to star as the Cat. (Waaaaaaahhh??)

• TIME MACHINE REMAKE ANNOUNCED

Simon Wells, great-grandson of author H.G. Wells, has begun production on his feature film adaptation of *The Time Machine*.

Guy Pearce (L.A. Confidential) is to star as a scientist trying to prove that time travel is possible so as to change a past tragedy, only to find himself 800,000 years in the future in a time when mankind is divided into the hunter and the hunted.

Time Machine will also star Jeremy Irons.

• SIXTH SENSE SEQUEL

Spyglass Entertainment has announced plans to develop a sequel to *The Sixth Sense*.

• HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY REMAKE

Director Jay Roach (Austin Powers, Meet the Parents) is working on an adaptation of the classic Hitchhiker's series. (kewll!)

• PLANET OF THE APES COMIC BOOK ANNOUNCED.

Dark Horse Comics has acquired the comic rights to FOX's new Planet of the Apes feature film.



Speaking of the Apes, if you haven't checked out the trailer you should go to <http://www.planetoftheapes.com> and check it out. The movie is slated for a July release. □

HEY, I HEARD THAT HESTON DUDE IS GONNA PLAY A CAMEO IN PLANET OF THE APES.

YEAH, ONLY THIS TIME HE PLAYS ONE OF THE APES. THAT'LL BE SO KEWL.

PLANET OF THE APES IS A CLASSIC. THEY BETTER NOT MUSS IT UP.



HUH? MY CLERIC GOT KONKED ON THE HEAD BY A METEOR? YOU MEAN HE'S DEAD?

OH MAN, WHAT ARE THE ODDS OF A METEOR HITTING SOMEONE RIGHT ON THE HEAD LIKE THAT?

THAT'S WHAT I SAID. YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN WEARING YOUR HELMET.



ARKANSAS

5/18/01 – 5/20/01
Roc*Kon 2001
Little Rock, AR
RPGA, GURPS, In Nomie, D & D 3E,
and Troll Lord Games
Visit our website:
<http://www.rockon.org/index.html>

CALIFORNIA

5/25/01 – 5/28/01
KublaCon
Oakland, CA
RPG, board games, ccg, and mini's
Visit our website:
<http://www.kublacon.com/>

IOWA

5/04/01 – 5/06/01
Jen-Con 11
Mt. Vernon, IA
The annual gaming convention of the
Cornell College Chess and Games Club.
Visit our website:
http://cornell-iowa.edu/chess_and_games/

KENTUCKY

5/04/01 – 5/06/01
Odyssey Con 2001
Harlan, KY
Featuring Sci-Fi and Fantasy in all their
myriad forms including films, books,
comics, role-playing and miniature
wargames.
Visit our website:
<http://www.angelfire.com/scifi/odcon>

MINNESOTA

7/6/01 – 7/8/01
CONvergence 2001
Minneapolis, MN
Sci-Fi and Fantasy Panels, readings, gam-
ing, art, masquerade, parties, live music, DJ
dance.
Visit our website:
<http://www.convergence-con.org>

NEVADA

5/25/01 – 5/28/01
Con 2001
Reno, NV
Guest of Honor include: Larry Elmore
Visit our website:
<http://con2001.home.att.net>

NEW JERSEY

4/20/01 – 4/22/01
MonCon 2001
Tinton Falls, NJ
Visit our website:
www.gameconvention.com

5/25/01 – 5/28/01

Dreamation
East Rutherford, NJ
Visit our website:
<http://www.dexposure.com/dreamation.htm>

SOUTH CAROLINA

4/20/01 – 4/22/01
RoundCon 2001
Columbia, SC
We are celebrating our 15th anniversary
this year. We feature RPGA role-playing,
Non-RPGA role-playing, LARPS, board
games, anime room, dealers room, and
more!
Visit our website:
www.roundcon.org

SOUTH DAKOTA

5/25/01 – 5/28/01
Mage Con North – 7
5/25/01 – 5/28/01
Sioux Falls, SD
Guest of Honor include: Jolly Blackburn
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TEXAS

6/1/01 – 6/3/01
Project A:Kon XII
Dallas, TX
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Conventions listed in bold are shows that Kenzer and Company will be attending.

To get your convention listed here for free, please email todd@kenzerco.com with the following information: Show dates, City and State, brief highlight of your show, and contact information and/or a web page for your show.



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.

Your editorial in the latest issue of *Knights* was very incisive, on target.

The same "critics" stereotyping the RPG enthusiast would rail mightily at like treatment of just about anyone else. Thankfully, in the ranks that count these days, mainly those in the computer field, there is a lot more awareness of the value of RPGs and those who play them.

As an aside, and after reading the letters in *Our Readers Talk Back*, I am almost persuaded to the viewpoint of the critics... People fretting over the fate of a rattlesnake indeed! Maybe some more pragmatic view of the real world is needed by gamers after all...

A firm supporter of the true PETA, People for the Eating of Tasty Animals,

Gary Gygax
via E-mail

Oh for the love of the great gaming gawd, I am surprised that no one mentioned the best *Basic D&D* movies/series to ever come out. Does *Record of the Lodoss Wars* (*The Original series*) ring a bell. This opus of gaming animation harkened back to the time when Elf was a character class and nothing was ever done by half steps. It is so good that me and my friends made a drinking game out of it. Whenever someone hits a monster in the eye, take a drink. Whenever someone cries out the name Parn, Deedlit, Beld or Lyleia, take a drink.

Not only is it a good movie for a college game, it has classic elements that gamers try to capture, such as cool magic swords, a great gaming environment, and an epic storyline with two story arcs with great fight climaxes. Go out and watch it, buy it, love it.

Cedric TS Snow
via E-mail

Luckily I work in a gaming store, so I grab every new *Knights* almost before it hits the shelves. The *Editorial-of-a-Madman*, about the *D&D* movie, in Issue #52 was amazingly entertaining! The clips from reviewers had me laughing so hard, some of my customers looked at

me strangely.

Sadly, I did not get as much enjoyment from the movie itself. If *Dungeons & Dragons: The Movie* had been named ANYTHING but *D&D*, it would have been a halfway decent movie. We all do it, my gaming group went to see *The Mummy* together when it opened, and we laughed, and had a good time relating it to as an adventure.

We watch *Gladiator* and joke about Maximus and how it must be nice to be 20th level. However, it is very sad, when *The Mummy* does a better job portraying *D&D* the game, then the movie named after the game!

We all assumed that the movie would kick because, hello, a gamer had kicked down the door and said "I will make this movie!"

What we forgot is the line of BAD gamers we have seen in the years playing. The obvious choice of setting for the movie would have been *Greyhawk*, especially with 3rd Ed. being released highlighting that very world. Where did *D&D: The Movie* take place? Some homebrewed world that doesn't exist where, evidently, dragons can't talk, beholders are dumber than kobolds, and (*darkskinned*) elven rangers run around with crossbows. The movie was entertaining enough, though I wish I had seen a matinee and not spent \$8.50 on it, but the ending.....the last 5 minutes or so, was the biggest load of dragon crap I have ever seen.

What was that? If this gamer ever sat down at OUR table and tried to sling dice, we would boot him out on his dice pouch!

I am with Jolly, I have knelt before my gaming god and prayed for *Lord of the Rings*, and *Mummy 2*, and I play my DVD of *Gladiator* until the laser almost burns through!

Benjamin Lott
Antioch, CA

I am writing in response to your "Editorial of a Mad Man" in issue #52 where it was discussed how movie critics reviewing the movie *D&D* slammed the players of *D&D* as well as the movie itself.

First off I would like to commend you for not taking a stance on the movie itself, though I believe it seriously had it's flaws and missed the mark, the temptation to point such things out would have been overwhelming for me. Thank you for showing more restraint.

Now as far as the critics are concerned. Please try to understand who we are talking about here. They are movie critics writing for a newspaper in a very competitive market. They are literally writing for their jobs each time they review a movie,

and as their name implies, critics are best at criticizing.

This is what they get paid for and as human psychology dictates, dirt sells more words then praise. As a result, it is a simple thing to criticize not only the movie, but the sub-culture that brought the movie on, the sub-culture responsible for the making of such a movie. This not only occurred with *D&D*, but also with *X-Men*, *Spawn*, *Star Wars*, and a wave of any other such 'geeky' movie that has ever been displayed on the silver screen. As a result, I would not take such reviews or words so personally.

After all, shedding some light on who is writing the reviews and what their goals were it is by far more understandable. On top of that, I find it ironic that 'pimply faced, pencil-necked geeks' who do nothing more then insult others, insult the creations of others, and sit around in dark theaters watching movies all day, picking their noses in the backs rows of the local metroplex to do their jobs; that these same people dare to insult and put down other "pimply-faced, pencil-necked geeks" who may sit around for a few hours a week or a month to participate in an entertaining game.

All I can say is people in glass houses should not throw stones.

In response to this movie and sub-culture spawned by losers living in their parent's basements who are still virgins and missed out on life as a whole? I am a thirty year old technical professional in the computer field making a comfortable salary with a wife and two children and I am well confident that my sex life would seriously embarrass any movie critic writing for some dirt-ball rag of a newspaper. (*I apologize for the bitterness there, but it is the truth, I believe.*) The game *D&D* has evolved.

It has become more mature as the years have gone by, and this is evident in the three editions it has gone through. I attribute this to the core population of role players that hung with the game since it's inception in the early 1980's. The gamers evolved and became more 'mature', more developed emotionally and mentally, and guess what? This influenced the game to do the same thing.

The creators and developers of *D&D* also fall into this grouping of people. It became clear to the developers that flexibility of the game was the key to it's evolutionary survival.

All I can say is that I enjoy the game now as much as I did when I first started playing nine years ago with some of the same players I started playing with. I have a thick skin and take some slack, now and again, because of this hobby of mine.

I have learned to shrug it off and con-

tinue on my way. D&D may never become an acceptable hobby for the general populace, but I do not let that trouble me as long as there is still an audience and product keeps coming from Hasbro.....quality product I might add. When this stops, when the sub-culture stops becoming profitable for them and as a result the product falters, then I would concede that the game may be on the decline, however for now, it is still going strong.

Jeff
Kokomo Indiana.

After reading Jolly's editorial in issue #52 of KODT I had to write. As I was reading the reviews of the D&D movie (*apparently the same ones Jolly was reading*), I was becoming a little put off.... no, I was down right pissed at the hail of insults flowing towards the gaming community. I know I shot off a few hot e-mails to the appropriate parties, but of course little will come of it.

Lets face it, when it comes to gamers and just about everything else intellectual the main stream press is clueless. I personally am proud to be called "geek", as I have seen the non-geek set and want no part of that mess! GAME GEEKS RULE!

On the other hand, look at who's writing these reviews anyway... I mean, what qualifies someone to be a movie reviewer... a guy/gal who frequently goes into a dark room, sits for two hours, and then writes about the experience...yeah, that takes talent. And lets look at the reviewers we know about — Gene Shallot, Leonard Maltin, Siskil and Ebert (and now all the 'GUEST' reviewers)...are these guys the biggest group of GEEKS you have ever seen or what? And the ones you see on TV are the best the press has to offer, just think about the guy at your local newspaper...his aspirations of writing the great Pulitzer prize winning article....getting the fame and fortune a byline like that would give them ... going to review "Dungeons and Dragons: The Movie."

They're pissed, and looking for an easy target to ease their small minds, and make themselves feel superior to something or someone.

After I thought about this, my anger subsided, and I actually pity them — fated to wallow in mediocrity, never to write a journalistic piece of any substance or meaning. They really aren't worth the time it took me to write this letter, but my pity forces me to give them something, sort of like when I throw my dog a bone....

Dave Wile
via E-mail

Lately KODT has been receiving opinions in response to the **GamerGrrrl's Manifesto** in issue #48. Although I feel that Hilary Doda's piece is an intrinsically important one, there is a unifying underlying cause that all gamers should feel passionate about. I guess the straw that broke my back was reading the editorial on the D&D movie. Now, I am not one to empower any critics by basing my decision on whether or not to see a movie; but, the critics in this editorial began attacking a hobby that I hold dear.

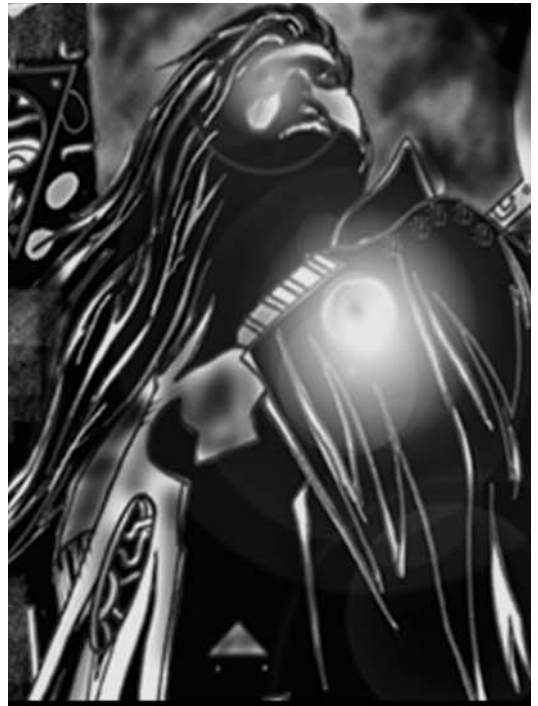
I have always been aware of the stigma surrounding those of us who game. Hell, I've seen the phone book commercial that suggests that those who game are pathetic losers without a social life (*or social skills for that matter*). But to be berated by an unqualified, uninformed movie critic is too much.

I began gaming roughly six years ago. Nowadays, my gaming book collection as well as my personal gaming circle have grown. Since my first roll of the die, I have been drawn to the imagination and pure cerebral tactics involved in a good RPG. More importantly, over the past six years I have made lasting friendships that have all stemmed from gaming. How can something that is a positive influence on a person's social life, as well as how well a person can use their mind at problem solving, be a bad thing?

So, in a roundabout response to Hilary's manifesto, we as gamers should put the petty differences and squabbles over gender and such aside. The RPG world is not strictly for males. GamerGrrrls have a place in the RPG world, not as sexual objects or cannon fodder. There are two GamerGrrrls in our gaming group (*one of which happens to be my wife*), and more are always welcome.

Gamers should accept one another as kindred spirits that enjoy the same hobby (*regardless of differences*). If we can get past the very things that inspired Hilary's manifesto, then we as gamers can press forward. Together, we can overcome this stigma that the media tends to place upon us; and, we can let Hollywood (*as well as the entire mainstream empire*) know that gaming is a viable source of entertainment ... more importantly, that gameheads are everywhere.

Todd D. Wilson
Valparaiso, Indiana



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Brian and Steve



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SPEAR OF THE LOHGIN

Paradigm Concepts • www.paradigmconcepts.com

The Spear of the Lohgin is the first of module of the **Canceri Chronicles** — a series of adventures that focus on the wicked nation of Canceri, a place of macabre horror and deadly intrigue. This series is yet another offering of **d20 System** product and is for four to six players of 4th – 6th level.

I don't want to spoil the adventure for any potential players, but there are a couple of highlights that need to be pointed out. One of the first things that struck me about this module was the high quality of work. The art is very nice, with the cover done by Brom. The maps are all done with *Campaign Cartographer 2*, and are clean and easy to read. All the text that is to be shared with the players is highlighted and off set from the other text, making it stand out. The overall quality of the module is very nice.

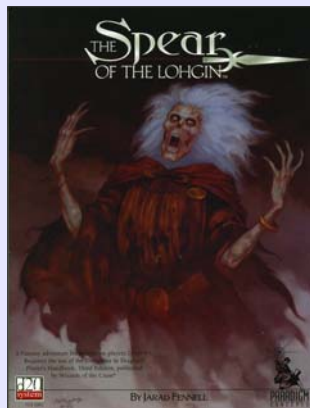
The really kewl thing about the module, however, is the way the story line is broken up into two different classes. There are *Hard points* and *Soft point*. The Hard points are essential to the plot. They are the points that move the story along. The soft points in the story line will allow the Game Master to alter the pace of the adventure, they could all be included giving this module more of a campaign feel, or they could be excluded making the adventure shorter. This added flexibility is a nice touch to

a good product. The story also has good background information so the GM could drop this city into a ongoing campaign.

I'll leave you with a quote from the adventure which will hopefully serve as a teaser.

"Look here. These strangers. So strong, they are. So courageous. But despite what they think, they'll end up just like the rest of us eventually. Sooner than us, more than likely. They'll end up...as corpses. You can trust me on that." - Erot of Canceri

Brian's Rating: Hackworthy!!



BOARD ROOM

Incom Productions • www.boardgamers.net

Here's something interesting that came across my desk this month. Jolly personally stopped by desk saying, "These are kewl! Be sure to check them out!" He then handed me a couple of video tapes which said **Board Room** on the box. The blurb on the back explained they were tapes of an Internet TV show of the same name.

Each tape in the series deals with a particular board game and how to play it. The host is a very friendly looking guy named, Bob Schwartz.

It's obvious Bob has a passion for board games. He does an interview either in person or by phone with the actual game designer as they go over the game in great detail.

In the video, Bob goes over the components of the game. He then plays a round or two, with the designer talking him through it, while explaining the mechanics of the games.

The viewer also gets some strategy hints for the games from the game designers. How kewl is that?

With the cost of new games ever rising, these videos go a long way toward helping you make much better use of your spending dollars. So check them out and start making better buying decisions. There is also a bunch of general game design information covered in the interviews. If you are an aspiring game designer these videos are a must have. Retailers might consider buying a few of these tapes and having them on hand for potential customers.

Brian's Rating: Grab a few!



TRILOGY OF FUN#1 • Mythrole Games • www.mythrole.com

Mythrole games, a new company, has entered the game industry by releasing a trilogy of card games in one package.

The games are **Shrimpin**, **Witch Hunt**, and **Night of the Ill-Tempered Squirrel** and are sold together in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. After you download the files you simply print out the cards, cut them up and you're ready to play.

In the game **Shrimpin**, you take up the job of running a shrimp boat on the Louisiana coastline. You need to decide what shrimp hole you want to fish. You can make upgrades to your shrimpin boat, and you can sabotage the other players' efforts to bring in a full net's worth of shrimp. Ahhh, a chance to experience the life of Forrest Gump.

In **Witch Hunt**, each player gets dealt some villagers and the goal of the game is to hang your opponents' villagers while at the same time protecting your own from the same fate. There are many ways to accomplish this goal. For example, you can bribe the judge, call in a witness, plant false evidence, and use other forms of making the other villagers appear to be practicing witchcraft and therefore deserving to be hung.

And finally, it's the **Night of the Ill-Tempered Squirrel**. The goal of this game is to create the worst possible horror movie ever. The cards in the game are broken up into seven movie elements: title, actor, monster, plot, set location, FX, and finale. After you assemble your movie 'release event' cards are then played. The winner of the game is the person who creates the worst horror movie.

For just slightly more money than an extra value meal, you get all three games in one bunch.

Brian's Rating: Cheap Fun!!



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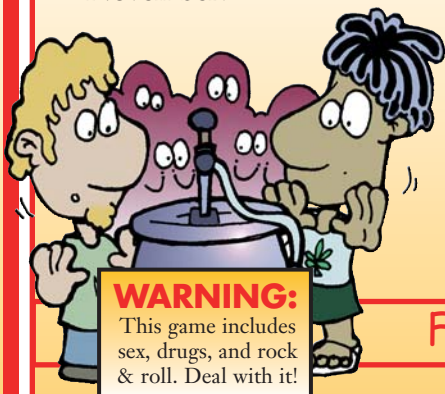
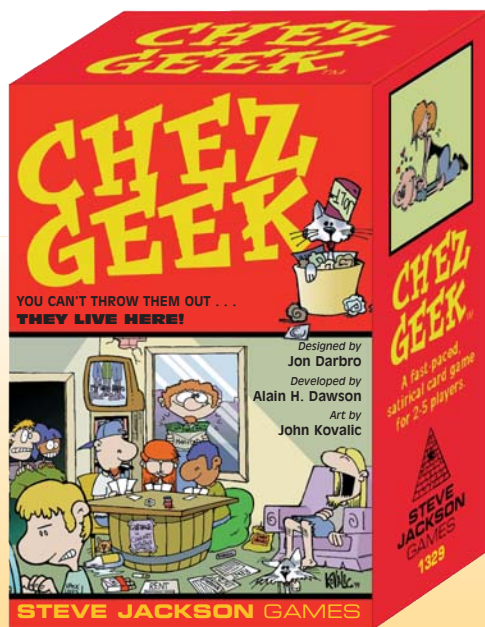
Take it to a party, a bar, or your favorite café. Your friends become your roommates as you each try to get enough Slack to overcome the stress of your job. You can get points for sleeping, watching TV, and nookie. Got money from home? Buy beer and CDs, and invite your friends over to *Chez Geek*!

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THE TOP TWENTY PROBLEMS WITH D&D 3E

We love the new third edition of Dungeons and Dragons just as much as the next gamer but when we received this irreverent look at the game from Christopher Heath (*Who submitted the classic KODT strip "Agent of Evil" by the way*) we got a chuckle out of it. We thought our readers might enjoy reading it as well.

20. D20s wear out quicker than the other dice.
19. Adult diapers now standard equipment for wizards over the age of sixty-five.
18. Three words: kobolds have goatees.
17. Infamous tarasque now 3' shorter.
16. New character races to include slimes, molds and puddings. Note: puddings may not become paladins and slimes may not multi-class.
15. Price of lute strings raised to 3 silver pieces.
14. Thieves may pick their friends and they may pick their noses, but they may NOT pick their friends' noses.
13. Extensive charts and tables outline in detail the combat penalties for hemorrhoid sufferers.
12. All elves, druids, rangers and bards must "find a leafy glade and make merry".
11. New rule: When a character dies . . . a player dies.
10. Dungeon Master is now a non-player character gnome with a heart of gold, appearing suddenly to guide the player characters along their way via cryptic words of wisdom, only to vanish seconds later.
9. All halflings are considered to be "randy" by default.
8. Gold bugs now worth one gold piece.
7. Repeating crossbows only fire pixie stix.
6. By nature of very specific rules, wizards are forced to have relations with their familiars.
5. Half-orcs now larger, but lactose intolerant.
4. All eccentric kings and dastardly villains must behave and dress as professional wrestlers.
3. Gaze of basilisk now just makes you warm and tingly inside (though this attack still extends to the ethereal plane).
2. Nearly half of all non-player characters begin an encounter by declaring a thumb war.
1. Otiluke's Freezing Sphere- not so cold anymore.

HACK FEATURE!

GIMME THE DAMN CAR KEYS, FRANK!! FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS DRIVE DRUNK!

SHOOKA!
SHOOKA!

-HIC- C'MON, H-HARRY. LEMME GO, DAT BROOD WENCH AT DA -HIC- BAR WANTS ME, SHE WANTS ME BAD.

Hack Feature is a sneak peek at some of the nasties awaiting you in the upcoming Hacklopedia of Beasts. Above, a **Giant Predacious Beetle** acts responsibly when it comes to the welfare of his little kobold drinking-buddy. [Note: In the actual Hacklopedia, giant predacious beetles are nasty, dangerous brutes. They don't speak in cartoon balloons and they really aren't responsible drinkers. Oh....and they hate kobolds in general.] □

Overheard at the Table

"Wait, we can't fight these guys. I don't have the right dice for it."



Mark Metroka (*Heroes of Asfar*) of sent us this picture of his home-brewed painting showing the Knights mixing it up with the characters from J.D. Webster's classic *Finieous Fingers* strip. Mark reports he displayed the painting at some local cons and that several fans walked away 'disappointed' when they learned the original was not for sale.



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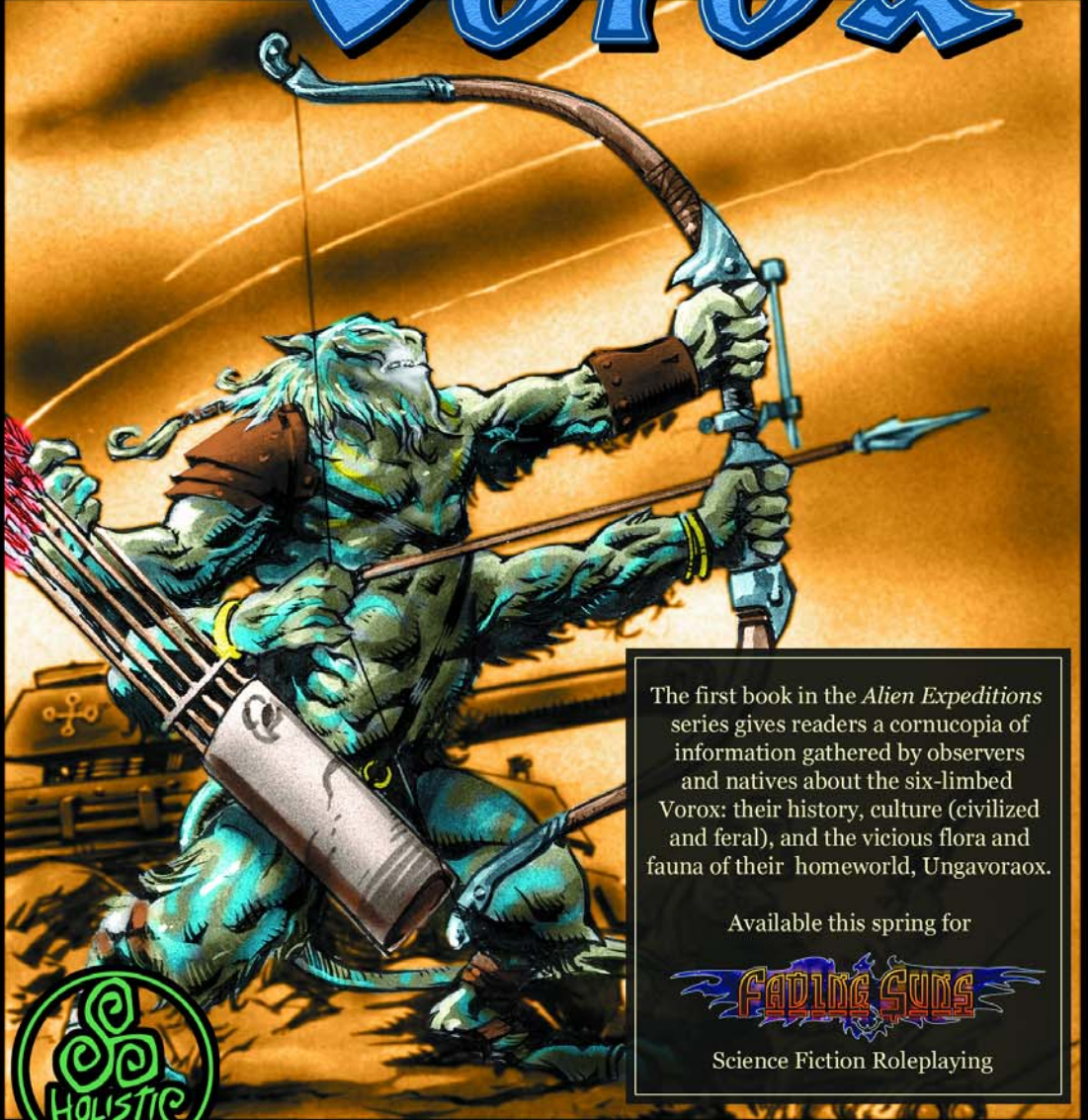


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BUT I'M *DEFINITELY* NOT *HOLDING OUT* ON YOU *CRUTCH...* ER... *SIR!*

FOR YOUR SAKE, I *HOPE* NOT, *HOSS.*



LATER...

DAMN! THAT *VOROX* BOOK IS GOING TO BE A *BIG SELLER!!* I'LL BE *SELLIN'* 'EM LIKE *HOT CAKES.* -HEH- -HEH-

IF I *LIVE LONG* ENOUGH THAT IS.

