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BUNDLE OF TROUBLE™

VOLUME ONE

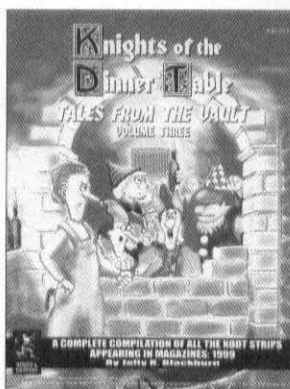
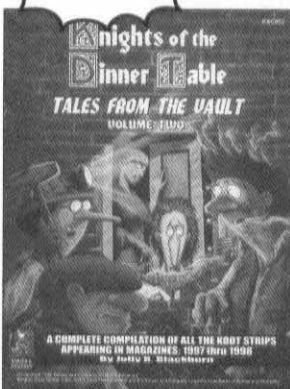
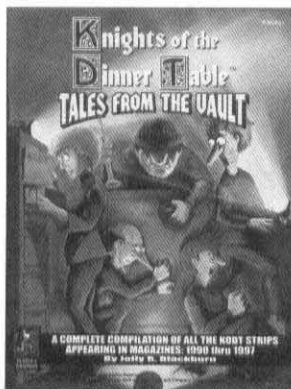


A COMPILATION OF KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE: ISSUES 1 THRU 3



AND OTHER
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I've got yer BACK ISSUES right here bub!!

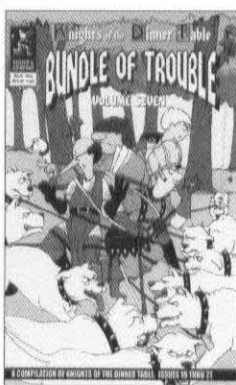
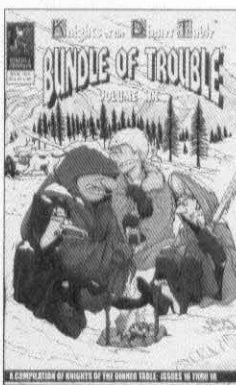


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KENZER AND COMPANY

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

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Knights of the Dinner Table™

BUNDLE OF TROUBLE VOLUME ONE

THE KODT DEVELOPMENT TEAM IS
JOLLY R. BLACKBURN • BRIAN JELKE • STEVE JOHANSSON • DAVID S. KENZER
Cover Art by **GEORGE VRBANIC**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cries from the Attic	2
ISSUE #1: NOT READY FOR SYNDICATION	
Lair of the Gazebo	5
A Question of Honor	8
By the Book	10
Attack of the Rules Lawyer	12
Let the Dice Fall Where They May!	16
The Farmer Wars	20
The Wonderful GaryCon Adventure	24
Diminishing Returns	26
ISSUE #2: GLUTTONS FOR PUNISHMENT	
First Impressions	35
The Cows of War	44
Lords of Darkness	47
Angel of Mercy	50
Spell-Jacked™	52
The Great Revolt	56
ISSUE #3: LICENSE TO LOOT	
Dueling GameMasters	61
A Critical Situation	66
Attack of the Snow Beasts	69
The Sticky Notes of War	71
The Samer It Gets	74
The Guest GM	76
Tough Noogies	80
Death by Repetition	83
I Got a Rock!!	87
BUNDLE OF TROUBLE: VOLUME ONE	
Dave's First Game (Retro KODT)	89
An Urban Legend: Eric and the Gazebo	93
Who's Who in the Group	95

Although he won't admit it, Knights of the Dinner Table™ was created by Jolly R. Blackburn way back in 1990 as 'filler' for the small press magazine Shadis™ (which he was publishing out of a spare bedroom). Nine years later, he continues to draw and write strips for the monthly Knights of the Dinner Table™ magazine. Writing KODT strips isn't nearly the lonely job as it was in the past. Since joining the ranks of Kenzer and Company and the formation of the KODT Development Team, the Knights have gone far beyond anything Jolly or the other developers ever imagined. Along the way, he's made some incredible friends and considers himself truly blessed.

A COMPILATION OF KODT ISSUES 1 thru 3
Not Ready for Syndication ¥ Gluttons for Punishment ¥ License to Loot

HISTORY OF THE GROUP

KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE™ first appeared in the second issue of the role-playing magazine, **SHADIS**, in 1990. For years, comics geared toward gamers have been a popular feature in gaming magazines. I noticed, however, that no one had ever done a strip about the gamers themselves - from their point of view. It didn't take long for the characters of the strip to take on lives of their own. The strip quickly became a favorite among the magazine's readers with the most frequently received response being, "Those guys remind me of my own group!"

I've never been an artist, let alone try to pass myself off as one. I scrawled out my comic strip in the early days of **SHADIS** because it was a one-man business back then, and I couldn't talk anyone else into doing it. As the magazine grew and began to take off I found myself with less time. My reaction was to kill the strip. I wasn't much of a cartoonist, I reasoned, and I didn't think anyone would really miss it. I was more than a little surprised, when our readers revolted and the strip was quickly revived. It's been going strong since.

I'm still a little amused when I see someone pick up a new issue of **SHADIS** and immediately flip to the back page and read the strip first. I can't explain such behavior. When talk started to float around the office about doing a full sized comic book, my first response was "Good idea, but let's hire a real cartoonist to do it right!" Unfortunately, when news got out we were looking for an artist to do the book, fans cried, "Foul!" It seemed they had grown accustomed to my inferior scratches of ink and pencil. Once again I was taught that the comic strip pulls all the strings and controls its creator.

Before I close, I want to answer a question that gets asked a lot. It seems many of you are curious to know if the characters of the strip are based on real gamers. The answer is yes. Each character is a montage of player personalities I've encountered over the years. I even drew from myself for B.A. Felton,, the frustrated Game-Master with a table full of players who seem eternally at odds with him. On the same note, most strips are inspired by actual game sessions. Occasionally, a reader will relate to me his or her own funny story at the gaming table, and it will end up in the strip.

There you have it, my own humble recounting of the history of the **KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE**. Privately I consider them all good friends. Publicly, I deny knowing them.

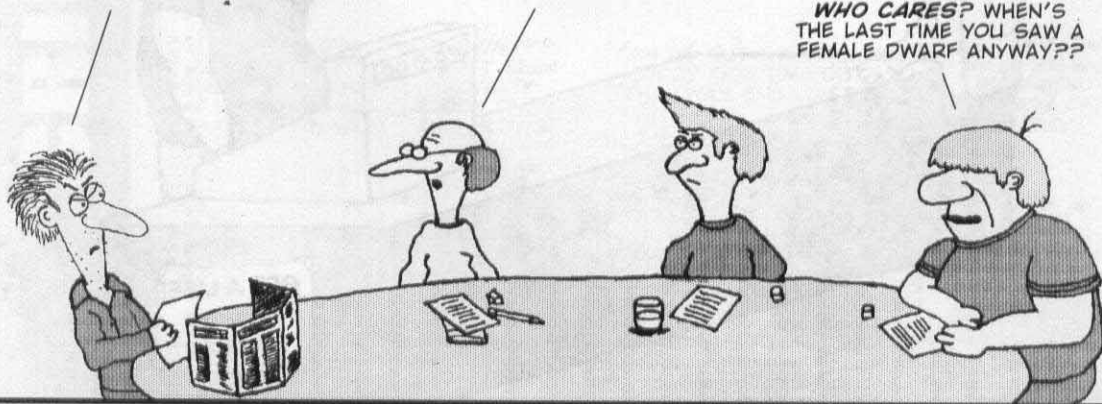
Jolly R. Blackburn

Jolly R. Blackburn
July 1, 1994.

FOR THE LAST TIME DROP IT!!
I KNOW YOU THINK THE ISSUE ON
WHETHER OR NOT **FEMALE**
DWARVES HAVE BEARDS IS VITALLY
IMPORTANT, BUT I'M SICK AND
TIRED OF TALKING ABOUT IT!

AWWW COME ON B.A!
WE GOTTA KNOW.
I GOT MONEY RIDING
ON THIS THING.

WHO CARES? WHEN'S
THE LAST TIME YOU SAW A
FEMALE DWARF ANYWAY??



Lair of the Gazebo

BASED ON A STORY BY RICHARD ARONSON

OK, AS YOU EMERGE FROM THE REAR GATE OF THE CASTLE YOU COME UPON A VAST, WELL-MAINTAINED GARDEN. THERE ARE SEVERAL FLOWERING SPRINGS FEEDING A SMALL POOL

I'M TRYING TO DISBELIEVE IT!
I THINK IT'S AN ILLUSION.

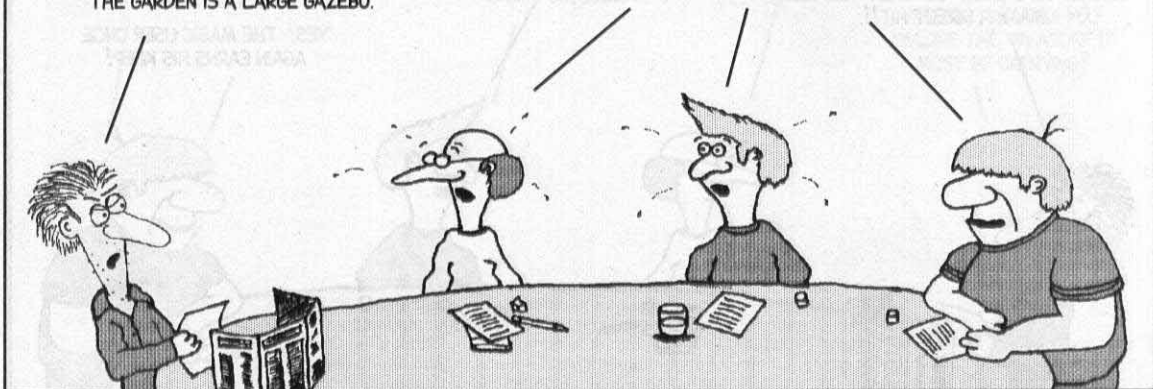
A **GARDEN**? ARE THERE ANY
CREATURES ROAMING ABOUT?

YEAH, ME TOO!



NO, IT'S NOT AN ILLUSION. THERE ARE FROGS
AND DRAGONFLIES AROUND THE SMALL POOL,
AND STANDING ON A SMALL HILL OVERLOOKING
THE GARDEN IS A LARGE GAZEBO.

A **GAZEBO??**

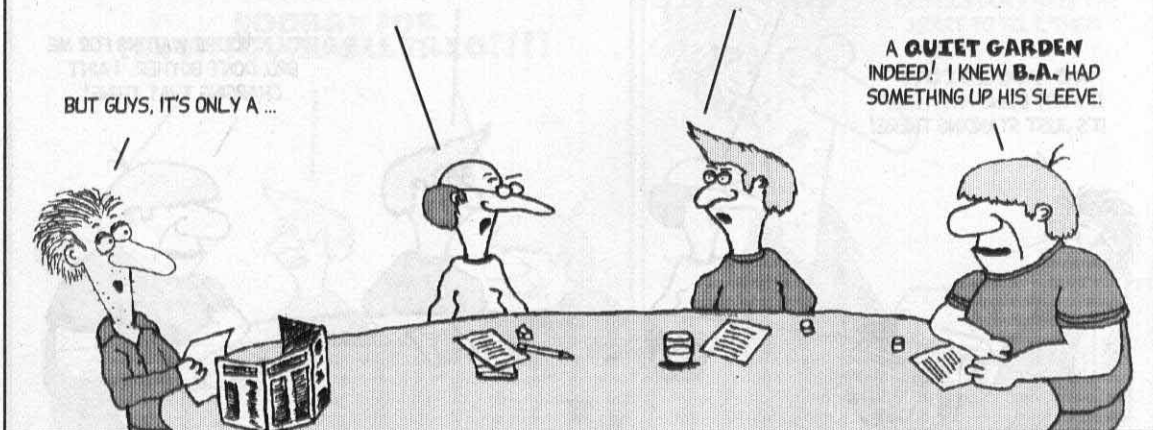


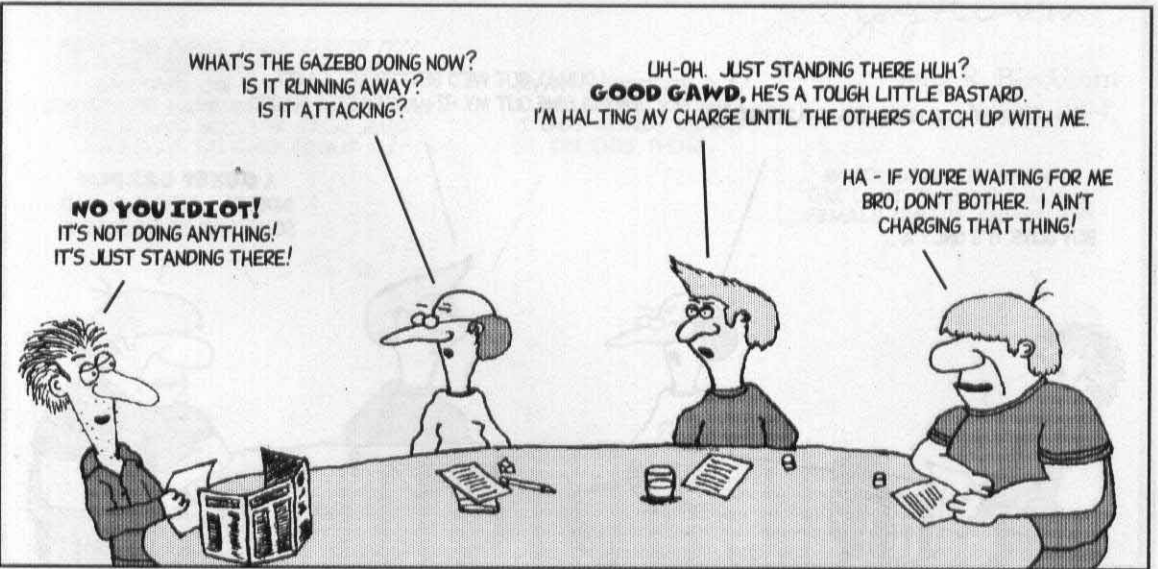
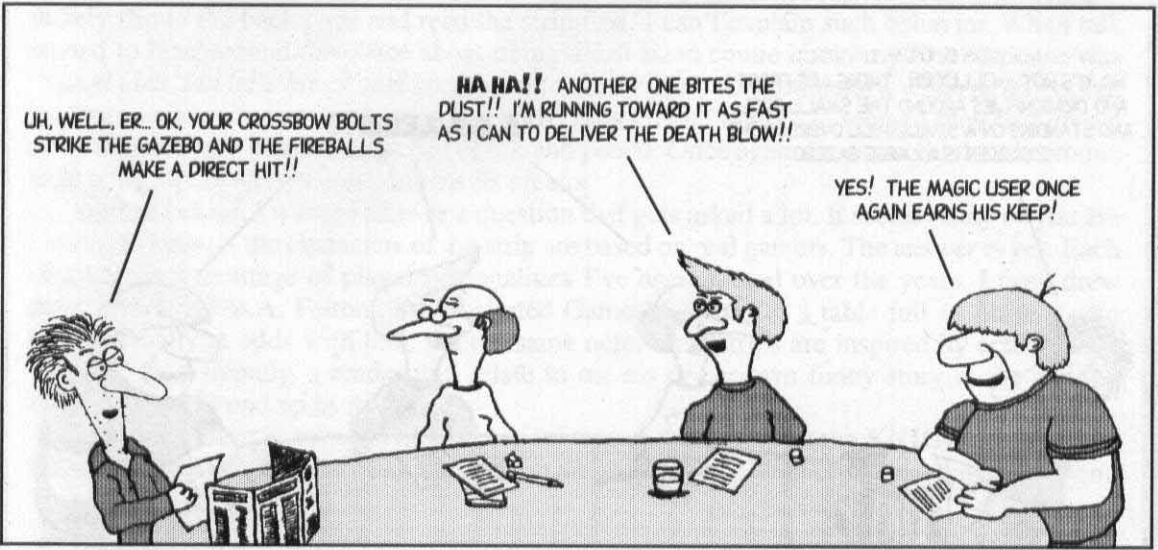
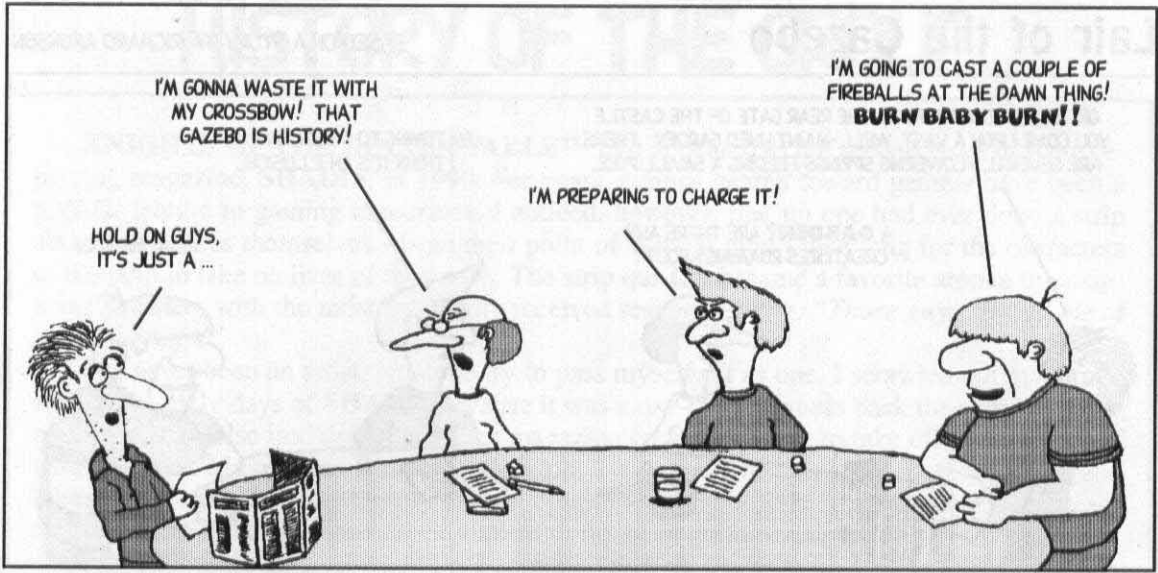
WHAT THE HELL IS A **GAZEBO**?

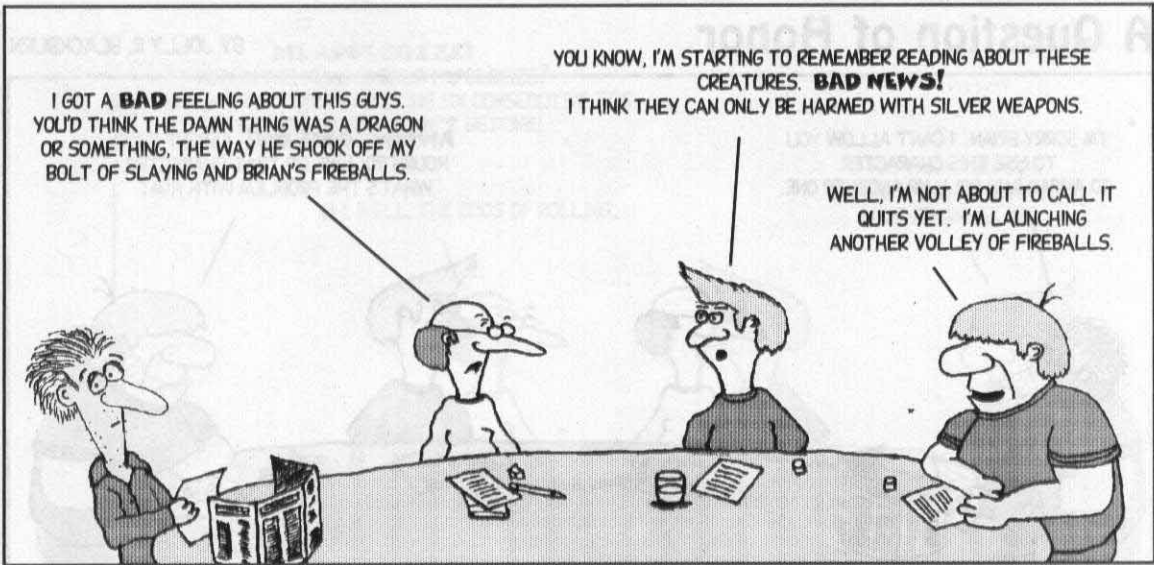
I DUNNO, BUT WE'D BETTER ACT FAST!
I'M PULLING OUT MY +12 HACKMASTER SWORD.

BUT GUYS, IT'S ONLY A ...

A **QUIET GARDEN**
INDEED! I KNEW **B.A.** HAD
SOMETHING UP HIS SLEEVE.



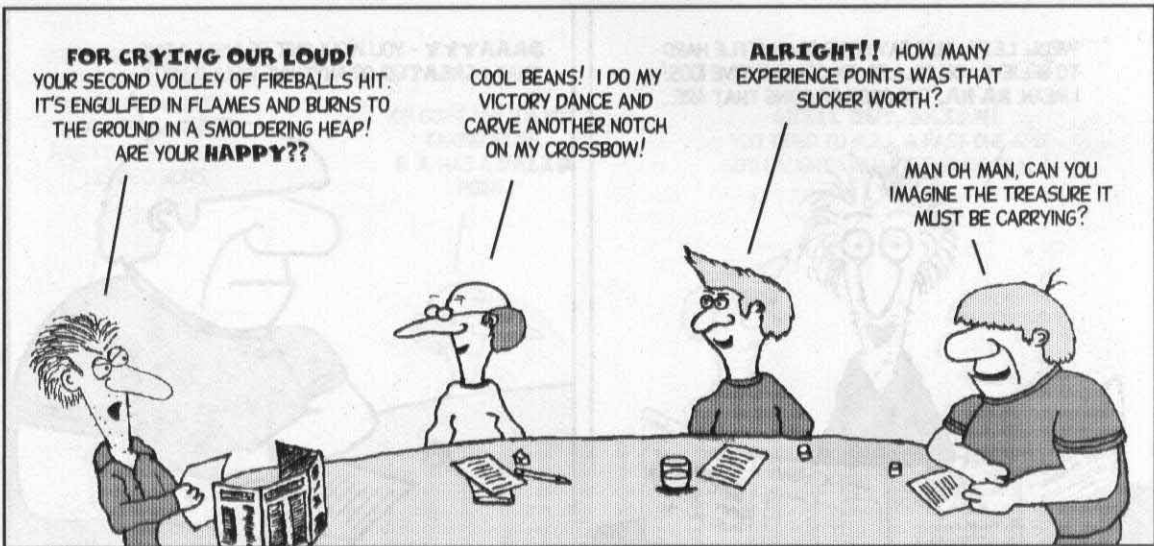




I GOT A **BAD** FEELING ABOUT THIS GUYS. YOU'D THINK THE DAMN THING WAS A DRAGON OR SOMETHING, THE WAY HE SHOOK OFF MY BOLT OF SLAYING AND BRIAN'S FIREBALLS.

YOU KNOW, I'M STARTING TO REMEMBER ABOUT THESE CREATURES. **BAD NEWS!** I THINK THEY CAN ONLY BE HARMED WITH SILVER WEAPONS.

WELL, I'M NOT ABOUT TO CALL IT QUIT'S YET. I'M LAUNCHING ANOTHER VOLLEY OF FIREBALLS.

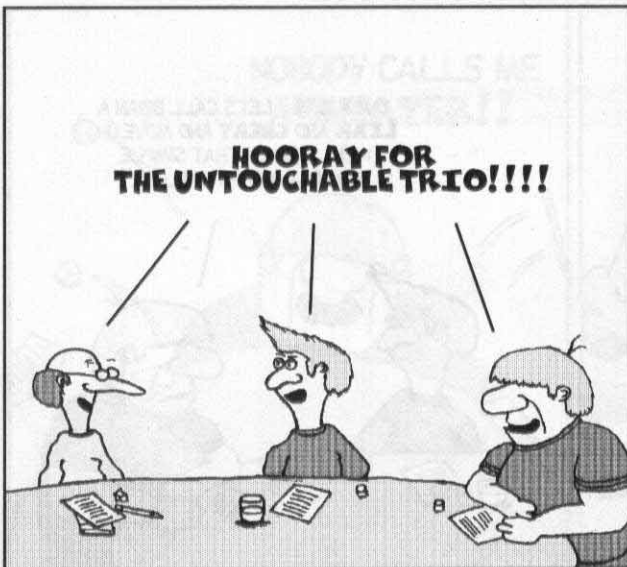


FOR CRYING OUR LOUD! YOUR SECOND VOLLEY OF FIREBALLS HIT. IT'S ENGLTFED IN FLAMES AND BURNS TO THE GROUND IN A SMOLDERING HEAP! ARE YOUR **HAPPY??**

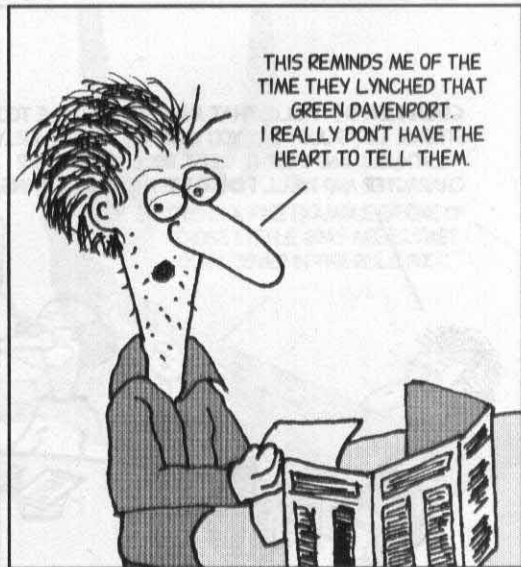
COOL BEANS! I DO MY VICTORY DANCE AND CARVE ANOTHER NOTCH ON MY CROSSBOW!

ALRIGHT!! HOW MANY EXPERIENCE POINTS WAS THAT SUCKER WORTH?

MAN OH MAN. CAN YOU IMAGINE THE TREASURE IT MUST BE CARRYING?



HOORAY FOR THE UNTOUCHABLE TRIO!!!!



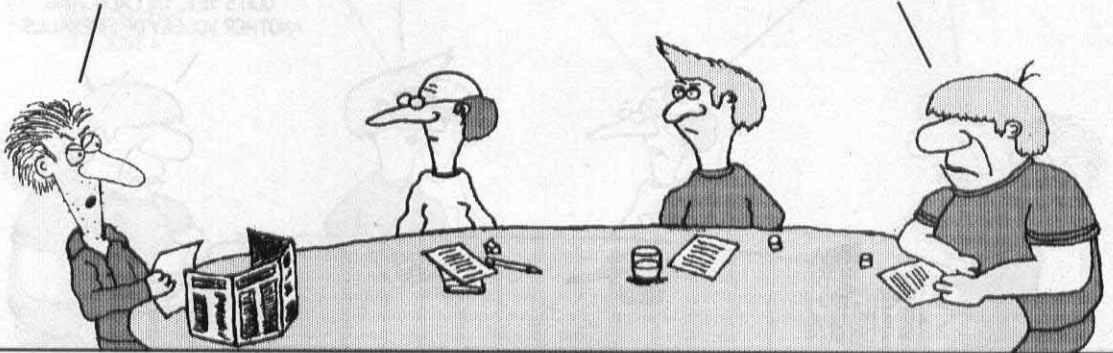
THIS REMINDS ME OF THE TIME THEY LYNCHED THAT GREEN DAVENPORT. I REALLY DON'T HAVE THE HEART TO TELL THEM.

A Question of Honor

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

I'M SORRY BRIAN. I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO USE THIS CHARACTER. GO AHEAD AND ROLL UP ANOTHER ONE.

AWWWW COME ON! I SPENT FOUR HOURS ROLLING UP THAT CHARACTER. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH HIM?



WELL, LET'S JUST SAY I FIND IT A LITTLE HARD TO BELIEVE YOU ROLLED SIX CONSECUTIVE 100S! I MEAN, **HA HA**, THE ODDS OF DOING THAT ARE...

SAAAYYY - YOU WOULDN'T BE INSINUATING THAT I **CHEATED** OR ANYTHING WOULD YOU?



CHEATING? WELL, THAT MIGHT BE A LITTLE TOO STRONG. LET'S JUST SAY YOU WERE A LITTLE OVERLY ENTHUSED AND DROP IT. JUST ROLL UP ANOTHER CHARACTER AND WE'LL **FORGET** THE WHOLE THING.

ON I SEE! LET'S CALL BRIAN A **LIAR** AND **CHEAT** AND MOVE ON. WELL IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE. I **DEMAND** AN APOLOGY!!

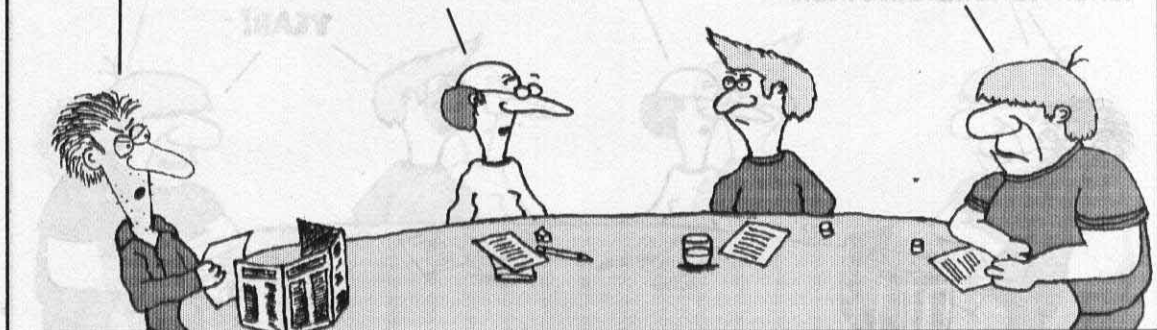


ME APOLOGIZE?

WHY IN THE HELL SHOULD I APOLOGIZE?
BOB, TELL HIM THE ODDS OF ROLLING SIX CONSECUTIVE 100S.
IT'S ASTRONOMICAL - **CAN'T** BE DONE!

UH, WELL, THE ODDS OF ROLLING...

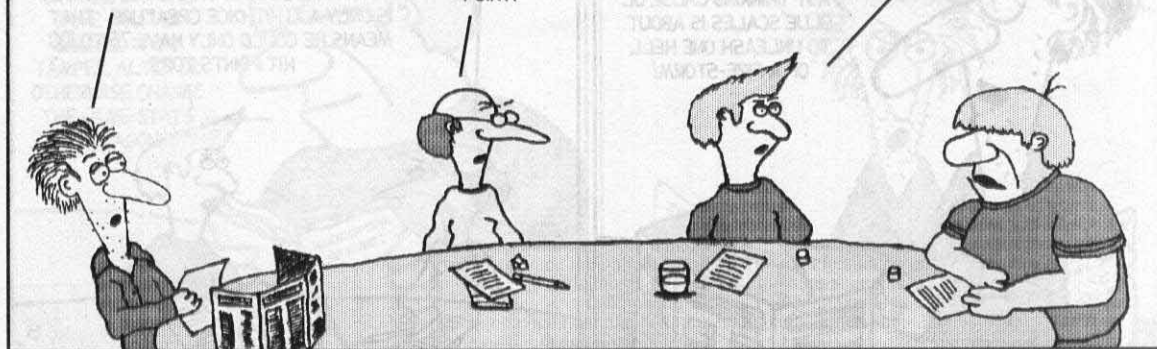
YOU TAKING HIS SIDE
BOBBY BOY? WHY YOU!
I OUGHTA BREAK YER...



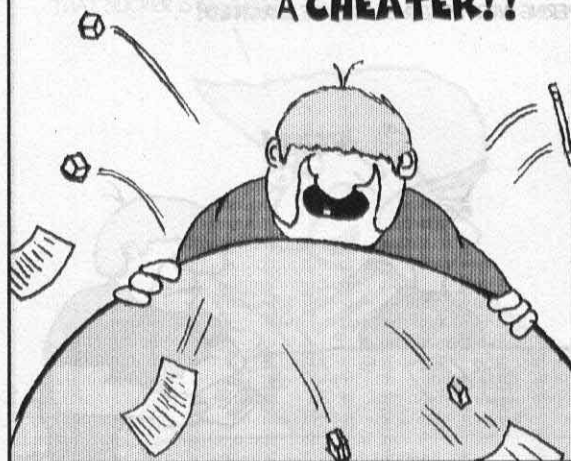
YOU'VE GOT ME AGAINST
THE WALL, BRIAN.
I'M NOT GONNA BUDGE
ON THIS ONE. A **GM**
HAS TO STAND BEHIND
HIS DECISIONS.

OH COME ON! I'M NOT
TAKING SIDES.
B. A. HAS A **VALID**
POINT.

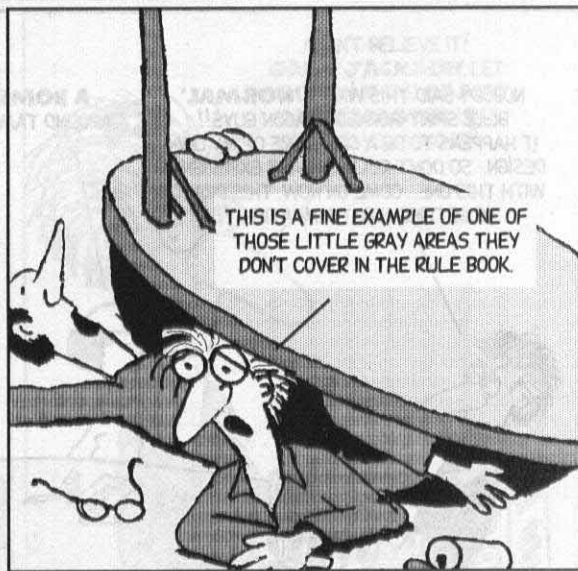
CHILL OUT, BRIAN!
YOU TRIED TO PULL A FAST ONE AND
GOT CAUGHT. WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

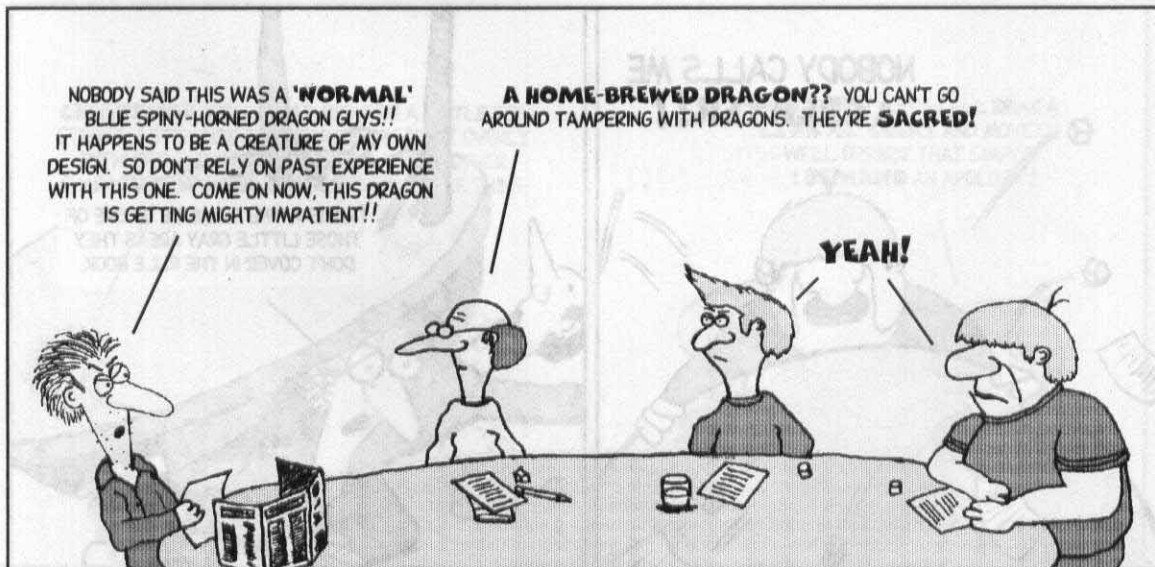
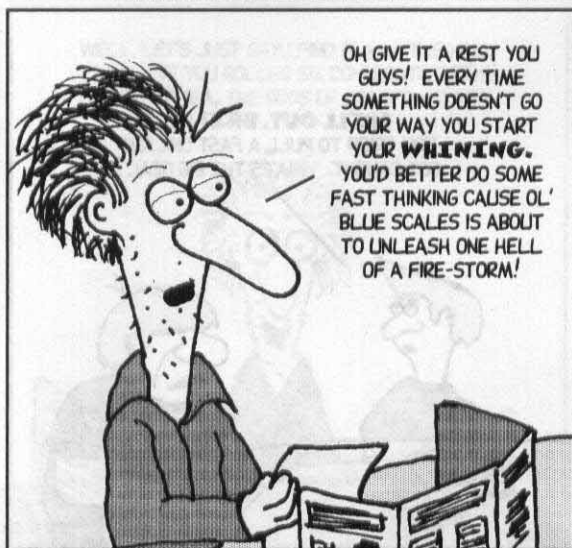


**NOBODY CALLS ME
A CHEATER!!**



THIS IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF ONE OF
THOSE LITTLE GRAY AREAS THEY
DON'T COVER IN THE RULE BOOK.





OF ALL THE STUPID...
LOOK, I'M THE GM AND I'M TELLING YOU
THIS DRAGON IS ABOUT TO BREATHE FIRE!!

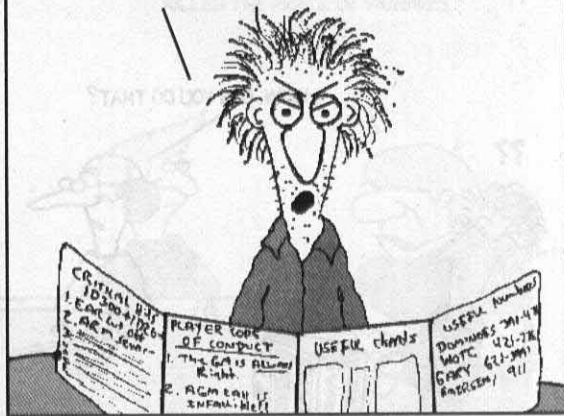
THEY'RE RIGHT **B.A.!** GARY JACKSON
SPECIFICALLY STATES IN THE **HACKLOPEDIA OF BEASTS**
VOLUME D THAT DRAGON STATS **CANNOT** BE ALTERED!



YEP! RIGHT HERE ON PAGE 64, "THE GAME-MASTER **SHALL NOT** TAMPER, ALTER OR OTHERWISE CHANGE THE GAME STATS FOR DRAGONS!"



HEY, HEY, HEY!! WHAT IN THE HELL ARE YOU DOING? I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DID THAT!! YOU KNOW THE RULES - THE PLAYERS **AREN'T** ALLOWED TO LOOK AT THE **HACKLOPEDIA!!**



HMMMM, AND LOOK AT THIS... THE BLUE SPINY-HORNED DRAGON HAS A MAX OF 74 HIT POINTS. THAT SUCKER IS **DEAD!!**



I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! **GARY JACKSON** LET ME DOWN! IF THE **GRAND GEMMASTER** ISN'T BEHIND YOU, WHO IS?



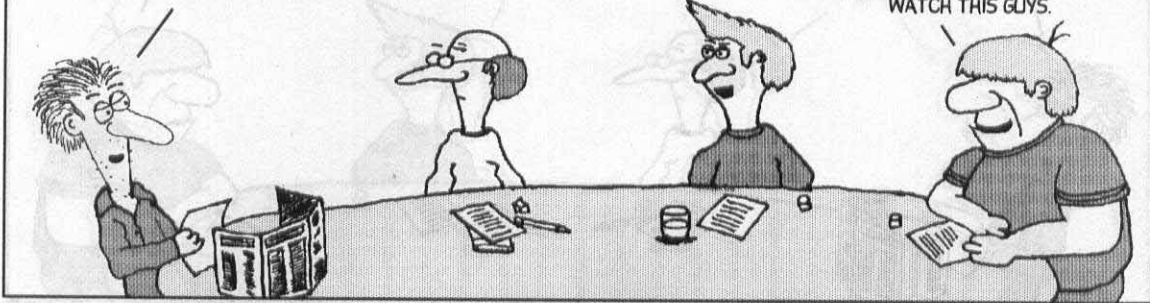
Attack of the Rules Lawyer

BASED ON A STORY RELATED BY JASON HOLMGREN

JUST AS YOU EMERGE FROM THE CRYPT YOU HEAR A TERRIBLE SHRIEK! LOOKING UP YOU SEE **VARDANIA**, PRINCE OF THE VAMPIRE HORDES STANDING ATOP THE MORTUARY. HE LAUGHS MANIACALLY AND YELLS, "**FOOLS!** YOU'VE COME TO DESTROY ME BUT I SHALL DESTROY YOU ALL!!"

DAMN, THAT'S PRETTY SCARY STUFF. WELL, THERE'S OUR MAJOR VILLAIN, GUYS. LOOKS LIKE THIS WILL BE A GREAT CAMPAIGN.

THIS SHOULD BE INTERESTING. WATCH THIS GUYS.

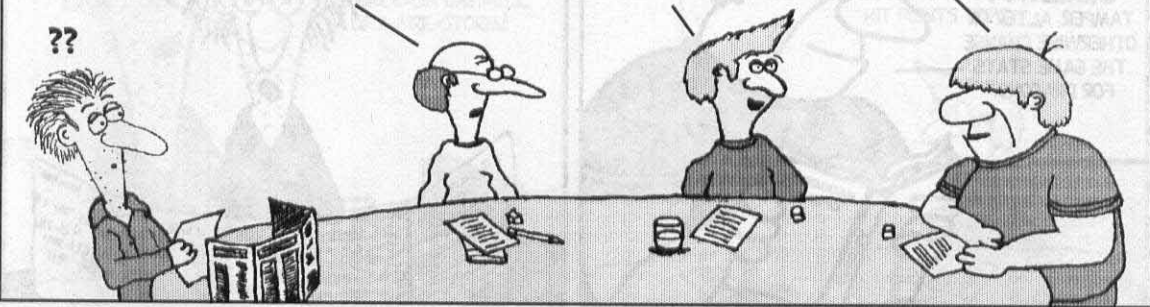


BEFORE HE CAN VANISH I TAKE OUT A WOODEN STAKE FROM MY POUCH AND I EXPEND **ALL** OF MY LUCK POINTS TO GUARANTEE A SUCCESSFUL ACTION. I THEN HURL THE STAKE AT **VARDANIA** IMPALING HIM IN THE HEART AND THUS KILLING HIM.

WOW, CAN YOU DO THAT?

WHOA DUDE!! **AWESOME!**

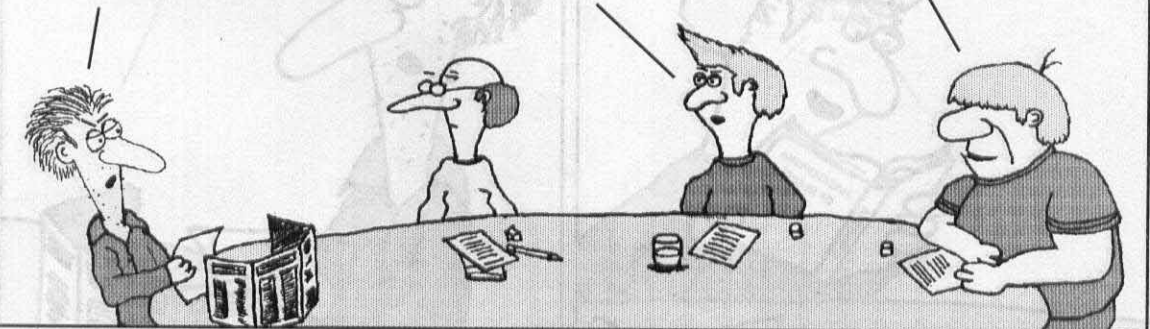
??



BRIAN, DO YOU REALIZE THAT BY EXPENDING ALL YOUR LUCK POINTS YOU AUTOMATICALLY DIE?

LET'S GO CLEAN OUT **VARDANIA'S TOMB!**

I DON'T CARE. I'M SACRIFICING MYSELF TO SAVE MY COMRADES. PRETTY COOL HUH?



BRIAN, QUIT CLOWNING AROUND. YOU'RE GONNA RUIN THE ENTIRE CAMPAIGN. I WORKED HARD ON THIS CAMPAIGN. YOU JUST CAN'T...

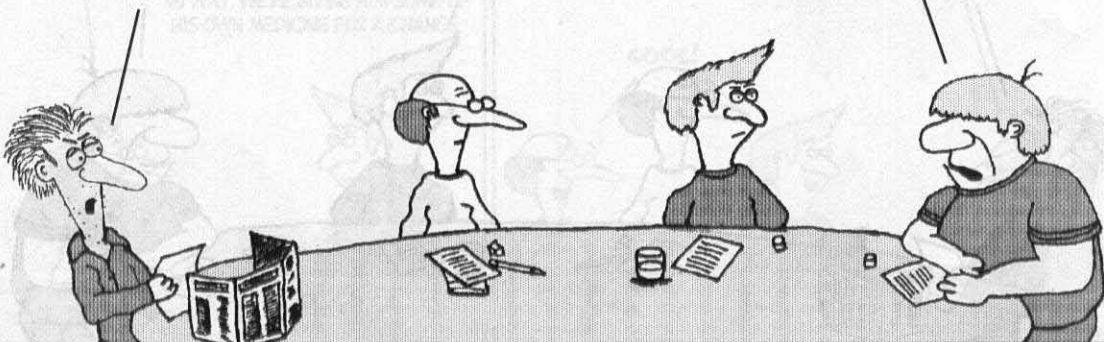
THE RULE BOOK SAYS I CAN DO IT - SO I'M DOING IT. SCRATCH OFF ONE PRINCE OF DARKNESS FROM THE ROSTER. HA HA!!

AWW COME ON! IT WAS A PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE ACTION. I WISH I'D THOUGHT OF IT.



YOU'RE BEING TOTALLY **DISRUPTIVE!** YOU'RE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A RULE OVERSIGHT IN WHICH THE DESIGNER COULDN'T POSSIBLY FORESEE A PLAYER TAKING ADVANTAGE OF...

SORRY B.A.! I'VE BEEN WAITING TO DO THIS EVER SINCE I READ THE RULE BOOK. BESIDES, HOW MANY FIRST LEVEL PLAYERS CAN SAY THEY KILLED THE PRINCE OF VAMPIRES?

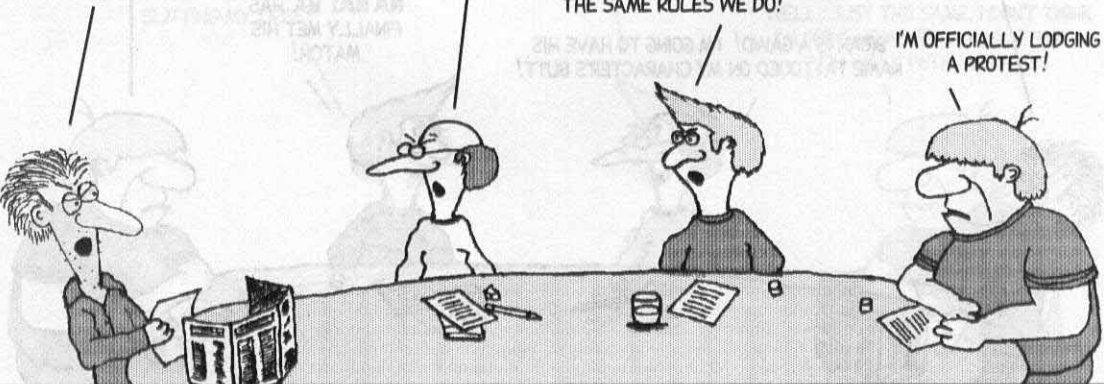


WELL, I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU, **I'M NOT GOING TO ALLOW IT!** YOUR STAKE MISSED HIM BY A MILE!

FOUL! FOUL! YOU CAN'T DO THAT! IT'S UNETHICAL!

NO WAY MAN! YOU GOTTA PLAY BY THE SAME RULES WE DO!

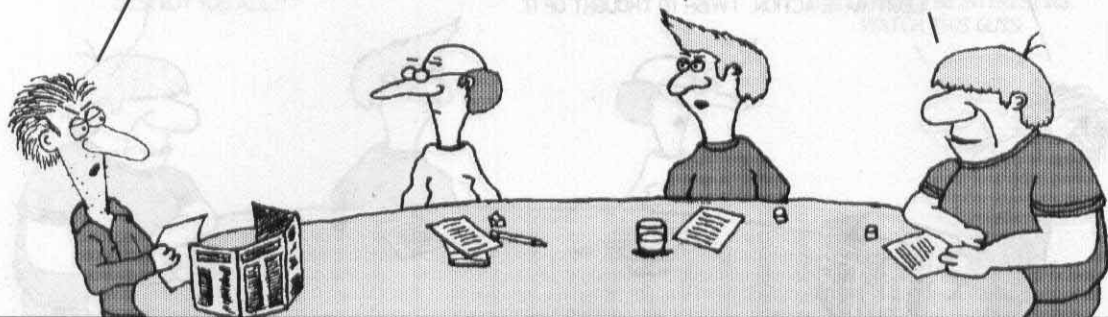
I'M OFFICIALLY LODGING A PROTEST!



LOOK YOU IDIOTS, I'M THE GM. REMEMBER? YOU JUST CAN'T LET A PLAYER RUIN AN ENTIRE CAMPAIGN BECAUSE HE FOUND SOME STUPID HOLE IN THE RULES!

A RULE'S A RULE! THAT'S WHAT YOU ALWAYS SAY! I THINK THE GM SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO THE RULES JUST LIKE US PLAYERS.

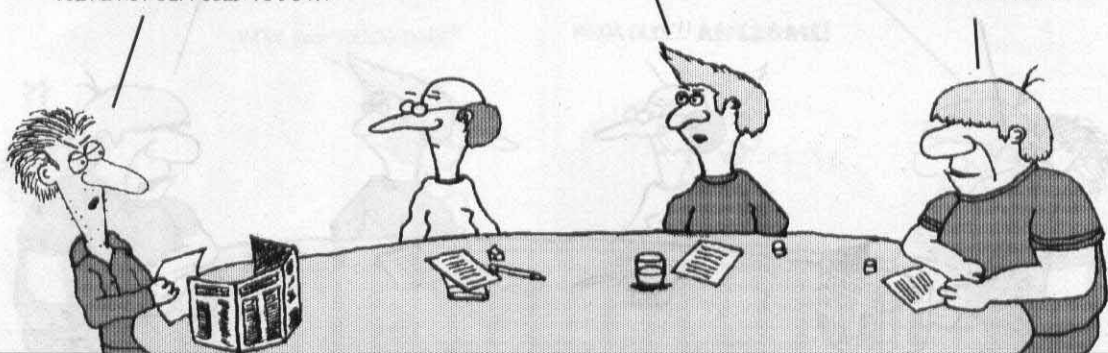
I SAY THE VAMPIRE IS DEAD! AND THAT'S **THAT!**



BE REASONABLE, BRIAN. I'LL CONCEDE THAT UNDER THE RULES YOU LEGALLY DO WHAT YOU DID. BUT YOU KNOW DAMN WELL YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO DO IT!

WHO CARES? THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS IS THAT BRIAN KILLED THE VAMPIRE AND WE ARE ABOUT TO LOOT HIS TOMB!

ENJOY IT GUYS! JUST MAKE SURE I GET A PROPER BURIAL.



THIS REALLY MAKES ME MAD BRIAN. I KNOW WHY YOU'RE DOING THIS. IT'S YOUR SICK FORM OF REVENGE. YOU'RE STILL MAD BECAUSE I WOULDN'T LET YOU REROLL THAT COMBAT ROLL LAST WEEK AND YOU DIED!

GEE, WAS THAT WHEN YOU TOLD ME, "A RULE'S A RULE. SUCK IT UP?"

BRIAN IS A GAWD! I'M GOING TO HAVE HIS NAME TATTOOED ON MY CHARACTER'S BUTT!

HA HA! BA HAS FINALLY MET HIS MATCH!



OH, I SEE HOW IT IS!!

THIS IS JUST A BIG GAME TO YOU! I BUST MY BUTT ALL WEEK DESIGNING AN ADVENTURE FOR YOU MORONS, AND HOW DO YOU THANK ME? YOU PULL SOME STUPID STUNT AND SABOTAGE THE GAME!

COME ON B. A. I'M NOT BACKING DOWN. MY CHARACTER WAS SUCCESSFUL AND THE CAMPAIGN IS FINISHED. BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME!

LOOK! HIS FACE IS TURNING PURPLE!

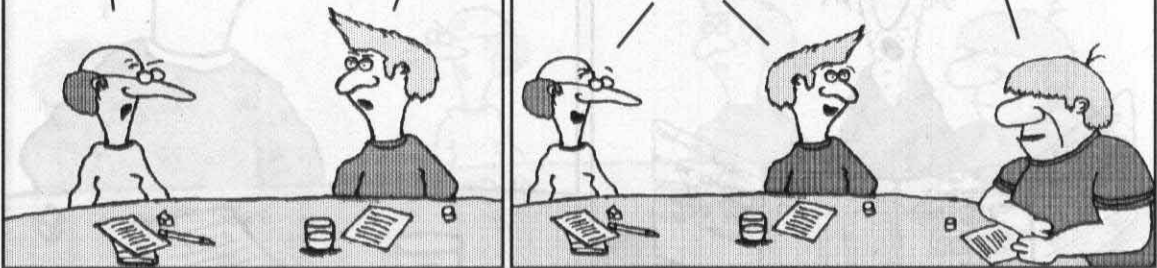


I DUNNO, HE'S PRETTY UPSET. MAYBE WE SHOULD LET HIM OFF THE HOOK. B.A. TAKES THIS STUFF PRETTY SERIOUSLY.

NO WAY, WE'RE GIVING HIM SOME OF HIS OWN MEDICINE FOR A CHANGE.

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE WORST OF IT GUYS! I HAVE A WHOLE LIST OF PLAYER-ADVANTAGE RULES I'VE BEEN COMPILING. THINGS ARE GOING TO CHANGE AROUND HERE.

COOL!



YOU THINK HE WAS SERIOUS ABOUT SLITTING MY TIRES?

I'VE KNOWN B. A. TO THROW AN OCCASIONAL DIE, BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM RESORT TO PHYSICAL VIOLENCE.

WELL, JUST THE SAME, I DON'T THINK I'M GOING HOME FOR A WHILE. WILL YOU WALK WITH ME DAVE?



Let the Dice Fall Where They May!

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

FOR CRYING OUT LOUD! AFTER ATTACKING THE WALL FOR 8 HOURS WITH A PICKAXE YOU FINALLY BREACH IT. YOU SEE A STAIRCASE SPIRALING DOWN INTO THE DARKNESS.

GOOD CALL BOB! WHY MESS AROUND WITH THIS FIRST-LEVEL, RUN-OF-THE-MILL CRAP WHEN WE CAN BE RAKING IN THE **REAL** EXPERIENCE POINTS?

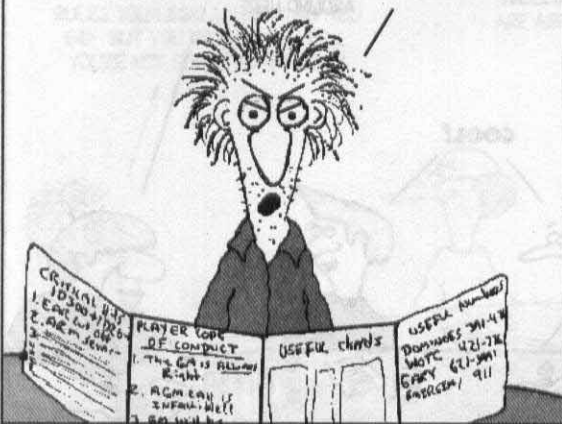
HA HA!! I KNEW THERE WAS ANOTHER LEVEL TO THIS DUNGEON!

OH YEAH!! HERE WE COME BABY!



GUYS, I HAVE TO **WARN** YOU! YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO FIND A WAY TO THE SECOND LEVEL YET. THIS NEXT LEVEL IS A REAL **KILLER** DUNGEON. I SUGGEST YOU HOLD OFF UNTIL YOU ARE READY.

WAITING IS FOR THE WUSS-OF-HEART!! LET THE DICE FALL WHERE THEY MAY!!
DOWNWARD AND ONWARD!!



I AGREE! HEROES FORGE AHEAD!! LET THE DICE FALL WHERE THEY MAY!!

HAAH! THIS **IS** A GAME OF HIGH ADVENTURE ISN'T IT? LET'S GET THIS GAME GOING!

I JUST DON'T WANT YOU GUYS GETTING MAD WHEN IT HITS THE FAN.

I DUNNO GUYS, SOUNDS LIKE IT MIGHT BE DANGEROUS.





YOU LITTLE SISSIFIED WIMP!
ARE YOU GOING TO LET **B.A.** SCARE
YOU AWAY FROM THE REAL TREASURE?

YEAH, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
YOU USED TO HAVE MORE OF A
FIGHTING SPIRIT BRIAN!

IT'S JUST THAT I SPENT A
LONG TIME BUILDING UP
THIS CHARACTER. I DON'T
WANT HIM TO DIE.



I'M TELLING YOU GUYS, IF YOU GO DOWN
THOSE STAIRS - YOU'LL HAVE TO LIVE
WITH THE CONSEQUENCES. NO WHINING OR
CRYING WHEN IT GOES AGAINST YOU!!

YEAH, YEAH, CAN THE SPEECH, EGG-
HEAD. I'M DRAWING MY SWORD AND
DESCENDING THOSE STAIRS.

I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU BIG GUY!
HACK AND SLASH CITY, BABY!



I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU ARE REALLY DOING
THIS. I SHOULDN'T DO THIS BUT I WOULD
HIGHLY SUGGEST YOU RETHINK YOUR
ACTIONS. I CAN'T STRESS ENOUGH
- THIS IS A REAL KILLER LEVEL, GUYS.

I LIVE FOR DANGER! I EAT IT FOR BREAKFAST!

QUIT STALLING **B.A.**! JUST LET THE DICE
FALL WHERE THEY MAY AND LET'S GET MOVING.

WELL, I'M WAITING RIGHT HERE!
I AIN'T GOING DOWN THERE.

WELL THANK GOODNESS FOR THAT! AT LEAST **BRIAN** HAS SENSE ENOUGH TO HEED MY WARNING!

YOU MAKE ME **SICK!**
WELL MISTER-YELLOW STRIPE,
YOU JUST LOST YOUR SHARE OF
TREASURE AND EXPERIENCE POINTS!

YEAH, MAYBE SO,
BUT AT LEAST I'LL BE
ALIVE TO TAKE WHAT
I PLEASE FROM YOUR
ROTTEN CORPSES!

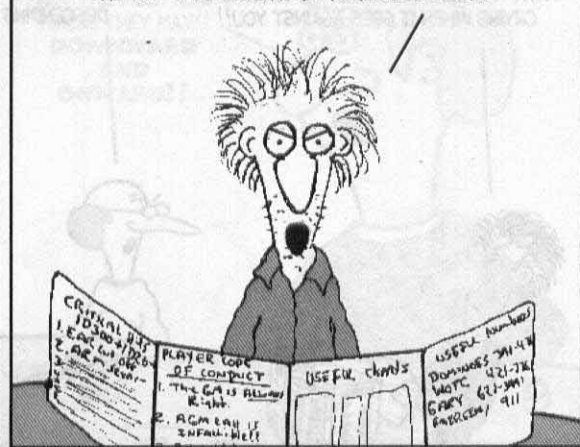


TO HELL WITH HIM! DAVE AND I ARE
GOING DOWN THE STAIRS!!

I'M YELLING MY WAR CRY
AND DRAWING MY SWORD!



WELL, THAT'S JUST GREAT. SINCE YOU DIDN'T EVEN
BOTHR TO CHECK FOR TRAPS, YOU FAILED TO NOTICE
THE TRIP WIRE. YOU HEAR AN AUDIBLE CLICK...



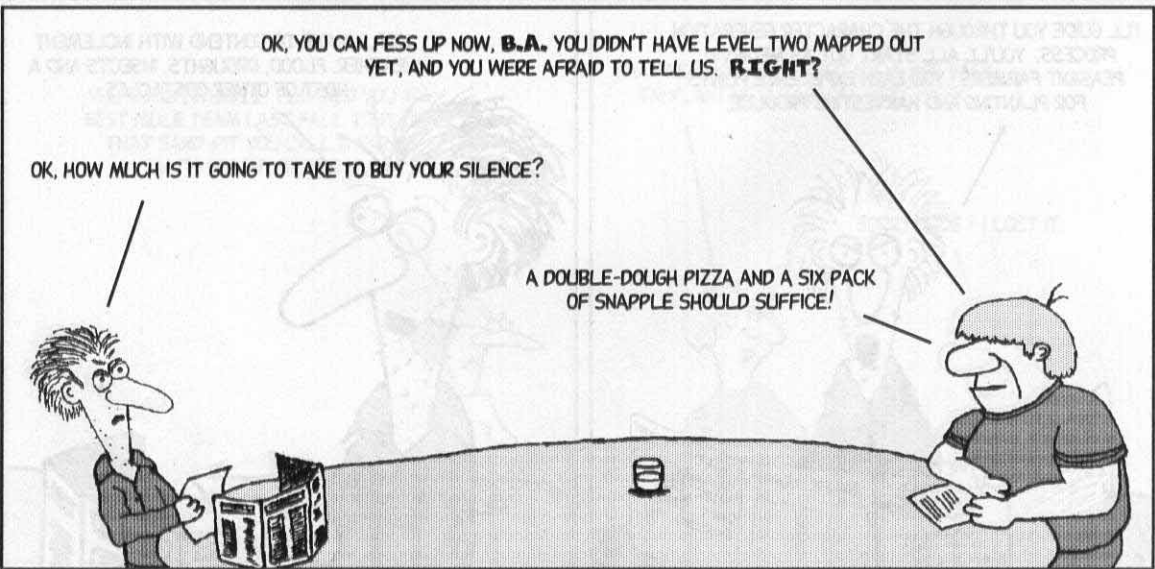
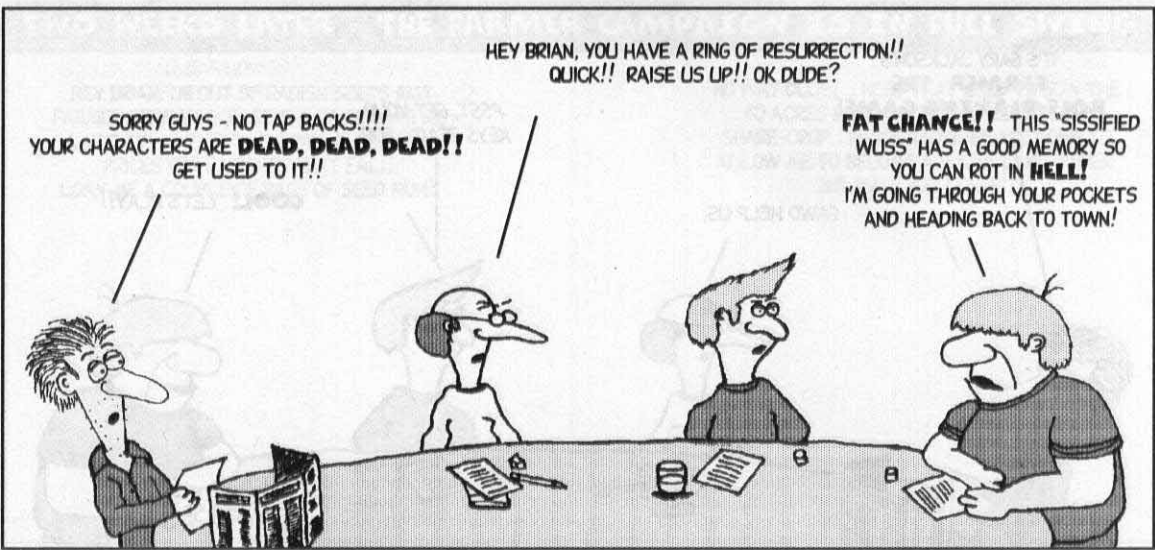
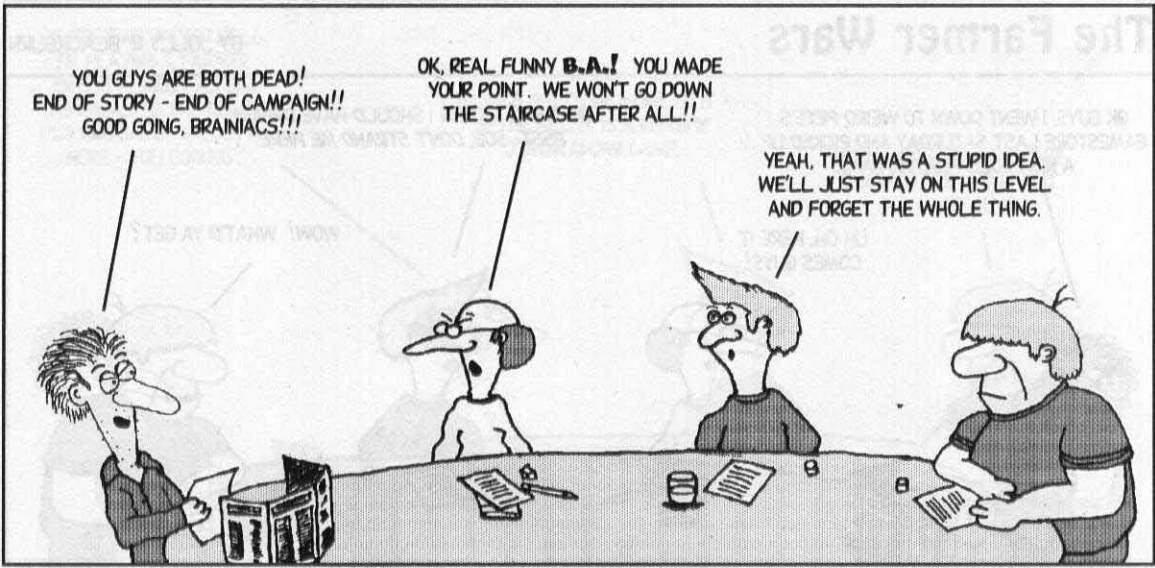
AND SINCE WE ARE "LETTING THE DICE
FALL WHERE THEY MAY!" - I HAVE NO
CHOICE BUT TO LET THE 8 TON BLOCK OF
GRANITE FALL FROM THE CEILING AND
CRUSH THE TWO OF YOU LIKE A COUPLE
OF OVERRIPE GRAPES!!

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

OVERRIPE GRAPES??
WHY YOU...

-SNICKER-





The Farmer Wars

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

OK GUYS, I WENT DOWN TO WEIRD PETE'S GAMESTORE LAST SATURDAY AND PICKED UP A NEW ROLE-PLAYING GAME

DAMN! I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE DRIVEN.
PSST- BOB, DON'T STRAND ME HERE.

UH OH, HERE IT COMES GUYS!

WOW! WHAT'D YA GET?



IT'S GARY JACKSON'S **FARMER: THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME!**

PSST. GET YOUR KEYS READY, BOB.

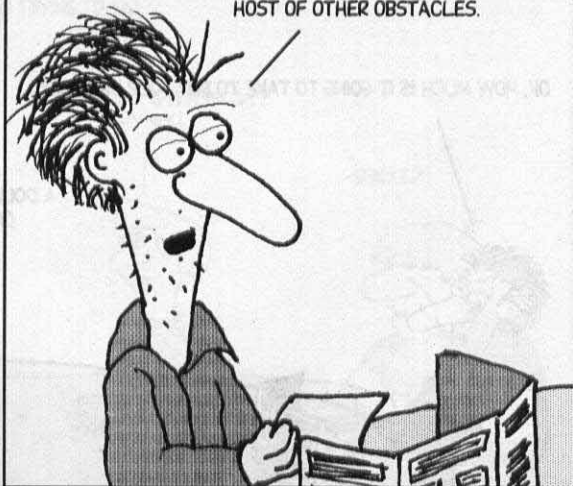
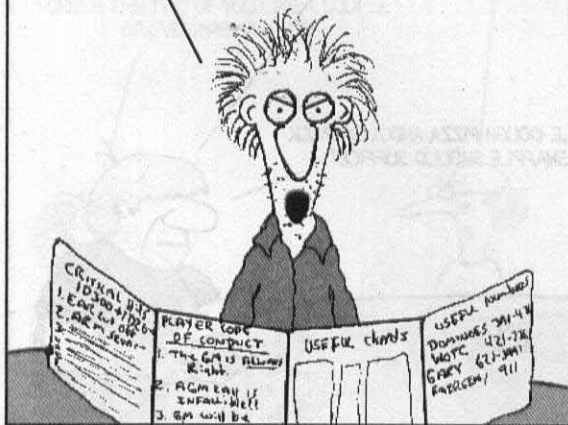
GAWD HELP US.

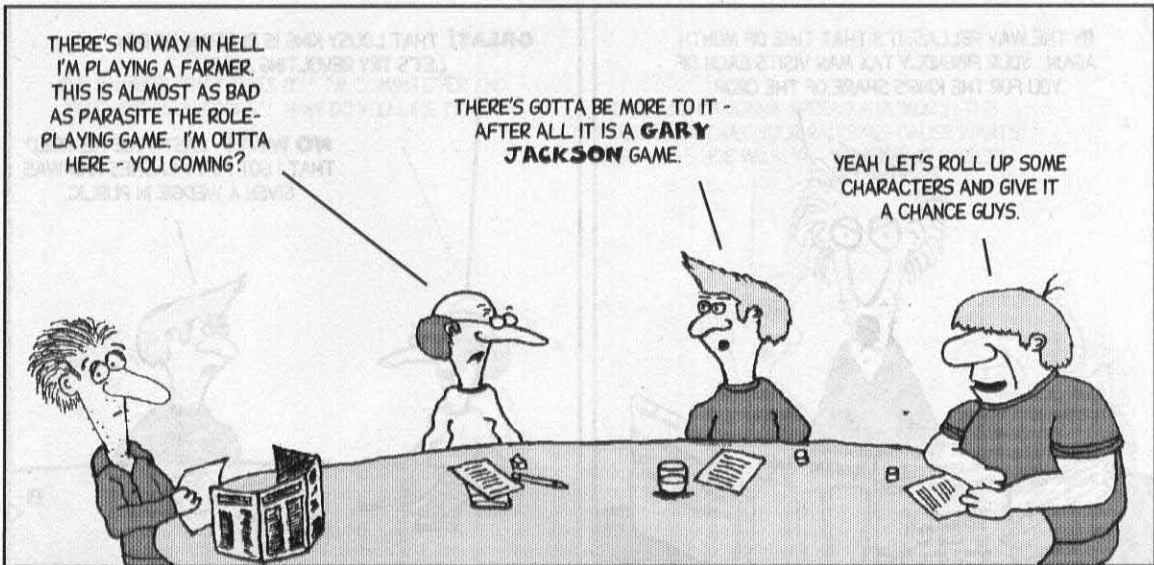
COOL! LET'S PLAY!!



I'LL GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE CHARACTER GENERATION PROCESS. YOU'LL ALL START OUT AS MEDIEVAL PEASANT FARMERS. YOU EARN EXPERIENCE POINTS FOR PLANTING AND HARVESTING PRODUCE.

YOU'LL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH INCLEMENT WEATHER, FLOOD, DROUGHTS, INSECTS AND A HOST OF OTHER OBSTACLES.





THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL I'M PLAYING A FARMER. THIS IS ALMOST AS BAD AS PARASITE THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME. I'M OUTTA HERE - YOU COMING?

THERE'S GOTTA BE MORE TO IT - AFTER ALL IT IS A **GARY JACKSON** GAME.

YEAH LET'S ROLL UP SOME CHARACTERS AND GIVE IT A CHANCE GUYS.

TWO WEEKS LATER - THE FARMER CAMPAIGN IS IN FULL SWING



HEY BRIAN, I'M OUT OF RADISH SEEDS AND FARMER HERMAN ACROSS THE RIVER GAVE ME A HOT TIP - - THE KING IS PAYING PREMIUM PRICES FOR RADISHES NEXT FALL. LOAN ME A COUPLE OF BAGS OF SEED HUH?

NO WAY DUDE! I NEED THAT SEED TO SOW THE 40 ACRES EARL WINSTON IS LETTING ME SHARE-CROP. THOSE RADISHES ARE GOING TO ALLOW ME TO BECOME A **REAL** LAND OWNER. **HA HA** - YOU LOSER!!

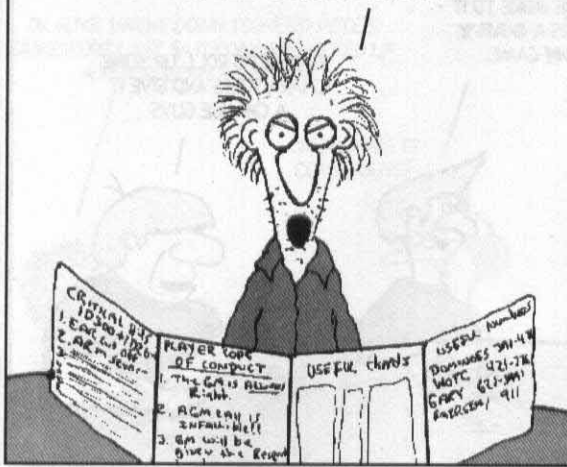


YOU **BASTARD!!** I LOANED YOU MY BEST MULE TEAM LAST FALL TO PLOW THAT SAND-PIT YOU CALL A FARM. THAT'S GRATITUDE FOR YA!

THAT REMINDS ME - I NEED MY +5 HOE BACK. I'M PLANTING RUTABAGAS NEXT WEEK.

SORRY DUDE - I LOST IT.

BY THE WAY FELLAS, IT'S THAT TIME OF MONTH AGAIN. YOUR FRIENDLY TAX MAN VISITS EACH OF YOU FOR THE KING'S SHARE OF THE CROP.



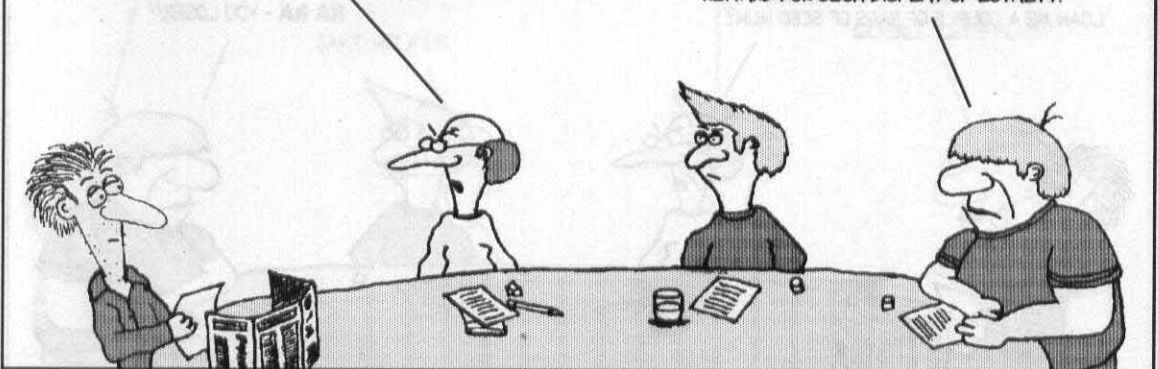
GREAT! THAT LOUSY KING IS BLEEDIN' US DRY. LET'S TRY REVOLTING AGAIN.



NO WAY! LAST TIME WE TRIED THAT I GOT FIFTY LASHES AND WAS GIVEN A WEDGIE IN PUBLIC.

WELL, I'M GOING TO CALL A MEETING OF ALL THE NON-PLAYER PEASANTS AND INCITE THEM TO REVOLT AGAINST THAT TYRANT OF A KING.

WHILE HE'S DOING THAT **B.A.**, I'M GOING TO REPORT TO THE EARL AND TELL HIM ABOUT BOB'S TREASONOUS ACTIONS. YOU MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT A 100 GP REWARD FOR SUCH DISPLAY OF LOYALTY.



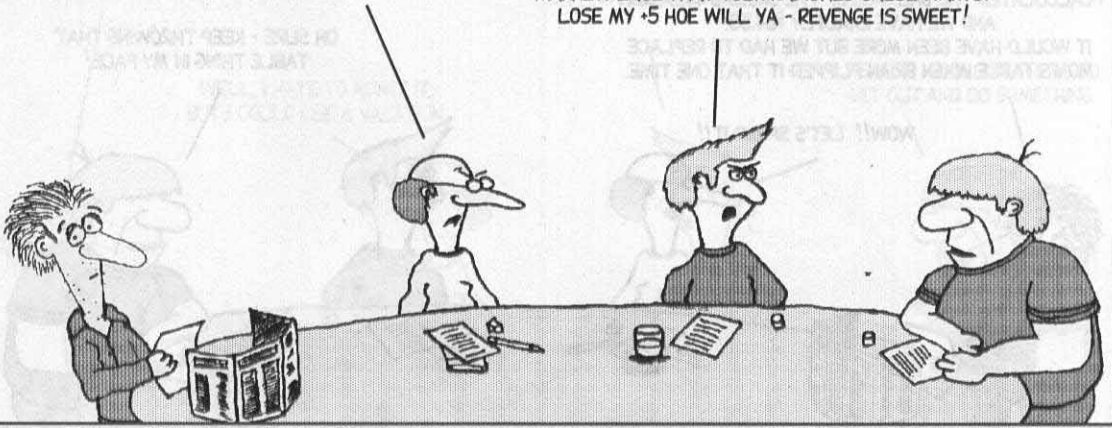
YOU WOULDN'T DARE! I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT ENOUGH OF YOUR BACK-STABBING, BUDDY.

NOTHING PERSONAL BOB, I JUST NEED THE MONEY. YOU UNDERSTAND? IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT, GET OUT OF THE GAME!



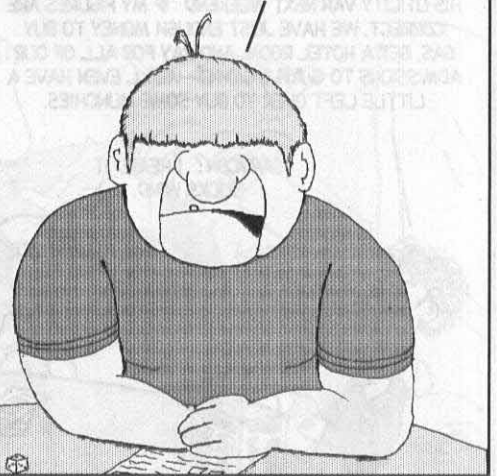
OH YEAH? THAT DOES IT!! I'M COMING OVER AND TORCHING YOUR CROPS!! HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT?

YEAH, AND I'M GONNA SPREAD A RUMOR IN THE MARKETPLACE THAT YOUR RADISHES CAUSE WARTS! LOSE MY +5 HOE WILL YA - REVENGE IS SWEET!



HA HA, BRIAN!! PAYBACK'S A... UHHH!

ANYBODY TOUCHES MY RADISHES AND IT'S WAR!!



GEE, THE BACK OF THE GAME BOX DIDN'T EVEN MENTION THIS. I CAN'T WAIT 'TIL THE NEXT SUPPLEMENT COMES OUT.

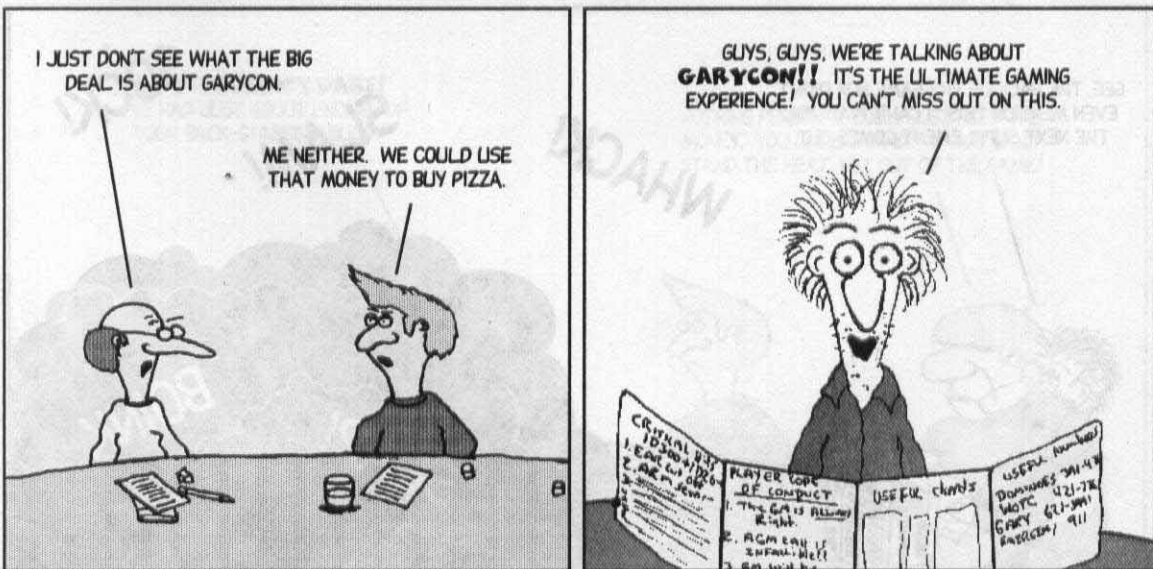
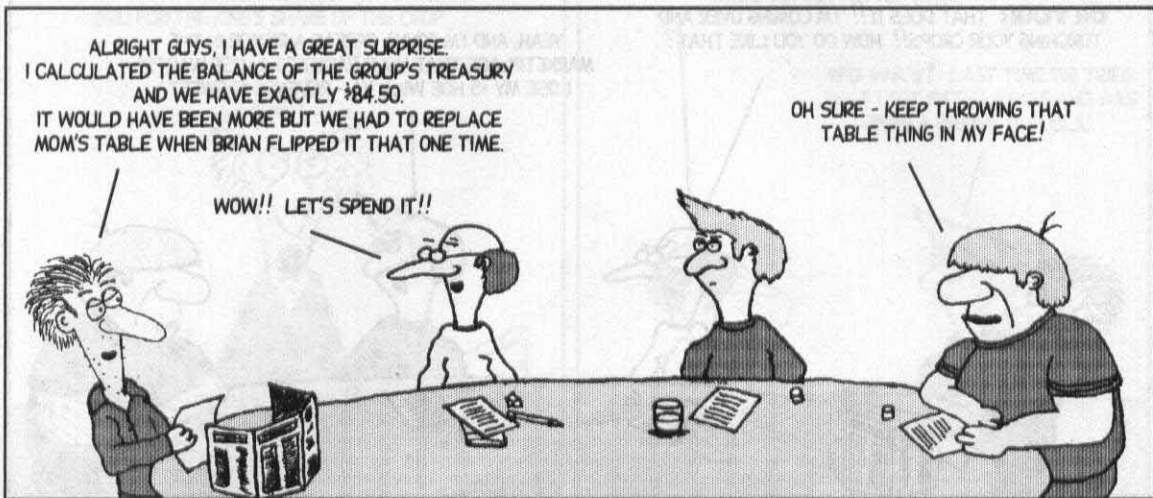


WHACK! SLAM! SOCK!

SLAP! BOINK

The Wonderful GaryCon Adventure

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN



I GUARANTEE YOU'LL HAVE THE BEST TIME OF YOUR LIFE!! IT SURE AS HELL BEATS SITTING AROUND THIS STUPID TABLE AND PLAYING GAMES - **RIGHT?**

YOU HAVE A POINT. I'M TIRED OF SITTING AROUND GAMING.

WELL, I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT I COULD USE A VACATION.

YEAH, IT WOULD BE GREAT TO GET OUT AND DO SOMETHING.



AND SO THE KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE EMBARK ON THEIR GREATEST ADVENTURE! 72 HOURS OF NON-STOP DRIVING, TWO FLAT TIRES AND THREE ECONOMY BAGS OF ONION CHIPS LATER, THE GROUP FINALLY ARRIVES AT **GARYCON!**



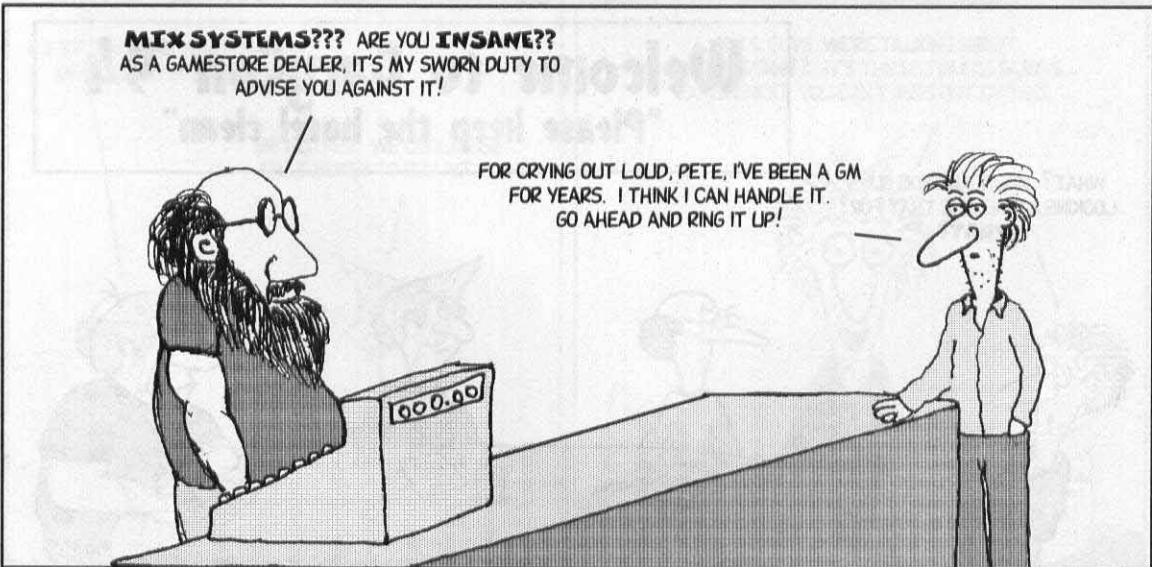
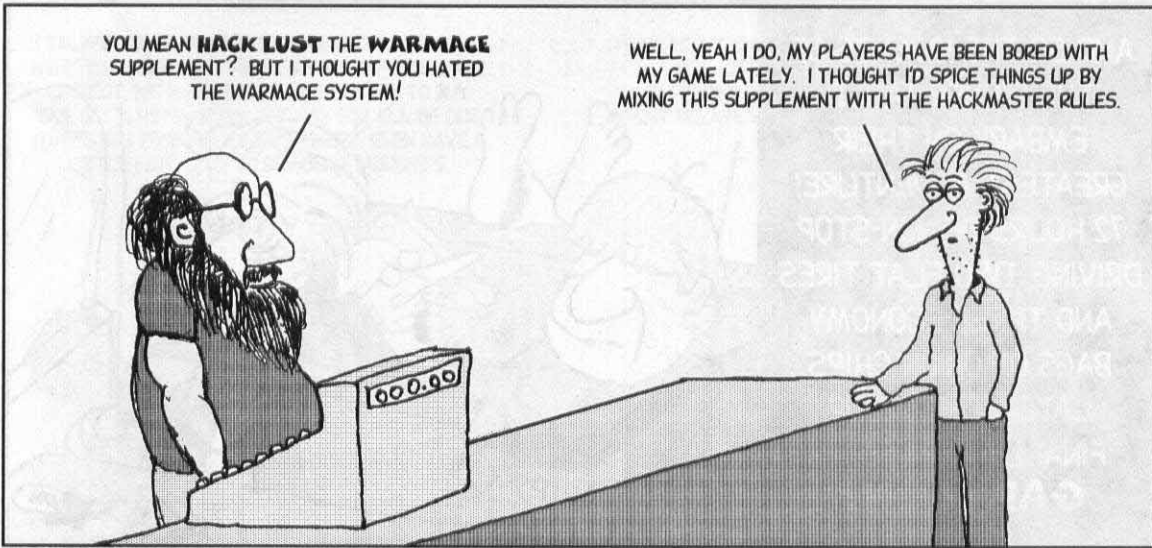
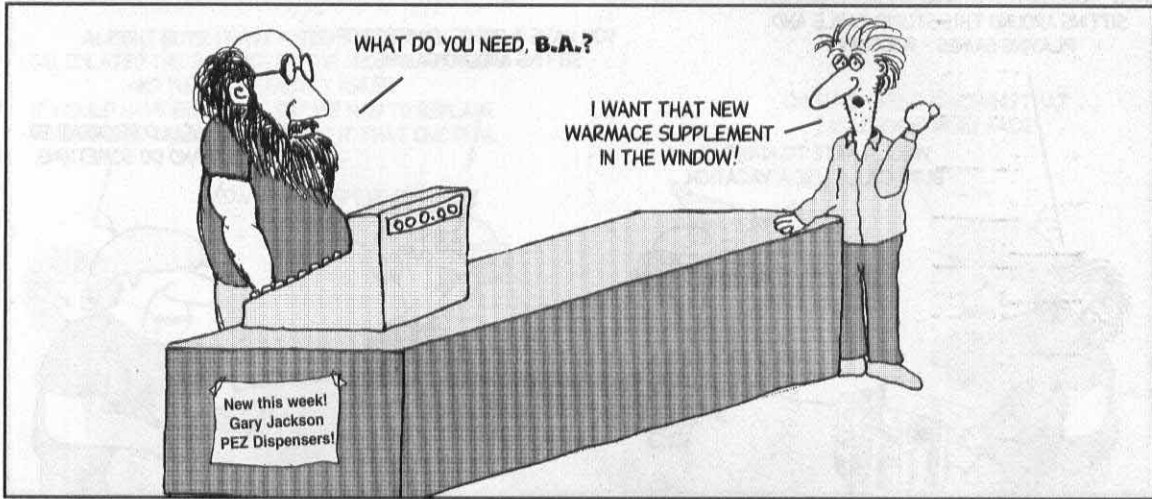
Welcome to GaryCon '94
"Please keep the hotel clean"

WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU GUYS LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT FOR?
WHAT?



Diminishing Returns

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN



GOING AGAINST WEIRD PETE'S ADVICE, B.A. FELTON RACES HOME AND SETS ABOUT MIXING THE WARMACE RULES WITH HIS OLD HACKMASTER RULES. LONG INTO THE NIGHT AND INTO THE FOLLOWING DAY HE PORES OVER HIS BOOKS AND HOME-BREWED CONVERSION TABLES. AT LAST, WITH ONLY HOURS TO SPARE BEFORE THE GROUP ARRIVES, B.A. IS READY TO UNVEIL HIS NEW SYSTEM!

OPEN YOUR MINDS BOYS! TONIGHT WE WILL BE USING A HYBRID SYSTEM OF MY OWN DESIGN.



THIS SYSTEM DRAWS UPON THE CLASSIC ROLE-PLAYING ELEMENTS OF HACKMASTER WHILE INTRODUCING THE POPULAR HACK-N-SLASH ASPECTS OF WARMACE. I THINK YOU'LL LIKE WHAT I'VE COME UP WITH!

LOOK, B.A., I JUST CAME TO PLAY. I DON'T WANT TO BE USED AS A GUINEA PIG. PLAYTEST THIS THING ON YOUR OWN TIME.

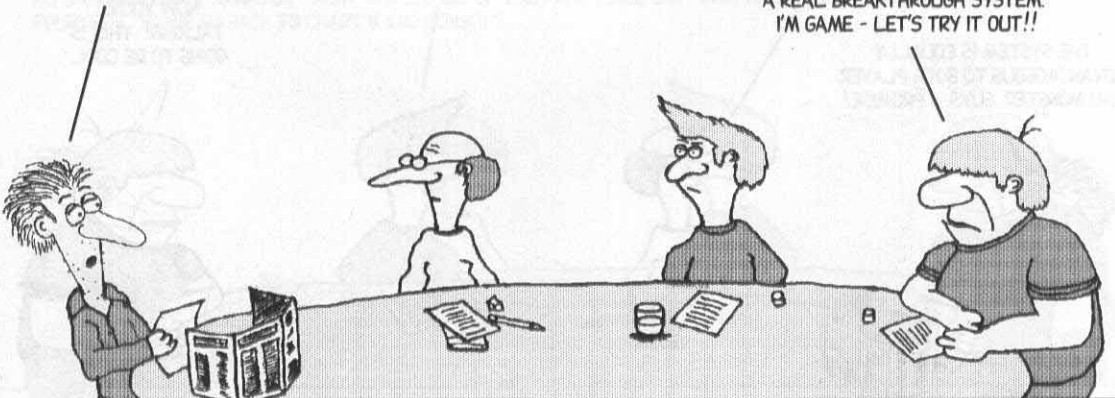
YOU CAN'T MIX THOSE TWO SYSTEMS! THEY'RE INCOMPATIBLE

HMMMM... HOW DO YOU SOLVE THE DAMAGE RATIO TO ARMOR CLASS VS. WEAPON, B.A.?



THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF IT, BRIAN. I CAME UP WITH A DOZEN ALGORITHM CHARTS THAT ALLOW ME TO COMPLETELY MESH THE TWO SYSTEMS TOGETHER WHILE ONLY INCREASING THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF DICE ROLLS BY 35%.

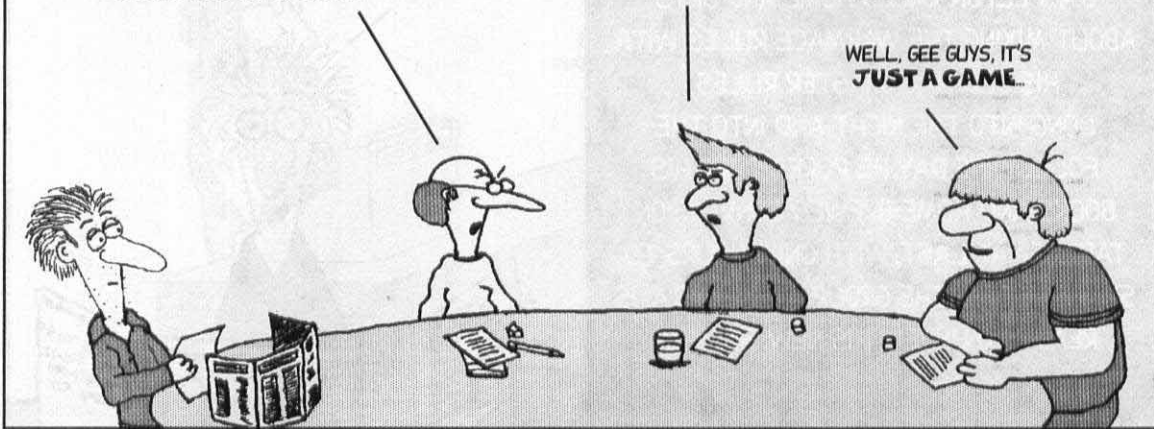
35%!! **wow!** THIS COULD BE A REAL BREAKTHROUGH SYSTEM. I'M GAME - LET'S TRY IT OUT!!



I DUNNO GUYS, YOU KNOW B.A.'S HOME-BREWED SYSTEMS ALWAYS END UP KILLING ONE OF US. WHO CAN FORGET THOSE **CARNIVOROUS SHEEP** HE CAME UP WITH?

YEAH, OR HOW ABOUT THAT TIME HE TRIED TO IMPLEMENT THOSE LAME TAGGER RULES FROM **HACKJOURNAL!!** WHAT A DISASTER!

WELL, GEE GUYS, IT'S **JUST A GAME.**



WHAT DID YOU SAY?

ER... SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THAT CAME FROM.

GUYS, I DID THIS FOR **YOU!** YOU'RE ALWAYS COMPLAINING THERE ISN'T ENOUGH HACK-N-SLASH IN MY CAMPAIGNS. ARE YOU GONNA SNUB ME THE ONE TIME I TRY TO DELIVER?

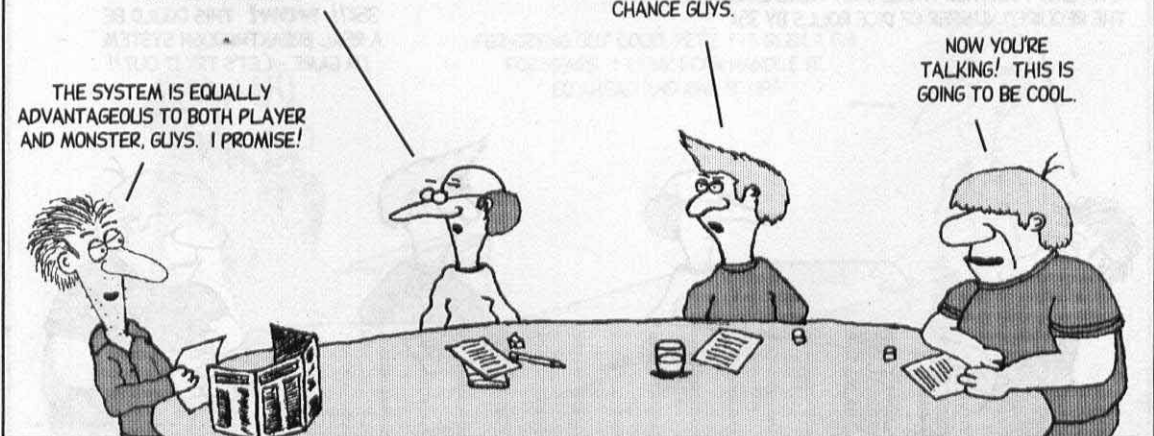


HOW DO WE KNOW THIS ISN'T A TRICK SO YOU CAN KILL US ALL OFF?

I'LL REGRET THIS LATER, BUT I SAY WE GIVE IT A CHANCE GUYS.

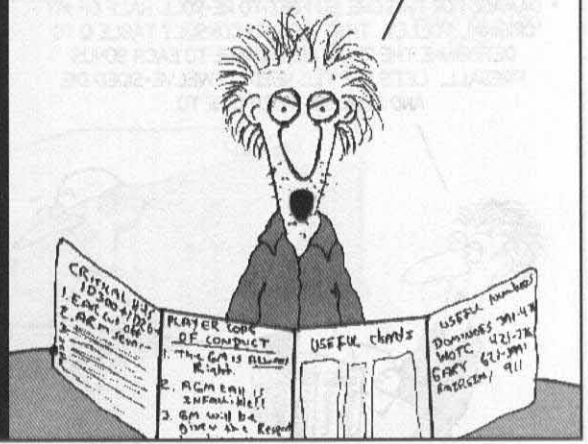
NOW YOU'RE TALKING! THIS IS GOING TO BE COOL.

THE SYSTEM IS EQUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO BOTH PLAYER AND MONSTER, GUYS. I PROMISE!



DRAWING UPON HIS YEARS OF GAME MASTERY EXPERIENCE, B.A. BEGINS TO WEAVE A BOLD ADVENTURE, LEADING HIS PLAYERS INTO THE FRAY! ALL SEEMS TO BE GOING WELL, UNTIL THE GROUP ENCOUNTERS THE EVIL MAGE OF SHINY PEBBLE CASTLE!!

AS YOU WALK ACROSS THE DRAWBRIDGE, THE CASTLE DOORS SWING OPEN AND THE EVIL MAGE EMERGES TO BLOCK YOUR WAY!



YOU NOTICE HE IS BRANDISHING AN ENORMOUS MAGICAL STAFF WHICH HE WAVES OVER HIS HEAD AS HE BEGINS TO UTTER THE WORDS OF A POWERFUL SPELL!

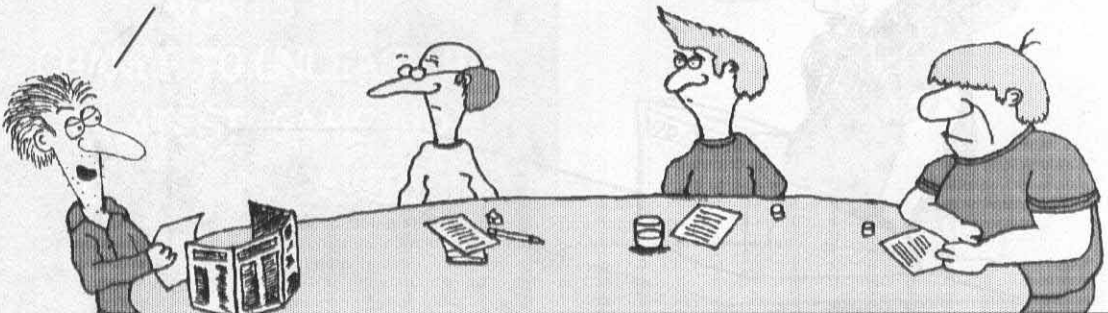
HE'S JUST ANOTHER WIMPY MAGE. I'M DRAWING MY HACKMASTER +12 AND I'M GOING TO CLUT HIS HEAD OFF AND THROW IT IN THE MOAT!

UH, ER... I'M GOING TO YELL, "WE COME IN PEACE!!" AND THEN SHOOT TO KILL!

I'M GONNA PREPARE A SPELL OF MY OWN, JUST IN CASE.



GREAT! WE FINALLY GET TO USE MY NEW HYBRID COMBAT SYSTEM. THE MAGE POINTS HIS STAFF AT YOU, DAVE AND LETS LOOSE A VOLLEY OF **PHANTASMAL FIREBALLS!!!** LET'S SEE, I ROLL FOUR 20 SIDED DICE, COMPARE IT TO CHART B AND CROSS-REFERENCE IT TO CHART K. NOW I CARRY THE RESULTS AS A MODIFIER TO CHART A AND THAT MEANS I CAN NOW ROLL ON TABLE 5 TO CHECK FOR SPELL FAILURE. THERE'S A FULL MOON SO I GET A -5 FOR THAT - OF COURSE, BECAUSE IT'S A PHANTASM SPELL, I GET TO ROLL A SIX SIDED DIE AS OPPOSED TO THE TRADITIONAL FOUR SIDED DIE FOR MY DAMAGE BONUS. **GOOD!** THAT TAKES CARE OF THE FIRST FIREBALL - NOW I HAVE TO CHECK FOR THE REMAINING FOURTEEN. SO WE GO BACK TO CHART B AND CONSULT...

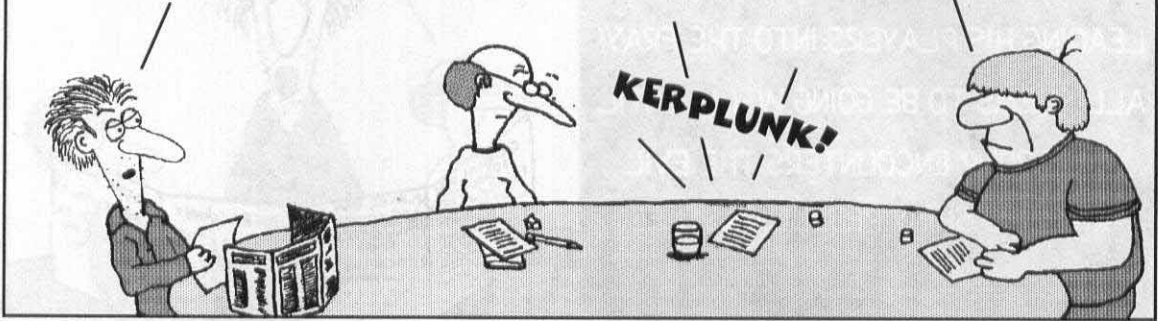


TWENTY MINUTES LATER...

..OK ONLY TWO FIREBALLS TO GO. UH OH, I ROLLED DOUBLE DAMAGE FOR THIS ONE, SO I GET TO RE-ROLL HALF OF MY ORIGINAL VOLLEY. THAT MEANS I CONSULT TABLE Q TO DETERMINE THE RELATIVE DAMAGE TO EACH BONUS FIREBALL. LET'S SEE, I'LL NEED A TWELVE-SIDED DIE AND FOUR SIX-SIDED DICE TO...

DAMN! DAVE FELL ASLEEP!

KERPLUNK!

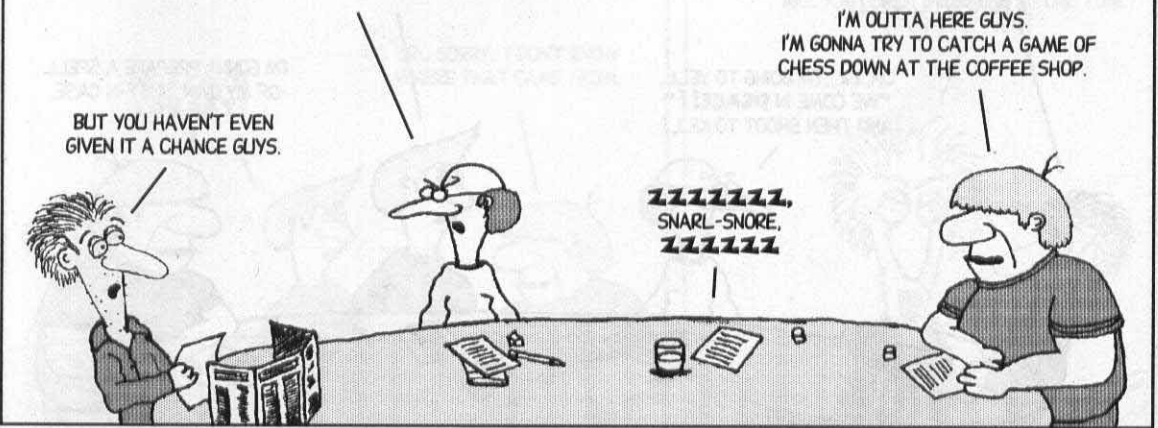


B.A., I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOUR FEELINGS BUT... NOW DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY BUT... OH THE **HELL** WITH IT! THIS GAME **SUCKS!!**

I'M OUTTA HERE GUYS. I'M GONNA TRY TO CATCH A GAME OF CHESS DOWN AT THE COFFEE SHOP.

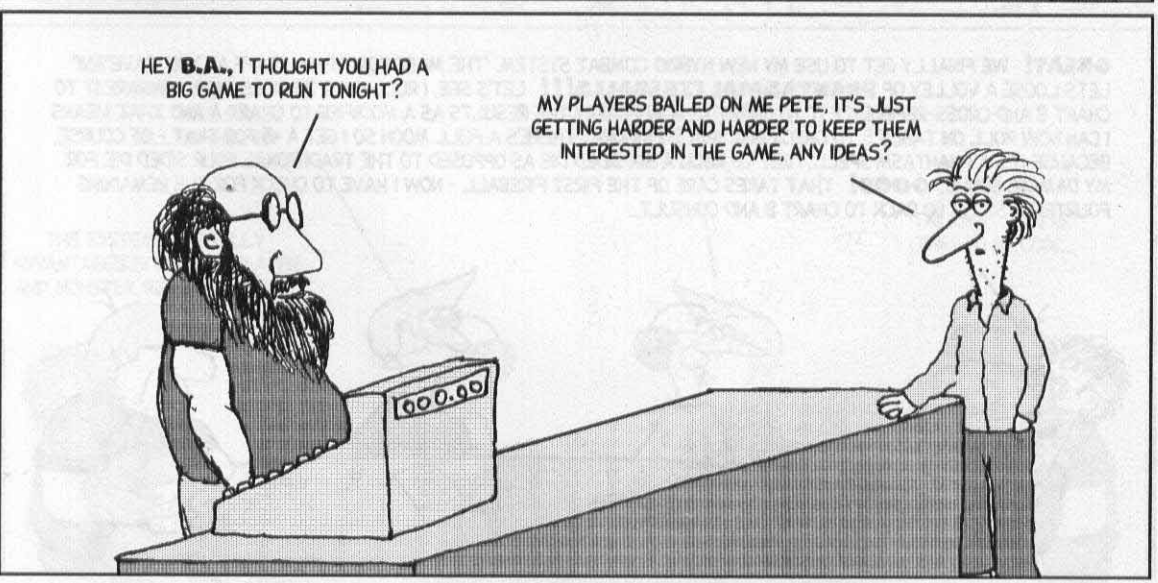
BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN GIVEN IT A CHANCE GUYS.

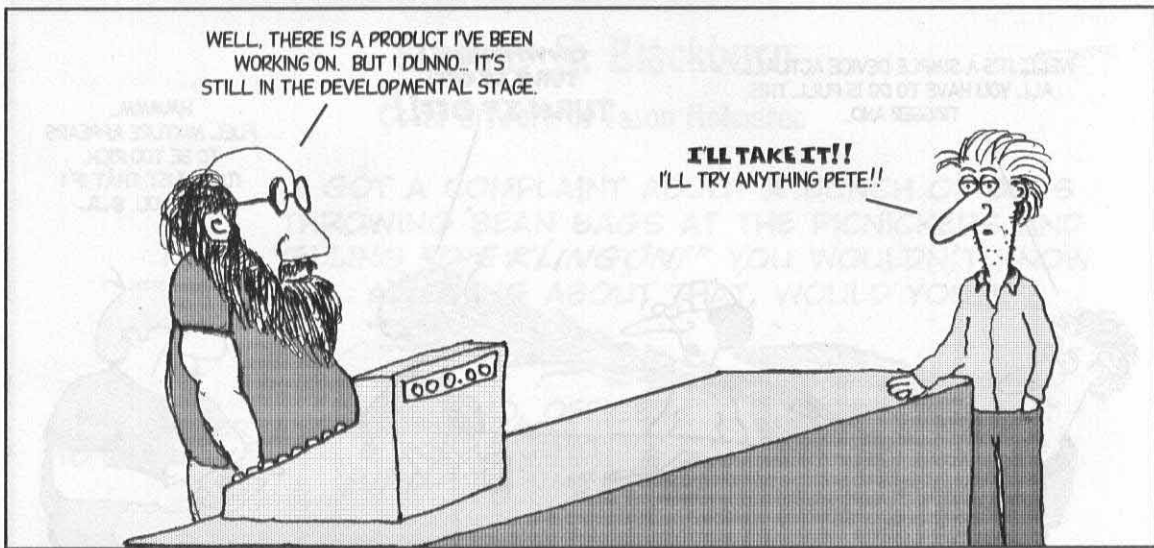
11111111,
SNARL-SNORE,
111111



HEY **B.A.,** I THOUGHT YOU HAD A BIG GAME TO RUN TONIGHT?

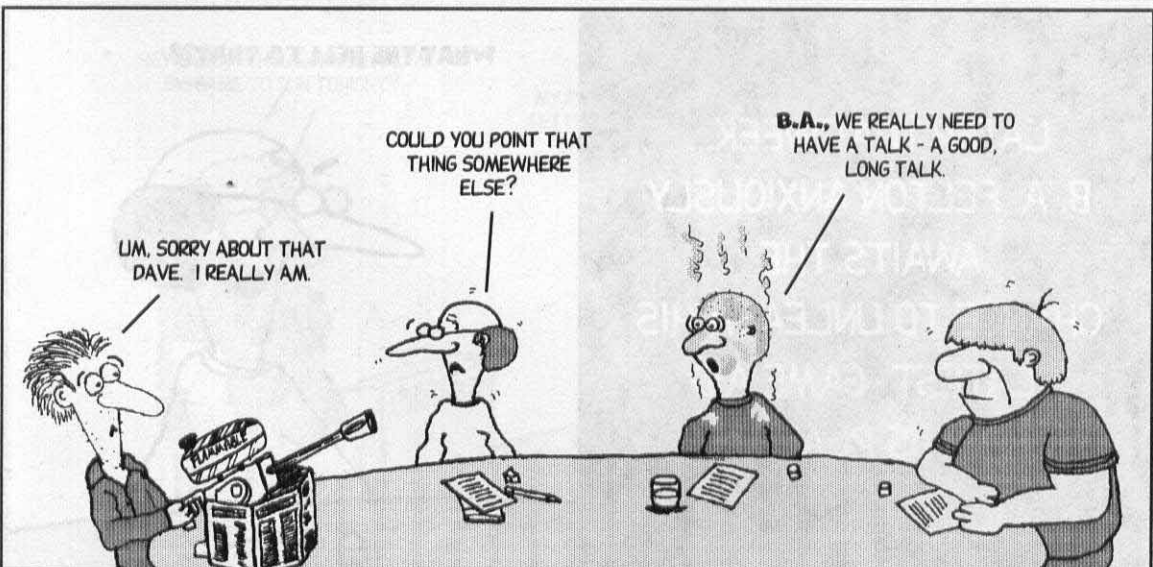
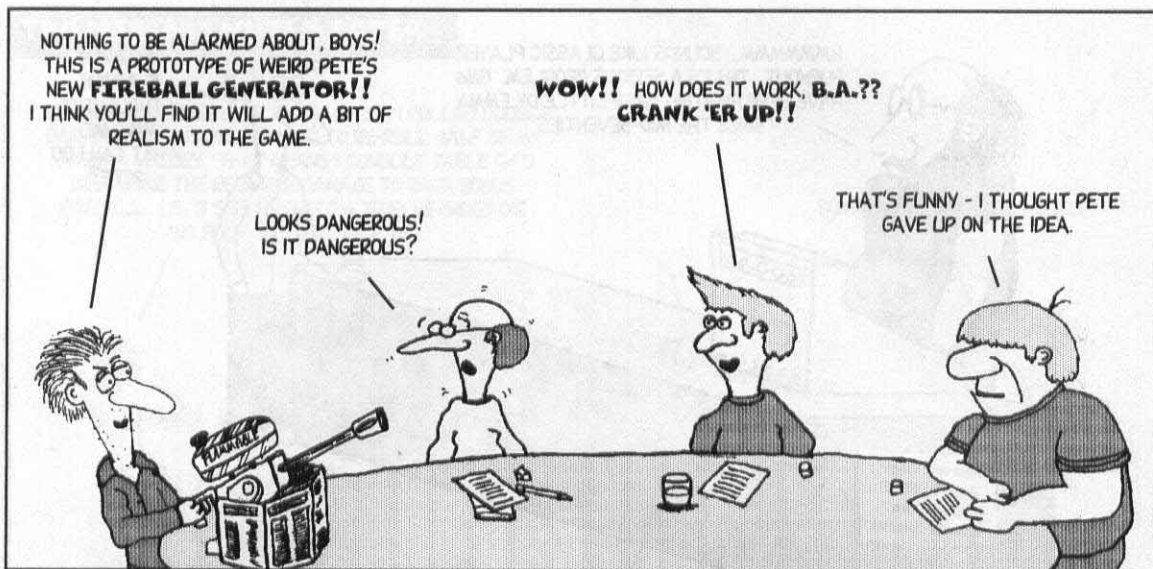
MY PLAYERS BAILED ON ME PETE, IT'S JUST GETTING HARDER AND HARDER TO KEEP THEM INTERESTED IN THE GAME, ANY IDEAS?





LATER THAT WEEK...
B. A. FELTON ANXIOUSLY
AWAITS THE
CHANCE TO UNLEASH HIS
LATEST GAME AID
UPON HIS PLAYERS...





THE KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE™

“Gluttons For Punishment”

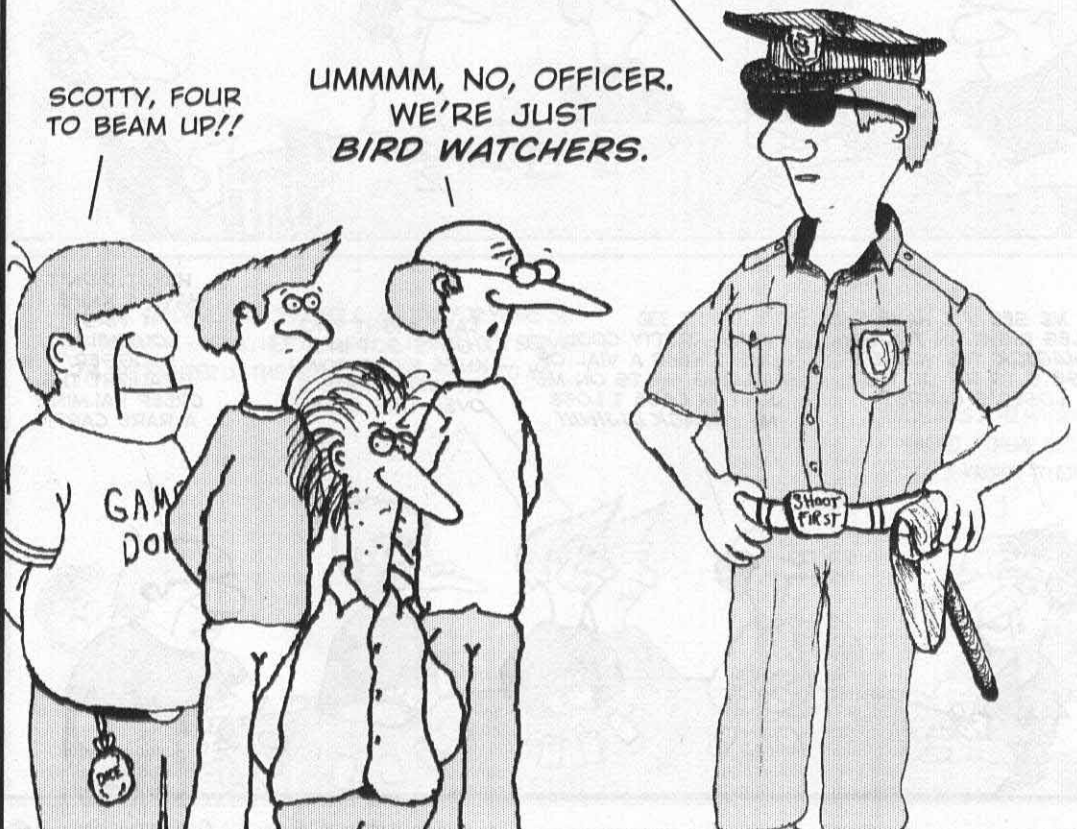
By Jolly R. Blackburn

Cover artwork by Jason Holmgren

I GOT A COMPLAINT ABOUT A BUNCH OF BOYS
THROWING BEAN BAGS AT THE PICNICKERS AND
YELLING “*DIE KLINGON!*” YOU WOULDN'T KNOW
ANYTHING ABOUT THAT, WOULD YOU?

SCOTTY, FOUR
TO BEAM UP!!

LIMMMM, NO, OFFICER.
WE'RE JUST
BIRD WATCHERS.



As my old boss was so fond of saying, "You're late, young man!" Ok, this installment of KODT is approximately five months late. For the past twelve weeks I've been assaulted daily by my partners and distributors with, "Well? Is it finished yet?" Sigh, no one understands the hardships of the reluctant cartoonist.

For those of you who have been anxiously awaiting this issue, my apologies. My duties as editor of SHADIS magazine have been demanding most of my time these past months. And now I'm told KODT is to become a bimonthly comic book??

This is where you, the reader, can be of great service. You will find details for a contest elsewhere in this issue. The biggest comment I receive on KODT is "Those guys remind me of my own group!" Assuming this is true, there must be hundreds of funny stories out there. If you would take time to send in your suggestions for storylines for the boys of KODT I would be personally grateful.

Enjoy the issue!

Jolly R. Blackburn

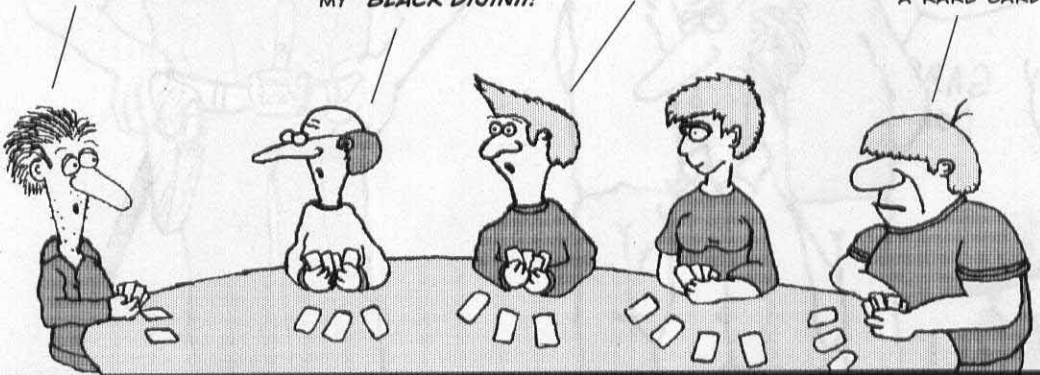
Jolly R. Blackburn
January 21, 1995

LET ME SEE IF I HAVE THE RULES RIGHT. IN **TOUGH-MAGICK** THE WINNER GETS TO RIP UP THE LOSER'S CARDS?

YEAH, PRETTY COOL, HUH? I KEEP A VIAL OF SMELLING SALTS ON ME JUST IN CASE I LOSE MY **BLACK DIJINII!**

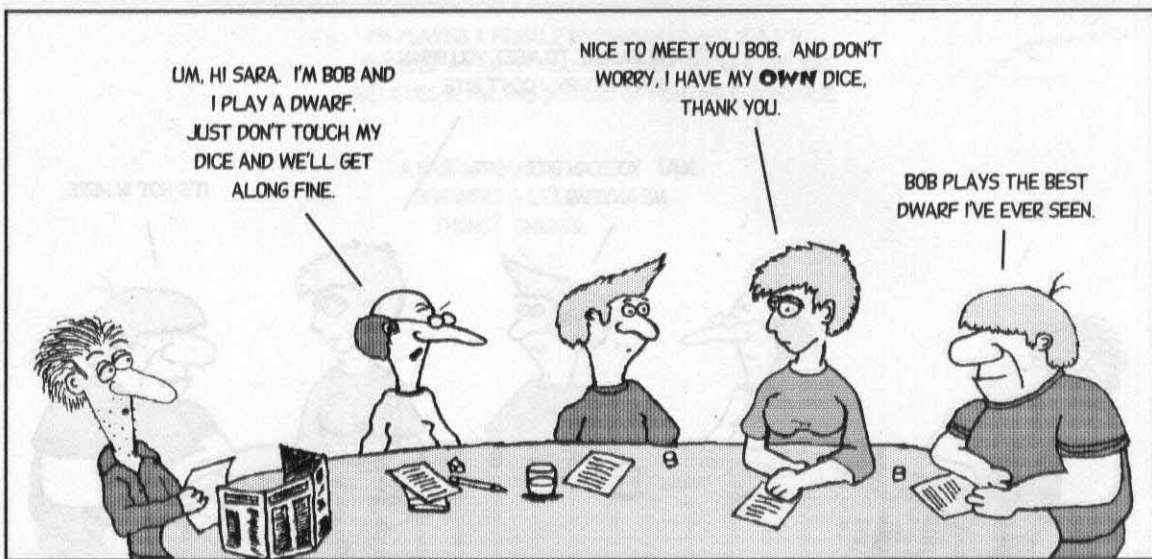
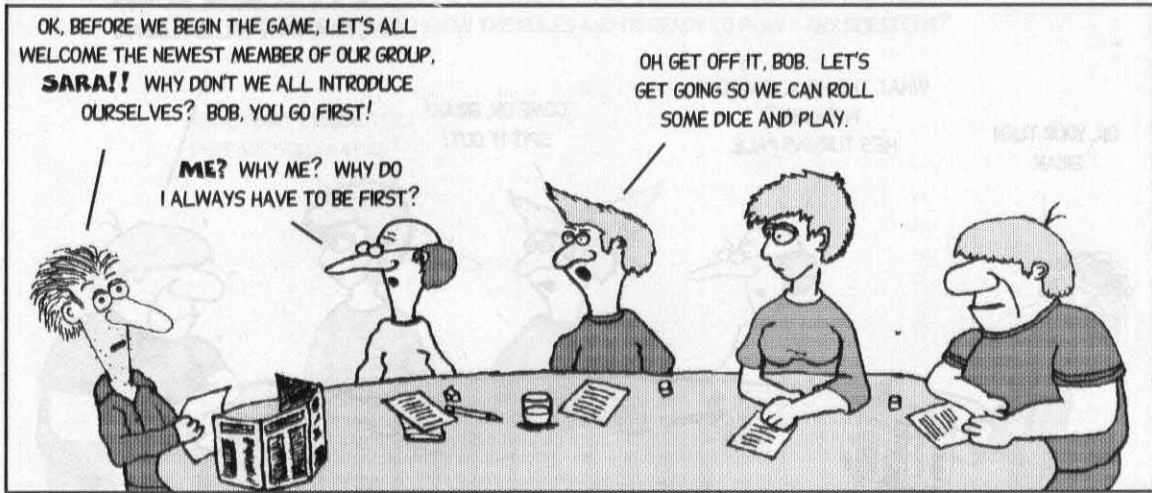
LAST NIGHT TWO GUYS GOT IN A KNIFE FIGHT DOWN AT WEIRD PETE'S OVER THIS GAME!

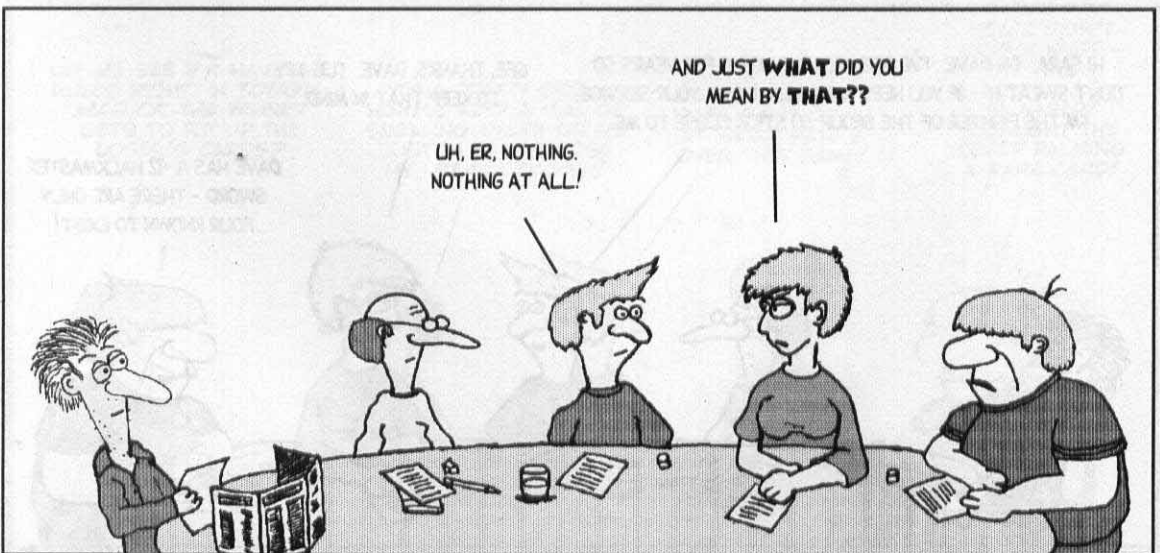
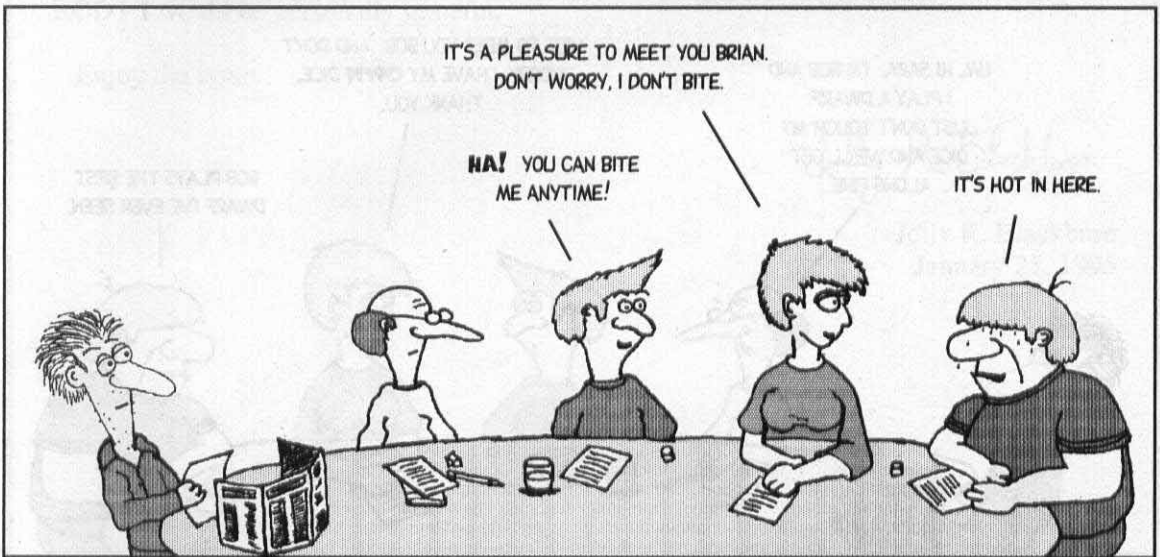
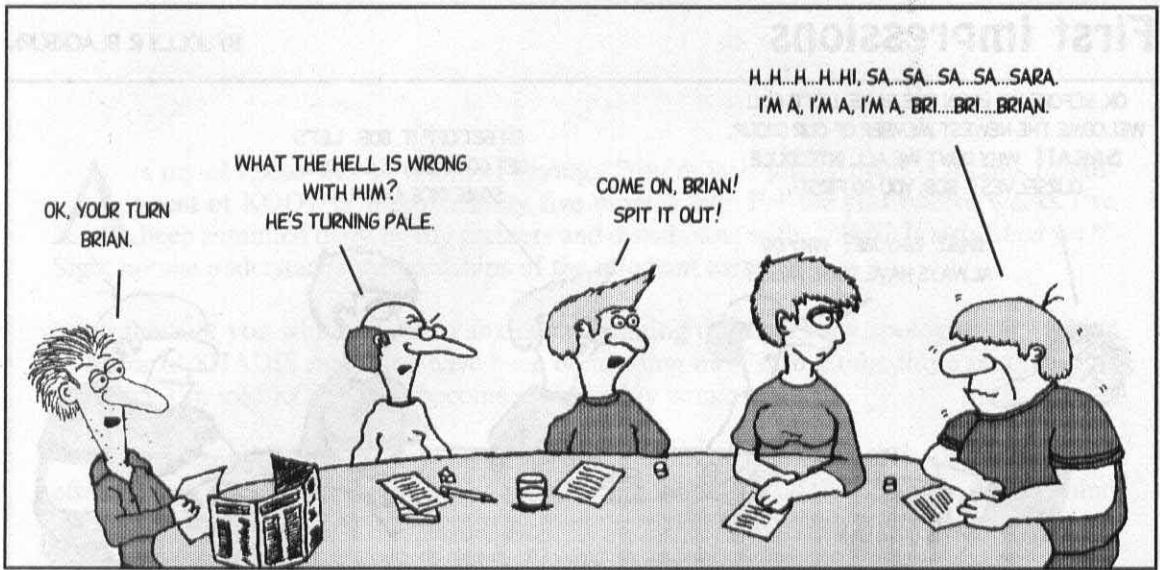
HEY, I DIDN'T HAVE A KNIFE - IT WAS LOUISVILLE SLUGGER! I CAUGHT THE CREEP PALMING A RARE CARD!



First Impressions

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN





I GUESS IT'S **MY** TURN! MY NAME IS SARA. I'VE BEEN ROLE-PLAYING FOR TEN YEARS. I WAS REGIONAL CHAMPION OF THE **GARY JACKSON RPG TOURNEY** FOR FOUR YEARS RUNNING. I DON'T STEAL DICE, I KNOW THE RULES AND I'M READY TO PLAY - ANY QUESTIONS?

YEAH, WHAT CHARACTER TYPE ARE YOU PLAYING?



I'M PLAYING A FEMALE BARBARIAN NAMED **ZAYRE**. SHE HAS A PAIR OF TRAINED STURM WOLVES AND SHE BELIEVES IN TALKING INSTEAD OF FIGHTING IF POSSIBLE.

A BARBARIAN HUH? DOES SHE WEAR A LEATHER THONG? SNICKER.

-CHUCKLE-



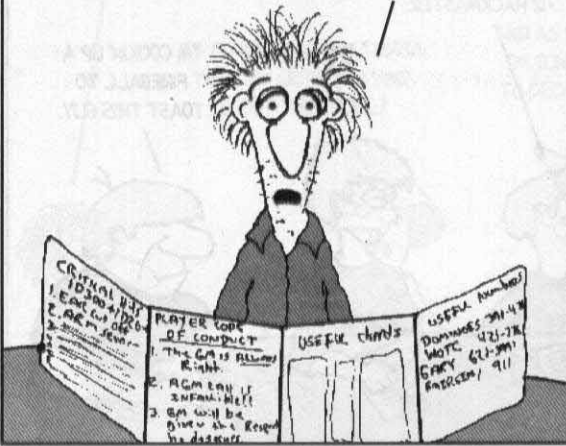
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO TELL YOU WHAT I DID TO THE LAST GUY WHO MADE A SEXIST REMARK ABOUT MY CHARACTER?

UH, NO. I GET THE POINT.





ACTUALLY BOB, YOUR CHARACTER MEETS SARA'S BARBARIAN IN THE BAR WHILE GAMBLING. YOU HIT IT OFF AND INVITE HER TO JOIN YOUR PARTY.



LIKE HELL I DO! AFTER THE WAY SHE TREATED DAVE?? I'VE SWORN A BLOOD-OATH WITH DAVE'S CHARACTER. HIS ENEMIES ARE MY ENEMIES. I REFUSE TO TALK WITH THE BARBARIAN.



THAT'S MY BOY!
YOU TELL 'EM BOB!

LOOK BOB, WE WENT THROUGH THIS THAT TIME BRIAN OWED YOU FIVE BUCKS AND YOU KEPT KILLING OFF ALL HIS CHARACTERS. YOU CAN'T BRING PERSONAL GRIEVANCES INTO THE GAME. YOUR CHARACTER HAS NEVER MET THE BARBARIAN BEFORE. I'M TRYING TO WORK IN SARA'S CHARACTER SO WE CAN GET ON WITH THE GAME. UNDERSTAND?



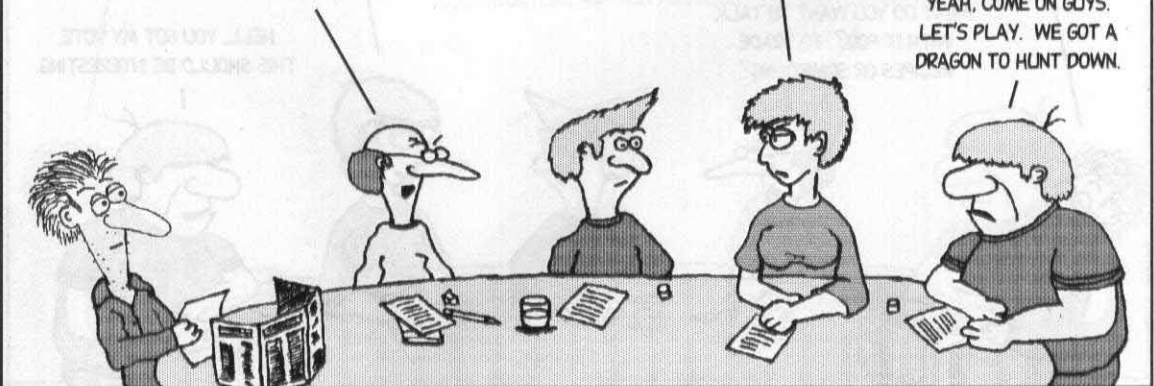
WHY DOES MY CHARACTER HAVE TO BE THE LINK? WHY NOT BRIAN'S? I JUST WANT TO GAMBLE IN PEACE.

GEE BOB, YOUR DWARF IS A GRUMPY LITTLE FART ISN'T HE?

HEY LOOK **MS. RPG TOURNEY**, WE HAD A PEACEFUL LITTLE GROUP HERE UNTIL YOU CAME ALONG. AND MY DWARF ISN'T GRUMPY, HE'S A NON-CONFORMIST.

YEAH, YEAH, WHATEVER CLUE-BALL. LET'S JUST SAY MY CHARACTER IS A LONG LOST FRIEND AND GET STARTED.

YEAH, COME ON GUYS. LET'S PLAY. WE GOT A DRAGON TO HUNT DOWN.



LATER...

OK, YOU GUYS FINALLY APPROACH THE CASTLE RUINS OF LINDULAR. JUST AS YOU ARE ABOUT TO CROSS THE DRAW-BRIDGE, AN ENORMOUS TROLL BRANDISHING A PIKE-AXE STEPS THROUGH THE GATES AND ORDERS YOU TO HALT.

I UNSHEATH MY
•12 HACKMASTER.

??

I'M COOKIN' UP A
FIREBALL TO
TOAST THIS GUY.

IT'S SHOWTIME!! I WASTE
HIM WITH MY CROSSBOW.



WAIT!!! I WANT TO TRY TO PARLEY
WITH HIM FIRST!
MY BARBARIAN RUSHES TO THE FRONT OF
THE GROUP TO BLOCK THEIR ATTACKS.

PARLEY? WHAT IN THE HELL IS
THAT? SOME KIND OF NEW SPELL?

I WANT TO TALK WITH IT,
IDIOT! HE MIGHT HAVE
SOME USEFUL INFORMATION.

TALK? WE'VE NEVER
TRIED THAT BEFORE.



TALK? YOU REALLY WANT TO TALK INSTEAD OF
HACKING IT OUT?? THANK GOD - I'VE ALWAYS
WANTED TO ROLE-PLAY A MONSTER.

LOOK, JUST GIVE ME 5 MINUTES TO
TALK WITH THE TROLL. IF NOTHING
COMES OF IT, YOU CAN KILL IT. OK?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TALK
WITH IT FOR? TO TRADE
RECIPES OR SOMETHING?

HELL, YOU GOT MY VOTE.
THIS SHOULD BE INTERESTING.



THE TROLL NOTICED THAT SARA HALTED YOUR ATTACK AND RELUCTANTLY LOWERS HIS WEAPON. HE'S NOW STANDING QUIETLY AS IF HE'S WAITING FOR YOU TO MAKE THE NEXT MOVE.

WILL YOU GUYS **PLEASE** LET ME DO THIS **MY** WAY? JUST THIS ONCE??

I'M GONNA HEAD-BUTT SARA WITH MY CROSSBOW AND SHOOT THE TROLL!

AND AS SOON AS SHE DROPS, I'M GONNA RUSH PAST HER TO DECAPITATE THIS DUDE.



COME ON GUYS. SARA IS AN ACCOMPLISHED GAMER **AND** A CHAMPION. YOU MIGHT LEARN A THING OR TWO FROM HER.

SO SAY WHAT YOU GOTTA SAY TO THIS CREEP AND LET'S GET GOING.

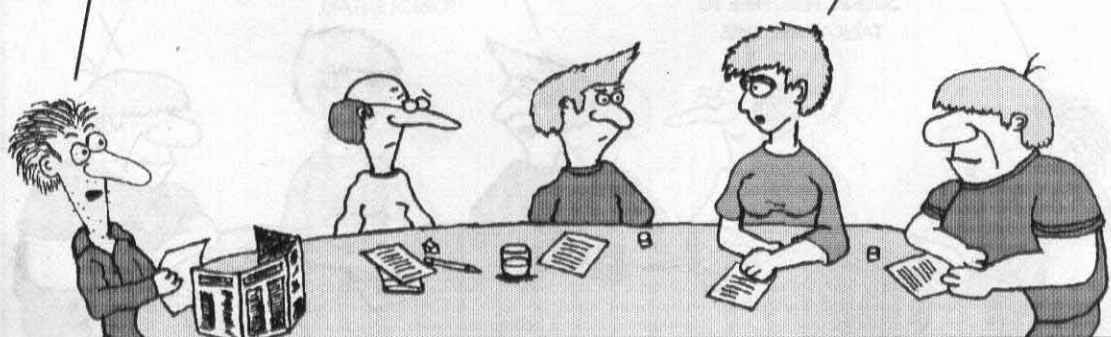
WATCH AND LEARN GUYS. OK, B. A. I'M GIVING THE TROLL THE COMMON HAND GESTURE FOR PEACE AND THEN I'M GOING TO APPROACH HIM AND CHAT WITH HIM.

OK **MS. RPG TOURNEY**. YOU GOT FIVE MINUTES AND THEN WE COME IN HACKING.



THE TROLL RETURNS THE GESTURE OF PEACE AND MOTIONS FOR YOU TO APPROACH HIM.

OK, MY CHARACTER SPEAKS FLUENT ROCK TROLL, HILL TROLL AND FOREST TROLL - SO COMMUNICATING SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM. I'M ALSO WELL VERSED IN TROLL CUSTOMS AND ETIQUETTE AND I WILL BE TRYING TO IMPRESS THE TROLL WITH MY KNOWLEDGE OF HIS CULTURE AS I ASK HIM ABOUT THE CASTLE AND ITS LAYOUT.

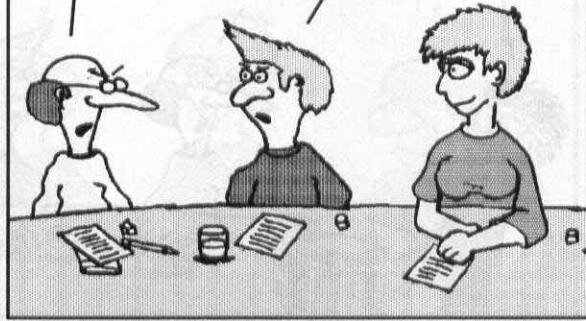


UPON HEARING HIS NATIVE LANGUAGE, THE TROLL VISIBLY WEEPS WITH JOY. HE EXPLAINS HE IS THE LAST OF HIS KIND IN THE REGION AND HASN'T HEARD TROLLKIN FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS. HE IS WILLING TO TELL YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW.



OH, I AIN'T BELIEVIN' THIS.

SO WHAT? A TORCH TO THE GROIN WOULD HAVE PRODUCED THE SAME RESULTS.



I GIVE THE TROLL MY +4 GOLD DAGGER AS A PEACE OFFERING. I EXPLAIN TO HIM WE ARE ON A MISSION TO DESTROY THE EVIL DRAGON AND THAT HIS HELP WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

I GOT DIBS ON THAT DAGGER WHEN WE HACK THIS SLUCKER!

NOT IF I GET THERE FIRST DUDE!

HEY, I THINK SARA MIGHT BE ON TO SOMETHING HERE.



THE TROLL GIVES YOU A POWERFUL AMULET OF PROTECTION. HE ALSO SKETCHES OUT A DETAILED MAP OF THE CASTLE AND THE DUNGEONS BENEATH IT - INDICATING TRAPS, MONSTERS AND POTENTIAL TREASURE. MOST IMPORTANTLY, HE REVEALS TO YOU THE **DRAGON'S LAIR**.

YEAH, THAT WAS PRETTY COOL, BARBARIAN BABE!

SARA, FEEL FREE TO TALK AT ANY TIME.

UH, THANKS GUYS.

WAY TO GO, SARA.



LATER...

OK, YOU PULL BACK THE LARGE IRON DOORS TO FIND A VERY ANCIENT BLACK DRAGON SITTING ON HIS HORDE OF GOLD. THE DRAGON IS AWAKE AND TURNS ITS GAZE TOWARD YOU AS YOU STAND THERE.

GEEZ LOVEEZE!!
I'M LOCKING AND LOADING MY CROSS-BOW AND DOUSING MYSELF WITH MY POTION OF FIREBREATH PROTECTION!!

I'M NOTCHING AN ARROW OF SLAYING INTO MY LONGBOW.

WAIT!!!
I GOT IT THIS TIME GUYS. I'M GOING TO TALK TO OL' SCALEY

BRINGING A PAIR OF FIREBALLS ON LINE GUYS.



GOOD IDEA! WE CAN PARLEY WITH THIS GUY. I'M SURE HE'LL COOPERATE IF WE AGREE NOT TO SLAY HIM.

I STEP UP BRAVELY TO THE DRAGON SHOWING HIM I HAVE NO FEAR. I'LL PAT THE HILT OF MY SWORD JUST SO HE KNOWS I'M ARMED AND READY FOR BUSINESS SHOULD OUR LITTLE PARLEY FAIL. I TELL THE DRAGON WE WILL ALLOW HIM TO LIVE IF HE GIVES UP HALF HIS GOLD WITHOUT A FIGHT.

UMMM, DAVE, MAYBE YOU SHOULD...



AS YOU APPROACH THE DRAGON, A HUGE EVIL GRIN STRETCHES ACROSS HIS SNOUT. AS YOU ARE ENVELOPED IN A HORRENDOUS TORRENT OF FIRE BREATH, YOUR LAST THOUGHTS ARE "WHAT'S THAT SOUND?". YOUR TOASTED BODY SETTLES IN A SMALL PILE OF ASH AND CHARRED BONE AT THE DRAGON'S FEET.

IT DOESN'T WORK **EVERY** TIME, DAVE!

OH THE HORROR!



The Cows of War

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

OK, YOU FIND YOURSELF WALKING ALONG A DUSTY STRETCH OF ROAD. IN THE FAR DISTANCE YOU SEE THE SPIRES OF A MIGHTY CASTLE. TO YOUR LEFT YOU SEE A PEACEFUL GRASSY FIELD.

WELL, THAT MUST BE THE PALACE WE'RE LOOKING FOR. I SUGGEST WE DOUBLE-TIME IT SO WE GET THERE BEFORE DARK.

A GRASSY FIELD HUH?
HMMMMMM

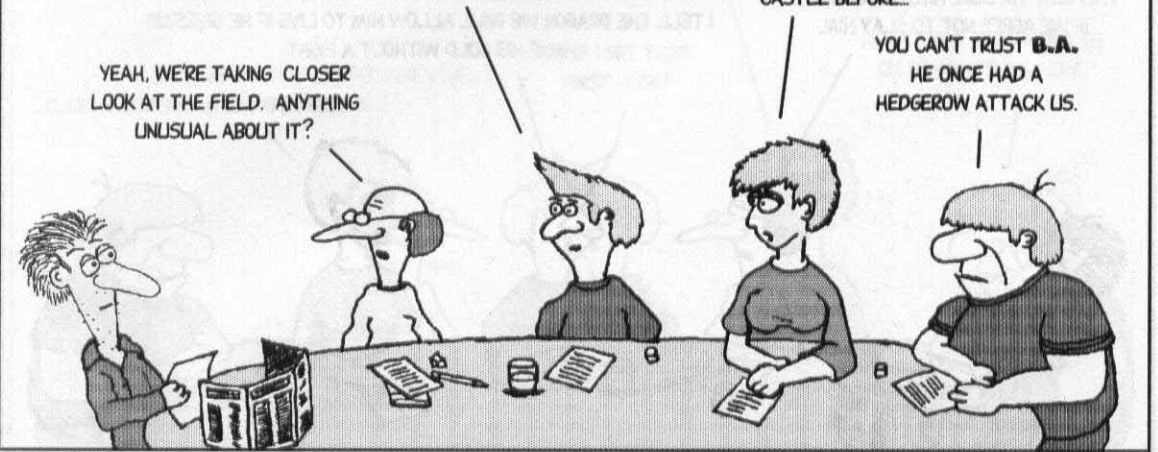


HOLD ON GUYS. LET'S CHECK OUT THIS "PEACEFUL" FIELD. I GOT A HUNCH THERE'S SOMETHING UP HERE.

FORGET THE FIELD GUYS. WE'VE GOT TO GET THE THAT CASTLE BEFORE.

YEAH, WE'RE TAKING CLOSER LOOK AT THE FIELD. ANYTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT IT?

YOU CAN'T TRUST B.A. HE ONCE HAD A HEDGEROW ATTACK US.



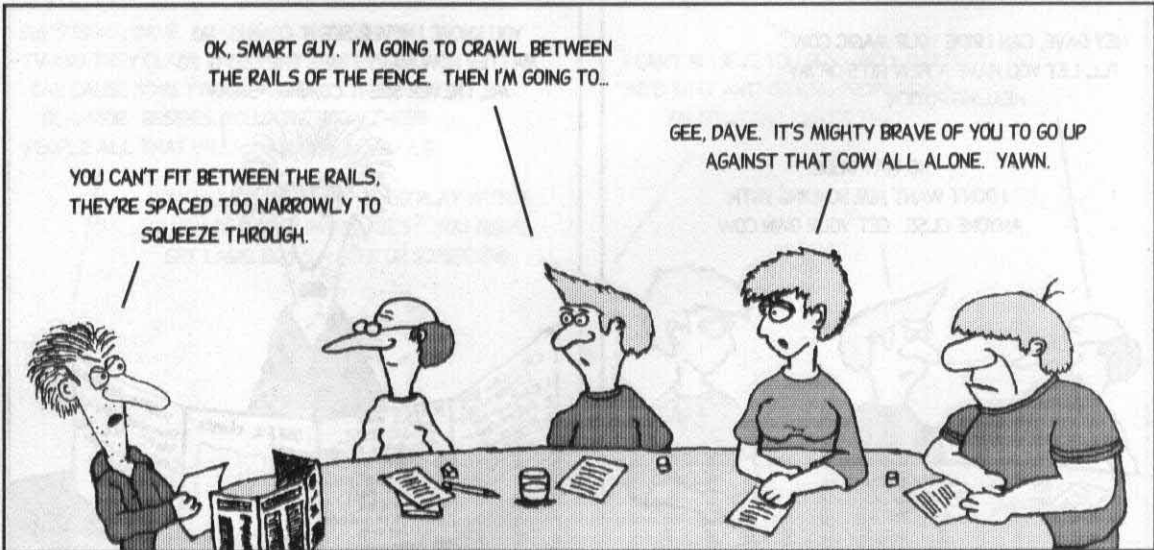
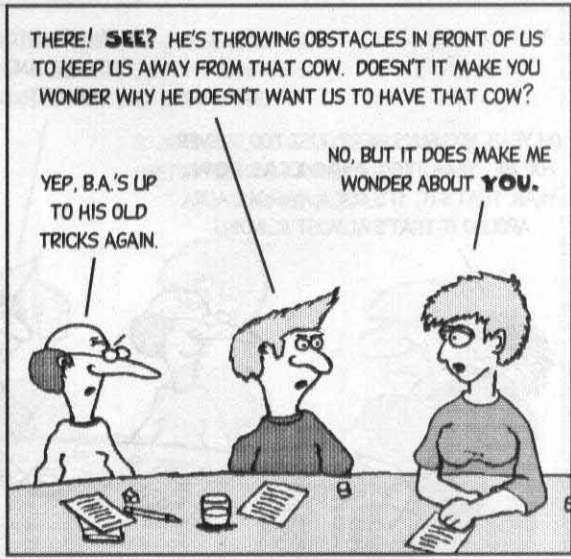
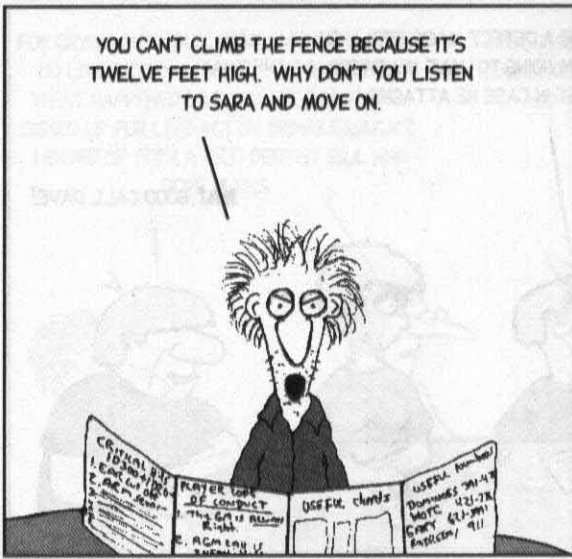
NO. THERE'S NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT THE FIELD. ALL YOU SEE IS A COW GRAZING IN THE MIDDLE OF IT.

A COW? NOW WE'RE GETTING SOMEWHERE. I'M GOING TO WALK UP TO IT.

WAKE UP GUYS, IT'S JUST A COW - ZERO EXPERIENCE, WASTE OF TIME.

I'M READINGY MY CROSSBOW JUST IN CASE.





WELL SINCE THE RAILS ARE SO NARROWLY SPACED, THEY SHOULD MAKE A PERFECT LADDER FOR ME TO CLIMB OVER THE **DAMN** FENCE.

OH FOR THE LOVE OF PETE, YOU CLIMB OVER THE **STUPID** FENCE, YOU CROSS THE **STUPID** FIELD AND YOU APPROACH THE **STUPID, ORDINARY** COW. ARE YOU **HAPPY??**

MY HERO. DAVE THE COW SLAYER.

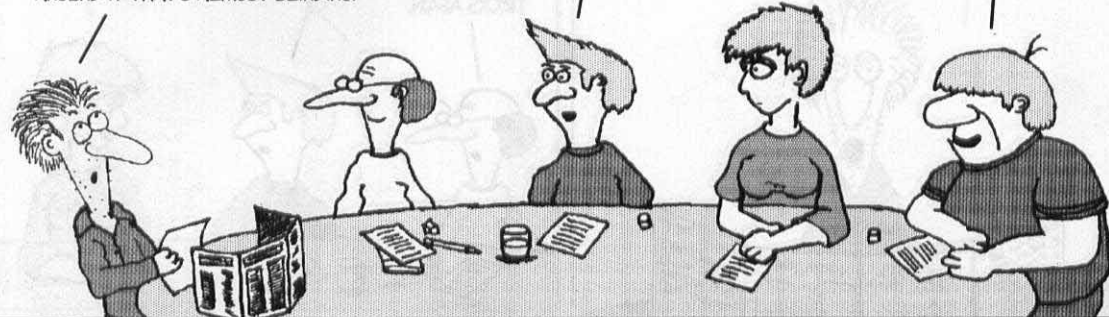
CAREFUL DAVE, DON'T FORGET THAT HEDGEROW.



OK, I'M GOING TO DO A DETECT MAGIC SPELL ON THE COW. AND I'M GOING TO HAVE MY SWORD READIED JUST IN CASE HE ATTACKS.

OH YEAH, YOU GUYS WERE JUST TOO CLEVER FOR ME. YEAH, IT'S A **MAGICAL COW**. YEAH, THAT'S IT. IT'S GOT A MAGICAL AURA AROUND IT THAT'S ALMOST BLINDING.

HA! GOOD CALL DAVE!

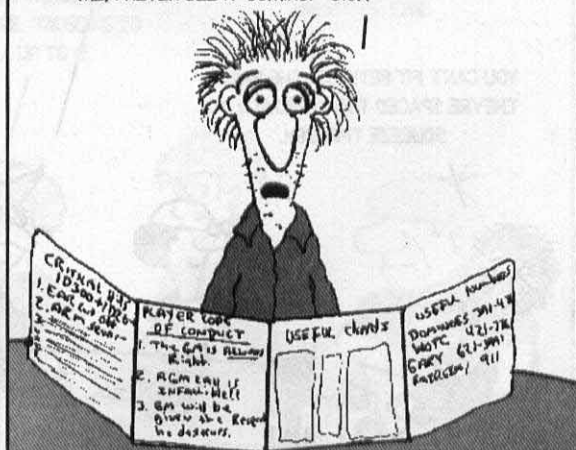


HEY DAVE, CAN I RIDE YOUR MAGIC COW? I'LL LET YOU HAVE A FEW HITS OF MY HEALING POTION.

NO WAY DUDE. I DON'T WANT HIM BONDING WITH ANYONE ELSE. GET YOUR OWN COW.



YOU KNOW, I NEVER SEE IT COMING. NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES THEY DO IT TO ME, I NEVER SEE IT COMING. *SIGH*



Lords of Darkness

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

GREAT GAME GUYS. I'D LIKE TO FINISH UP THIS CAMPAIGN NEXT WEEK SO WE CAN BEGIN PLAYTESTING MY NEW GAME SOON. WHY DON'T WE PLAY WEDNESDAY NIGHT AND WRAP THINGS UP?

SORRY DUDE! WEDNESDAY NIGHT IS VAMPIRE NIGHT. I CAN'T MAKE IT. IT'S MY FIRST GAME.

OH GOD, DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE INTO THAT LIVE ACTION ROLE-PLAYING GAME??



FOR CRYING OUT LOUD, DAVE. WE HAD A DEAL. NO LIVE ACTION GAMING! YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED LAST SUMMER WHEN WE SIGNED UP FOR LIVE-ACTION **SPACEHACK**? I ENDED UP WITH A \$500 DENTIST BILL AND ROPE BURNS.

AWH, THIS IS DIFFERENT BOB. THESE GUYS ARE REALLY COOL. BESIDES, IT'S BY INVITATION ONLY AND YOU'RE NOT INVITED. SORRY DUDE.

I'D BE CAREFUL DAVE. I'VE HEARD SOME PRETTY BIZARRE STORIES ABOUT THOSE VAMPIRE GROUPS.



SHE'S RIGHT, DAVE. I SAW THIS DOCUMENTARY ON TV AND THEY CLAIM THESE LIVE-ACTION GROUPS CAN CAUSE SOME PRETTY RADICAL CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR. BESIDES, YOU DON'T KNOW THESE PEOPLE ALL THAT WELL. MAYBE YOU SHOULD..

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU GUYS WOULD BUY INTO THAT ANTI-GAMING PROPAGANDA. I'M GOING AND THAT'S THAT!

WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO GO PLAY WITH A BUNCH OF GAMER WANNA-BE'S? YOU MIGHT GET LABELED AS A GEEK OR SOMETHING.



THE NEXT WEEK...

THIS IS MY NEW PERSONA. THEY MADE ME **DARK OVERLORD OF THE HORDE!** THIS ISN'T JUST A GAME, GUYS. IT'S A WHOLE NEW EXPERIENCE

WHAT IN **THE HELL** HAPPENED TO YOU?
YOU LOOK LIKE A **FREAK!!**

DAVE, MY MOM ASKED ME IF YOU WERE
ON DRUGS. CARE TO EXPLAIN?

I THINK THE BLACK LIPSTICK IS
A BIT TOO MUCH DAVE.



DAVE, I DON'T WANT YOU GOING BACK TO
THIS VAMPIRE THING. AS YOUR REGULAR
GM AND FRIEND, I FORBID IT.

BOB, YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD UNDERSTAND.
BESIDES, I WAS GOING TO INVITE YOU TO GO THIS
WEEK. IT'S PRETTY EXCLUSIVE BLD. I WOULDN'T
ASK JUST ANYBODY.

DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY,
DAVE, BUT YOU'RE SCARING THE HELL
OUT OF ME. WHERE'S THE OL' DAVE?

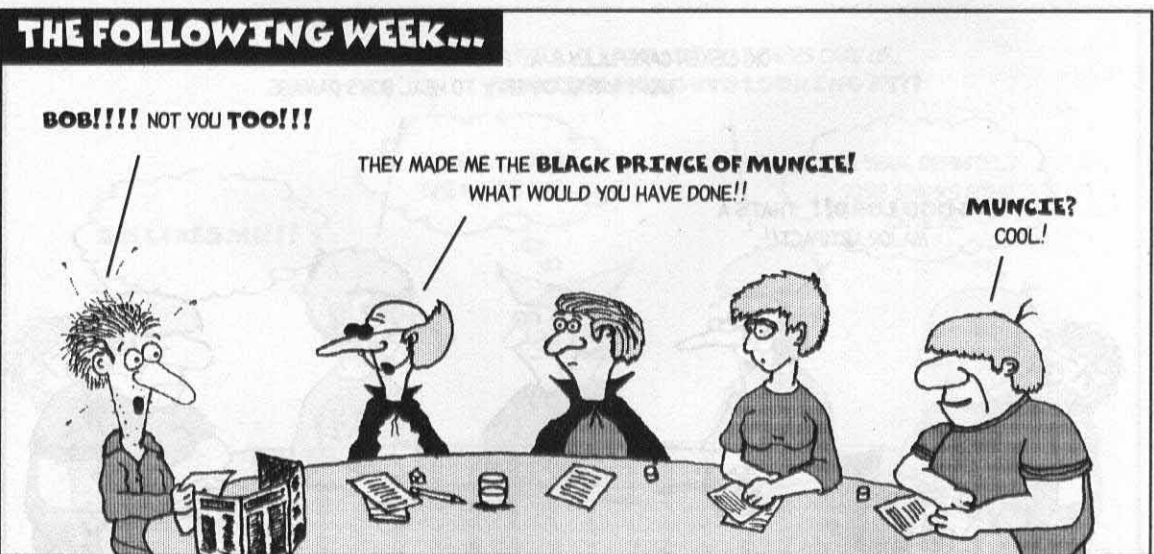
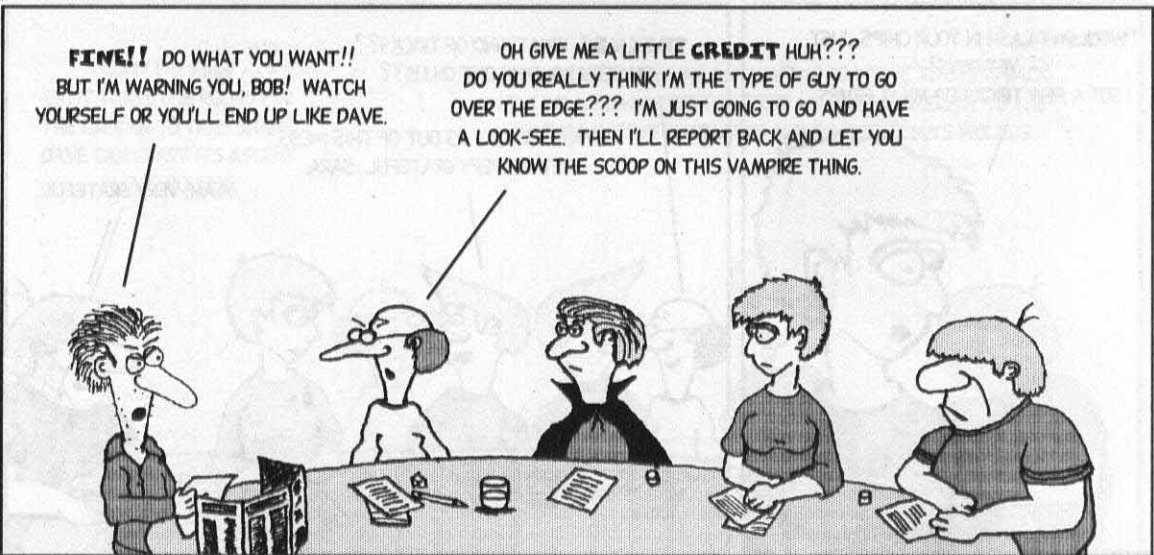
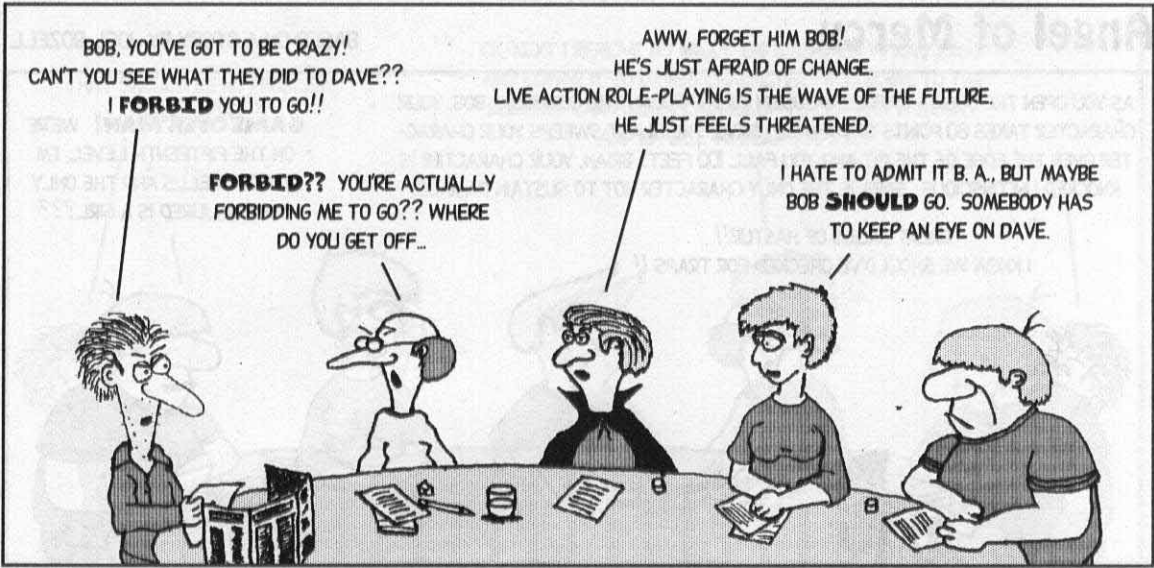
OH, I SEE HOW IT IS! **SNUB**
YOUR **REAL** FRIEND!



YOU'RE INVITING **ME**? UH, GEE, I'M FLATTERED. I'LL TELL YOU
WHAT. I'LL GO JUST TO CHECK THINGS OUT FOR MYSELF BEFORE I
PASS JUDGEMENT. BUT I'M NOT WEARING BLACK LIPSTICK.

COOL! I'LL PICK YOU UP
WEDNESDAY AT 7:00





Angel of Mercy

BASED ON A STORY BY JOEL BOZELL

AS YOU OPEN THE DOOR A LARGE EXPLOSION RIPS THROUGH THE CORRIDOR. BOB, YOUR CHARACTER TAKES 80 POINTS OF DAMAGE. DAVE, THE BLAST SWEEPS YOUR CHARACTER OVER THE EDGE OF THE PIT AND YOU FALL 100 FEET. BRIAN, YOUR CHARACTER IS KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS. SARA IS THE ONLY CHARACTER NOT TO SUSTAIN DAMAGE.

GAME OVER MAN! WE'RE ON THE FIFTEENTH LEVEL, I'M OUT OF SPELLS AND THE ONLY ONE UNINJURED IS A GIRL???

GREAT BALLS OF HASTUR!!
I KNEW WE SHOULD'VE CHECKED FOR TRAPS !!



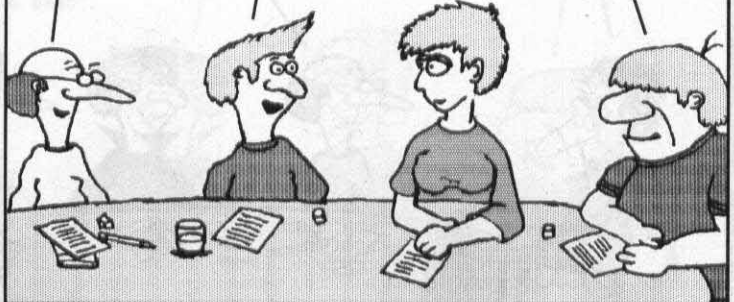
I WOULDN'T CASH IN YOUR CHIPS JUST YET BOYS!
I GOT A FEW TRICKS UP MY SLEEVES.



TRICKS? WHAT KIND OF TRICKS??
YOU BEEN HOLDING OUT ON US??

IF YOU CAN GET US OUT OF THIS MESS,
WE'D BE VERY GRATEFUL, SARA.

YEAH, VERY GRATEFUL.



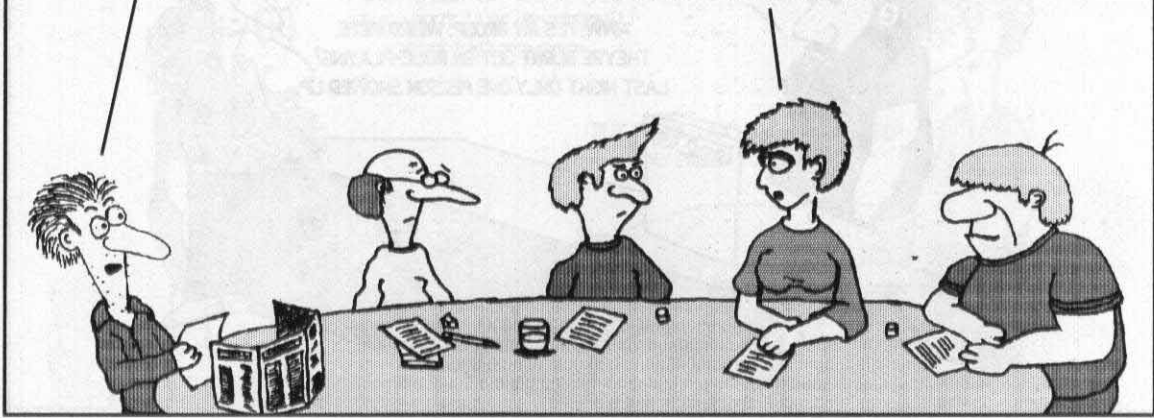
OK, LISTEN CAREFULLY B. A. FIRST I'M GOING TO USE MY **RING OF HEFTY RECOVERY** TO HEAL BOB'S DAMAGE.

GOOD LORD!! THAT'S A MAJOR ARTIFACT!!



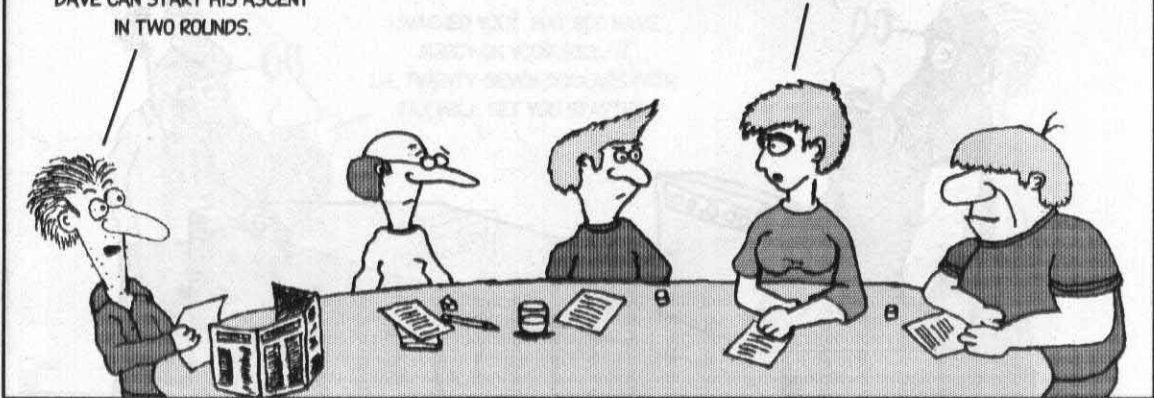
THAT SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM.
WHAT NEXT??

OK, NEXT I REMOVE MY **BELT OF LADDER WEAVING**
AND LOWER IT TO DAVE'S CHARACTER. ACCORDING TO THE
RULES IT CAN FORM A LADDER UP TO 100 FEET IN HEIGHT
AND IS ABLE TO BEAR 500 LBS.



GOOD THINKING!
OK, IT TAKES ONE ROUND FOR
THE LADDER TO TAKE SHAPE.
DAVE CAN START HIS ASCENT
IN TWO ROUNDS.

EXCELLENT! WHILE WE ARE WAITING FOR DAVE TO CLIMB BACK
UP, I WILL ADMINISTER THE FIRST AID SKILLS INHERENT TO THE
BARBARIAN CHARACTER AND TEND TO BRIAN'S WOUNDS.

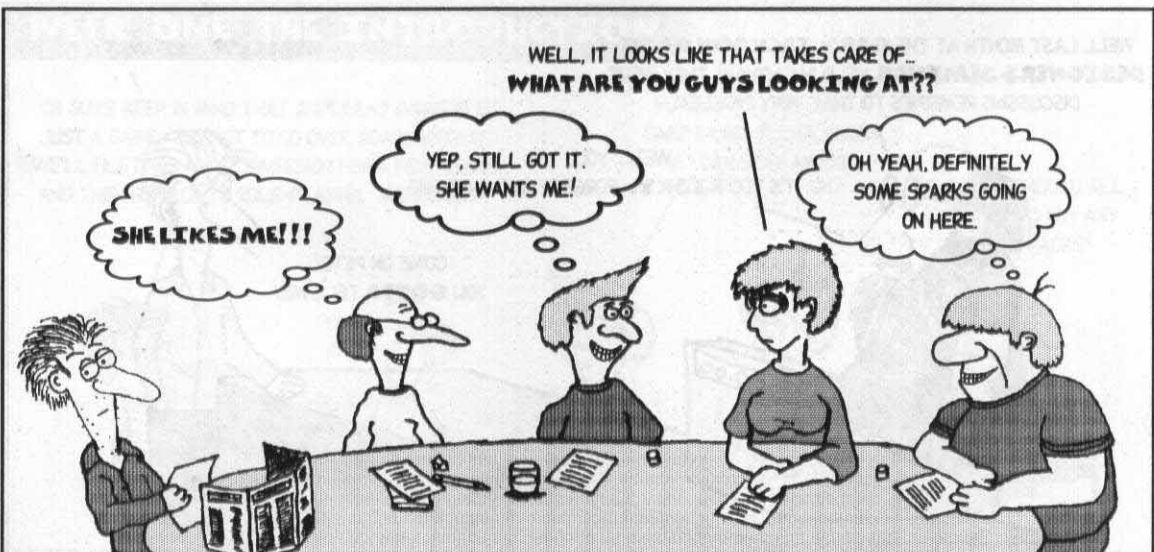


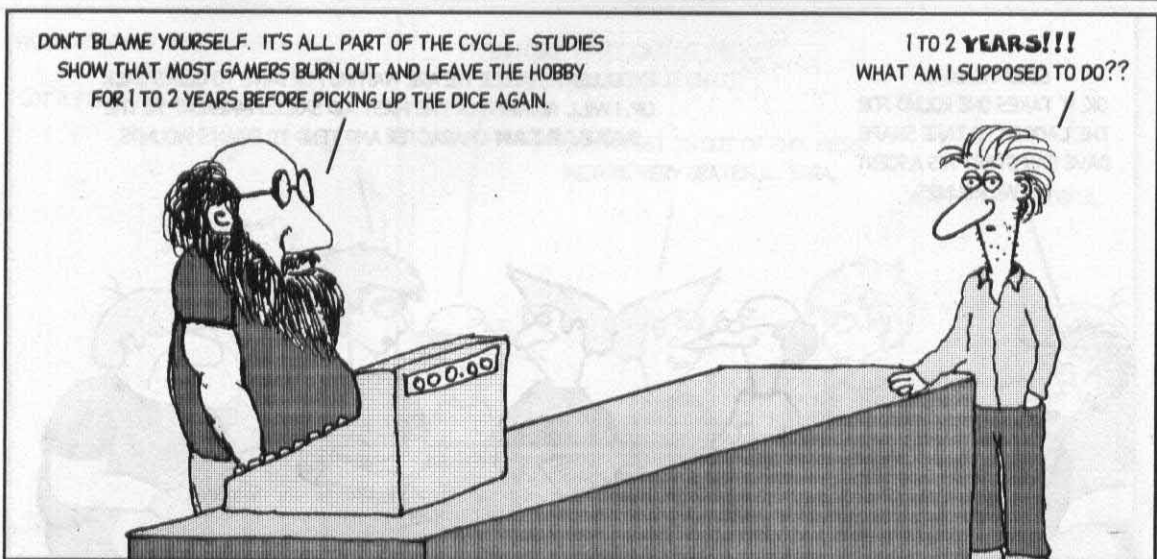
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE THAT TAKES CARE OF...
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS LOOKING AT??

SHE LIKES ME!!!

YEP, STILL GOT IT.
SHE WANTS ME!

OH YEAH, DEFINITELY
SOME SPARKS GOING
ON HERE.





WELL, THERE'S THIS NEW COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME CALLED **SPELL-JACKED!!!**



YEAH, THAT'S THE PROBLEM. IT CAN REALLY GET OUT OF HAND. TALK ABOUT GAME OBSESSION!! FORGET I MENTIONED IT.

COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME??

OH NO, I'VE HEARD OF THOSE. AREN'T THEY ADDICTIVE?



BUT THERE'S A CHANCE IT CAN KEEP MY GROUP TOGETHER??

I'LL TAKE ANY CHANCE TO SAVE THE GROUP. MAYBE A BREAK FROM ROLE-PLAYING IS ALL THEY NEED. A FEW WEEKS OF CARD GAMING AND THEY'LL BE BEGGING TO GET BACK INTO SOME GOOD OL' ROLE-PLAYING!!



I WARNED YOU! MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON YOUR SOUL!!! UH, TWENTY-SEVEN DOLLARS WITH TAX WILL GET YOU STARTED.



WEEK ONE: THE INTRODUCTION

OK GUYS, KEEP IN MIND THAT **SPELL-JACKED** IS JUST A GAME. TRY NOT TO GO OVER-BOARD WITH IT. WE'LL USE IT AS A NICE DIVERSION FOR A FEW WEEKS AND THEN GO BACK TO ROLE-PLAYING. **AGREED??**



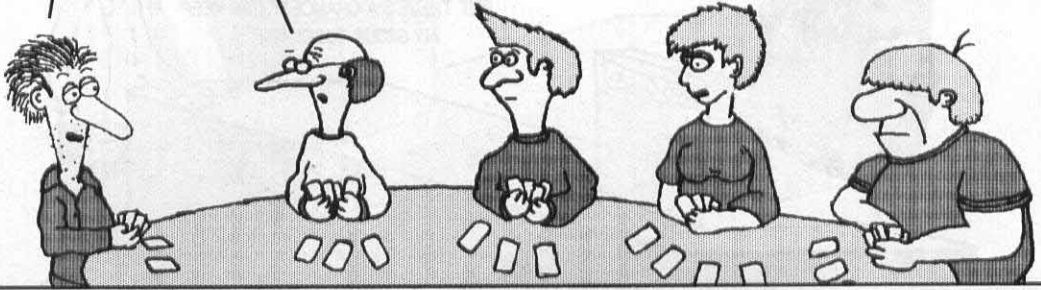
NO SWEAT!! IT'S JUST A CARD GAME. I'LL BE LUCKY IF I CAN STAY AWAKE.

I THINK WE SHOULD ALL AGREE NOT TO BUY ANY BOOSTER PACKS!

GOOD IDEA!
LET'S JUST PLAY WITH WHAT WE HAVE.
IT'LL BE MORE FUN THAT WAY!!

THEN IT'S AGREED, WE KEEP THE GAMES SIMPLE AND
FRIENDLY - NO MONSTER DECKS AND HOARDING CARDS.

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME!
I'D RATHER SPLURGE ON SODA
AND PIZZA THAN CARDS.

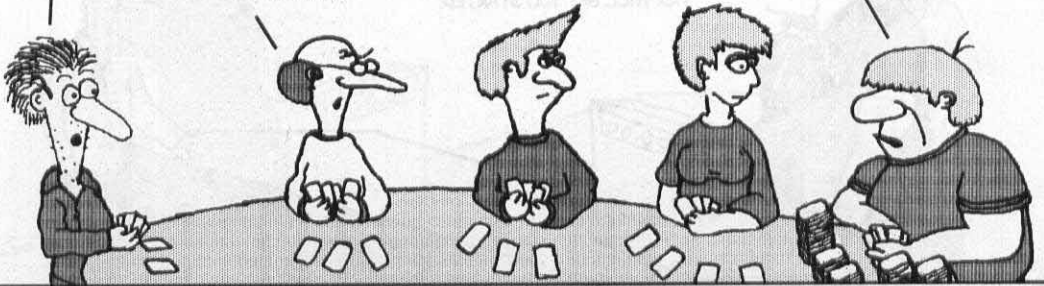


WEEK TWO: FIRST BLOOD

I THOUGHT WE HAD A DEAL BRIAN.
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

UH, I BOUGHT A COUPLE OF BOOSTER
PACKS. WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

SO IT'S LIKE THAT HUH?
MAYBE I SHOULD START UP THE PAPER
ROUTE AGAIN.



WEEK THREE: THINGS TURN UGLY

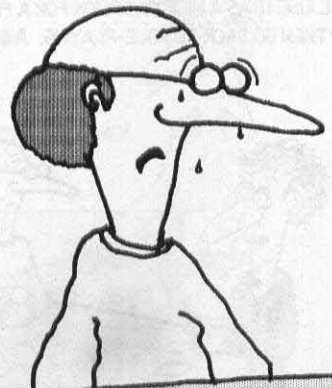
HA HA!!! BEHOLD THE TERROR!!! I REBUFF
YOUR PUNY ATTACK WITH THIS ULTRA-RARE CARD,
THE FABLED **DARK ENCHANTRESS!!**

RARE HUH?
WELL, HERE'S
MY ANSWER!



RIP!
TEAR!
RIP!

HEY YOU CAN'T DO..
(WHIMPER)



WEEK FOUR: TOWER OF BABBLING RULES

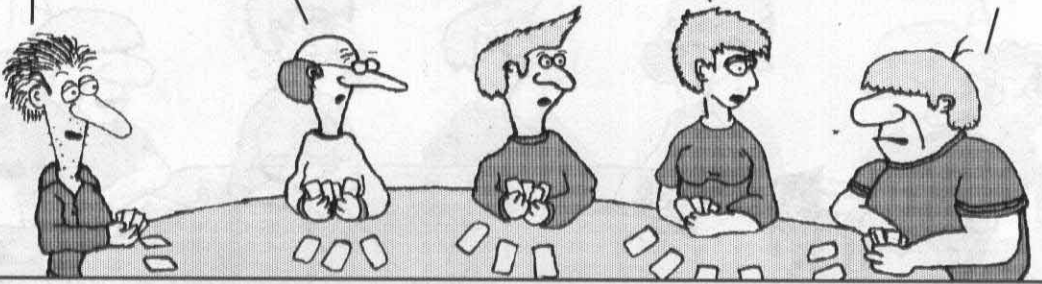
NO, NO, I THINK YOU'RE WRONG. AN **AMBER WYRM** CANNOT BE TAPPED IF AN **OMLET OF DENNIES** IS IN PLAY.

AND BESIDES, MY **PURPLE HOWLING GREEPER** CANCELS OUT YOUR **FORTUITOUS DISK OF DIMENSION** SO YOUR SPELL QUOTIENT IS HALVED!

ACTUALLY IT'S A MOOT POINT NOW BECAUSE I'M PLAYING A **VORPAL PLANE OF CANCELLATION** ON YOUR HAND THIS TURN.

AND I'M PLAYING A ...

RUCKIN' BING BLAST... JUST FORGET IT!



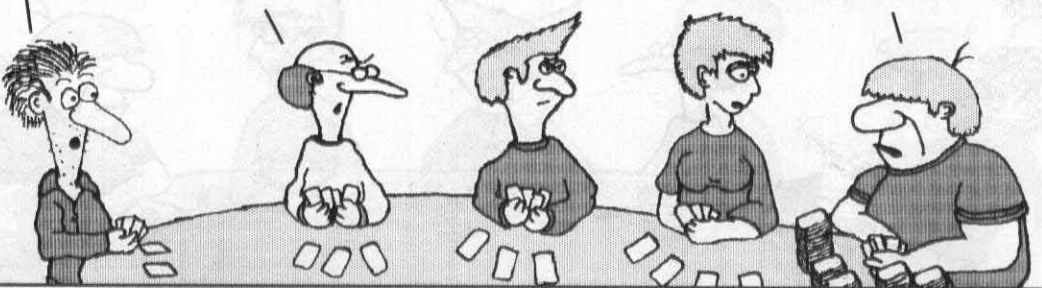
WEEK FIVE: THE SPECULATION

FOR THE LAST TIME BRIAN, I REFUSE TO SIGN A FORM ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY DAMAGE THAT MAY OCCUR TO YOUR CARDS DURING PLAY.

LOOK, IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE CARDS - JUST DO WHAT I DID. I HAVE ONE DECK FOR PLAY AND ONE FOR DISPLAY AND ONE IN A HERMETICALLY SEALED VAULT AT THE BANK.

AND I THINK IT WOULD GET A LITTLE HOT PLAYING THE GAME WHILE WEARING RUBBER GLOVES.

WELL FORGET IT THEN!
I'M NOT SUBJECTING MY CARDS TO THE RIGORS OF PLAY!
I'M PUTTING THEM BACK UNDER GLASS.

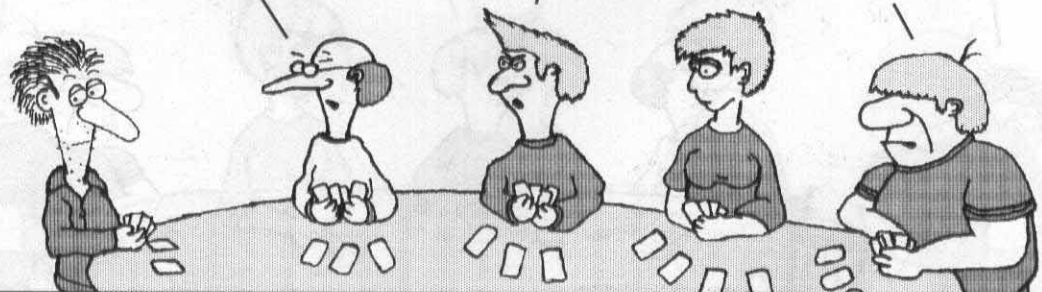


WEEK SIX: FEEDING THE HABIT

THIS IS YOUR **LAST** CHANCE B. A. HAND OVER THE BALANCE OF THE GROUP TREASURY AND THERE'LL BE NO BLOOD SPILLED!!

BRIAN, BLOCK THE DOOR!!
I THINK HE MIGHT TRY TO RUN FOR IT.

GOTCHA! REMEMBER - WE BUY A SEALED BOX OF **SPELL-JACKED** AND WE SPLIT THE CARDS FOUR WAYS. **RIGHT?**



The Great Revolt

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

OK GUYS. BEFORE WE BEGIN TONIGHT'S GAME THERE IS SOMETHING I WANT TO DISCUSS. I KNOW I PROMISED NOT TO INTRODUCE ANY MORE HOME-BREWED CRITICAL HIT TABLES, BUT I DEVELOPED SOME NEW TABLES THAT ARE TRULY INGENUOUS. SO I WANT YOU TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND.



NO WAY IN HELL. I'M GONNA LET HIM USE THOSE TABLES GUYS. WE GOT TO STICK TOGETHER ON THIS ONE. THAT MEANS **YOU TOO, BRIAN**.

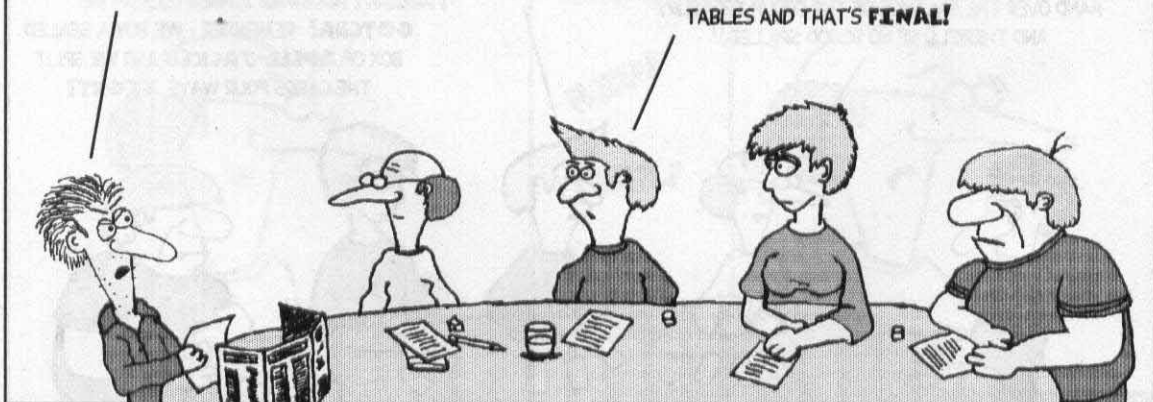
YEAH BRIAN, YOU ALWAYS CAVE IN AND END UP SIDING WITH B. A.. YOU WITH US OR AGAINST US THIS TIME?

COME ON GUYS. LET'S AT LEAST HEAR HIM OUT.



OH **FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!!** IT'S DIFFERENT THIS TIME. I PUT A LOT OF WORK INTO BALANCING THESE TABLES. THEY'LL WORK THIS TIME, **I SWEAR!**

JUST A DAMN MINUTE B.A.! WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS ISSUE TIME AND TIME AGAIN. I'M NOT GOING TO ALLOW OUR CHARACTERS TO BE KILLED BY YOUR CRAPPY CRITICAL HIT TABLES AND THAT'S **FINAL!**



HEY, HEY, **HEY!!** YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE OUT OF LINE AREN'T YOU **DAVE??** TELLING **ME** WHAT I CAN AND CAN'T DO IN MY GAME? I AM THE **GAMEMASTER** AFTER ALL.

THERE YOU GO AGAIN! OFF ON THAT POWER-MANIA TRIP. THE TERM **GAMEMASTER** IS DEGRADING TO THE PLAYERS.

YOU WEAR THAT STINKING TITLE LIKE IT WAS A BADGE OR SOMETHING!

HERE, HERE!! I GOTTA AGREE WITH YOU DAVE.



YEAH, IT IMPLIES WE'VE GIVEN UP OUR BASIC RIGHTS OR SOMETHING.

I PROPOSE WE CHANGE THE TITLE **GAMEMASTER** TO SOMETHING A LITTLE LESS OFFENSIVE.

HMMMM. THERE'S NO PRECEDENT FOR THIS KIND OF PLAYER ANARCHY.



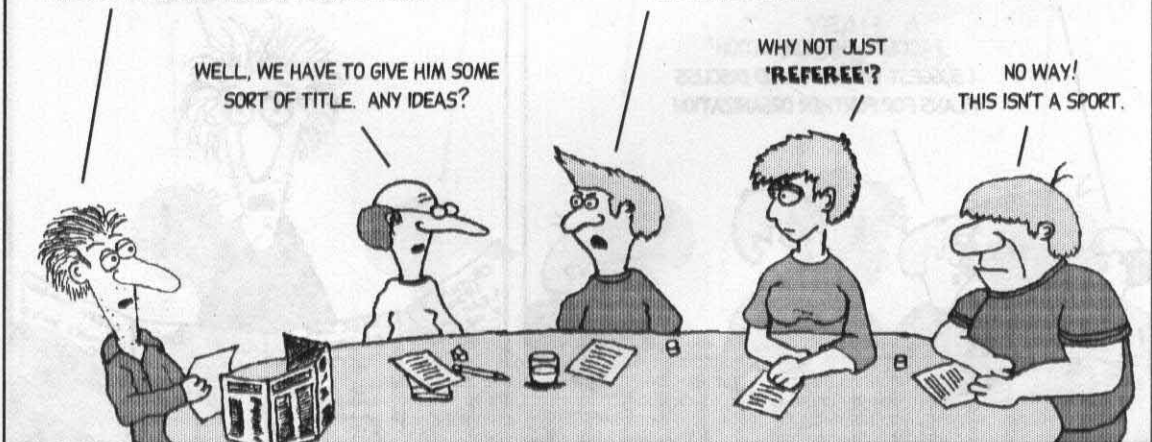
CHANGE MY TITLE?? WHAT IN THE HELL ARE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT?? YOU CAN'T GO AROUND TAMPERING WITH OFFICIAL TITLES!

SOMETHING THAT ACKNOWLEDGES HIS ROLE AS REFEREE WITHOUT LENDING HIM ANY UNDUE AUTHORITY.

WELL, WE HAVE TO GIVE HIM SOME SORT OF TITLE. ANY IDEAS?

WHY NOT JUST **'REFEREE'?**

NO WAY! THIS ISN'T A SPORT.



GUYS! **GAMEMASTER** IS A TIME HONORED TRADITIONAL TERM. I WON'T GIVE IT UP WITHOUT A FIGHT!

OR PERHAPS **GAME TRUSTEE**.

HOW ABOUT **DUNGEON CUSTODIAN**?

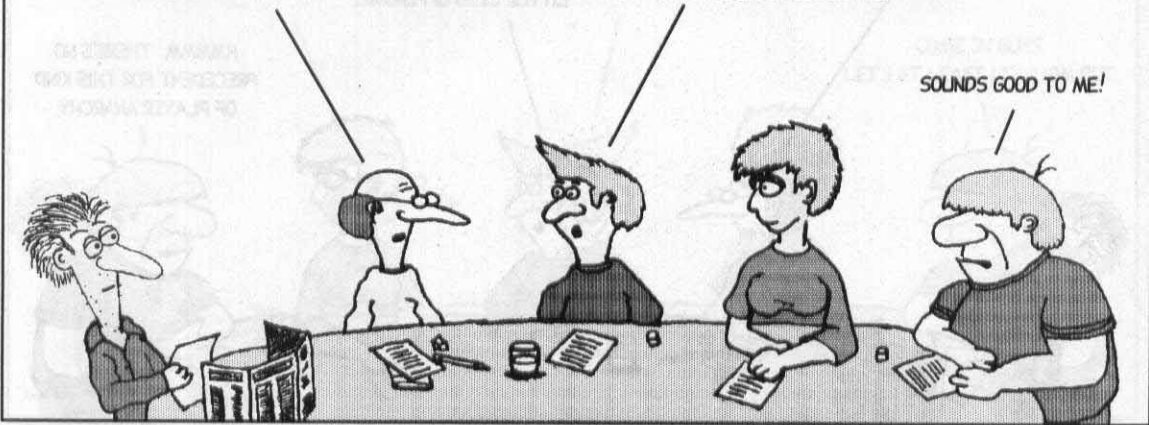
I LIKE TRUSTEE! IT DENOTES RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT SUGGESTING AUTHORITY.



HEY, WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT, I PROPOSE THAT WE ORGANIZE AS PLAYERS TO PROTECT OUR RIGHTS.

COOL! A GROUP CONSENSUS AMONG THE PLAYERS CAN EFFECTIVELY VETO ANY **GAME TRUSTEE** CALL!

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME!

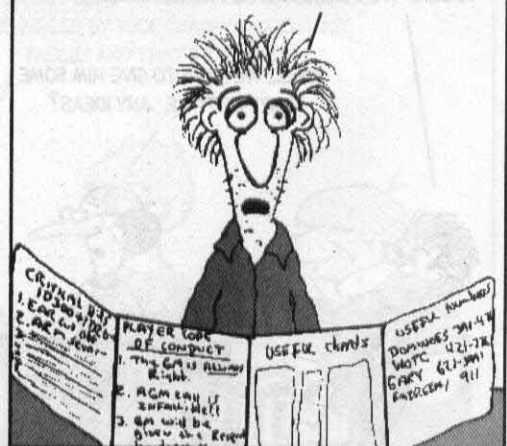


I NOMINATE DAVE AS OUR PLAYER REPRESENTATIVE!

I ACCEPT THE NOMINATION!
I SUGGEST WE BREAK AND DISCUSS PLANS FOR FURTHER ORGANIZATION



MY WORST FEARS HAVE COME TRUE!
MY PLAYERS HAVE **UNIONIZED!!**



KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE

“License to Loot”

By Jolly R. Blackburn

Cover by Jason Holmgren

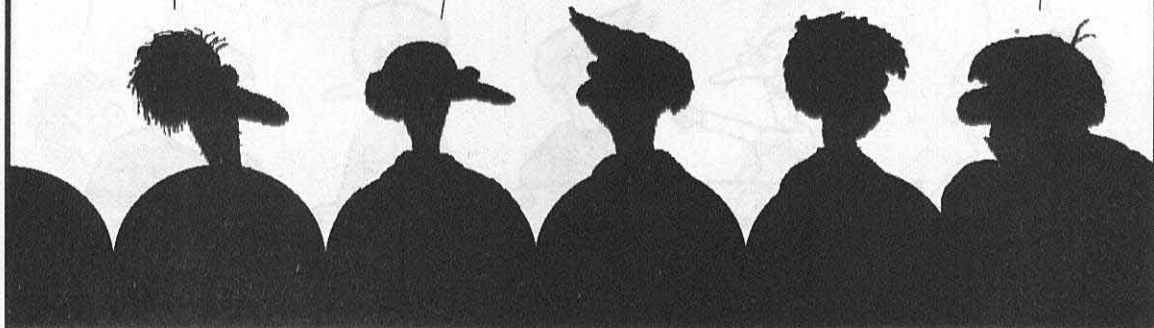
WHO'S THIS 'JOLLY' GUY
ANYWAY AND WHY IS *HE*
GETTING NAME LINE CREDIT??

I GET A SICK FEELING
EVERYTIME WE DO ONE OF
THESE BOOKS.

YOU KNOW, I GOT SOME
REALLY GOOD LINES
THIS TIME OUT - IT WAS A REAL
STRETCH FOR MY CHARACTER.

I'M GOING TO THE
SNACK BAR - YOU WANT
ANYTHING, SARA?

YEAH, A
PAPER BAG.



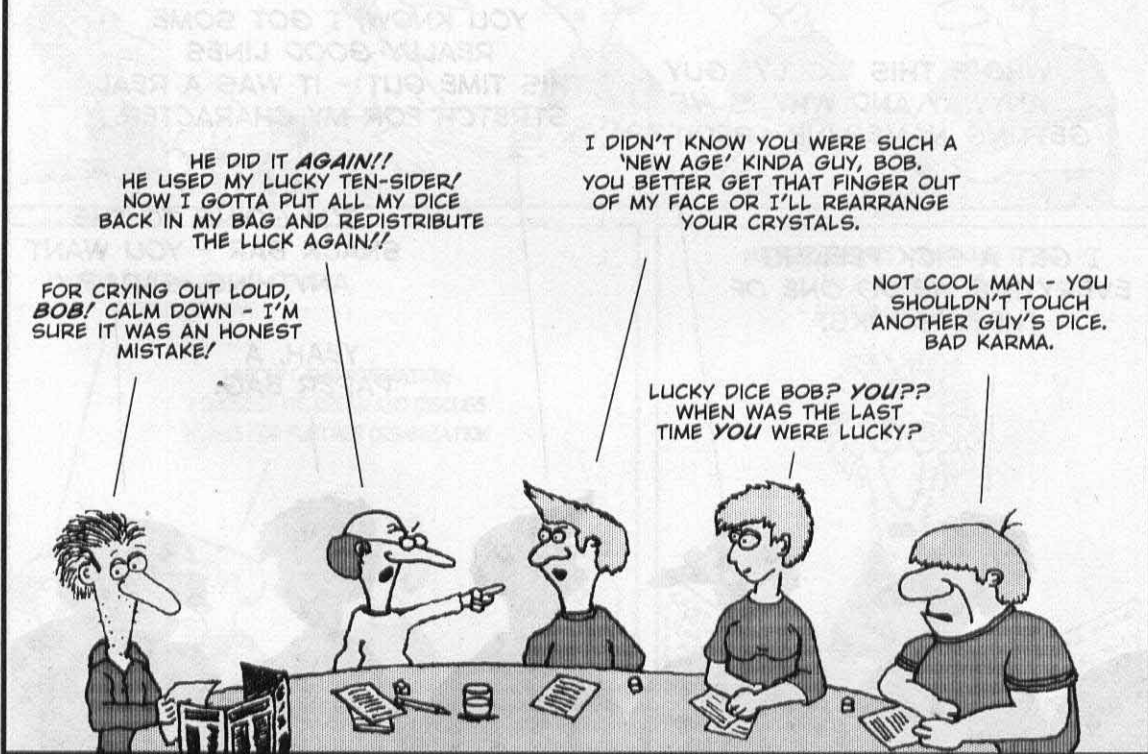
Well, here we go again - a third time around! If nothing else, the popularity of KODT proves one thing, that gamers have a great sense of humor and can laugh at themselves. Did I say "themselves?" That's probably not an accurate statement. For the truth is, in the past five years since the first KODT comic strip appeared in SHADIS magazine, I've received hundreds of letters proclaiming, "I know those guys! They're just like the guys in my group!" But I've yet to receive a letter saying, "I'm just like Bob!!" or "Yeah, I'm Brian all right - just like him!!"

Perhaps it's just a matter of selective memory. We don't remember when 'we' go off on some poor clod because he had the misfortune to accidentally pick up our lucky ten-sider. Maybe we even forgot about the time 'we' flipped the table because Jethro the Fighter was killed by a blind, rabid beaver (Hey, it happened, OK?).

Regardless why, KODT seems to have found an audience and I'll try not to analyze the reasons too closely. I suppose it's comforting to know that so many gamers share the same friends. Maybe we're not so different from one another after all.

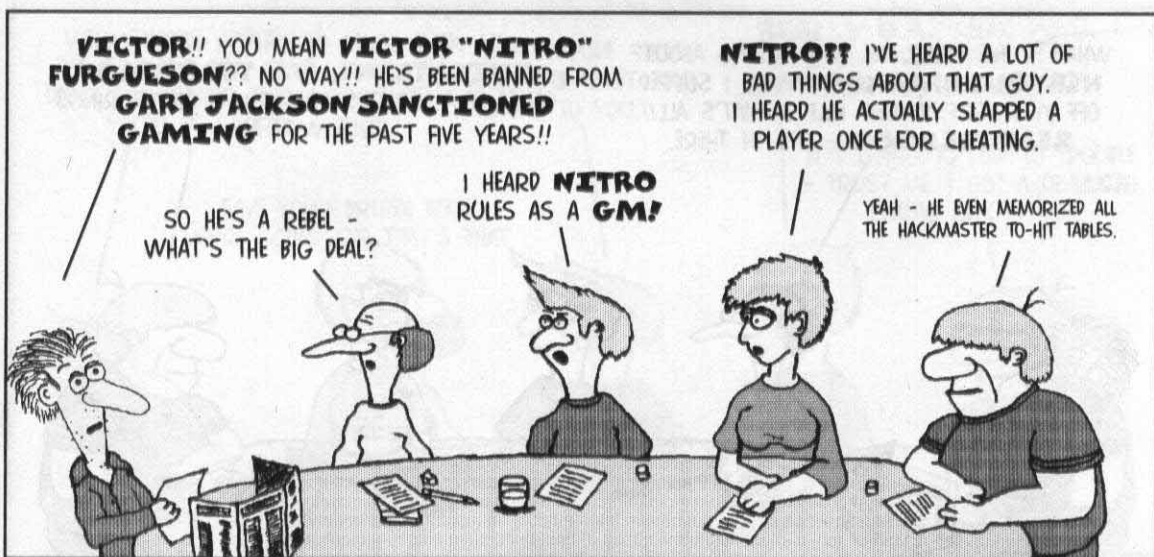
Jolly R. Blackburn

Jolly R. Blackburn
April 15, 1995



Dueling GameMasters

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN



OH MY GOD!! BOB, YOU WERE INVOLVED WITH FURGUESON'S FOLLY??
THAT MADE THE PAPERS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. I'D LOVE TO HEAR ALL THE DETAILS.

HE DOESN'T LIKE TO TALK ABOUT IT.

IT'S NOT EASY LOOKING DEATH IN THE FACE AND
LIVING TO TELL ABOUT IT. I LEFT A BIG PIECE OF
MYSELF IN THOSE SEWER TUNNELS.

YEAH, BOB HAD A NERVOUS
BREAKDOWN AND FREAKED OUT.
HE GOT SEPARATED FROM THE
PARTY AND WANDERED AROUND
ALONE FOR SEVEN DAYS.



WHAT IN THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
NERVOUS BREAKDOWN??? I SLIPPED
OFF BY MYSELF TO FIND HELP - THAT'S ALL!!
READ THE BOOK - IT'S IN THERE.

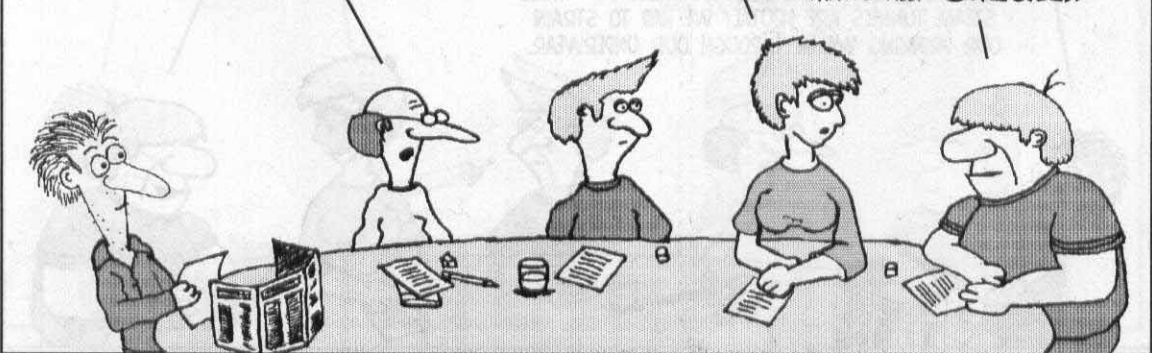
I'M JUST GOING BY WHAT I HEARD ON
KNIGHTLINE, DUDE, TED KOPLOV
CALLED IT A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN AND IT RINGS
TRUE WITH ME.



TED KOPLOV? THAT MEDIA VULTURE!! WHEN
WAS THE LAST TIME **HE** TRAMPED THROUGH A
SEWER TUNNEL?? I WAS THERE AND I'M TELLING
YOU I WAS LOOKING FOR HELP.

YOU REALLY SHOULD TAKE HIS WORD FOR
IT BRIAN. AFTER ALL, HE IS YOUR FRIEND.

I'M JUST SAYING **BOB** FAILED
HIS SAVING THROW VS. INSANITY.
THAT'S ALL. -**SNICKER-**



LOOK GUYS - I KNOW THIS IS GOING TO SOUND PETTY, BUT I DON'T WANT YOU PLAYING IN **NITRO'S** GAME. THE GUY'S DANGEROUS AND BESIDES - **I'M YOUR GM!!**

YOU **GM** TYPES ARE ALL ALIKE - YOU'RE REAL TOUGH UNTIL YOU'RE CONFRONTED WITH A LITTLE HEALTHY COMPETITION AND THEN YOU GET ALL QUIVERY-LIPPED AND WEAK KNEED.

WE GOTTA PLAY WITH **NITRO**. WE PROMISED.

WELL, **B.A.'S** MY FRIEND. I'M NOT GOING.



WELL, THANKS **BRIAN**. I'M WARNING YOU GUYS - DON'T PLAY UNDER THIS GUY. YOU'LL BE SORRY!

DON'T WORRY DUDE - I'M SURE **NITRO** CAN'T HOLD A CANDLE TO YOU.

REALLY B.A., RELAX. WE'LL GIVE YOU A FULL REPORT WHEN YOU GET BACK.

IT'S GOING TO LEAD TO TROUBLE - TRUST ME. I GOT A (**BELCH**) FEELING ABOUT THIS.

SAVE YOUR BREATH DUDE! WE'RE GOING AND THAT'S THAT.



TWO WEEKS LATER

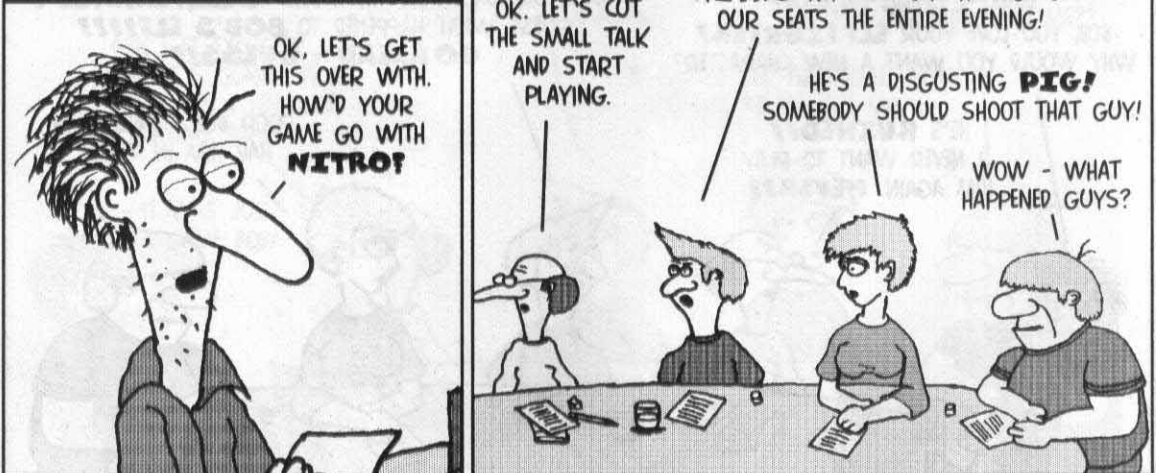
OK, LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH. HOW'D YOUR GAME GO WITH **NITRO**?

UH, IT WAS OK. LET'S CUT THE SMALL TALK AND START PLAYING.

IT WAS AWESOME!! **NITRO** KEPT US ON THE EDGE OF OUR SEATS THE ENTIRE EVENING!

HE'S A DISGUSTING **PIG!** SOMEBODY SHOULD SHOOT THAT GUY!

WOW - WHAT HAPPENED GUYS?



SEE, I WARNED YOU SARA. I'M NOT ONE TO SAY, 'I TOLD YOU SO' THOUGH, SO LET'S GET BACK TO **OUR** GAME. NOW LET'S SEE....ER...BOB, WHERE'S YOUR CHARACTER SHEET?

UM, I LOST IT. I'LL HAVE TO CREATE A **NEW CHARACTER.**

SQUEEEEEEEEEEE!!!
SNICKER - SNICKER

COME ON, **DAVE!**
YOU PROMISED -
LEAVE HIM ALONE.



LOST IT?? WELL, LUCKY FOR YOU I KEEP COPIES OF EVERYBODY'S CHARACTER SHEET ON FILE.

NO THAT'S OK.
I **WANNA** ROLL UP
A NEW CHARACTER.

SQUEEE!!



STOP SAYING THAT!!!
I MEAN IT MAN!!
SHUT UP!!!

PLEASE **DAVE,**
IT WASN'T REALLY
FUNNY.

HA HA!!
HAR HAR!!



WOULD SOMEBODY CARE TO EXPLAIN
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
BOB, YOU LOVE YOUR **ELF FIGHTER!**
WHY WOULD YOU WANT A NEW CHARACTER?

HE'S **RUINED!!**
I NEVER WANT TO PLAY
HIM AGAIN. **NEVER!!**

GET A LOAD OF THIS **B.A.! NITRO** RAN THIS GREAT
ADVENTURE BASED ON THE MOVIE "**DELIVERANCE**".
GUESS WHAT HAPPENED TO **BOB'S ELF!!!!**
GO AHEAD - GUESS!!

POOR BOB - **NITRO**
HAD HIM IN TEARS.

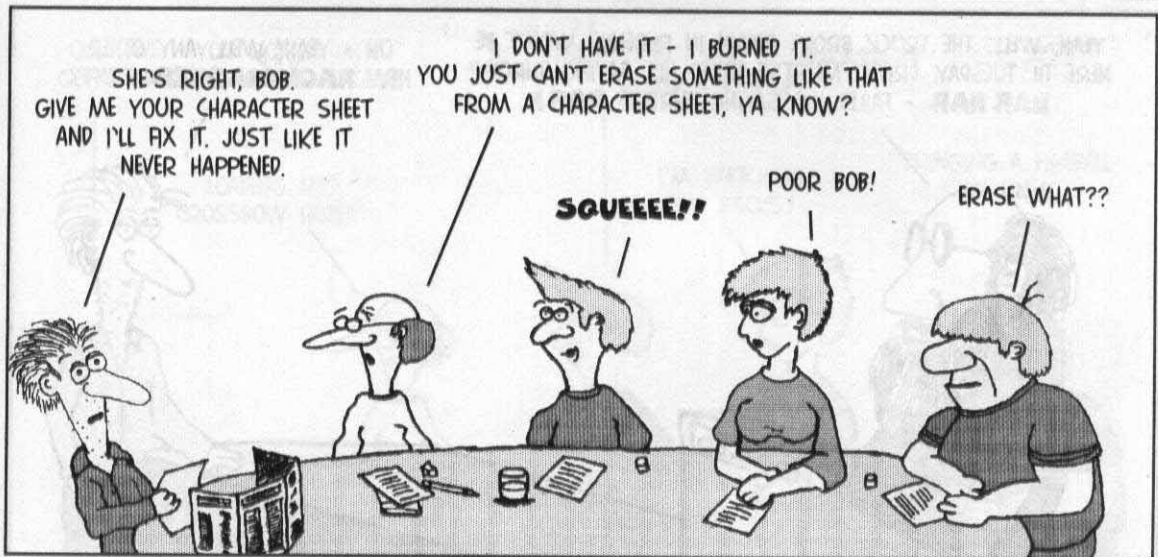




I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT, **OKAY??** GIVE ME A FEW MINUTES TO ROLL UP A NEW CHARACTER AND LET'S JUST **FORGET ABOUT IT!!**

BOB, I'M SURE IF YOU EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO **B.A.** WE CAN PRETEND IT NEVER HAPPENED AND YOU CAN SALVAGE YOUR CHARACTER.

WAIT A MINUTE - I DON'T GET IT. WHAT HAPPENED?



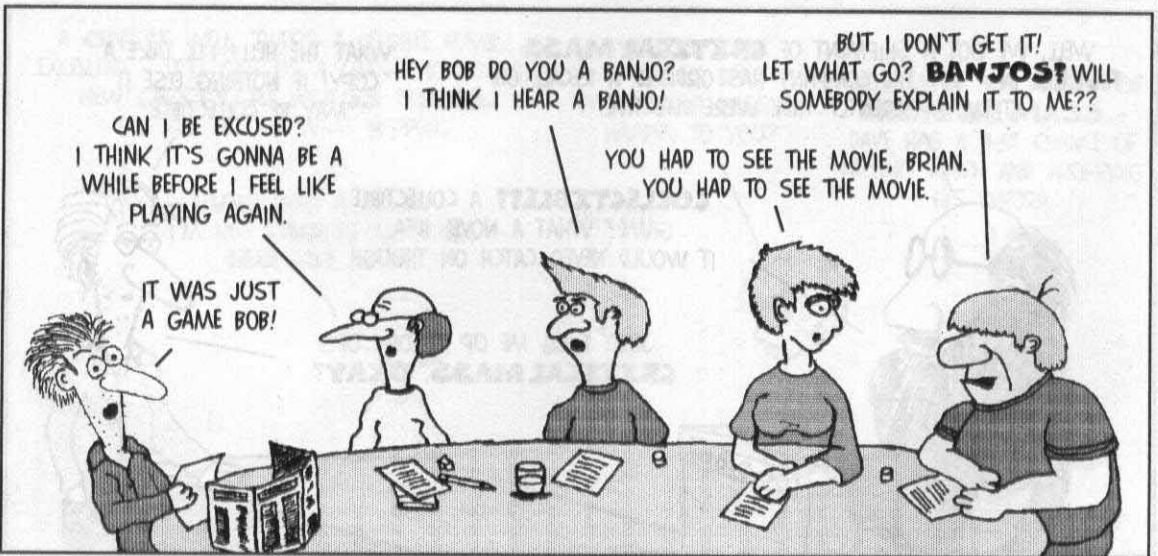
SHE'S RIGHT, BOB. GIVE ME YOUR CHARACTER SHEET AND I'LL FIX IT. JUST LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED.

I DON'T HAVE IT - I BURNED IT. YOU JUST CAN'T ERASE SOMETHING LIKE THAT FROM A CHARACTER SHEET, YA KNOW?

SQUEEE!!

POOR BOB!

ERASE WHAT??



CAN I BE EXCUSED? I THINK IT'S GONNA BE A WHILE BEFORE I FEEL LIKE PLAYING AGAIN.

IT WAS JUST A GAME BOB!

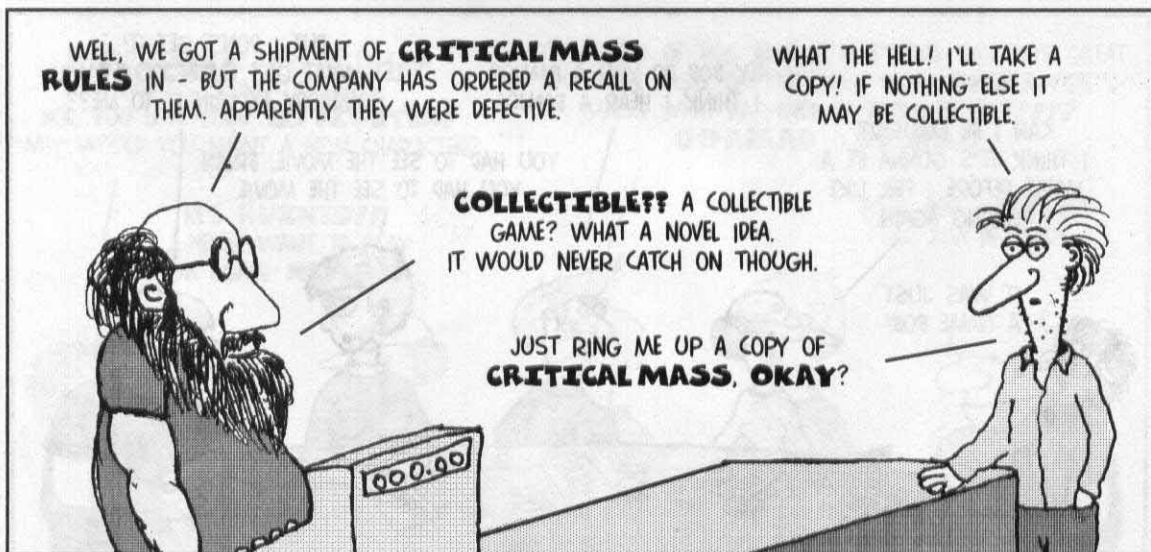
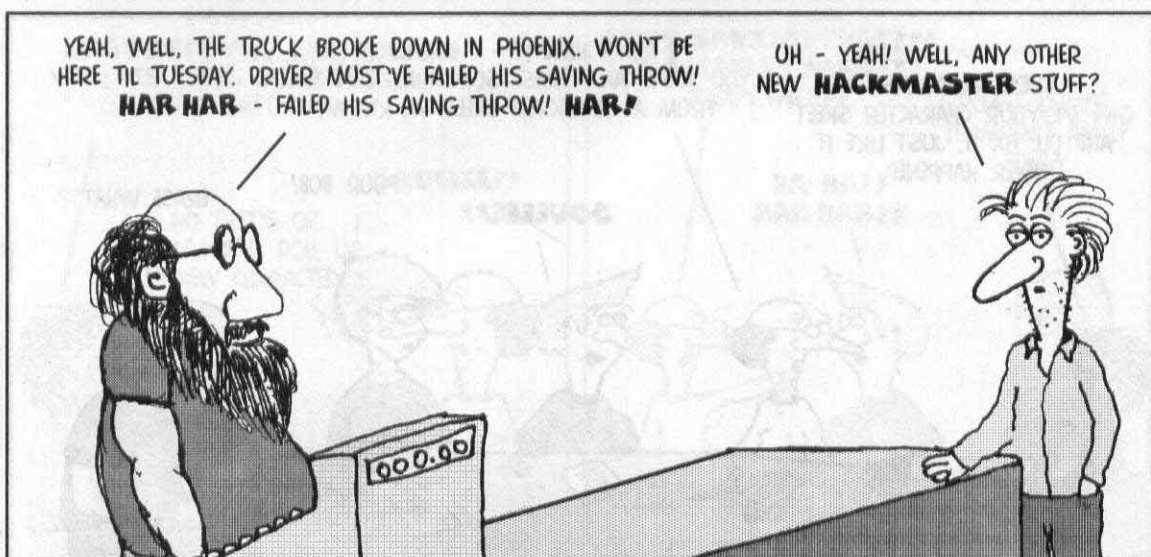
HEY BOB DO YOU A BANJO? I THINK I HEAR A BANJO!

BUT I DON'T GET IT! LET WHAT GO? **BANJOS!** WILL SOMEBODY EXPLAIN IT TO ME??

YOU HAD TO SEE THE MOVIE, BRIAN. YOU HAD TO SEE THE MOVIE.

A Critical Situation

BASED ON A STORY RELATED BY LARRY GRANATO



LATER...

OK, AS YOU OPEN THE DOOR YOU ARE CONFRONTED WITH A VERY LARGE **PURPLE IMPALER!!**



GENERAL HINT: DON'T GET TOO CLOSE TO THE PURPLE IMPALER!
PLAYER COPY OF CONDUCT: 1. The GM is always Right.
USEFUL CHECKS
USEFUL NUMBER
DAMAGE: 2d12-7
MOTC: 6d3-10
COPY: 911

PURPLE IMPALER!! I HATE THOSE THINGS - THEY TEND TO STAIN YOUR CLOTHING. SUCH BLEEDERS!!

BUMMER! THEY HAVE A VERY LOW EXPERIENCE POINTS/TREASURE FACTOR AS WELL. BUT THEY ARE TASTY. **SLAY AND FILLET!!**



OK, DAVE - YOU GOT INITIATIVE. GO AHEAD AND ROLL FOR ATTACK!

NO SWEAT!! AND I ROLL A...**DAMN!!**
I ROLLED A **ONE!!**

LOADING MY CROSSBOW HERE!!

I'M WATCHING OUR BACKS!!

BRINGING A FIREBALL ON LINE!!



A **ONE!!** WELL, THAT'S A DEFINITE FUMBLE. EXCELLENT - IT'LL GIVE US A CHANCE TO USE THE NEW **CRITICAL MASS RULES**. I'LL ROLL TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM BOB? WHAT COULD POSSIBLY HAPPEN TO YOU?

WELL, WITH THIS VERSION OF **CRITICAL MASS** - DAVE HAS A 43% CHANCE OF FALLING DOWN AND DROPPING HIS SWORD.

HUH? WAIT A SECOND - I'M NOT STANDING ANYWHERE NEAR DAVE, AM I?

UH-OH!!



OH MY! I ROLLED A 100! **WOW!**
THAT'S FOUR ROLLS ON THE **MAJOR
BLUNDER** TABLE AND THREE ROLLS ON
THE **MINOR BLUNDER** TABLE.

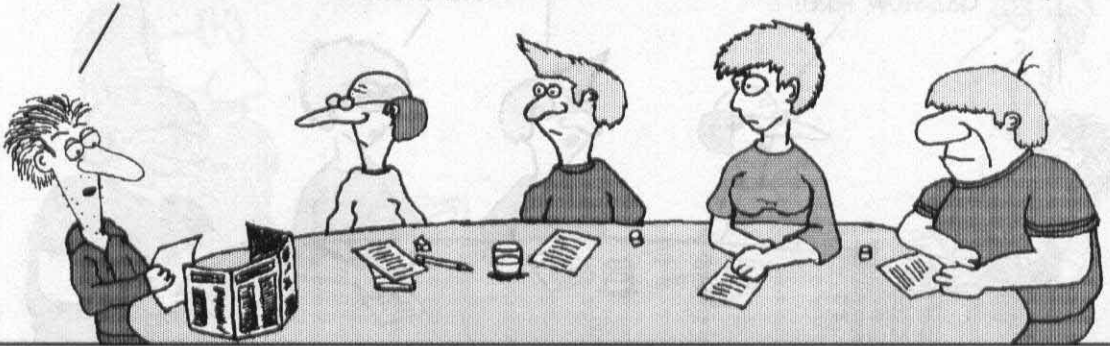
YOU'RE SUCH A WUSS, **BOB!**
IT CAN'T POSSIBLY BE THAT BAD.

**MOTHER OF
BLESSED SAYING
THROWS!!**
WE'RE COOKED!

**JUMPIN' HURDY
GURDY!!**
I'M DIVING FOR COVER!!



OK LISTEN UP - HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS! DAVE - YOU HIT YOURSELF FOR 24 POINTS OF DAMAGE WHICH CAUSES YOU TO **DROP YOUR SWORD**. THE SWORD **BOUNCES** BACK OFF THE FLOOR AND GOES THROUGH BOB'S BACK FOR 30 POINTS OF DAMAGE. THE **OVERWHELMING PAIN** CAUSES BOB TO FIRE HIS CROSSBOW OF SLAYING INTO HIS FACE FOR ANOTHER 47 POINTS OF DAMAGE. HE THEN DROPS THE CROSSBOW AND IT BREAKS. NOW, BOB IS **KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS** BY THE PAIN AND HITS THE FLOOR TAKING ANOTHER 8 POINTS OF DAMAGE AND TRIPPING BRIAN, WHO WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF CASTING A SPELL. BRIAN'S FIREBALL EXPLODES IN HIS FACE CAUSING 48 POINTS TO EACH PLAYER. THEN BRIAN **COLLAPSES** ON BOB CAUSING ANOTHER FOUR POINTS OF DAMAGE TO HIM...



GAWD!! GMS
LIVE FOR DAYS
LIKE THIS.

UH-OH.

FIVE BUCKS BRIAN!
DON'T KILL HIM OR ANYTHING -
JUST MAKE HIS LEGS BEND THE
WRONG WAY.

AND I'LL THROW IN AN EXTRA TEN
DOLLARS IF YOU MAKE **B.A.** TALK
LIKE CAROL CHANNING. **DEAL?**

KEEP YOUR MONEY BOYS!
THIS ONE'S ON ME -
GRRRR!



Attack of the Snow Beasts

BASED ON A STORY BY DAN KIPP

ALL RIGHT, YOU BEGIN TO CROSS THE GLACIER WHEN SUDDENLY A PACK OF **SNOW BEASTS** SPRING UP OUT OF THE SNOW AND SURROUND YOU!!

UH OH - I GOT MY **CROSSBOW** READIED AND LOADED FOR ACTION!

DAMN, WITH NO PLACE TO HIDE - I SUGGEST WE PLACE OURSELVES BACK TO BACK!!

I'M DRAWING MY +12 **HACKMASTER!!**

I'LL BE SLIPPING ON MY **RING OF INVISIBILITY!**



THE SNOW BEASTS ARE ENRAGED AND LAUNCH A FERCE ATTACK. DAVE - YOU'RE HIT FOR FOUR POINTS. BRIAN - YOU GET HIT WITH FIVE POINTS OF DAMAGE.

CRIPES!! I'M MAKING A CALLED SHOT - WHAT ARE MY CHANCES OF HITTING ONE OF THESE THINGS IN THE NADS?

I'M FIRING A COUPLE OF BOLTS INTO THE NEAREST BEAST!

NO TIME TO HEAL DAVE OR BRIAN - I MIGHT AS WELL ATTACK TOO!

HEY! HOW'D I GET HIT? I'M INVISIBLE!!



OK, BOB - YOUR CROSSBOW ATTACK DROPS ONE OF THE BEASTS. SORRY DAVE - NO CHANCE OF MAKING SUCH A CALLED-SHOT - THE BEASTS' FUR IS TOO THICK. BRIAN - TWO BEASTS ATTACK YOU SIMULTANEOUSLY!!

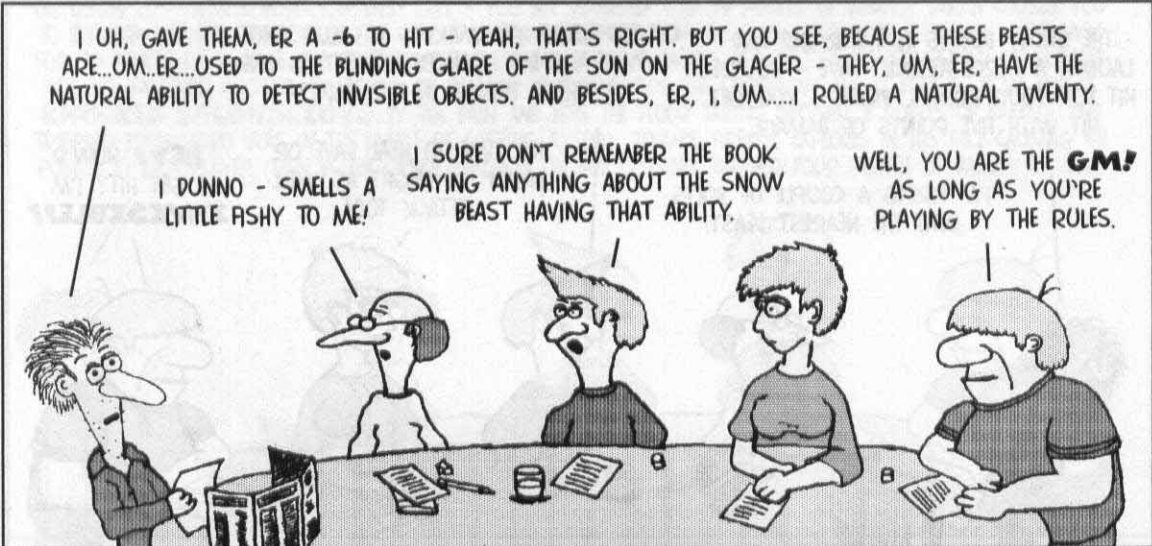
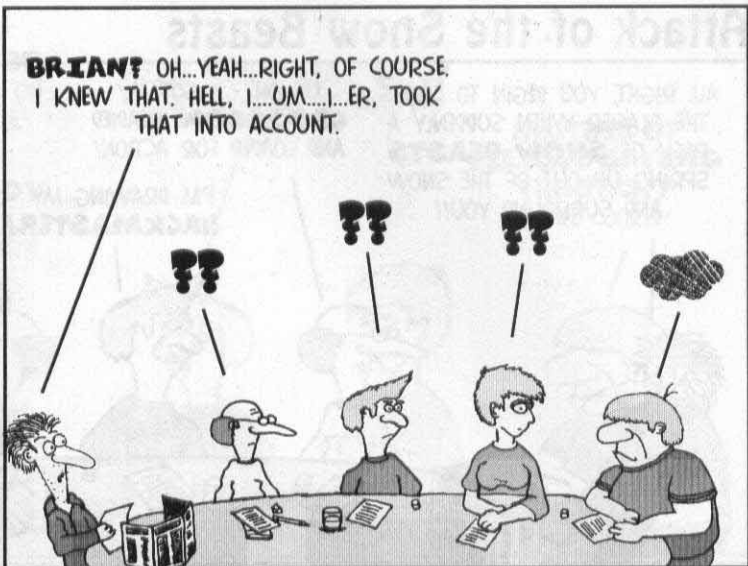
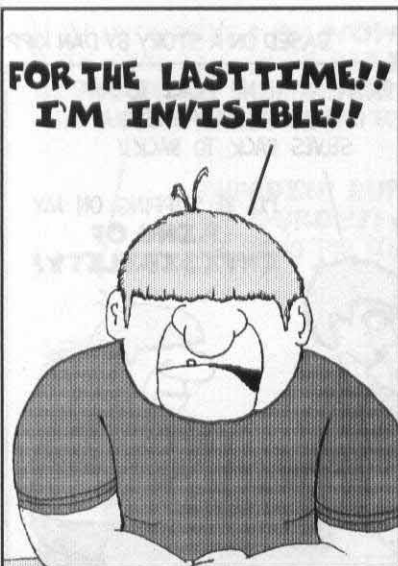
BLAST IT! THEN I'M JUMPING INTO THE FRAY SWINGING LIKE A MAD MAN!!

OH LORD - THIS IS TERRIBLE. I'M DROPPING MY CROSSBOW AND PULLING OUT MY **AXE OF DOOM!**

I'M COVERING DAVE AND PROTECTING HIS BACK!

HEY DAMN IT!!! I SAID I WAS INVISIBLE!!!!





The Sticky Notes of War

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

OK BOB, YOU MANAGED TO PICK THE LOCK AND DISARM THE POISON NEEDLE TRAP. A SMALL TRAP DOOR SWINGS OPEN REVEALING A ROOM FULL OF CHESTS. UNFORTUNATELY, SARA'S CHARACTER IS THE **ONLY** ONE WHO CAN FIT THROUGH THE SMALL PORTAL.

HA! MOVE ASIDE BOYS - LET THE **BROWNIE THIEF** SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE!!

DAMN! WHO DESIGNED THIS BLASTED DUNGEON - **HAMSTERS?**

YOU WERE RIGHT SARA - BROWNIES **CAN** BE USEFUL.



OK SARA - YOU'RE IN THE ROOM AND YOU CAN SEE A CHEST WITH A LOCK ON IT AND ANOTHER CHEST WITH A RUNE WHICH...

YEAH AND I'M ALL OVER THAT CHEST WITH THE RUNE.

HOODY-HOO!!
I'M SMASHING OPEN THE CHEST WITH THE LOCK!

BUT...BUT...

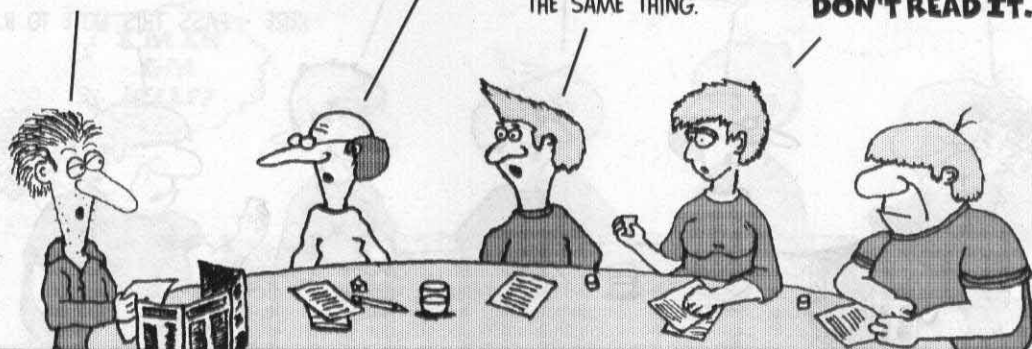


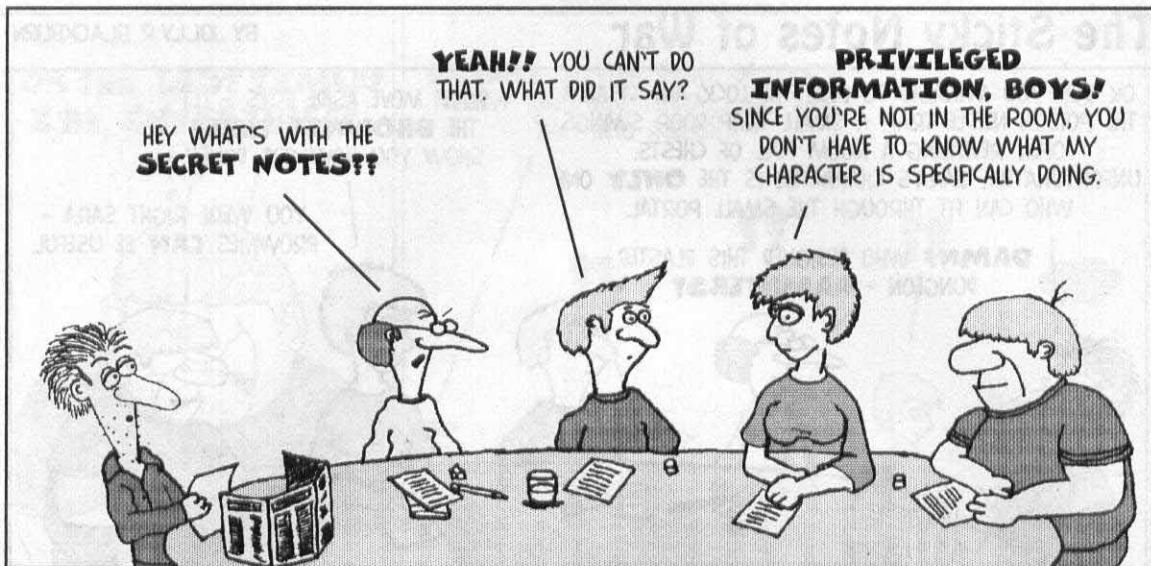
SORRY GUYS!
I JUST TOLD YOU THAT SARA IS THE ONLY CHARACTER ABLE TO ENTER THE ROOM. SO SHE'S THE ONLY PERSON ABLE TO REACH THE CHESTS.

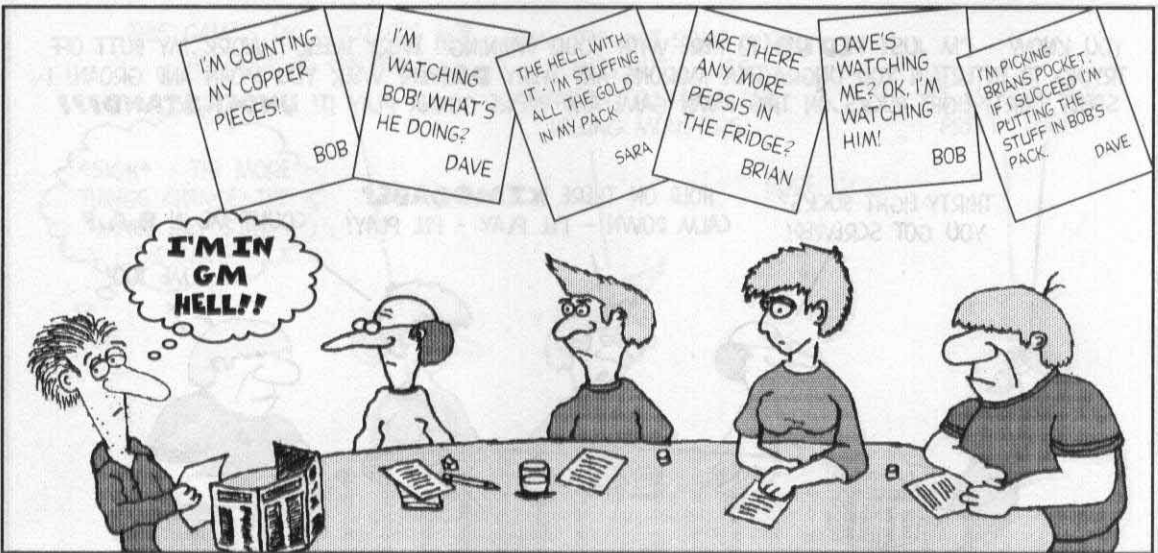
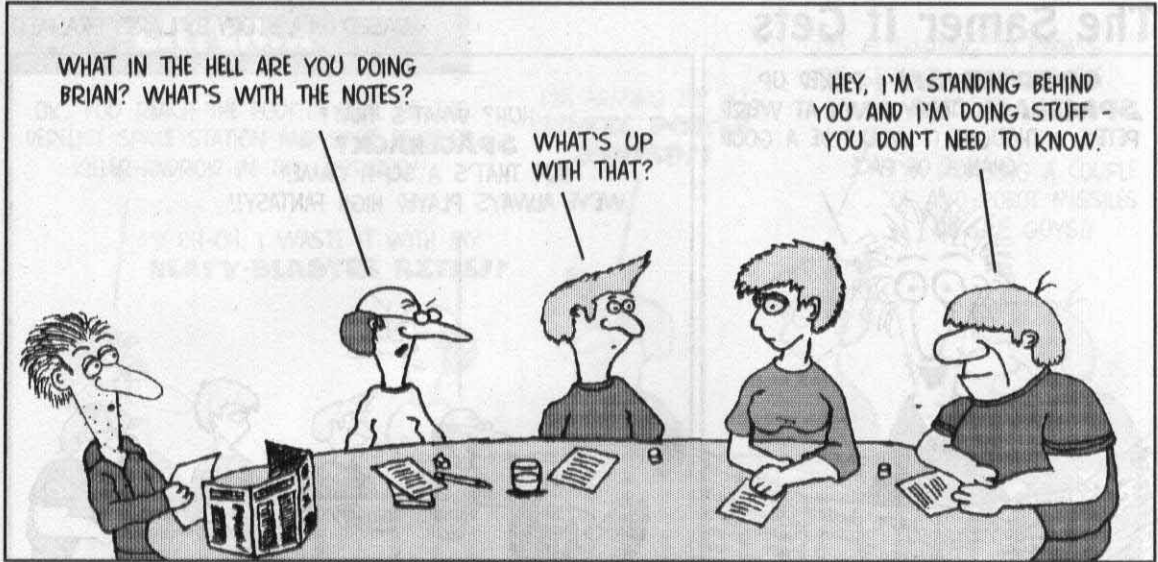
WELL, I'M LAYING ON MY BELLY AND STRETCHING REALLY FAR - AND I'M USING A WILLOW BRANCH TO...

YEAH, I'M DOING THE SAME THING.

HERE - HAND THIS STICKY NOTE TO **B.A.** - AND **DON'T READ IT.**







LATER...

OK, YOU REACH THE FOURTH LEVEL OF THE DERELICT SPACE STATION AND SPOT ANOTHER KILLER-ANDROID IN THE CORRIDOR!!

OH-OH, I WASTE IT WITH MY **HEAVY-BLASTER RIFLE!!**

I'M ARMING MY +12 **SONIC POWER SWORD!!**

I'M ATTEMPTING TO BYPASS THE SECURITY PANEL ON THE AIRLOCK!!

I'M BRINGING A COUPLE OF ANTI-ROBOT MISSILES ON LINE GUYS!!



OK, THE **ANDROID** IS HIT PRETTY HARD - HE RECOVERS THOUGH AND RETURNS A VOLLEY OF LASER-BLASTS!! DAVE - YOU'RE HIT FOR 8 POINTS OF DAMAGE!!

I'M SWITCHING ON MY **PERSONAL CLOAKING DEVICE!!**

BLAST - I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE LAID DOWN THE CREDITS FOR THAT +5 BLAST-PLATING!!

I'M USING MY MEDICAL TECH GLOVE TO HEAL **DAVE'S** WOUNDS!!

MY MISSILES ARE PREPPED!! I'M LETTING THEM LOOSE!



THIS GAME'S OK - BUT IT'S NOT AS GOOD AS FANTASY.

YEAH, IT'S GOT SOME GOOD POINTS BUT I MISS DUNGEON CRAWLING AND KILLING MONSTERS.

THE MISSILES ARE PRETTY COOL!

SIGH - THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME.

SURE, GUYS!



The Guest GM

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN



OK BOYS, B.A. ASKED ME TO STAND IN FOR HIM AS YOUR GAMEMASTER WHILE HE'S VISITING HIS AUNT NUDRA.

GEE, PETE - I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU OUTSIDE OF THE GAMESTORE. THIS IS STRANGE!

NO OFFENSE OL' TIMER - BUT WE CONSIDER OURSELVES A PRETTY ELITE GROUP. YOU MIGHT BE A LITTLE TOO RUSTY...

FOR CRYING OUT LOUD, **DAVE!** PETE IS MORE THAN QUALIFIED TO RUN OUR LITTLE GAME.



SHE'S RIGHT DAVE! AFTER ALL, **PETE** WAS THE DESIGNER OF **LYNCH MOB!** BESIDES, THE DUDE WAS TUTORED BY **GARY JACKSON** HIMSELF!!

LOOK, I'M NOT SAYING THE MAN ISN'T A LEGEND - BUT WHAT HAS HE DONE IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS?? **ZIP!!**

YOU'RE WAY OUT OF LINE DUDE! PETE'S A LIVING PIECE OF GAMING HISTORY! WE COULD LEARN A THING OR TWO FROM HIM.



WELL, I HAD PLANNED ON TAKING YOU GUYS INTO MY MODULE, **TEMPLE OF HORRENDOUS DOOM**, BUT SINCE YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED...

WOAH! I HAD NO IDEA! WE'VE ONLY HEARD HUSHED WHISPERS ABOUT THAT MODULE! THEY SAY NO ONE HAS EVER SURVIVED IT!

THE TEMPLE OF... **OH MY GAWD!!!** THAT MODULE IS INFAMOUS!!! YOU WROTE THAT???

OOOOOOHHH - I'D LOVE TO HAVE A CRACK AT PUTTING THAT ADVENTURE UNDER MY BELT!

NOW YOU'RE TALKIN'.
GOOD, LET'S GET STARTED.
FIRST, I'LL NEED YOU TO SIGN THE
WAIVER FORMS I'VE GIVEN YOU.

AT LAST - **BLACK LOTUS**
IS FINALLY GOING INTO AN
ADVENTURE WORTHY OF HIM.

YES!! TOO BAD **B.A.**
ISN'T HERE TO SHARE IN
THIS MOMENT!!

OH MAN - THIS
IS GOING TO BE
INTENSE!

GREAT - THEN WE
HAVE A GAME!



TWENTY MINUTES LATER

ALL RIGHT, YOU OPEN THE DOOR TO THE TEMPLE
- LET'S SEE, WHO WAS FIRST IN LINE? AAAAH,

BOB - LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE THE UNHAPPY
CAMPER. TAKE OFF 76 POINTS OF DAMAGE FROM
WALKING THROUGH A POISONOUS GAS CLOUD!

AAACK!! HEY, SHOULDN'T
HE GET A SAVING THROW
BEFORE TAKING DAMAGE??

YEAH - OR
SOMETHING.



SAVING THROWS?? LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT SAVING THROWS -
BULL COCKY!! A LAME CRUTCH FOR SISSIFIED GAMERS WHO CAN'T
HANDLE THE GAME. DON'T BELIEVE IN THEM - DON'T ALLOW THEM!

BUT...BUT...**B.A.** ALLOWS
SAVING THROWS.
IT'S NOT FAIR TO JUST...

YEAH **PETE** - DON'T YOU
THINK WE SHOULD STICK
WITH THE RULES?

NOT TO STEP ON YOUR TOES,
BUT PAGE 56 OF THE
**HACKMASTER GM'S
GUIDE** STATES THAT THE
SAVING THROW...



ARE YOU QUOTING THE RULES TO ME???

THAT'S 5 DEMERITS **BRIAN!!** AND DAVE, YOU JUST EARNED YOURSELF 3 DEMERITS FOR QUESTIONING MY AUTHORITY!

JUST SHUT UP AND LET THE MAN RUN **HIS** GAME.

HEY, I DON'T REMEMBER ENLISTING IN **YOUR** ARMY PETE.

YEAH - WHAT'S UP WITH THE DEMERITS?

DEMERITS? DOG GONE IT!



YES DEMERITS! SOMETHING I CAME UP WITH TO HANDLE SPOILED PLAYERS. EARN 50 DEMERITS AND LOSE A LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE. CARE TO TEST ME?

UH...NO SIR... I MEAN PETE.

NO...NO PETE.

GRUMBLE - FERK BLASTIN' MUMBLE

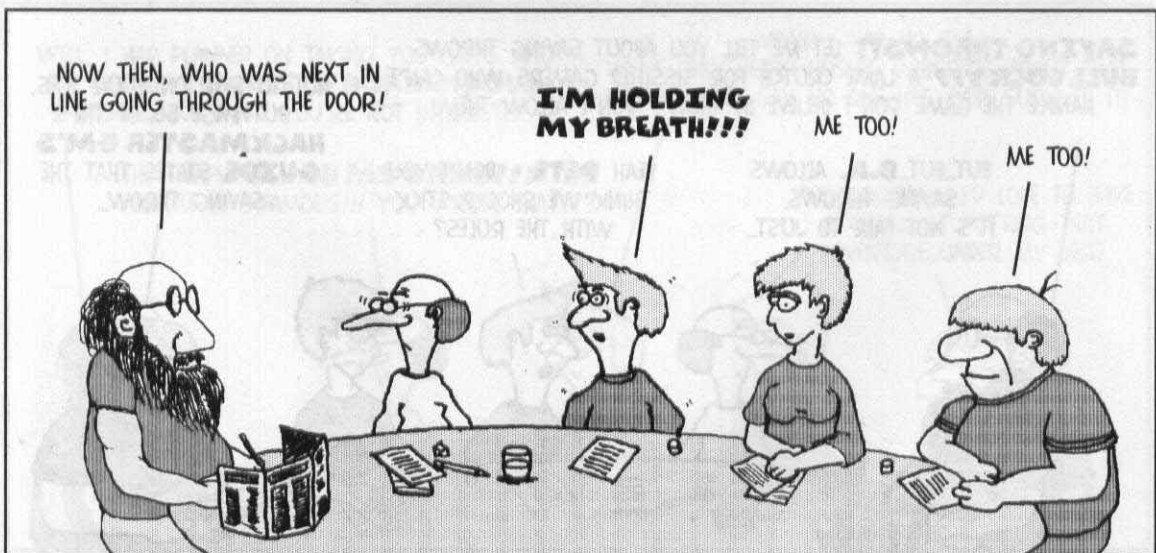


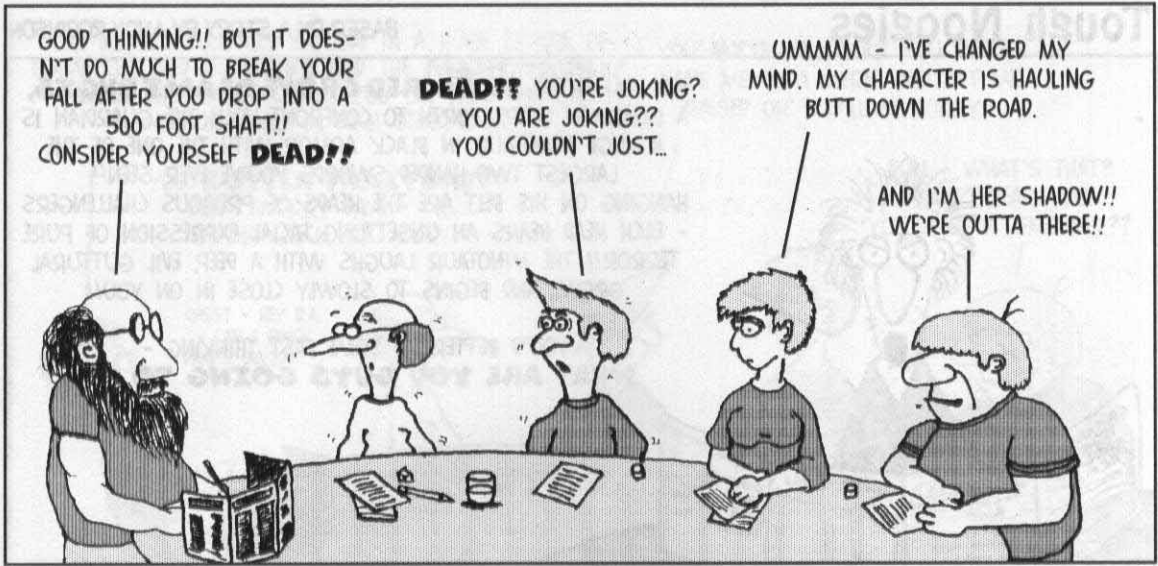
NOW THEN, WHO WAS NEXT IN LINE GOING THROUGH THE DOOR!

I'M HOLDING MY BREATH!!!

ME TOO!

ME TOO!



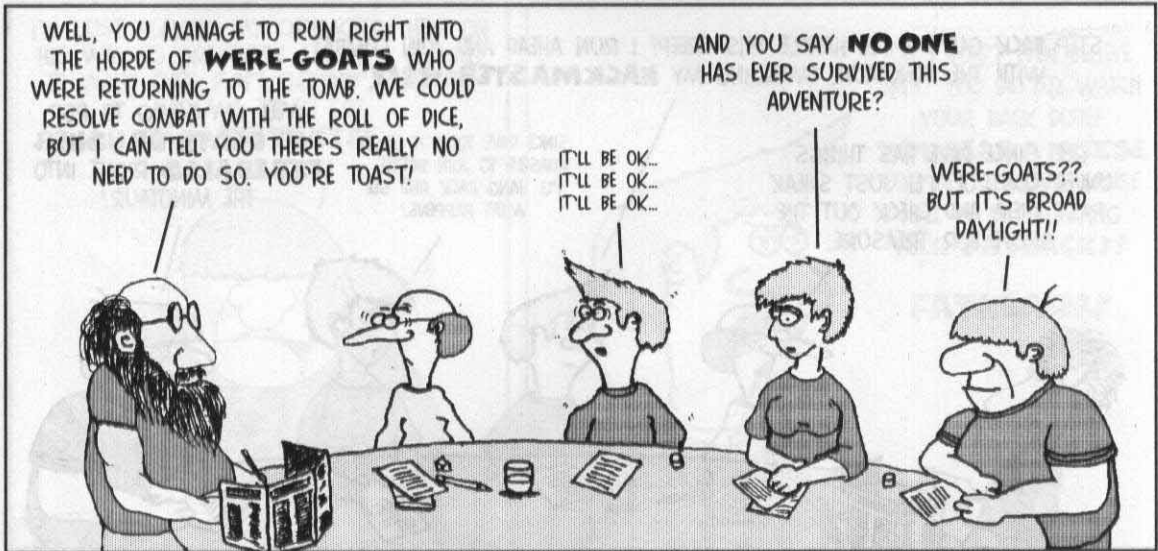


GOOD THINKING!! BUT IT DOESN'T DO MUCH TO BREAK YOUR FALL AFTER YOU DROP INTO A 500 FOOT SHAFT!! CONSIDER YOURSELF **DEAD!!**

DEAD!! YOU'RE JOKING? YOU ARE JOKING?? YOU COULDN'T JUST...

UMMMMM - I'VE CHANGED MY MIND. MY CHARACTER IS HAULING BUTT DOWN THE ROAD.

AND I'M HER SHADOW!! WE'RE OUTTA THERE!!

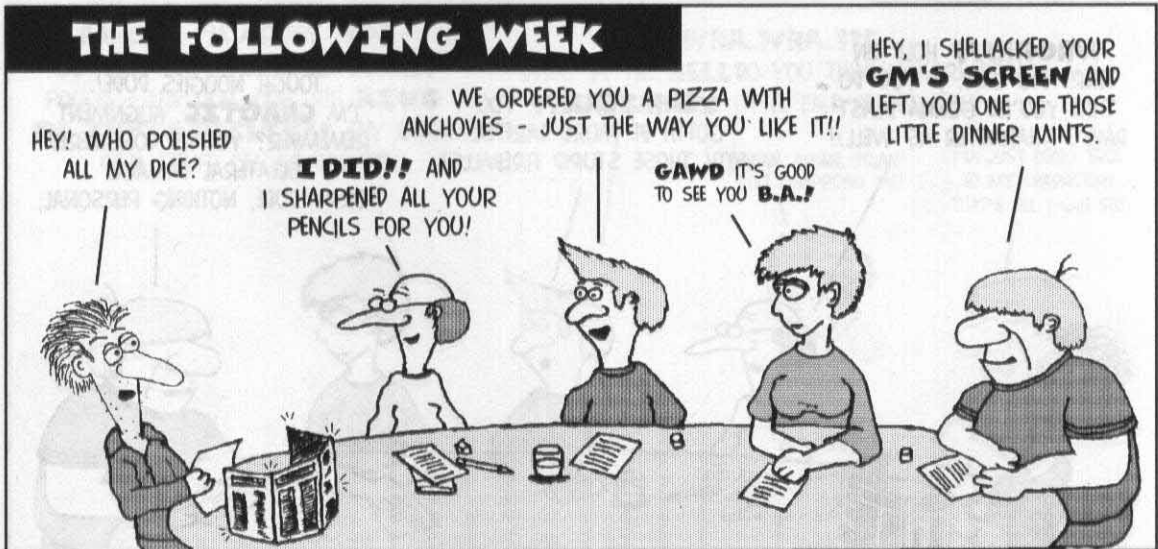


WELL, YOU MANAGE TO RUN RIGHT INTO THE HORDE OF **WERE-GOATS** WHO WERE RETURNING TO THE TOMB. WE COULD RESOLVE COMBAT WITH THE ROLL OF DICE, BUT I CAN TELL YOU THERE'S REALLY NO NEED TO DO SO. YOU'RE TOAST!

AND YOU SAY **NO ONE** HAS EVER SURVIVED THIS ADVENTURE?

IT'LL BE OK... IT'LL BE OK... IT'LL BE OK...

WERE-GOATS?? BUT IT'S BROAD DAYLIGHT!!



THE FOLLOWING WEEK

HEY! WHO POLISHED ALL MY DICE?

I DID!! AND I SHARPENED ALL YOUR PENCILS FOR YOU!

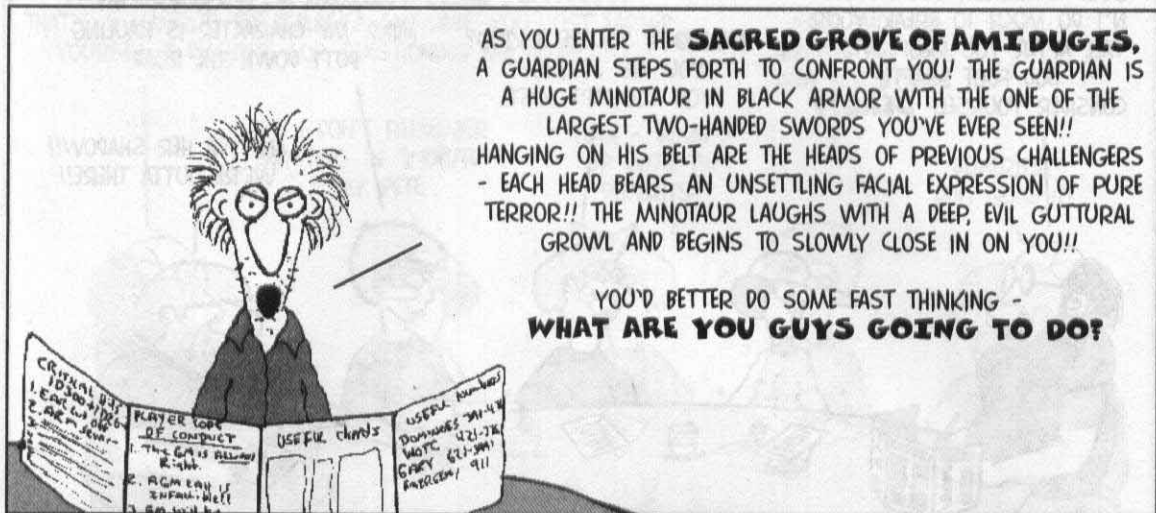
WE ORDERED YOU A PIZZA WITH ANCHOVIES - JUST THE WAY YOU LIKE IT!!

GAWD IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU **B.A.!**

HEY, I SHELLACKED YOUR **GM'S SCREEN** AND LEFT YOU ONE OF THOSE LITTLE DINNER MINTS.

Tough Noogies

BASED ON A STORY BY ANDY ROBINSON



AS YOU ENTER THE **SACRED GROVE OF AMI DUGIS**, A GUARDIAN STEPS FORTH TO CONFRONT YOU! THE GUARDIAN IS A HUGE MINOTAUR IN BLACK ARMOR WITH THE ONE OF THE LARGEST TWO-HANDED SWORDS YOU'VE EVER SEEN!! HANGING ON HIS BELT ARE THE HEADS OF PREVIOUS CHALLENGERS - EACH HEAD BEARS AN UNSETTLING FACIAL EXPRESSION OF PURE TERROR!! THE MINOTAUR LAUGHS WITH A DEEP, EVIL GUTTURAL GROWL AND BEGINS TO SLOWLY CLOSE IN ON YOU!!

YOU'D BETTER DO SOME FAST THINKING -
WHAT ARE YOU GUYS GOING TO DO?



OK, BRIAN'S FIREBALLS EXPLODE IN A HUGE SPHERE OF FLAME CENTERED ON **DAVE** AND THE **MINOTAUR!!** WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS YOU SEE DAVE AND THE MINOTAUR LYING IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS!

YOU **BIG JERK!!** YOU BETTER HAUL ME TO A CLERIC AND GET ME RAISED OR YOU'LL BE SORRY!!

YOU **ROTTEN TRAITOR!!** DON'T WORRY DAVE - I'M GONNA CHECK YOU OUT!!

HUH - WHAT'S THAT? I CAN'T HEAR YOU! YOU'RE DEAD REMEMBER??

(PSST - HEY B.A. - CAN I PINCH DAVE'S SWORD??)



I'M JUST PLAYING MY CHARACTER! HE'S ON HIS WAY TO GREATNESS AND HE'S WILLING TO WALK OVER **ANYBODY'S** ROTTEN CARCASS TO DO SO! **DEAL WITH IT!!**

OH I DON'T EVEN BELIEVE THIS! YOU BETTER WATCH YOUR BACK DUDE! YOU HEAR A NOISE YOU BETTER JUMP CAUSE IT'LL BE ME BRINGING YOUR **PAYBACK!!**

FATHEAD!!

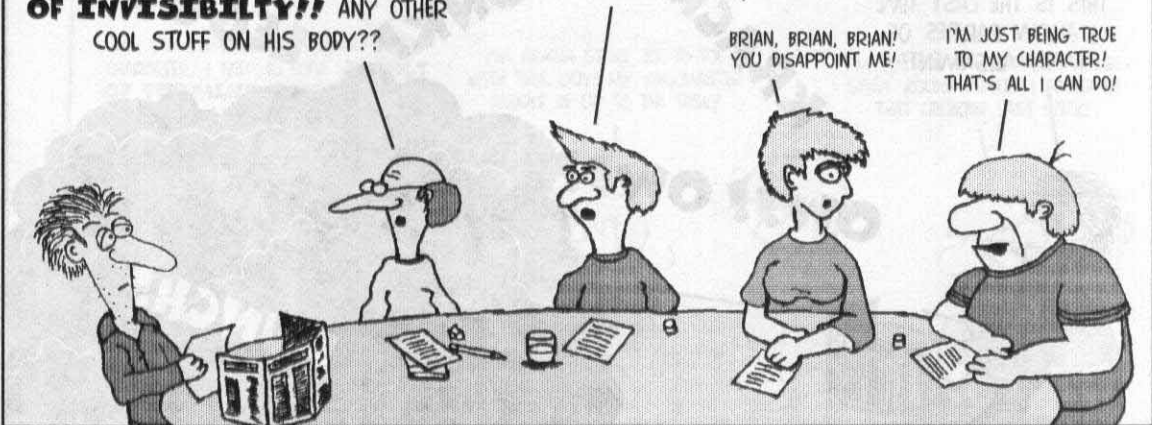


HEY B.A! SINCE I'M ALREADY THERE - I'LL GO AHEAD AND PICK UP DAVE'S COIN POUCH - AND OOH, OOH, HIS **RING OF INVISIBILTY!!** ANY OTHER COOL STUFF ON HIS BODY??

WHA...WHA...??? WHAT IN THE **HELL** DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING **BOB!!** YOU LITTLE BALD-HEADED JERK!

BRIAN, BRIAN, BRIAN! YOU DISAPPOINT ME!

I'M JUST BEING TRUE TO MY CHARACTER! THAT'S ALL I CAN DO!



WELL BOB, YOU WERE SO BUSY PICKING OVER DAVE'S BODY THAT YOU DIDN'T NOTICE HE WAS ONLY **STUNNED!!** DAVE YOU WAKE UP JUST IN TIME TO SEE BOB POCKET YOUR RINGS AND COIN POUCH!!

GULP!! ER... I'M HANDING DAVE BACK HIS SWORD! AFTER ALL, I WAS JUST SAFEGUARDING IT FOR HIM.

OH YEAH!!! I TAKE THAT SWORD AND I'M MAKING A CALLED SHOT TO DECAPITATE BOB!!

UMMMMM. I KNOW A CERTAIN MAGE WITH A VERY POOR ARMOR CLASS WHO SHOULD BE MAKING A RUN FOR IT NOW

UHHHH...



OK, YOU'RE SUCCESSFUL! **BOB'S** HEAD GOES BOUNCING ACROSS THE GROVE AND LANDS IN A POOL!

AND NOW... I'M CALLING UPON THE **DEATHRUNE** ON THE HILT OF MY SWORD - I'M BEEN SAVING THIS CHARGE FOR JUST SUCH AN OCCASION! I CAST IT ON **BRIAN** - STEALING HIS SOUL AND BANISHING HIM FROM THE WORLD OF THE LIVING - **FOREVER!!!**

WHY YOU!! THAT'S THE THANKS I GET FOR WATCHING YOUR VALUABLES??

OH - MY **FIST** IS GONNA DO THE **FLAMENGO** ALL OVER YOUR FACE!



THIS IS THE LAST TIME I ALLOW PARTIES OF MIXED ALIGNMENT!

KRACK!!
BONK!
LEGGO LEGGO!!
OW!! OW!!
PUNCH!



Death by Repetition

BASED ON A STORY BY ANDY R. OBINSON

AS YOU ARE WALKING ALONG **THE LANE OF DREED** YOU COME UPON AN ANCIENT SIGN BOARD. IT'S INTRICATELY CARVED INTO A SLAB OF BLACK MARBLE AND OVERGROWN WITH TWISTED VINES AND WEEDS.



EVEN SO - THE WORDS, "**TURN BACK LEST YE PERISH HERE**" CAN BE CLEARLY SEEN.



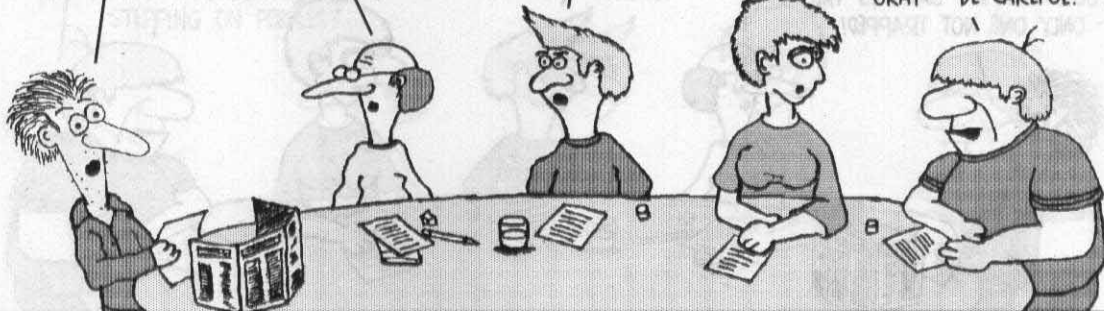
SOUNDS LIKE AN INVITATION TO ME!
I'M LOADING MY CROSSBOW FOR GOOD MEASURE AND PRESSING ON!

PERISH INDEED!! SOUNDS LIKE THIS ROAD NEEDS A GOOD SWEEP OF EVIL CRITTERS!
I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU BOB!

SO MUCH FOR THE WARNING.

I'M GONNA DROP BACK AND INSPECT THIS SIGN A LITTLE CLOSER, BRIAN. WATCH YOUR BACKSIDE!

OKAY - BE CAREFUL!



OK YOU TAKE A FEW STEPS PAST THE SIGN AND THE HIDIOUS **DEMON LORD SCROUD** APPEARS BEFORE YOU!! HE'S SURROUNDING BY A BRILLIANT BLUE FLAME AND HE IMMEDIATELY STARTS TOWARD YOU. QUICK - WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING?

UM, I'M STEPPING BACK BEHIND DAVE'S CHARACTER! I NEED TO LOAD MY **BOLT OF TORMENT** IN MY CROSSBOW - IT GETS A +20 VS. DEMON KIND.

I'M GONNA STAND TOE-TO-TOE WITH THIS GUY!! MY HACKMASTER SHOULD BE UP TO THE TASK!

I'M TOSSING A HANDFUL OF THOSE SHINY ROUND PEBBLES I FOUND IN THAT CREEKBED LAST WEEK!



OK DAVE, SINCE **SCROUD** IS FROM THE **BASEMENT PLANE** AND IS A **TYPE II DEMON** AS SOON AS YOU STEP NEAR HIM TO SWING YOU AUTOMATICALLY TOUCH THE **DEMON FLAMES** PROTECTING HIM AND YOU TAKE 250 POINTS OF DAMAGE!! AND SINCE HE'S A SOUL-HUNTER YOUR SOUL IMMEDIATELY IS TRAPPED IN HIS BELT BUCKLE! NO CHANCE OF BEING RAISED UNLESS HE'S DEFEATED IN COMBAT - WHICH ISN'T LIKELY!!

HEY, DID **SCROUD** NOTICE MY PEBBLES?

GULP!



I'M RUNNING FOR MY MULE - NO USE IN HANGING AROUND!

WELL, I DON'T THINK MY BROWNIE WILL BE ANY MATCH FOR THIS CREEP - I'LL TRY TO FEATHER HIM WITH ARROWS!!

SORRY BOB! AS SOON AS YOU REACH THE SIGN BOARD, AN INVISIBLE BARRIER BLOCKS YOUR ESCAPE - SARA IS THE ONLY ONE NOT TRAPPED!

DEAD?? BUT... BUT...

WELL - SO MUCH FOR THE MUSCLE OF THE GROUP - I GUESS IT'S TIME FOR THE BRAINS TO STEP IN!!



OKAY **B.A.** - LET'S HAVE AT IT!! I WANT TO KNOW WHAT EFFECT MY PEBBLES ARE HAVING ON THIS DEMON.

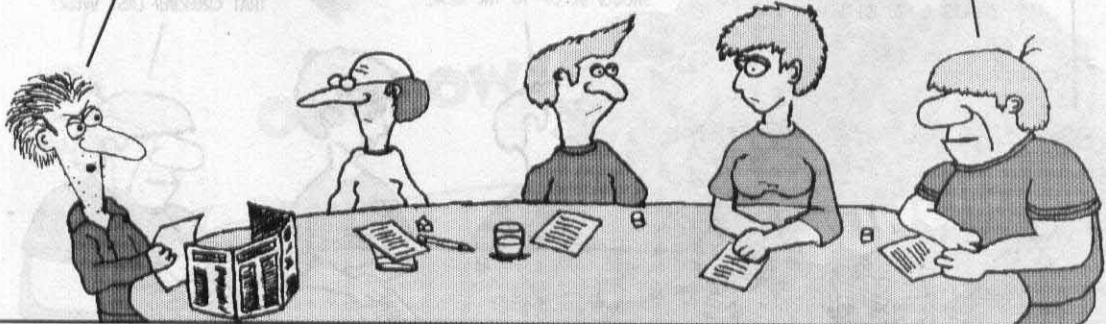
WELL DID HE STEP ON ANY OF THE PEBBLES?

I'M HAVING TROUBLE HEARING THOSE DICE ROLL DOWN HERE - YOU DID ROLL TO SEE IF HE STEPPED ON THEM?

NONE - THEY'RE JUST ORDINARY PEBBLES **IDIOT!!**

NO!!

NO, I DIDN'T ROLL FOR IT!



SATISFIED?? NONE OF THE PEBBLES HURT THE DEMON'S FEET!! NOW THEN - LET'S CONTINUE WITH THE BATTLE. **SCROUD** STEPS...

(**ROLL**) NO, HE PAYS ABSOLUTELY **NO** ATTENTION TO THEM WHAT-SO-EVER! ARE YOU THROUGH?

WAIT A MINUTE! **SCROUD** IS FROM A DIFFERENT PLANE - MAYBE HE HASN'T SEEN PEBBLES BEFORE! HE MIGHT PAUSE TO INVESTIGATE THEM!

GOOD IDEA!

YER BAD!!

NOT QUITE...



WHAT NOW?

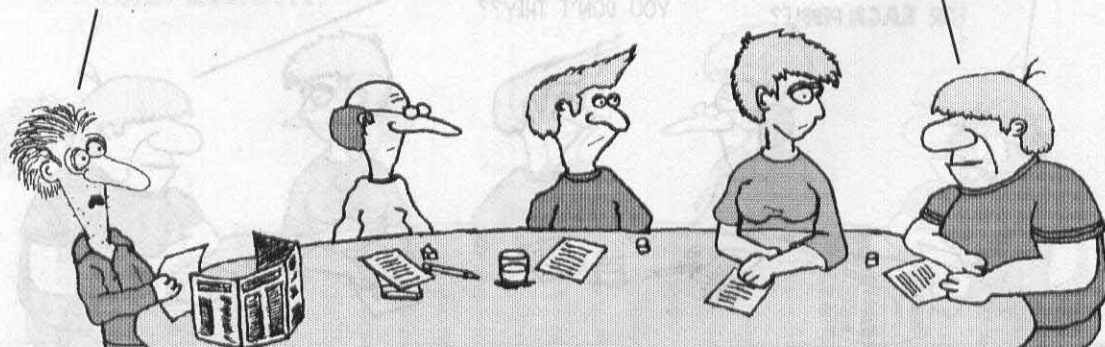
WELL, BY YOUR OWN ADMISSION - **SCROUD** DIDN'T NOTICE THE **ROUND** PEBBLES ALL OVER THE ROAD BEFORE HIM. I WOULD ARGUE THAT THERE IS A VERY GOOD CHANCE **SCROUD** WILL LOSE HIS FOOTING ON THEM AND FALL ON HIS BUTT!!



TWENTY MINUTES LATER

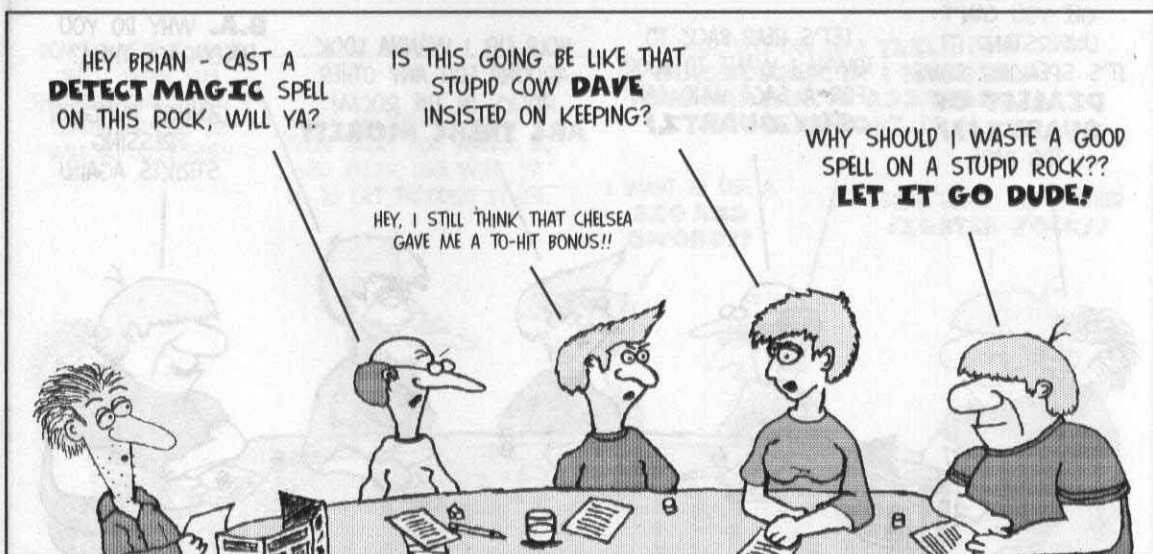
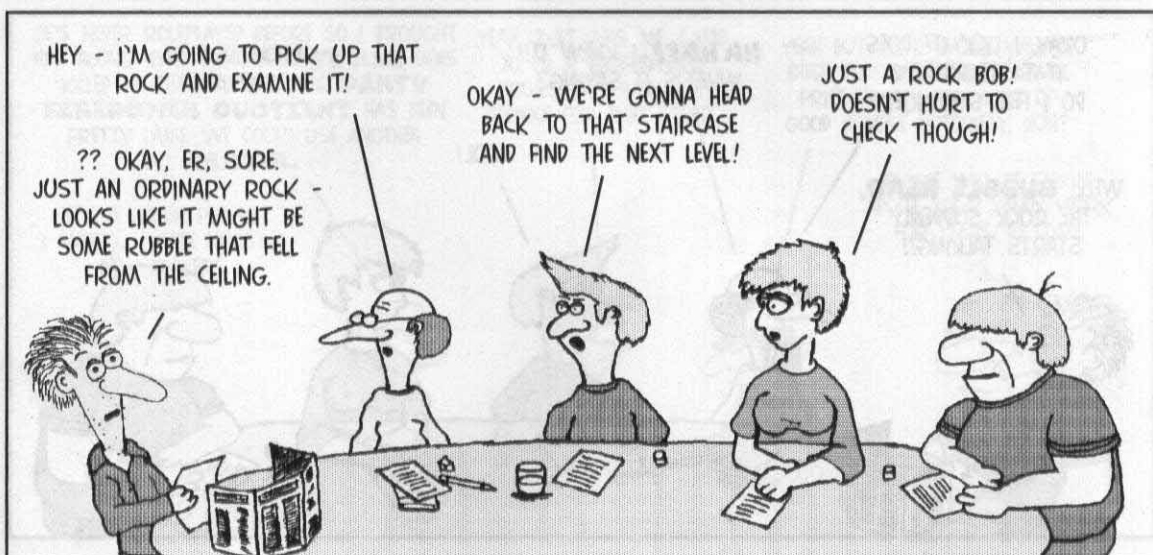
BRIAN? (WHIMPER) FOR CRYING OUT LOUD - HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN ON KEEPING THIS UP?

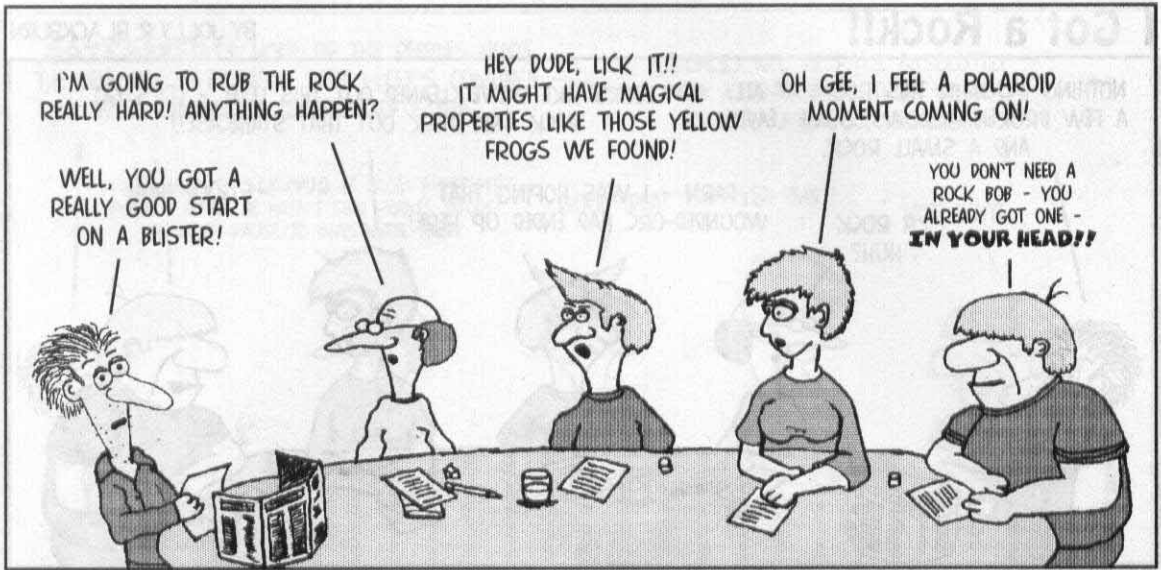
WELL, I FIGURE EITHER YOU OR **SCROUD** WILL GET TIRED EVENTUALLY AND GO HOME. I GOT NOTHING ELSE TO DO FOR A FEW DAYS!



I Got a Rock!!

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN





Dave's First Game

"The Never-Before-Seen Past Adventures
of the Knights of the Dinner Table"

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

TEAR BACK THE **COBWEBS** OF TIME, MY FRIEND, AND JOURNEY BACK WITH ME TO ANOTHER ERA. TO A FAMILIAR TABLE WHERE OLD FRIENDS **B.A. FELTON, BOB HERZOG, JOHNNY KIZINSKI** AND **BRIAN VAN HOOSE** HAVE GATHERED TOGETHER TO PLAY THEIR FAVORITE GAME, **HACKMASTER** AS THEY DO EVERY **THURSDAY**. THIS DAY IS DIFFERENT, HOWEVER, FOR A **NEW FACE** IS PRESENT AT THE **TABLE!**



HEY BOB, WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?

THIS IS **DAVE BOZWELL!!!** I MET HIM PLAYIN' **PAINTBALL** A FEW MONTHS AGO. HE SAVED MY ASS FROM A **DOUBLE-FLANKER!!**

DAVE BOZWELL! HEY, AREN'T YOU THE GUY WHO PAINTED "**IN THE NADS**" ON THE OLD WATER TOWER ON THE WEST SIDE?

HEY DUDES!! HOW'S IT HANGING?

THAT WAS SO KEWL!

HE'S NEVER ROLEPLAYED BEFORE SO I BROUGHT HIM ALONG. EVER SINCE **RUSTY AXE** WAS KILLED BY THAT VAMPIRE OUR **PARTY FIREPOWER QUOTIENT** HAS BEEN PRETTY LAME. WE COULD USE ANOTHER **PLAYER.**

YEAH, THAT WAS ME. I HAD TO DO A **HUNDRED HOURS** OF COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR THAT STUNT.

YEAH BUT YOUR WORK WILL BE THERE FOR **YEARS!!** SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR A BIT OF GOOD HONEST NOTORIETY. HUH?

HE'S A GREEN PLAYER? I DUNNO... I HATE NURSING NEW PLAYERS.

PEOPLE WILL BE TALKIN' ABOUT YOUR HANDY WORK FOR YEARS TO COME.



DON'T SWEAT IT, B.A.!! WE'LL WALK HIM THROUGH GENERATING A CHARACTER. THE KID WILL DO JUST FINE!!

OKAY, SO FIRST YOU GOTTA DECIDE WHAT YOU WANNA BE. YOU KNOW, LIKE WHAT YA DO TO GET THROUGH IN LIFE.

YEAH, YOU CAN BE A **THIEF**, OR A **MAGIC USER**, OR A **RANGER**, A **BARBARIAN**, AN **ASSASSIN**, A **ROGUE KNIGHT**, OR A.....

I WANT TO USE A **BIG ASS SWORD!!**

(SIGH) LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER **FIGHTER-JOCK!!**



TWENTY MINUTES LATER

OKAY, SO WHAT'S THIS BOX THAT SAYS **CHARACTER BACKGROUND**??

BAAAHH!! WE NEVER USE THAT. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY IT'S ON THERE.

YEAH FORGET ABOUT ALL THAT CRAP. ALL YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT IS **TREASURE AND EXPERIENCE POINTS!!**

THAT'S RIGHT. DON'T LET THE LITTLE STUFF DISTRACT YOU FROM YOUR MISSION.



OKAY, HOW ABOUT THIS BOX THAT SAYS **LANGUAGES KNOWN**? WHAT DO I PUT THERE??

ZIP!! THAT'S WHAT YOU PUT THERE. PUT A LANGUAGE DOWN THERE AND THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW, **B.A.** IS TRYING TO HAVE THINGS TALK TO YOU AND STUFF.

AND FOR **GAWD'S SAKE** DON'T PUT DOWN ANYTHING UNDER **FEARS** OR **WEAKNESSES!!** IF YOU DO YOU'RE JUST INVITING **B.A.** TO **SCREW** WITH YOU.

EXACTLY!!



I'M CONFUSED. I THOUGHT **B.A.** WAS PLAYING WITH US. YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE HE'S THE **ENEMY!!**

HE IS THE ENEMY!! DON'T YOU GET IT?? DON'T **EVER** TURN YOUR BACK ON **B.A.!!** HE'S JUST WAITING TO DO YOU IN!!

THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S **US** AGAINST **HIM!!** WE STICK TOGETHER - YOU GOT THAT? HOW DO YOU THINK **RUSTY AXE** GOT IT? HUH? ONE MINUTE I'M GETTIN' A SODA FROM THE FRIDGE. NEXT THING I KNOW MY JUGULAR IS RIPPED OPEN LIKE A **THANKSGIVING TURKEY!!**

LISTEN TO JOHNNY. HE KNOWS!



NOW LET US GIVE YOU A FEW POINTERS. FIRST OFF -YOU SEE SOMETHING MOVE - **YOU KILL IT!!** I DON'T CARE IF IT'S TALKING, SQAWKIN' OR WALKIN!! YOU TAKE YER **E.P.'S** WHERE YOU CAN GET THEM.

87% OF **ALL** PLAYER CHARACTER FATALITIES ARE THE DIRECT RESULT OF **TALKIN'** WITH SOME STUPID BASTARD WHEN THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN **HACKIN'!!**

ACTUALLY IT'S 82% BUT JOHNNY IS MAKING A GOOD POINT, DAVE.



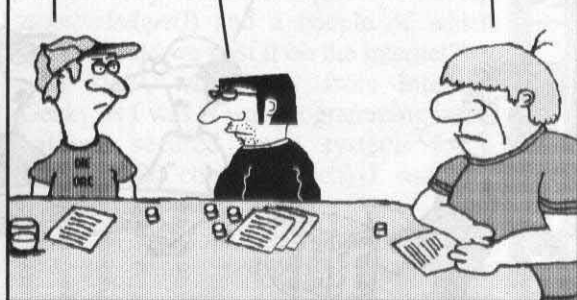
YER SLIPPIN' **BRIAN!!** IT'S 87%!! I'M SURE OF IT.

SORRY JOHNNY, IT'S 82% I WAS READING THE LATEST POLLS ON THE **HACKMASTER HOME PAGE** JUST LAST NIGHT!

WOW, YOU GUYS SURE KNOW YOUR **HACKMASTER**. I DUNNO IF I CAN LEARN ALL THIS CRAP. IT SEEMS REALLY COMPLICATED.

IT ALL COMES WITH EXPERIENCE, DAVE. ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS FOLLOW OUR LEAD.

COURSE THAT 82% IS ACCURATE PLUS OR MINUS 2 PERCENT.



ANOTHER THING - DON'T TAKE NO FLAP FROM A **NON-PLAYER CHARACTER**. **B.A.** HAS A BAD HABIT OF RUNNING MOUTHY **NPC'S** WHO ARE ALWAYS TRYING TO TALK YOU INTO **THIS** OR **THAT**. DO YOURSELF A FAVOR. SOME **NPC** STARTS GETTING CHUMMY OR TOO CHATTY WITH YA?? **WASTE THAT BUGGER** WHERE HE STANDS.

ROGER THAT!! DO I GET EXPERIENCE POINTS FOR THEM??

YER DAMN RIGHT YOU DO!! SAY, YOU CATCH ON QUICK. I'M TELLIN YA, **POINT-WHORE** FOR THOSE **E.P.'S** AND YOU'LL DO ALRIGHT.



AND WATCH OUT FOR THE **BLEEDIN-HEART** TYPES. YOU KNOW, **BEGGARS, ORPHANS, DWARVES WITH SUCKING-CHEST-WOUNDS. B.A.** LIKES TO THROW THEM AT US HOPING TO DISTRACT US. SAME RESPONSE - **WASTE 'EM WHERE THEY STAND!!**

CRIPES!!! WHAT A DIRTY TRICK TO PULL.

AND CUTE LITTLE ANIMALS!!! **BIG TROUBLE!!!** TAKE 'EM OUT WHERE EVER AND WHEN EVER YOU ENCOUNTER THEM!!



YEAH, ONE TIME BRIAN FOUND A FUZZY LITTLE **HAMSTER** AND TOOK IT UNDER HIS WING. LITTLE VARMIT WAS CARRYING THE **BLACK PLAGUE!!!** WIPED OUT THE **WHOLE PARTY!!**

DAMN!!!

ANOTHER TIME A RABID **HUMMING BIRD** FLEW THROUGH A **VISOR SLIT** ON MY **GREAT HELM** AND BLINDED MY CHARACTER.

HEY, IT WAS NEVER PROVEN **GOLDIE** WAS THE CARRIER!



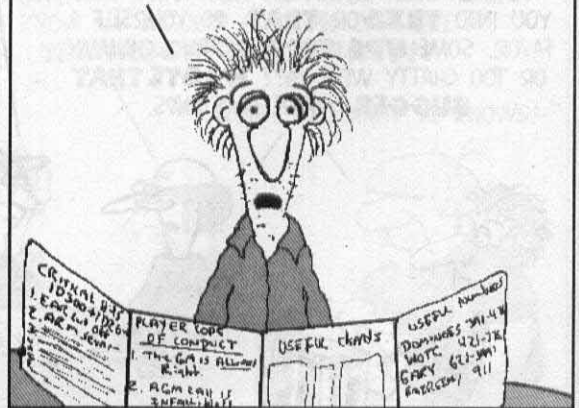
WOW, THANKS FOR ALL THE GREAT ADVICE GUYS. I WAS REALLY LUCKY TO HOOK UP WITH SUCH **GREAT PLAYERS!!!**

THUS ANOTHER **HACK-N-SLAYER** IS BORN INTO THE FOLD. (SIGH)

YOU'RE RIGHT. THERE ARE LOTS OF GUYS OUT THERE WHO DON'T KNOW DIDDLY ABOUT GOOD ROLE-PLAYING.

JUST ALL THOSE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE SPEAKING, I SUPPOSE.

REALLY UNUSUAL TO HAVE SO MUCH PLAYER TALENT AT ONE TABLE.



CRITICAL HIT
1. EAR FOR DICE
2. ARE WE GOING TO...
3. ...

PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT
1. THE GM IS ALWAYS RIGHT.
2. A GM CAN IF ...

USEFUL CHANTS

USEFUL NUMBER
DOMMONES 201-414
MOTC 421-78
GARY (21-301)
BARBICUE 911

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In 1994 while I was working on Issue #1 of *Knights of the Dinner Table*, I was invited to a party that a local gaming club in Riverside, California, was holding at a pizzeria. At some point in the evening KODT came up and several people started suggesting story ideas for the comic book. One of the stories related to me that night was about an incident involving a gazebo and a frustrated gamemaster.

The amazing thing about the story was that it apparently was true and had taken place at a local game several years prior.

A few days later I worked the story into a KODT strip and positioned it as the lead-in strip for Issue #1 dubbing it "*Lair of the Gazebo*".

After the comic hit the streets, a strange thing began to happen. People began to approach me and tell me, "Hey! I was at the game where that 'gazebo' thing happened." or "My gamemaster was the GM who ran that game."

What made it so strange was the fact that the people making these claims were geographically scattered around the country. Also, as each person recounted the 'real' story to me the details varied wildly. I couldn't figure out what was going on.

I told my friends that apparently the 'gazebo story' was some form of urban legend. Every gaming circle in the country seemed to have its own variation of it. (sometimes the 'gazebo' was a 'davenport'). While, I wondered if there might have been an original incident that sparked the wide spread story, there didn't seem to be any clues.

One day the answer arrived in the form of a letter from Richard Aronson. Attached was a xeroxed copy of a magazine article published nearly ten years prior.

As I sat down and read "*Eric and the Gazebo*" I was floored. Was this the elusive original source for the 'gazebo myth'?

After reading the attached letter it was clear that Richard was, indeed, the first to spin the tale. When it came time to reprint the *Lair of the Gazebo* in this book, I wanted to do more than simply give Richard his long due credit.

When I asked him if we could run the original 'gazebo' story for the enjoyment of our readers, not only did Richard agree, he went a step further and wrote up a brief history of the story and the strange evolution of an urban gamer legend.

Enjoy!

Jolly

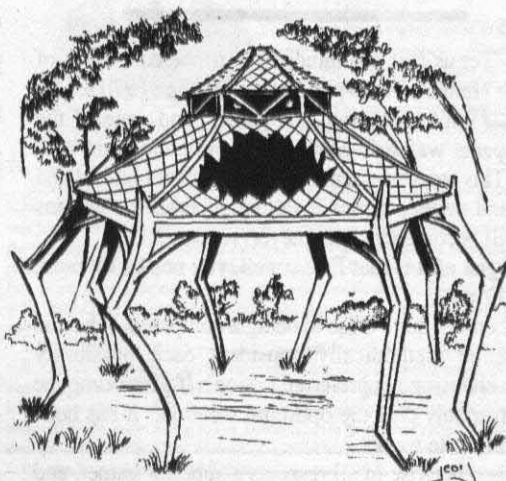
ON THE EVOLUTION OF AN URBAN GAMER LEGEND

In 1985 I told *Eric and the Gazebo* at Lee Gold's game. She insisted I write it up for *Alarums and Excursions*, her APA which is still going strong after twenty years. Wanting to continue playing in her game, I did so.

Corey and Lori Cole then pointedly asked why this story did not grace their fanzine, *The Spell Book*, on which I was supposedly a contributing editor.

That led to a reprint there, in slightly different form, in 1987. A year and a half passed. Two Mensa groups reprinted E&T from *The Spell Book*; one of them excluded my name entirely.

Then it was reprinted in *The Mensa Bulletin* of June 1989, and being a semi-pro magazine with an international circulation of about 30,000, they checked the authorship back to me



(much thanks to Corey and Lori for not claiming it for their own). Suddenly I was a published author.

I even got some fan mail, some of which was along the lines of "Would you write us another story like this?" (if I was that good, I'd be Jolly Blackburn [*blatant suckup acknowledged*]) and a couple of which were "Could we post it on the internet?"

In 1989, who knew from internet. Geeky as I was (I was programming international secured email systems for a Fortune 100 company then) I was still internet ignorant.

I said "Sure, as long as you spell Ed's and my names correctly, because we deserve the credit, and Eric's, since he deserves the blame.

And to be fair, both people who asked did indeed attribute correctly, although it appears Whitchurch has picked up an unexpected "e" along the way.

Even some of the people who reprinted it from their postings attributed it correctly. And maybe one of the people who read those postings attributed it correctly.

By 1995, I had become a computer game designer for *The Sierra Network*. I occasionally could write off convention expenses by speaking, and at one con I retold "*Eric and the Gazebo*."

Afterwards, a fourteen year old half my size threatened bodily harm upon me for stealing his friend's story. S'truth!

Eric and the Gazebo

Let us cast our minds back to the early days of fantasy role-playing... In the 1970's, Ed Whitchurch ran "his game," and one of the participants was Eric Sorenson, a veritable giant of a man. This story is essentially true: I knew both Ed and Eric, and neither denies it (although Eric, for reasons that will become apparent, never repeats it).

The gist of it is that Eric... well, you need a bit more about Eric.

Eric comes quite close to being a computer. When he games, he methodically considers each possibility before choosing his preferred option. If given time, he will invariably pick the optimum solution. It has been known to take weeks.

He is otherwise in all respects a superior gamer, and I've spent many happy hours competing with and against him. *Even today, if any player in our group takes an unreasonably long time to decide what to do, he draws calls of "Hurry up, Eric." (So if you imagine pauses before any Eric response, with the word pause to indicate an unreasonably long pause, you'll have the flow down pat.)

Ed, on the other hand, is very quick witted, of the general school that if you do the wrong thing quickly it may work out better than the right thing slowly.

His pauses were usually signs that players were asking something very important or unbelievably unimportant.*

So... Eric was playing a neutral paladin (Why should only lawful good religions get to have holy warriors? was the rationale) in Ed's game.

He had a holy sword, which fought well and did all those things holy swords are supposed to do, including detect good or evil (by random die roll). He was exploring some lord's lands when the following exchange occurred:

ED: *You see a well-groomed garden. In the middle, on a small hill, you see a gazebo.*

ERIC: A gazebo? What color is it?

ED: (Pause) *It's white, Eric.*

ERIC: How far away is it?

ED: *About 50 yards.*

ERIC: How big is it?

ED: (Pause) *It's about 30 feet across, 15 feet high, with a pointed top.*

ERIC: (rolls dice) I use my sword to detect whether it's good.

ED: *It's not good, Eric. It's a gazebo!*

ERIC: (Unusually long pause, even for Eric) I call out to it.

ED: *It won't answer. It's a gazebo!*

ERIC: (Pause) I sheathe my sword and draw my bow and arrows. Does it respond in any way?

ED: *No, Eric. It's a gazebo!*

ERIC: I shoot it with my bow (rolls to hit). What happened?

ED: *There is now a gazebo with an arrow sticking out of it.*

ERIC: (Pause) Wasn't it wounded?

ED: *Of course not, Eric! It's a gazebo!*

ERIC: (Whimper) But that was a plus-three arrow!

ED: *It's a gazebo, Eric, a gazebo! If you really want to try to destroy it, you could try to chop it with an axe, I suppose, or you could try to burn it, but I don't know why anybody would even try. It's a @#!\$*& gazebo!*

[Author's note: Ed was in the army, and no, he did not say @#!\$*&. The letter count has not been changed for the linguistically curious. Clue: it was a gerund.]

ERIC: (Long pause - he has no axe or fire spells) I run away.

ED: (Thoroughly frustrated) *It's too late. You've awakened the gazebo, and it catches you and eats you.*

ERIC: (Reaching for his dice) Maybe I'll roll up a fire-using mage so I can avenge my paladin...

At this point, the increasingly amused fellow party members restored a modicum of order by explaining what a gazebo is.

This is solely an afterthought, of course, but Eric is doubly lucky that the gazebo was not situated on a grassy knoll. □

Feel free to contact me at Richard Aronson, P.O.B. 2273, Oakhurst, CA, rfaronson@aol.com.

*If you're interested in amateur publications 100% guaranteed to occasionally carry works as good as E&T before it appears in **Knights of the Dinner Table**, contact Lee Gold, 3965 Alla Road, Mar Vista, CA, 90066 for **Alarums and Excursions**, or Mary Kelly, 7409 David Drive, Frisco, TX, 75035-5440, for **Re:Quests**, the fully legitimate daughter of **The Spell Book**.*

b.a.

FELTON



B.A. (Boris Alphonzo not Bad Attitude or Bozo as his schoolmates called him) Felton is a devoted GameMaster, loyal to his group and the game known as HackMaster™. In his 30s, he still lives with his mom, but this has given him the time to perfect his craft. To make money, he drags himself away from his game designs to work the graveyard shift at the local Pizza-Go-Go.

In his early years, B.A. played a Gnomish thief named Tar Markvar, a character fate frowned on, whose wit outshone his wisdom to the day of his death.

B.A.'s college career of anthropology and history study didn't last long; he dropped out to pursue his dream of being a game designer. He spent his life savings of \$6000 into developing and producing his first independent game, DAWG: the RolePlaying Game™. Unfortunately, the game failed and bombed; B.A. believes to this day the game didn't sell due to a negative review in WatchDog Gamer magazine (run by Nitro Furgueson). This was too much for B.A., who suffered a nervous breakdown and gave up gaming. A few years later, the sound of rolling dice called to him once more - he began gaming again and founded the Knights Of the Dinner Table. At their peak, the KODT boasted a membership of 26; in the following years, membership has fluctuated and now dropped to a steady five.

B.A. has always tried to push the envelope both in features, description and imagination. The first adventure he ran as a GM was "The Hordes of Dark Devastation". Swiftly moving from pre-generated shelf adventures to his own adaptations and creations, he inflicted ran his first home-brewed adventure "It's A Rocky Road To Frankenstein's Castle" - the HackMaster™ adaptation of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show", while Bob and Brian were the only Knights. His innovations didn't stop there - successfully mixing incompatible systems, employing the most intense game aids or taking his group into the 21st Century with GM aids and player systems are samples of B.A.'s dedication. Granted, not every one of his experiments is a complete success; sometimes the role of a GM must fly in the face of available facts. But his hard work, his innovations, his time at the HackMaster™ Academy and his willingness to spread the joy of HackMaster™ to new players or new GameMasters give proof of B.A.'s caring, love and dedication to the phenomena that are Gary Jackson's HackMaster™ and the KODT.

It hasn't always been easy for B.A.; his great work isn't always appreciated - or without dangerous incident either. Although B.A. has had some glorious moments, one of the darkest moments - for himself and for the Knights - was the day he chose to quit when fellow-competing GM Earl Slackmozer moved into the county and cheated to win the respect that was rightfully B.A.'s; and yet in the end, B.A. and the Knights won through. With a slice of pizza in one hand and the notes for his adventure with a home-brewed system, B.A. keeps the thoroughly well-deserved title... of GameMaster of the Knights Of the Dinner Table.

The preferred system for B.A. and the Knights is Gary™ Jackson™'s HackMaster®, with its derivative supplements, SpaceHack™ and Cattlepunk™.



johnny KIZINSKI

Johnny "Lucky" Kizinski was one of the original members of the Knights of the Dinner Table Gaming Club. He was highly respected by the other members for his gaming style and dedication to the game. He is mostly remembered, however, for his incredible luck with the dice and his uncanny habit of coming up with the right results at the right time. Mention his name around any gaming table in Muncie, Indiana and you're likely to hear the sad refrain, "the boy could play!" Johnny's story has an unhappy ending however. One night during a power session of CattlePunk, his luck ran out. He fumbled consecutively FIVE times, failed four saving throws, and missed twelve to-hits over the course of the evening. As a result four high level player characters met their demise. Johnny's unlucky streak haunted him in the weeks that followed and he eventually lost interest in the game and hung up his dice bag. He moved out of state and now manages a Big Juices in Wisconsin.

brian

VAN HOOSE



The almost perfect phrase to describe Brian Van Hoose is "idiot savant" - minus the idiot bit. A young lifetime of devotion to his computer hobby has instilled in Brian the precision required to make him what he is today - a walking, talking, nearly perfect, unstoppable, organic HackMaster™ machine, living and breathing

The Game.

Brian's early computer hobby developed into running his own Internet connected BBS, a hobby that helps support him. His other means of financial support comes from the - again, very precise - hobby/business of miniatures, painting and selling. Mindful of the economics of the situation, a van Hoose painted miniature comes in three styles of increasing quality and price: Slop-N-Go, Table-Top and Museum Qualities. His other hobbies include his beloved Fantasy and Science Fiction TV shows and novels (note the Babylon 5 mural painted on his van or his Green Lantern t-shirt). Then again, he also claims to have been abducted by aliens. Which way the therefore go on that one, nobody is sure.

His personal life obviously reflects the flaw points which balance his otherwise precise lifestyle. Outside the Knights, personal expression is one of Brian's weaker points. Brian himself is a quiet, withdrawn man, apparently barely capable of stringing three words together into a clear sentence. For that matter, Brian also - in spite of a decent tenor singing voice - appears to be so unnerved by the idea of having to sing he breaks out in hives. Brian's Armor of Reticence, however, has its weaknesses. Once shattered, the resultant explosion is terrifying - and usually leads to the table being picked up and flipped over in a mad rush of blind rage. Brian is also quick to defend himself - when B.A.'s 82 year old grandfather had a flashback and attacked Brian "the Japanese sniper", Brian defended himself admirably... or at least it was fairly admirable until Pappy Felton crawled from the room and Battle-Rage Brian dragged him back in by the ankles. And all the gawds in all the heavens help you if you mention something like Alexis to him now (Alexis: His make-believe girlfriend).

His home would be declared a biohazard if ever inspected by the appropriate health authorities - scary, furry green things growing in the refrigerator, dust that scares asthmatics into fits and a bizarrely adhesive substance on the floor of the bathroom. Best not to ask.

Brian's devotion to and mastery of HackMaster™ is unparalleled, possibly superior to any other single person in the history of HackMaster™. Owner of what is probably the most complete collection of HackMaster™ manuals, articles and supplements outside the offices of Hard8™, the purpose of the manuals in Brian's case is simply to provide proof for others - Brian himself is an living, breathing encyclopaedia, a repository for virtually every rule, line, table or piece of HackMaster™ information there is, down to the footnotes and page numbers, letter perfect. His calculations of remaining hit points, ratios, percentages, probabilities, experience or saving point values, body weights and statistics put Seymour Cray to shame.

In recent history, Brian has never been seen to act as a GameMaster. In spite of his astonishing HackMaster™ ability, his Third Place Award in the Saginaw RPG Tourney of 1978 and the fact that he himself introduced B.A. to HackMaster™, Brian underwent a terrible trauma at GaryCon'89, some terrible, mysterious event that caused him to actually give up role-playing for almost a year. Fortunately for the institution of role-playing, Brian recovered and went from strength to strength from there - except for the fact that Brian never acts as a GM anymore.

Brian's training is, of course, supplemented by his attendance at the 1987 and 1993 HackMaster™ camp (at which he attended the same ten-day demi-human culture classes and was awarded a badge for his Orc-speak prowess. His other great service to the world of HackMaster™ was his proposal of the Gamer Achievement Awards, a concept he is now developing with the help of Bob and Dave. Brian proposed the GAA to the Gary Jackson Academy Of Role-Playing, designed to be worn beneath convention name tags and at other formal gaming events.

But Brian's phenomenal mastery of HackMaster™ isn't the only feature that makes him a terrifyingly good player - the other factors are his ruthlessness, tactical cunning and his ability to exploit any shoddy rule.

Examples of Brian's frightening cunning include the times he:

- Killed the Vampire lord Vardania armed only with a wooden stake, sacrificing himself to save his comrades - whilst being a first-level character
- Saved the entire crew of the HackCruiser Warmonger from untimely death at the hands of space-pirates with his knowledge of mass-transporter systems and explosives
- Saved the party from being slaves of Rot Gut the Swack-Iron Dragon by tricking it into polymorphing into a dung beetle
- Tricked B.A. into running a HackMaster™ game when the party should have been playing SpaceHack™
- Took over the entire town of Muskeegie in CattlePunk™
- Rescued the entire party from imprisonment and execution with his Teleportation ring
- Created the Warmonger Science Officer

Brian's characters have included:

- Crimson Lotus, Black Lotus & Benny the Mage in the ongoing KODT HackMaster™ adventures
- Shotgun Billy and Big Jim Murdock in CattlePunk™
- The Leader of the Green Empire of Asia in Risque™
- The Warmonger's Science Officer in SpaceHack™
- Nigel Molenski in HackNoia™
- A Caped Crusader in Heroes And Zeroes™



bob

HERZOG

Bob Herzog is one of the world's last true gamers, a living embodiment of Gary Jackson's rallying cry, "The game must go on!". Still living with his parents and watching soaps, Bob's devotion to the game is unflagging and unquestionable; even when his temper and sharp tongue lose him several jobs, regardless of societal, peer or parental pressure, no sacrifice or hardship is too great for Bob and the game.

Bob's role-playing adventures away from the table are further testament. Rope burns, a \$500 dentist bill and a temporary makeover were just entrees. Bob's crowning glory was the nationally publicized Furgueson's Folly - a boy scout troop's eight day foray into the steam tunnels of Muncie led by none other than the Lord of Steam, Nitro Furgueson. In that week, Bob looked death in the face and lived to tell the tale, leaving a big piece of himself in those sewer tunnels.

Great Hack'n'Slasher that Bob is, his strengths do not lie in GameMastering or adventure writing, as evidenced by his earlier attempts after watching The Wizard of Oz and once mapping a dungeon after the design of his own house.

Bob's most touching quirk is his devotion to those blessed tools of the RolePlayer, his dice. Bob's dice collection is one of the largest known in Muncie, especially his pride and joy, the lucky ten-sider. His attachment to his favorite polyhedron was most evident when it was lost at a local convention; Bob's "Have you seen this die?" poster campaign became an unavoidable feature of nearly every vertical surface at the Ball State Campus. But Bob's dice fetish goes beyond mere love; when Nitro dared touch Bob's dice, Bob lost it and quote "went medieval on Nitro's ass" unquote.

Bob's devotion to the game was most evident in what may have been the second darkest age of the KODT - the day Bob's dad (an adjuster for Hoe And Harness Farmer's Insurance) saw a 60 Minutes Special on HackMaster™, searched Bob's room and found Bob's HackMaster™ manuals. On that day, Bob's dad forced him to get a real job and banned Bob from gaming.

A comrade had fallen and the Knights had to play for Bob who could not. For weeks, the Knights played with a succession of substitutes, including the Gamer Temp Corps's Ty Ferfel, the young and unsocial Newt Forager and a suc-

cession of other... erm... players. In the end, it was only quick thinking on Bob's part that allowed him to return to the Table. Unfortunately, the tightly stretched web of far-fetched lies and damning deceit was torn when Dave was spotted alive and well by Bob's dad. In the end, all the precautions came to naught and Bob's dad discovered Bob's game again. A deal was made - if Bob could maintain a steady job following in his father's footsteps as an adjuster for H&H Farmer's Insurance, Bob could continue the game. Although this has damaged his dream of becoming a professional role-player, it has also strengthened Bob's intense need to hack and slash.

Bob's most famous and favorite character is the one and only Knuckles the Sixth, King of the Wall Climbers. Knuckles is a dwarven thief/fighter with a braided beard, brandishing a crossbow or axe, wearing studded leather armor, a hooded cape and a ring on the middle finger of his left hand. Knuckles's back is tattooed with arcane symbols, imprinted on his flesh by the hand of (Brian's mage) Teflon Billy, making Knuckles one of Teflon Billy's two walking, talking emergency spellbooks. Although the opportunity doesn't come up often, Knuckles is also a gourmet chef (with a 75% proficiency in gourmet food preparation).

It takes a moment to notice his left leg - instead of a leg of flesh and blood, it appears to be a wooden leg, made of fine blood-wood, adorned with ivory inlays and gilded with pure gold. Knuckles was unjustly sentenced to losing his left leg (hacked off at the knee) as punishment for the murder of a beggar in Lord Gilead's city of Fangaerie. Before they left the city, the party's torch-bearer Knobby Foot found the legendary Wooden Leg of Dwarven Pirate Sturm Pyre at the Fangaerie Bazaar.

Knuckles's favorite steed is Mike the Dwarven Warhorse, successor to Door Stop. Bob/Knuckles values Mike very highly - not only as a companion or beast of burden, but also as an effective lethal weapon. Bob's/Knuckles's second favorite weapon is his Axe of Doom. The Axe is second only to his favorite weapon - found by Shadow Pete in the Halls of the Mountain Mage, the Crossbow of Doom has been handed down to Knuckles and is his constant companion of chaos which he uses with various bolts, including the Bolt of Torment, +6 Bolt of Despair, +8 Bolt of Devastation, Bolt of Reaving, Bolt of Thrashing and the Bolt of Skewering.

When the Knights made the switch to being sponsored by Kenzer and Company, Bob and Dave nearly didn't make it - the brass were considering losing the Dangerous Duo and replacing them with a pair of power-gamers. In the end, an impassioned plea by B.A. and Sara saved them from grisly fates as temps in the Gamer Temp Corps or as miniature painters.

From humble beginnings, Dave Bozwell has embraced role-playing with a passion, empathy and loyalty worthy of awards, rarely matched in the many worlds of HackMaster™.

As a welcome break from his Ball State U. courses of cultural anthropology and dance theory, Dave was introduced to role-playing by Bob in the days when B.A., Bob, Johnny Kizinski and Brian were the only Knights. In his rebel years, Dave was the sort of guy who'd paint the words "IN THE NADS" on the side of a water tower and risk his "life" saving a Paintball-War Buddy, paving the way for the on-the-edge, bored-with-tiny-details, true-blooded, hungry-for-victory Hack'n'Slasher that he was to become.

His introduction to the subtleties and intricacies of HackMaster™ was an historic, solemn moment. A few early RPG life experiences prepared Dave for the rigors of RPG life ahead; most notably, playing in Nitro Furgueson's "Trial By Ordeal" LARP and the accidental target-end testing of Weird Pete's experimental gasoline-powered Fireball Generator.

For a long time, HackMaster was "just a game" to Dave, much like Paintball, Risk or Nintendo. He'd play one session with the Knights and miss another two... until that fateful hour when Dave and his adventuring human fighter El Ravager discovered one of the powerful relics of the HackMaster™ polyverse... the HackMaster +12. HackMaster +12 A major relic of the HackMaster™ polyverse, the HackMaster +12 wielded by El Ravager (a.k.a. Dave Bozwell) is one of the only four known to exist on Garweeze Wurd. Made of pure Dwarven steel, a HackMaster +12 is forged in the belly of Blind Luvia, tempered in a vat of the blood of a fearsome Swack-Iron Dragon. The mystic runes of warning and power on the blade are etched by the fifty most skilled and blessed blind Dwarven craftsmen of Garweeze Wurd; the blade is then polished with the chest hair of Thor himself. The eldritch Death Rune imprinted on the hilt is the earthly manifestation of a powerful spell; cast upon a victim, it steals their soul and banishes them from the world of the living forever. Twinned with the necromantic power of Vlad'neer of Robinloft in the form of the Pommel Stone of Vlad'neer, this fantastic weapon becomes the most fearsome, unstoppable

force for swift and deadly justice in the HackMaster™ polyverse, a mighty HackMaster +15 (Batteries not included). Dave's attachment to his HackMaster +12 is almost like no other - when faced with the possibility of finding the Pommel Stone of Vlad'neer (see above), Dave's response was a simple and profound expression of joy. The only other time Dave has ever expressed such astonishment was when the Knights played an April Fool's joke on Dave, making him think that his HackMaster +12 had been destroyed by a curse.

Since becoming such a devoted player Dave has, of course, tried his hand at being a GameMaster. His success can be summed up very simply.

The only element of the HackMaster™ polyverse that Dave could love as much as his HackMaster +12 was his faithful mount. Not his good steed the horse Clover-Flax, his equine companion - but Clover-Flax's predecessor, Chelsie. Chelsie began life as a cow peacefully munching grass in a field near a palace/castle of an evil lord. It was Dave/El Ravager's finely honed instincts that led to the discovery of this seemingly innocuous cow's incredible properties. Even though Dave/El Ravager took the best care he could of the bovine she ran away, taking the to-hit bonus Dave was sure she gave El Ravager with her.

Dave's most famous character is, of course, El Ravager the HackMaster +12-wielding human Fighter. It bears mentioning that El Ravager's back is tattooed with arcane symbols, imprinted on his flesh by the hand of (Brian's mage) Teflon Billy, making El Ravager one of Teflon Billy's two walking, talking emergency spellbooks.



dave

BOZWELL

Sara Felton is the exception that proves the rule. Where the rest of the Knights Of the Dinner Table are the fire, heart and soul, Sara is the cooler, wiser head of the group, the perfect foil to their impetuosity - a consummate professional in the business of HackMaster™.

Moving from Wisconsin to Muncie, the home town of her cousin B.A., led her to an invitation to join the Knights. The wealth of experience she brought to the Table was more than anyone expected - role-playing for ten years, regional champion of the Wisconsin Gary Jackson Role-Playing Tourney for four years running and attended the HackMaster™ camp in 1992 (*spending ten days studying demi-human cultures*).

Sara even stretches to the role of GameMaster with ease, her latest triumph being convincing a bunch of sexist Hack'N'Slash maniacs to put aside their usual characters for a night and play female characters, warming her up for an upcoming GaryCon.

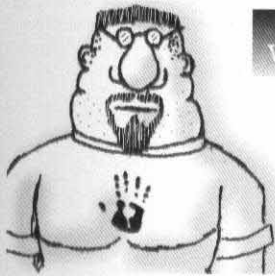
Sara is quite the perfectionist; for her, the art of HackMaster™ and role-playing is more of a science to be carefully and properly executed, whether in the playing, GameMastering or even tasks such as mere mapping. Her role-playing is technically near-perfect, with her ability to either suppress or use her personal feelings to enhance her role-playing. She has earned her respect - not only from the people who live in the many worlds of HackMaster™, but even from the most impossible taskmasters of the game - the Knights Of the Dinner Table.

Sara has reflexes that would scare a striking cobra. Those instant reflexes, however, are generally used for only one thing around the table. The second someone makes a sexist comment, Sara's hand is tightly gripped on their shirt, pulling them into range of the fist she has cocked and ready to launch into the face of the offender.

Unless a sexist comment has been made, Sara maintains her cool at all times. Sure, she regrets the loss of her favorite character Zayre the Barbarian, but she keeps the perspective that Zayre was just a fictional construct defined by numbers on paper. A cool, calm professional, Sara is ready to move on with her expertise in the game that is HackMaster™.

sara

FELTON



victor "nitro"
FERGUSON

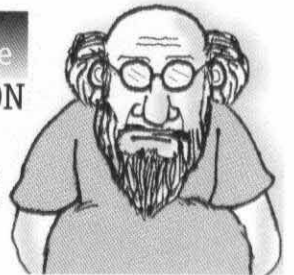
Victor Fergusson became known as the *Lord of Steam* when he adapted the HackMaster rules to live-action play and began taking hand picked groups of players on late night forays into the labyrinth of steam tunnels beneath Ball State University. After 'Fergusson's Folly' made national headlines (Victor and his group were lost for 7

days prompting a massive rescue search), the steam tunnels were secured and dozens of entrances were sealed with concrete. There are several contradicting accounts of what happened weeks later on the evening of January 5th, 1987 but it involved a satchel of C-4 high explosive, a miscalculation of the expected blast radius, and a medical evacuation of the Campus Administration Building which collapsed during an attempt to breach the steam

tunnels. The incident earned Victor the nickname 'Nitro' and 5 years probation. Nitro has been president of the Black Hand Gaming Society for 8 years, taking over from Weird Pete.

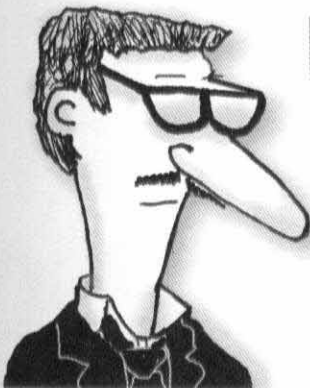
"Weird" Pete Ashton is the sole proprietor of a local game store called the Games Pit. He is proud of the fact that he was one of the co-designers of the cult classic role-playing game, *Lynch Mob*™. Pete loves to relate the story of how he was burned by his partners and lost "millions". Pete is always available for advice but oddly seems to be very bitter about the hobby he loves so much. He was a major stockholder in Hard 8 Enterprises but sold his shares mere days before HackMaster was released. Pete co-founded the Black Hand Gaming Society along with Nitro and served as president for the first four years of the club's existence. The backroom of Pete's shop serves as home table for the Society.

"weird" pete
ASHTON



gary
JACKSON

Gary Jackson is fondly known as the "Gawdfather of Gaming" by millions of gaming enthusiasts around the world. His failing wargame company, Hard 8 Enterprises, was about to close its doors for good in 1977 when Gary tossed the dice on a hastily produced role-playing game, *The HackMasters of EverKnight*™. The first print run was quickly snapped off the shelves and soon frantic distributors were calling Gary's three-man shop with pleas of "More!" Gary has been riding Hackmaster spin-offs ever since. For those who want to know what 'hard eight' means, it refers to the game of craps where Gary has blown thousands of dollars of company money over the years on his frequent trips to Vegas.



ISSUES ONE THROUGH THREE OF

Knights of the **D**inner **T**able

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**96 PAGES OF
CLASSIC KODT
INCLUDING A
BRAND NEW
STORY!!**

Eight years ago the first **Knights of the Dinner Table™** strip was created as an afterthought - filler to take up space on the last page of the small press games publication I was putting out in my spare time.

Since that time, **KODT™** has appeared in numerous magazines and is now a monthly comic book. It's been a strange and wonderful journey.

When it came time to start pulling the first three issues together for a second printing, I found myself thinking back over that journey - from that first strip to the current issue of the comic book.

KODT is a celebration, not of gaming, but of gamers themselves. For me the word 'gamers' is synonymous with the word 'friends.' Perhaps that's why all those letters to the **KODT** mailbox start out with that same familiar phrase, "These guys remind me of my friends."

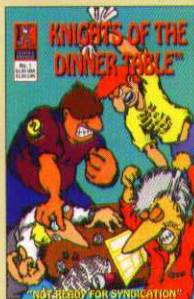
Although J.R.R. Tolkien warned us not to "ask to see the bones boiled to make the soup", I really don't think there would be any harm in asking that question regarding the soup that's come to be known as **Knights of the Dinner Table**.

The 'bones' here are obviously friends and all those things that forge lasting friendships; laughing, fighting, sharing, caring, etc...

**Knights of the Dinner Table
Issue #1**

Not Ready for Syndication

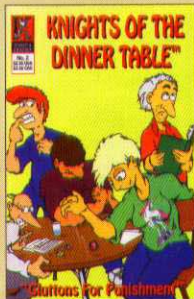
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**Knights of the Dinner Table
Issue #2**

Gluttons for Punishment

Originally Published: January, 1995



**Knights of the Dinner Table
Issue #3**

License to Loot

Originally Published: April, 1995

