



**K**nights of the **D**inner **T**able™

# BUNDLE OF TROUBLE™

VOLUME SIX

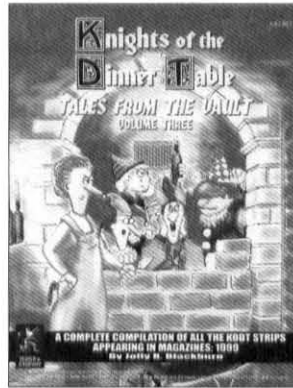
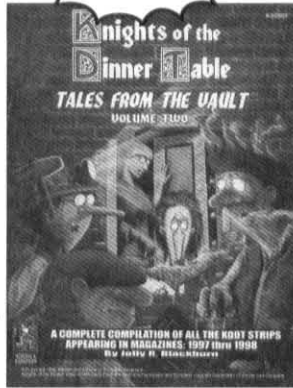
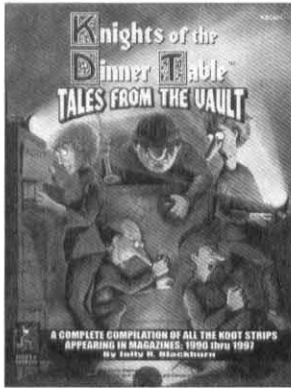


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# Knights of the Dinner Table™

## BUNDLE OF TROUBLE VOLUME SIX

The KODT Development Team is  
Jolly R. Blackburn, Brian Jelke,  
Steve Johansson and David S. Kenzer  
Cover Art by George and Jackie Vrbanic

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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). Eleven 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 16 thru 18**

**THE DICE OF WRATH! • THIS SWORD FOR HIRE • AGAINST ALL ODDS**

**KENZER AND  
COMPANY**

Knights of the Dinner Table  
Bundle of Trouble  
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Left: The first sketch of Nitro Ferguson. August, 1994

## Editorial of a Madman

*"Actually, these Umber Hulks are running toward you at 80 miles per hour!"*

Nitro  
Summer, 1980

This volume of **Bundle of Trouble** is particularly noteworthy because, among other things, it contains the very first **Black Hand** strip. (*Carry a Big Stick* - page 29) Although it's only been two years since their debut, I find it hard to imagine the **KODT** universe without them.

Since a new volume of **Bundle of Trouble** is pretty much a good excuse for looking back and reflecting, I thought perhaps this was as good a place as any to share the story of the **Black Hands** and their development.

It really all began when Nitro Ferguson was first mentioned in **KODT #3** (*Dueling Game Masters*). When Bob announced he was going to play with in Nitro's game, a shocked B.A. quickly forbade him from doing so. (*B.A. went on to point out that Nitro was "dangerous" and "insane"*).

We learned some interesting things about Nitro in this first brief mention (*such as Ferguson's Folly and that he had slapped a player once*). Almost immediately, readers began writing in and demanded to know who this guy was and if he'd ever appear in the comic.

To be honest, I had no plans to introduce Nitro until Roger Carden (*of the now defunct gaming magazine, The Familiar*) gave me a phone call in the fall of 1995.

It turned out, Roger wanted **KODT** to appear in his magazine. When I explained my commitment with **Dragon**™ prevented me from doing so, Roger thought for a moment and then asked about the possibility of my creating a 'new' strip based in the same world as the **Knights** but with different characters. We discussed it a bit and settled upon a strip which poked fun at the games' industry (*from behind the scenes*) and featured the characters **Gary Jackson** (*who was fondly spoken of by the Knights, but never seen*) and **Weird Pete**.

I agreed to give it a try and a few days later I sent him a hastily-drawn strip which I was sure would be rejected, called "The Gary Jackson Files" (*See Tales from the Vault Volume One, page 49*). The strip ran and featured Nitro Ferguson harassing Gary Jackson at a seminar. Though I had made a few sketches of what I thought Nitro might look as far back as 1994, this was the first time he'd officially appeared in print. This only seemed to fuel interest in the character.

Nitro didn't appear in **KODT** the comic book itself until the "**Lord of Steam**" ran in issue number 7, (*Bundle of Trouble: Volume Two, page 11*) when he was asked to guest GM for B.A.'s group.

(Incidentally, this was based on a real guest GM my friends and I were once forced to suffer under.)

Nitro's cryptic warning to the players, "*I am the Walrus! I am the Dice-Man! Koo Koo Kachoo!*" made many readers cringe and wonder what the hell his regular gaming group was like.

We were curious too. Shortly after I joined the ranks of **Kenzer and Company** in late 1996, Dave Kenzer, Steve Johansson, Brian Jelke and myself spent a lot of time talking about the future of the comic book.

Somewhere during those discussions, we decided to present the **Black Hands** as an alternate strip in the comic book.

We knew it was going to be a challenge. The **Knights of the Dinner Table** had an eight-year head start and a loyal following. It was inevitable that comparisons would be made between the two groups. Would the **Black Hands** manage to find their own following?

We discussed it at length and decided to use the same formula that had worked with **KODT** but with a spin.

Everyone, it seems, has a favorite Knight who they identify with and are perfectly willing to admit such things as, "*I'm just like Brian!*" or "*I'm the Bob in my group*". The **Black Hands**, we decided, would represent the other side of the coin.

What would happen if we took all those player-types who nobody liked or wanted to play with and threw them together into the same group? What if the **Black Hands** were the "*black sheep*" of their gaming community — Guys who played together because nobody else would have them?

Two years later it appears as though the **Black Hands** have, indeed, found an audience. Though by no means is everybody a fan. They've inspired some fairly-heated debate among readers as to what is proper behavior at the gaming table. In fact, this led directly to the creation of a new forum in the comic [Back Room at the Games Pit] where such issues as newbie-bashing, sexism in gaming etc., are discussed.

You can read more tidbits of trivia on the **Black Hands** as well as the **Knights** in the footnotes throughout this volume.

May all your hits be crits!

Jolly R. Blackburn

Jolly R. Blackburn



**KENZER AND  
COMPANY**

Knights of the Dinner Table #16

"The Dice of Wrath!"

Originally Published: February, 1998

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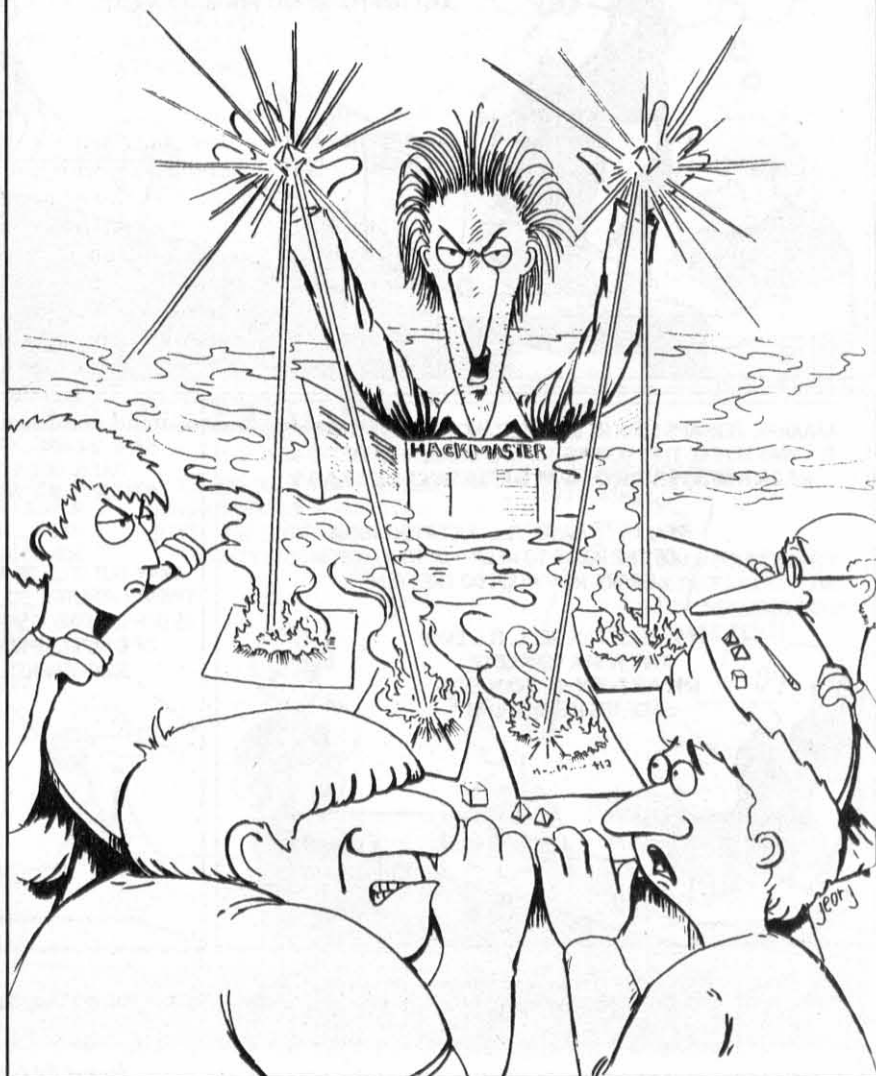
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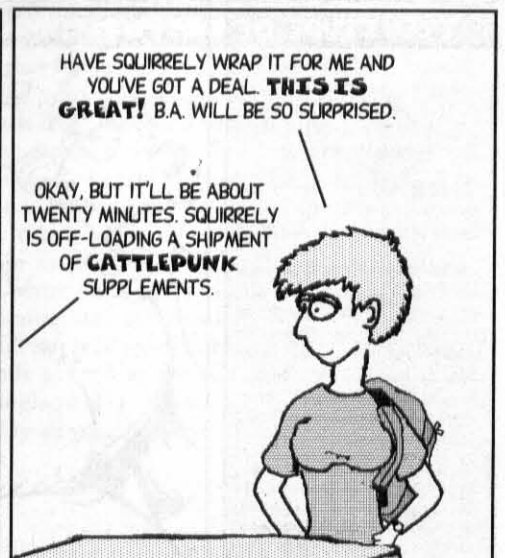
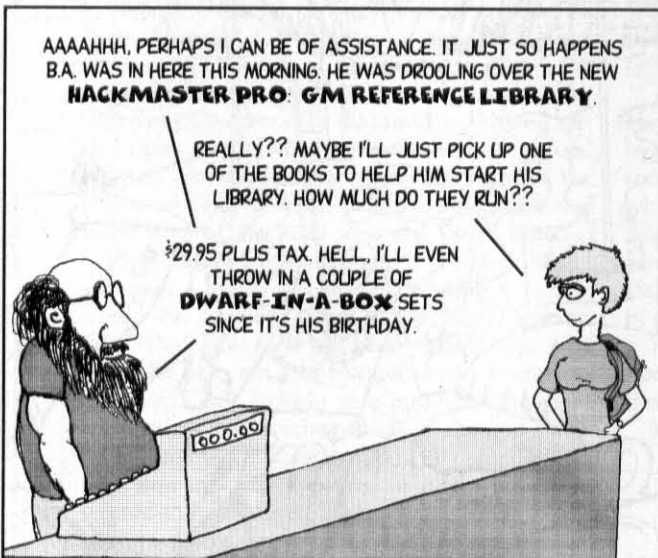
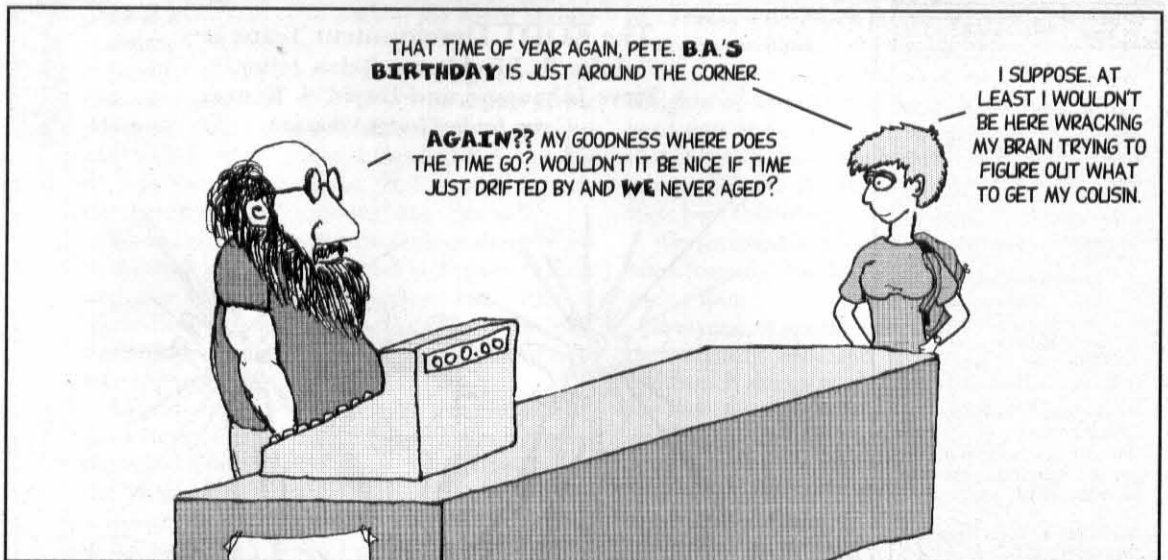
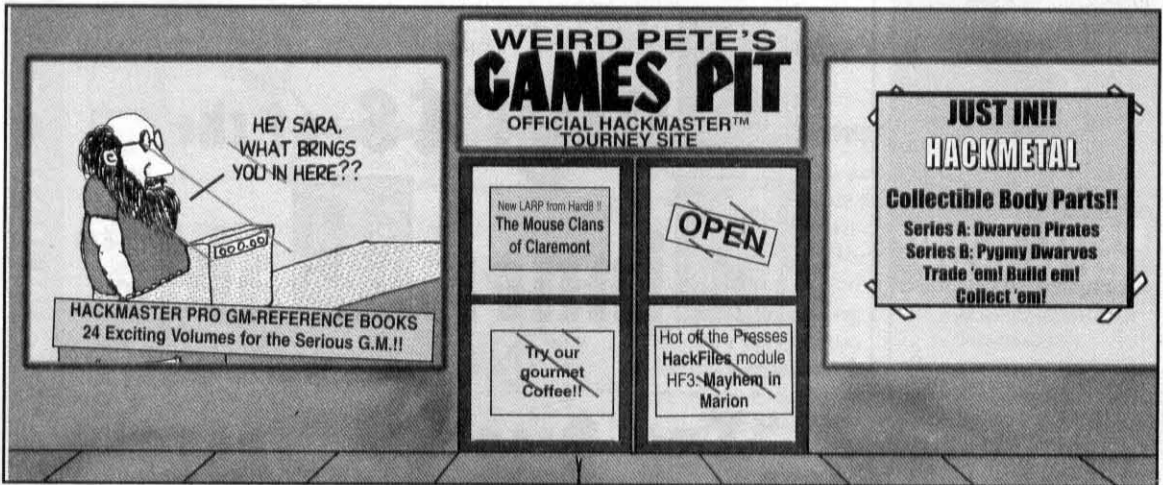
## "THE DICE OF WRATH!"

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# The Whistling Zephyr

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN  
WITH STEVE JOHANSSON



This strip was a thinly disguised reworking of "Lair of the Gazebo" [Bundle of Trouble Volume One, page 5]

### A FEW WEEKS LATER...

EXCELLENT!! EVERYONE IS HERE!! GOT A GREAT ADVENTURE FOR YOU GUYS TONIGHT!! I WAS REALLY SUPER-INSPIRED ON THIS ONE. THANKS TO **VOL 18 OF THE HACKMASTER PRO: GAMEMASTER REFERENCE LIBRARY!!** (WINK) THANKS SARA!!

THROW IT ON US, THEN!! I SPENT THE DAY AUDITING A FALSIFIED REPORT ON A STOLEN **SOYBEAN CULTIVATOR** AND SOMETHING'S GONNA DIE IN THE DUNGEON TONIGHT!!

WELL I'M READY TO HACK!! BEEN READY!!

I'M SO GLAD MY GIFT PROVED USEFUL B.A.

VOLUME 18?? WHICH BOOK IS THAT?? THE COMPLETE BEASTS OF BURDEN HANDBOOK?? NO, THAT'S VOL 12. HMMM... IT'LL COME TO ME.



### AS THE ADVENTURE BEGINS...

THE EXULTANT KING SENDS YOU A MISSIVE CONVEYING THE EXIGENCY IN WHICH HIS REALM FINDS ITSELF. A SUPERFLUITY OF NEFARIOUS PLOTS HAVE THREATENED TO REND HIS COUNTRY IN TWAIN. HE SENDS YOU AN ADJURATION TO COLLUDE WITH HIS INSUPERABLE ARMIES TO HELP ERADICATE THIS THREAT!!!

MISSING CONVOY?? SAY WHAT??

I SEE YOUR LIPS MOVING BUT I'M NOT RECEIVING!

UH-OH!!

THE ORC ARCHITECTURE AND ENGINEERING LEXICON?? NO... THAT WOULD BE VOLUME 6.



### A PLENTITUDE OF POLYSYLLABICS LATER...

...AND WITH GREAT HISTRONICS THE PUGNACIOUS DESPOT ENGAGES IN A RIBALD ORATION DETAILING THE PECCADILLOES OF YOUR PARTY WHILE RESIDING IN HIS DOMAIN..

I'M NOT SURE BUT I THINK SOME DUDE NAMED, **PUGSLY** IS HAVING ORAL SURGERY AND THERE'S GOING TO BE A PARTY OR SOMETHING.

I'M HAVING **ETYMOLOGY 101** FLASHBACKS!!!!

WHAT?? WHAT'D HE SAY?? **ARE WE BEING ATTACKED??**

**RIBALD ORATION??** I THINK THAT'S AN 8TH LEVEL SPELL OF **SEQUESTERED MAGICK!!**



**EVEN LATER STILL...**

YOU AWAKE TO FIND A BEAUTIFUL MORNING. THE FOREST IS ALIVE WITH SOUND. THE AVIANS ARE CHIRPING AND A **ZEPHYR** WHISTLES THROUGH THE BRANCHES OVERHEAD.

A ZEPHYR?? WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?? I'M SCRAMBLING TO PUT MY HELMET ON!!

I GOT A FIREBALL COMING ONLINE!!! I'LL BLAST THAT **LITTLE BASTARD** RIGHT OUT OF THOSE TREE TOPS!!

A WHISTLING ZEPHYR??!! I WASTE IT WITH MY CROSSBOW!!

BUT GUYS, A ZEPHYR IS JUST A BREEZE!!



HA!! I ROLLED A CRITICAL HIT!! THAT **STINKIN' ZEPHYR** CRASHES TO THE GROUND!! **HOODY HOO!!**

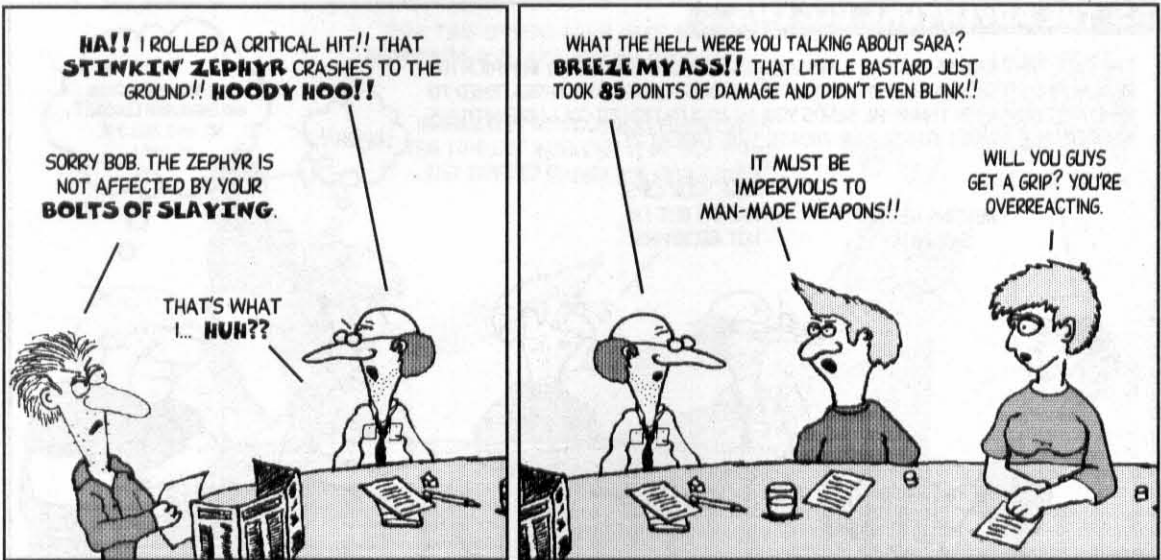
SORRY BOB. THE ZEPHYR IS NOT AFFECTED BY YOUR **BOLTS OF SLAYING**.

THAT'S WHAT I... **HUH??**

WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT SARA? **BREEZE MY ASS!!** THAT LITTLE BASTARD JUST TOOK **85** POINTS OF DAMAGE AND DIDN'T EVEN BLINK!!

IT MUST BE IMPERVIOUS TO MAN-MADE WEAPONS!!

WILL YOU GUYS GET A GRIP? YOU'RE OVERREACTING.



I'M SETTING MY FIREBALL ON **SCATTERED BURST** AND FIRING IT INTO THE BRANCHES. THAT SHOULD SET FIRE TO THE CANOPY OVERHEAD AND GIVE OUR LITTLE FRIEND SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT!!

WHISTLING?? HEY, I'VE HEARD OF THESE THINGS. THEIR SONG DRIVES MEN INSANE. **QUICK! PLUG YOUR EARS!!**

**DAMN!** IT MUST BE ONE OF **B.A.'S** WHACKED HOME-BREWED MONSTERS. THEY CERTAINLY AREN'T IN ANY OF THE BOOKS.

YOU'RE SETTING FIRE TO THE FOREST??

IS THE ZEPHYR STILL WHISTLING??

OF COURSE IT'S STILL WHISTLING YOU IDIOT!!



I THINK DAVE IS RIGHT! IF YOU LISTEN TO THE **CRY OF A ZEPHYR** YOU TURN INTO SWINE OR SOMETHING. I READ ABOUT THESE DUDES IN A BOOK ONCE.

LA LA LA LA LA!!  
I CAN'T HEAR YOU!!  
LA LA LA LA LA!!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT. THEY'RE ACTUALLY CREATING A MONSTER OUT OF THIN AIR. I THINK THIS IS HOW THOSE **ALIEN ABDUCTION** STORIES GET STARTED.

ALIEN ABDUCTION? YOU THROWING THAT BACK IN MY FACE? I KNEW I NEVER SHOULD HAVE CONFIDED IN YOU.

DAVE?? DAVE!!  
WHAT THE HELL IS HE DOING??



LA LA LA LA LA!!  
WE CAN'T HEAR YOU!  
LA LA LA LA LA!!

C'MON GUYS!! CUT IT OUT!!

**FINE!** I'LL JUST GO ON WITHOUT YOU TWO...



**TWENTY MINUTES LATER...**

...YOUR PROGRESS IS DIMINISHED BY AN INDURATE ANTHROPOID WHO EFFECTS DUBITANCY AS TO THE ERSATZ INCANTATION YOUR **CRETINOUS** COMPATRIOTS ARE INVOKING...

LA LA LA LA LA!! WE CAN'T HEAR YOU! LA LA LA LA LA!!

WELL? DID YOU FIGURE OUT WHICH VOLUME IT WAS??

IT JUST CAME TO ME. THE **HACKMASTER THESAURUS!!** THEY SHOULD HAVE INCLUDED OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS.



# CHELSIE: A bovine outstanding in her field

When the strip on the opposite page (*Where Now Brown Cow?*) first appeared we were a bit surprised by reader response. [*Oh, if you haven't read the strip yet you may want to do so now and then come back and read this. I wouldn't want to spoil the ending for you.*]

Many readers were upset with the turn of events in the strip and they wrote in to let us know about it.

"Shame on you!" wrote one reader, "I demand that you give Dave back his cow. She was my favorite character!"

Now, I suppose at this point, I could simply point out that Dave is a character in a comic strip who is playing a character in a role-playing game who happens to own a cow. But I think it's more revealing to point out that when Bob, Dave, Brian and B.A. were pummeled senseless by Crutch and Switch (See *Nitro's Revenge* on page 38) nary a voice of concern was offered by any of our readers. How sad is that?

We've always found it interesting that Dave's 'magic cow' has been the focus of so many letters.

For those of you who don't remember the story as to how Dave came to own a cow, it is found in **Bundle of Trouble Volume One** [KoDT #2] in the strip, "The Cows of War".

In that story, the party is walking along a country road and B.A. is describing the scenery. When he remarks that there is a cow standing in the middle of the field, the party inexplicably believes there is something 'strange' about the cow and stubbornly insist on investigating.

Despite B.A.'s attempt to convince the party the cow is just an ordinary barnyard animal and nothing more than descriptive flavor text -- Dave is convinced the cow has magical properties and that B.A. is stubbornly trying to keep him from obtaining it.

As with many of the events which unfold in the strips, this story was based on a 'real life' gaming situation.

Years ago, when I was stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas a group of my Army buddies and I had a fairly mean AD&D™ campaign going. One night I declared I was burned out as far as DMing and informed the group I was sitting out. One of the regular players (Mike) had been chomping at the bit to DM his first game and quickly offered to run an adventure of his own design.

I was tired at the time and declined his pleas that I sit in as a player. Instead, I was content to pop a movie into the VCR and sit in the adjoining room.

As the hours went by, I found myself listening more to the action in the other room than to the movie. Mike was really struggling with the reigns and the players weren't about to take it easy on him. He was having a tough time keep-

ing seeing. Mike thought for a moment and said, "there's nothing but fields."

"Nothing but fields? That's all?"

"Uh...." (rolling dice) "There's a cow grazing in the field."

"A cow? What kind of cow?"

"Just a cow."

"Is it looking at us?"

"No. It's just grazing. It couldn't care less about you."

"I'm going to go check it out!"

"You can't"

"Why?"

"It runs away!"

"I'm on a horse. I'm sure I can out run it!"

"Okay, you catch it. But it's just an ordinary cow."

"Okay I'm getting off my horse. I'm going to pet it."

"As you attempt to pet it, the cow kicks you for (rolls dice) 8 points of damage."

"What? How can it kick me? I'm standing in front of it."

"Easy! It just spins around on its front hoofs and kicks you with its back legs."

"Spins around? You mean it stands on its front legs, spins around 180 degrees and kicks me? No initiative check?"

"You were surprised."

"I used to work on a farm. I've never seen a cow spin around on two legs."

"This is a wild cow."

"A wild cow? What the hell is a wild cow?"

This exchange between the GM and player about the cow standing in the field went on for twenty minutes and eventually erupted into a heated debate. Encyclopedias were pulled from the shelf to settle the matter. When that didn't work, one of the players threatened to call his Dad ("He knows all about cows!").

As I lay in the other room listening to all of this, my sides ached from laughter and tears ran down my cheeks. I still can't read "The Cows of War" without fondly remembering the old Fort Bliss group and the friends I haven't seen in years.

And I have to admit, I do feel a bit guilty about 'offing' of Chelsie.

*Jolly R. Blackburn*

Jolly R. Blackburn



ing them to the adventure. At one point it was very obvious that the players had strayed outside the parameters of the adventure.

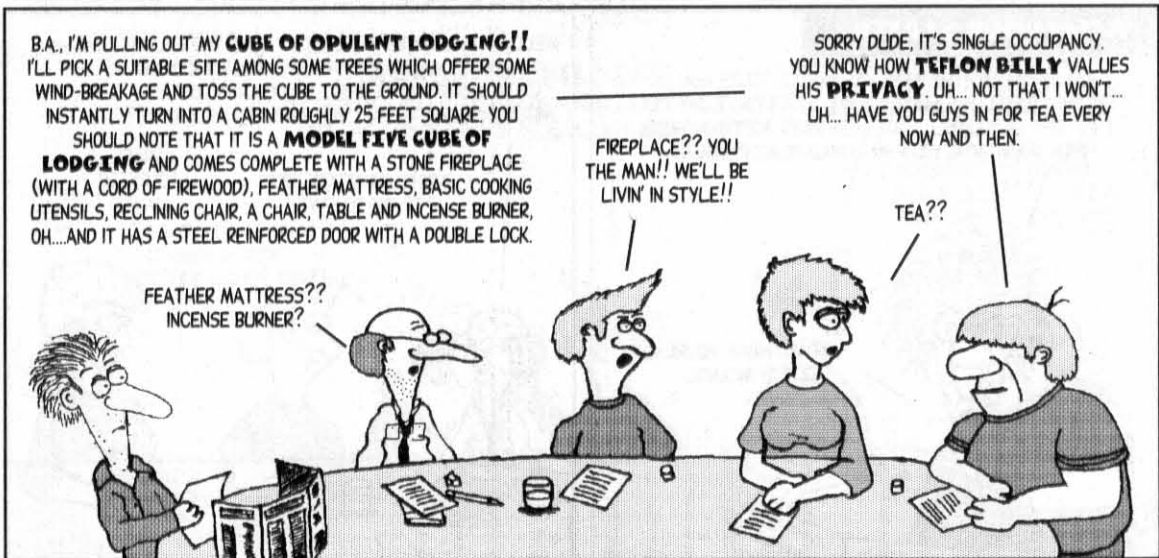
Poor Mike was flustered but he wasn't about to admit he wasn't in control. As he began to ad lib he reminded me of a cat dog-paddling in a swift current. One minute he was heading in one direction, the next minute he was heading in another.

Eventually, Mike had the party traveling along a country road that apparently led to a castle (*where the original adventure was supposed to have taken place.*) He was rushing the players at this point, trying to nudge them closer and closer to the castle so he could get back on track.

Then he made a fatal mistake. One of the players said he was looking around and wanted to know what he

# Where Now Brown Cow?

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN



**SEVERAL HOURS LATER...**

WELL, IT'S BEEN SNOWING FOR SEVEN DAYS AND SHOWS NO SIGN OF LETTING UP. EVEN WITH YOUR FIRE IT'S **BITTERLY COLD**. THE WIND HOWLS WITH A MOURNFUL DRONE THROUGH THE GREY WEB OF BRANCHES OVERHEAD. HOAR FROST FORMS ON THE INNER CANOPY OF YOUR TENTS AS IF **OLD MAN WINTER** IS MOCKING YOU AND REMINDING YOU THERE CAN BE **NO ESCAPE** FROM THE COLD!!



MEANWHILE, YOU SIT IN YOUR TENTS AND STARE AT EACH OTHER AS YOU FEEL THE **GRASPING FINGERS OF MADNESS** CLAW AWAY AT YOUR SANITY.

**UH OH!** I RECOGNIZE THIS FLAVOR TEXT!! **JO JO ZEKE'S** WORK. ALL OF HIS ADVENTURES ARE **HACKFACTOR 8** AND ABOVE. **I THINK WE MIGHT BE IN TROUBLE!!**

**JO JO??** YOU THINK SO? AWH MAN, THAT SUCKS. HE GIVES OUT THE WORST **EXPERIENCE POINT VS. RISK RATIOS!**

HE'S A BRILLIANT STORY-TELLER. HE TRIES TO PROMOTE ROLE-PLAYING BY MINIMIZING THE RETURNS FOR HACK-N-SLASHING.



**WHAT THE HELL ARE WE GOING TO DO??** WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF FOOD AND EVERY TIME WE TRY TO GO SCROUNGE UP SOME GRUB WE GET WHACKED WITH FROSTBITE DAMAGE AND SNOW BLINDNESS!!

I DUNNO, WE BETTER THINK OF SOMETHING QUICK. MAYBE WE SHOULD TRY AND TALK SOME SENSE INTO **SERGEANT BARRINGER\*** AND GET SOME SUPPLIES OUT OF OUR **BAG OF NEFTY CAPACITY**.

**NOT LIKELY!!** YOU KNOW WHAT THE TERMS OF THE **TREATY** ARE. WE HAVE TO PAY A **5,000 GOLD PIECE TRIBUTE** FOR EVERY ITEM WE REQUEST FROM THE BAG. DAVE'S ALREADY DEPLETED ALL OUR HARD COIN PAYING TRIBUTE FOR A **SLEEPING BAG** AND THAT **BUCKET OF COAL**.

HMMRRFFF!! WE WOULD HAVE WON THAT WAR IF MY PIKEMAN FLANKING MANEUVER HADN'T BEEN ROUTED.



**A FEW HOURS LATER...**

OKAY GUYS!! ANOTHER WEEK HAS PASSED. YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO FEEL THE **EFFECTS OF STARVATION**. FROM THIS POINT ON YOU WILL EACH LOSE **FIVE HITPOINTS PER DAY** UNTIL YOU FIND ADEQUATE NOURISHMENT.

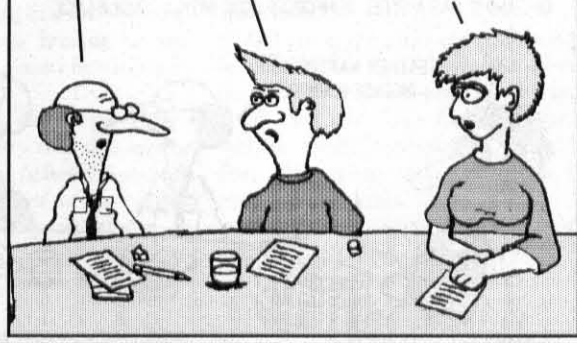


OH AND BRIAN, YOU'RE OUT OF INCENSE.

WELL..... I WAS HOPING IT WOULDN'T COME TO THIS, BUT IT'S TIME TO MAKE SOME **TOUGH DECISIONS**. DAVE, I KNOW YOU'RE REALLY ATTACHED TO YOUR **MAGIC COW** AND ALL BUT... HOW DO I PUT THIS??

WHA...WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY??

BRACE YOURSELF DAVE!!



\* See *Bundle of Trouble Volume Five* [KoDT #14] "The Barringer Rebellion"



DAVE, I'M AFRAID WE HAD AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE WHEN WE AGREED TO GIVE **CHELSTIE** AN EQUAL SHARE OF THE RATIONS. WE WERE JUST PAYING THE PREMIUM ON OUR **INSURANCE POLICY**.

INSURANCE POLICY?? WHAT ARE YOU GUYS UP TO?? HUH? **WHAT'S UP?? SARA??**

SORRY DAVE!! MY CHARACTER IS A BARBARIAN. I'M AFRAID SHE WOULD SEE THIS AS THE ONLY PROPER COURSE OF ACTION. IT'S A MATTER OF SURVIVAL.

BASED ON **CHELSTIE'S** CURRENT LEVEL OF HITPOINTS AND ASSUMING SHE'S OF ABOVE AVERAGE STOCK, SHE SHOULD YIELD 700 + 20100 POUNDS OF PRIME BEEF.

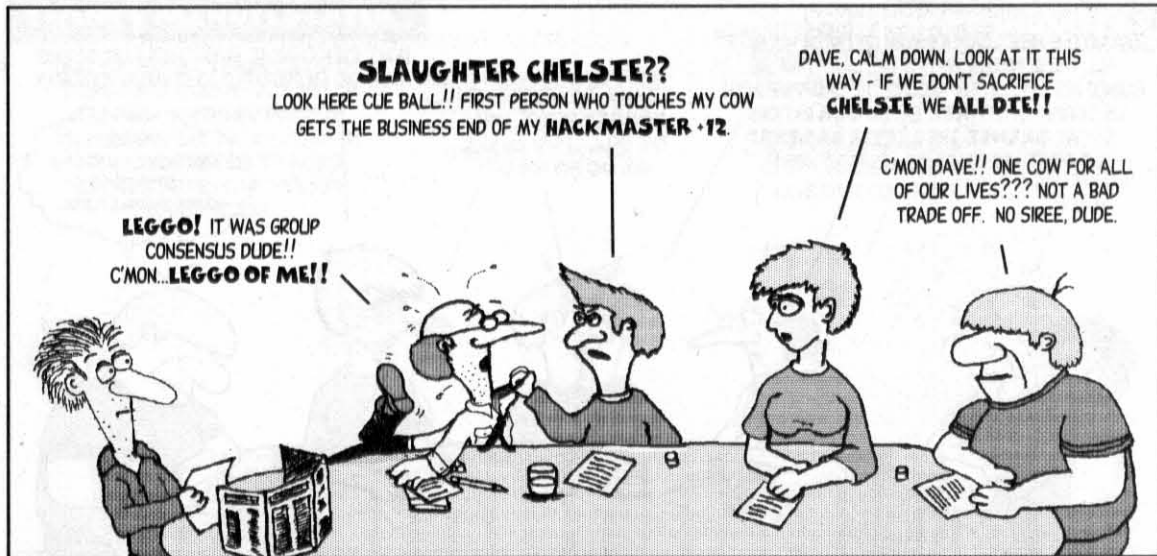


NOW THE GOOD NEWS IS SARA'S BARBARIAN HAS AN 85% PROFICIENCY IN **SLAUGHTERING AND SKINNING GAME ANIMALS!** I SUBMIT THAT **CHELSTIE** QUALIFIES AS A GAME ANIMAL AND THEREFORE SARA SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO THE +25% YIELD OF EDIBLE PARTS GRANTED BY THE SKILL.

DAMN SHAME OUR SAUSAGE GRINDER IS IN THAT **BAG OF HEFTY CAPACITY**.

AND IT MAY BE SOME CONSOLATION THAT KNUCKLES HAS A 75% PROFICIENCY IN **GOURMET FOOD PREPARATION**. NEVER REALLY THOUGHT I'D EVER GET TO USE IT. JUST THINK WE CAN HAVE RIBS, MEATLOAF SURPRISE, BEEF STROGANOFF, CHILI CON CARNE, CHUCK BEEF GOULASH, BALSAMIC FLANK STEAK, LAREDO BEEF, LIVER & ONIONS, STEAK DIANE, BEEF PEPPER STEAK, BLADE STEAK, CUBE STEAK, SHEPHERD'S PIE, POT ROAST, BEEF MEDALLIONS, RED FLANNEL HASH, BRISKET, CARPACCIO, TONGUE, STEAK TARTAR, SLOPPY JOES, SKIRTSTEAK, MOUNTAIN OYSTERS.....

BOB, I DON'T THINK YOU'RE HELPING.



**SLAUGHTER CHELSTIE??**

LOOK HERE CUE BALL!! FIRST PERSON WHO TOUCHES MY COW GETS THE BUSINESS END OF MY **HACKMASTER · 12**.

DAVE, CALM DOWN. LOOK AT IT THIS WAY - IF WE DON'T SACRIFICE **CHELSTIE** WE ALL DIE!!

**LEGGO!** IT WAS GROUP CONSENSUS DUDE!! C'MON... **LEGGO OF ME!!**

C'MON DAVE!! ONE COW FOR ALL OF OUR LIVES??? NOT A BAD TRADE OFF. NO SIREE, DUDE.

When I finished this strip I sent it up to Dave Kenzer with a note, "Do you know of any good meat dishes/recipes to add to Bob's Gourmet Food Preparation list?" A few hours later Dave called to read me the list which appears above and I was floored. I had no idea the list would be so extensive. Apparently he and his wife, Jennifer, pulled out all their cook books as part of their research. — Jolly

LET ME MAKE THIS PERFECTLY CLEAR!! **WE'RE NOT GOING TO EAT CHELSIE!!** YOU GOT THAT? **NO WAY IN HELL!!!**

I'M SURE WE COULD TAKE DAVE OUT - **IF NEED BE**. OF COURSE WE **COULD** SETTLE FOR **LIL' MIKE**. THOUGH THE THOUGHT OF EATING MULE IS FAR LESS APPETIZING. ALSO THE **YIELD OF EDIBLE FLESH** WOULD ONLY BE **ROUGHLY 22.35 PERCENT OF CHELSIE'S**.

I KNEW HE'D THROW A FIT!! DAMN!  
I'M NOT TOO KEEN ON GOING UP  
AGAINST THAT **HACKMASTER -12**.  
WHADDA YA SAY BRIAN?



OHHHHHH YEEAAHHHHHHH! **LITTLE MIKEY!** I'D WAGER HE'D MAKE MIGHTY **FINE EATING!!** WHAT WITH HIS **SPECIAL DIET** AND ALL. A LITTLE **GRAIN-FED MULE!** (**SMACK**) I HEAR THAT MAKES MEAT **TENDER AND JUICY!! YUM YUM!!**

WAIT A MINUTE!! **WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?** WE'RE A TEAM!! WE SHOULDN'T BE ARGUING OVER **SLAUGHTERING** OUR BELOVED **BEASTS OF BURDEN!** AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH?? **ARE WE NUTS?** I THINK WE'RE FORGETTING SOMETHING.

**HUH??** LITTLE MIKE??  
BUT HE'S A DWARVEN  
WARHORSE!! YOU DON'T  
EAT WARHORSES!!

MY BARBARIAN WOULDNT  
BE AGAINST EATING THE  
MULE EITHER.

WHAT'S  
THAT, DUDE?

THE NPC DUDE!!  
**KNOBBY FOOT!!**

OH GAWD  
NO!!



THE **LITTLE FREE LOADER'S** BEEN SITTIN' ON HIS BUTT ALL THESE WEEKS. WHEN'S THE LAST TIME HE EARNED HIS PAY? SITTIN' AROUND THE CAMPFIRE WITH US, COPPIN' AN ATTITUDE, EATING **OUR** RATIONS. I SAY WE **SKEWER THE LITTLE BASTARD** ON A SPIT AND ROAST HIS ASS RIGHT NOW!!

HMMMM...I'VE NEVER EATEN **HOBBIT** BEFORE. WHAT THE HELL? I SAY WE KILL HIM AND FRY HIM UP!!

DON'T EVEN THINK IT, GUYS!! HE'S PART OF THIS TEAM AND I'M PREPARED TO STAND IN YOUR WAY.

LET'S SEE,  
((BODYWEIGHT \* STRENGTH)  
\* HITPOINTS) / 5 =  
POUNDS OF EDIBLE FLESH....



**AFTER TWENTY MINUTES OF INTENSE DEBATE...**

THE HELL WITH THIS. DAVE AND I HAVE A PLAN. WE DROP THE SUBJECT OF KILLING **KNobby FOOT** AND LAUGH IT OFF. DAVE AND I ANNOUNCE WE'LL SIMPLY FLIP A COIN IN THE MORNING TO SEE WHO GETS THE AXE. **CHELsIE** OR **LIL MIKE**!!

THEN WHEN I WAKE UP BOB TO RELIEVE ME FOR GUARD DUTY WE'RE GONNA KILL **KNobby FOOT** IN HIS SLEEP. THAT WAY SARA IS NONE THE WISER AND EVERYONE WAKES UP TO FIND **HOBBIT OMELETS** ON THE GRILL!! **HAR HAR!!**

**DAMN!** WE'RE GOING TO LOSE SARA'S **25% SLAUGHTER GAME ANIMAL BONUS.** OH WELL.

YOU'RE GOING TO KILL A LOYAL HIRELING??



WELL I HATE TO BURST YOUR BUBBLE BUT WHEN YOU GO TO **MURDER** **KNobby FOOT** IN HIS **SLEEP** YOU DISCOVER, MUCH TO YOUR DISMAY, THAT HE'S NOT IN HIS SLEEPING BAG. A QUICK CHECK OF THE AREA AND YOU DISCOVER HE'S NOWHERE IN CAMP. YOU ALSO REALIZE THAT BOTH **CHELsIE** AND **LITTLE MIKE** ARE MISSING.

**LITTLE MIKE IS MISSING??** THAT TORCH BEARER IS A **DEAD MAN!!** YOU HEAR ME!! **A DEAD MAN!!!** I'M TRACKING HIS ASS DOWN!!

I KNEW HE SECRETLY COVETED MY COW!! ALWAYS ASKING TO BRUSH HER DOWN. ALWAYS OFFERING HER AN APPLE AND STUFF!!! **HE'S DEAD!!**



**TWENTY MINUTES LATER...**

OKAY YOU FOLLOW **THREE SETS OF TRACKS** UP A DRAW. HALF WAY UP THE DRAW, **KNobby FOOT'S** TRACKS DISAPPEAR. YOU ASCERTAIN BY THE WAY **CHELsIE'S** TRACKS SUDDENLY DEEPEN THAT HE'S NOW RIDING THE COW.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH **LITTLE MIKE**?? HUH?? HE'S A FAR BETTER CHOICE OF A MOUNT THAN SOME STUPID COW.

NO WAY!! **CHELsIE** WOULD NEVER LET ANYONE ELSE RIDE HER!! WHAT THE HELL HAS HE DONE TO HER??

LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE GOING TO BE A WHILE. I GUESS I'LL HAVE THAT CLIP OF TEA.

SURE. BRING YOUR OWN CLIP THOUGH.



**A WEE BIT LATER...**

OKAY, YOU COME TO A COLD CAMP SITE. BY THE TRACKS IT LOOKS LIKE **KNobby FOOT** MADE CAMP HERE AND MOVED ON SEVERAL HOURS BEFORE. IT LOOKS LIKE HE HAD A **LARGE FEAST**. THERE ARE **GNAWED BONES** STREWN ALL ABOUT THE CAMP AND THERE IS STILL A **CHARRED RACK OF RIBS** ON A SPIT OVER THE FIREPLACE. THERE'S ALSO SEVERAL BITS OF CUT LEATHER LAYING ON THE GROUND. YOU CAN TELL BY THE OUTLINES OF THE CUT-OUT PORTIONS THAT **KNobby** MADE HIMSELF A PAIR OF **BOOTS** AND A **JACKET**.

SO THE LUCKY BASTARD FOUND HIMSELF A DEER HUH? I BET IT WAS ROAD KILL.

WHO CARES? LET'S EAT!! I'M ALREADY DOWN 15 HITPOINTS FROM STARVATION!

YOU DON'T THINK...?

HO HO!! JUST KEEP WATCHING. THIS SHOULD BE GOOD.

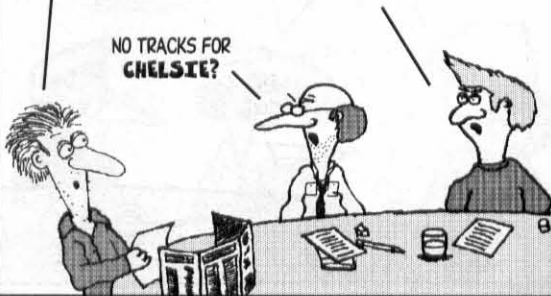


**AFTER GORGING THEMSELVES...**

I'M TELLING YOU THERE IS ONLY ONE SET OF TRACKS - **LITTLE MIKE'S!** YOU CAN TELL BY HOW DEEP THEY ARE THAT **KNobby FOOT** IS RIDING HIM.

THAT'S STRANGE. WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO **CHELSEIE**? SHE MUST HAVE BACKTRACKED ON US.

NO TRACKS FOR **CHELSEIE**?



**DUDE!** YOU KNOW WHAT? I THINK WE JUST CHOWED DOWN ON WHAT WAS LEFT OF **CHELSEIE!!!** AND THE LITTLE BASTARD MADE BOOTS OUT OF HER HIDE!!!

DAVE??

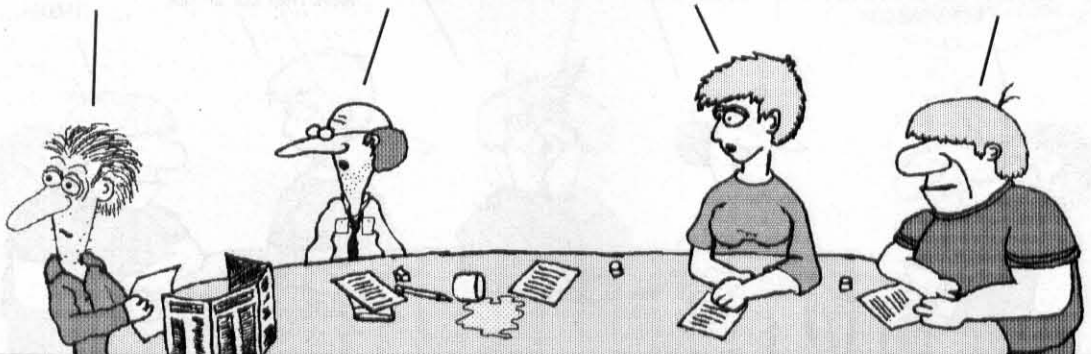


OH NO - HE DIDN'T MAKE IT OUT THE FRONT DOOR. THAT'S A BRAND NEW THROW RUG.

OH MAN. I CAN'T BELIEVE HE **TOSSED HIS COOKIES!** I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE HE **REALLY** ATE THE DAMN COW.

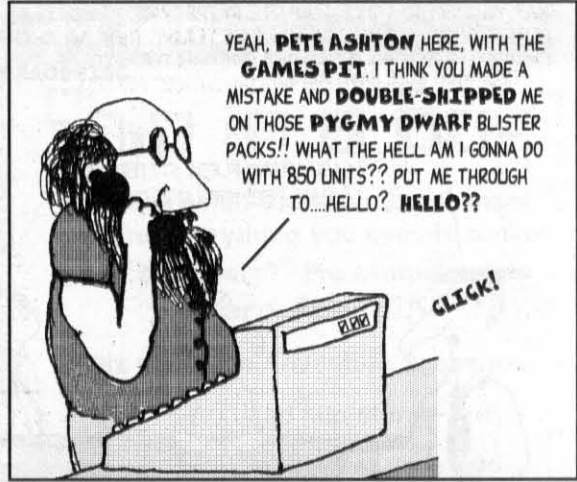
SURE, THE THOUGHT OF EATING **KNobby FOOT** DIDN'T EVEN PHASE HIM. WHAT A STRANGE BIRD!

WHOAH!! THAT WAS KEWL. THIS WILL MAKE A GREAT LETTER TO **HACKJOURNAL FORUM.**



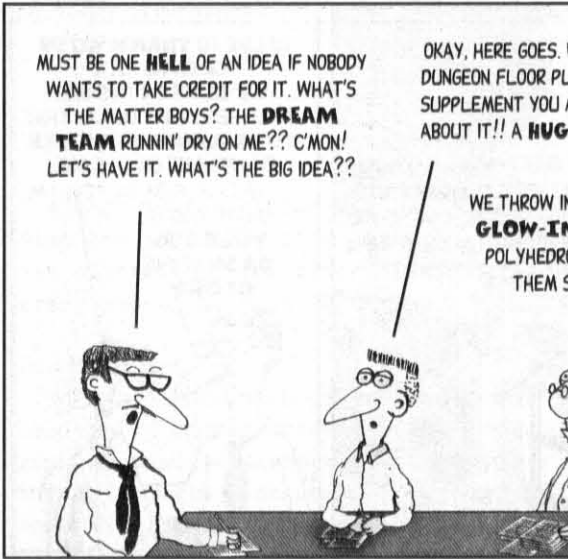
# The Gary Jackson Files: Ship in a Box

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN  
WITH DAVID KENZER



**GARY JACKSON HAS MORE IMPORTANT THINGS ON HIS MIND THAN PYGMY DWARF PACKS. SPACE HACK SALES ARE LAGGING AND HE'S DETERMINED TO BRING THEM BACK UP AGAIN.**

**FIVE MINUTES OF AGONIZING SILENCE LATER...**



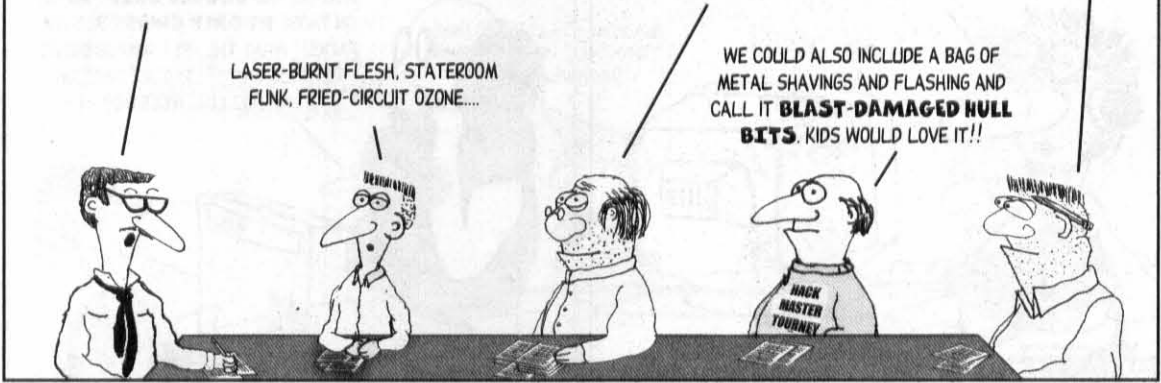
SHIP IN A BOX?? THAT'S IT?? THAT'S THE BEST YOU GOT?? WHAT'S GONNA MAKE LITTLE **JOHNNY-GAMER** WANT TO BUY THIS DAMN THING? HUH? C'MON, SELL ME ON THIS. WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU GOT??

OKAY, HERE'S THE BEST PART. **SCRATCH-N-SNIFF MOOD ENHANCEMENT CARDS!!** EACH CARD HAS A DIFFERENT **SHIPBOARD ODOR OR SMELL.**

AND TO PUSH THE WEIGHT-FACTOR UP WE'LL INCLUDE A **REAM OF BLANK CHARACTER SHEETS!**

LASER-BURNT FLESH, STATEROOM FLUNK, FRIED-CIRCUIT OZONE...

WE COULD ALSO INCLUDE A BAG OF METAL SHAVINGS AND FLASHING AND CALL IT **BLAST-DAMAGED HULL BITS.** KIDS WOULD LOVE IT!!

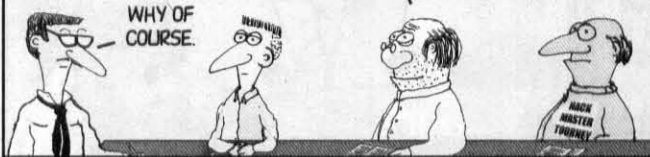


HMMMMMM, IT JUST MIGHT WORK.

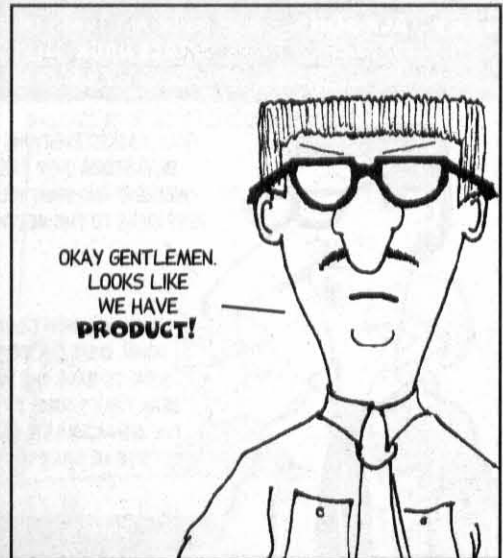
JUST TO BE **SAFE** MAKE SURE WE **SHRINK WRAP** THE **WHOLE DAMN THING** WITH A **POLY PLY FIVE** THAT SHOULD KEEP THE **LOOKY-LOU'S** FROM **POPPIN' OPEN THE BOX** IN THE **STORE** AND RUINING **IMPULSE SALES.** YOU RECALL WHAT HAPPENED WITH **ABE, BABES** AND **ROLLERBLADES?**

IMPLEMENT THE **"NO RETURN"** POLICY TO **RETAILERS** AS WELL, **GEE-JAY?**

WHY OF COURSE.



OKAY GENTLEMEN. LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE **PRODUCT!**



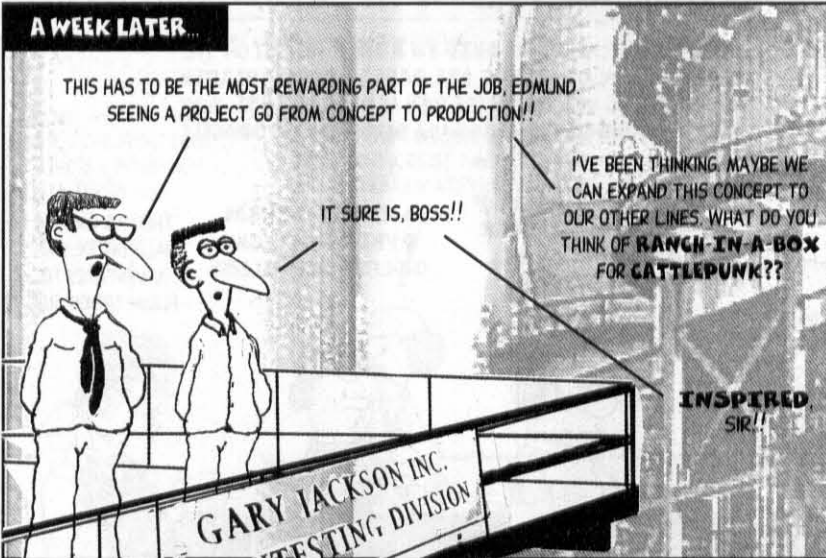
**A WEEK LATER...**

THIS HAS TO BE THE MOST REWARDING PART OF THE JOB, EDMUND. SEEING A PROJECT GO FROM CONCEPT TO PRODUCTION!!

IT SURE IS, BOSS!!

I'VE BEEN THINKING, MAYBE WE CAN EXPAND THIS CONCEPT TO OUR OTHER LINES. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF **RANCH-IN-A-BOX** FOR **CATTLEPUNK??**

**INSPIRED, SIR!!**



I'D LIKE TO **THANK YOU SIR** FOR GIVING ME A **BY LINE** ON THIS ONE. I STILL FEEL A BIT GUILTY THAT YOU **DECLINED** TO PUT YOUR **OWN NAME** ON THIS ONE.

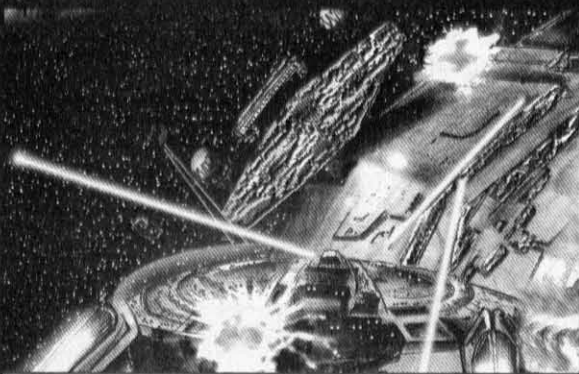
OH NO, THIS IS **YOUR BABY.** **BASK** IN THE **GLORY.**



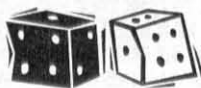
In the original printing several text boxes dropped from this page. One panel just showed the board members staring at each other in silence. Not sure what happened but we took the opportunity to fix it here (and even add a few more panels).

Gary™ Jackson™'s®

## SpaceHack!® Pro Edition



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## STEVILS BITTER PULPIT

Dear Bitter Stevil,

Do you have any suggestions as to how I can get rid of all the "Goths" in the world?

Your Friend,  
Gabriel Gentile  
UsagiOni@aol.com

I admire your ambition Gabriel but ridding the world of Goths is not a task we can delegate to you alone! Each and every one of us must do our part.

Dear Bitter Stevil,

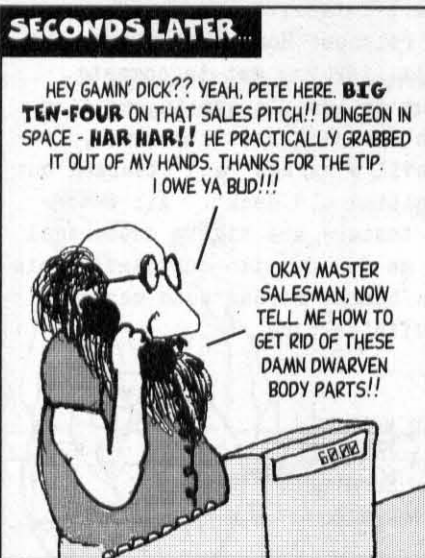
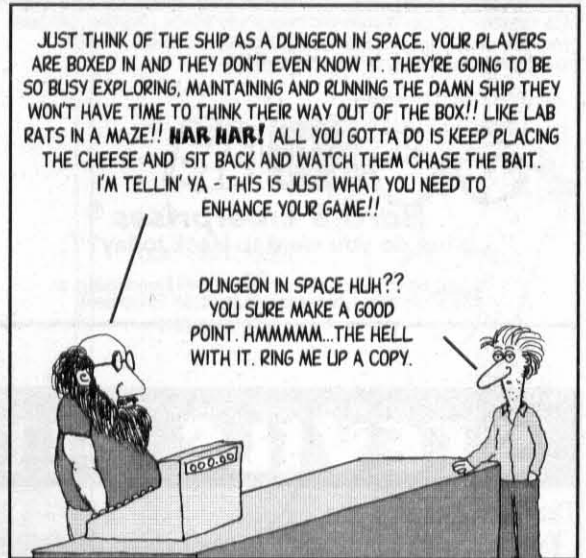
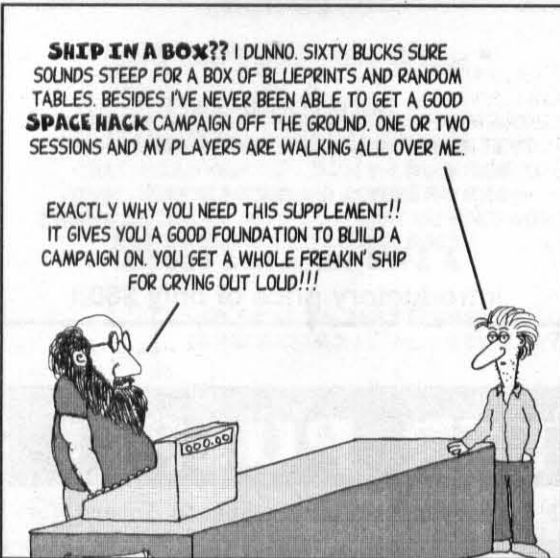
I'm free this summer and I thought it would be great if I could come out and intern for you guys. I think it would be great sitting around all day playing games and stuff. I can bring my sleeping bag - I don't mind sleeping under a desk or something. What do you say?

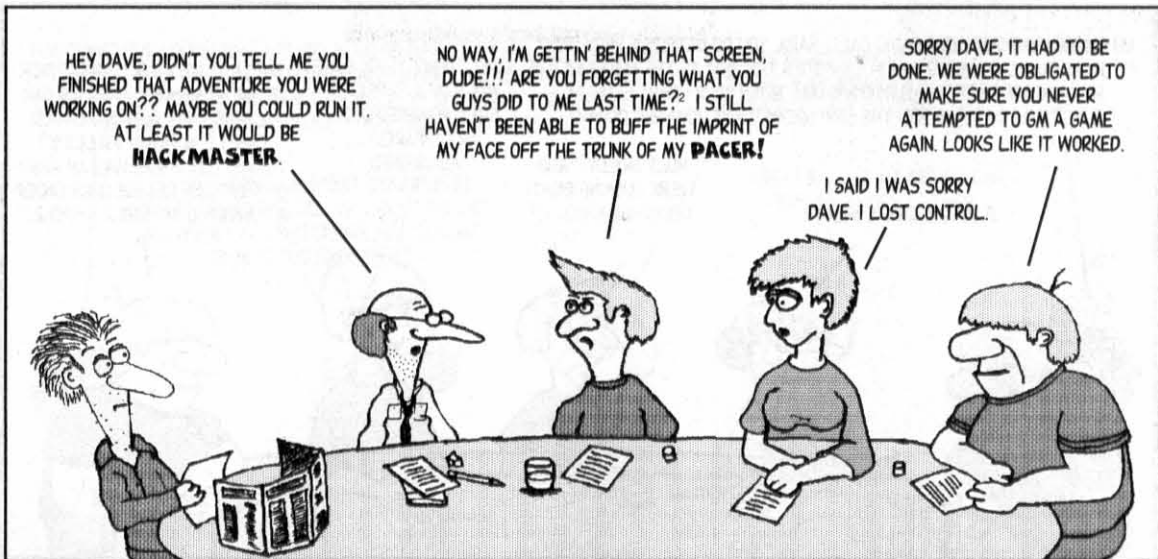
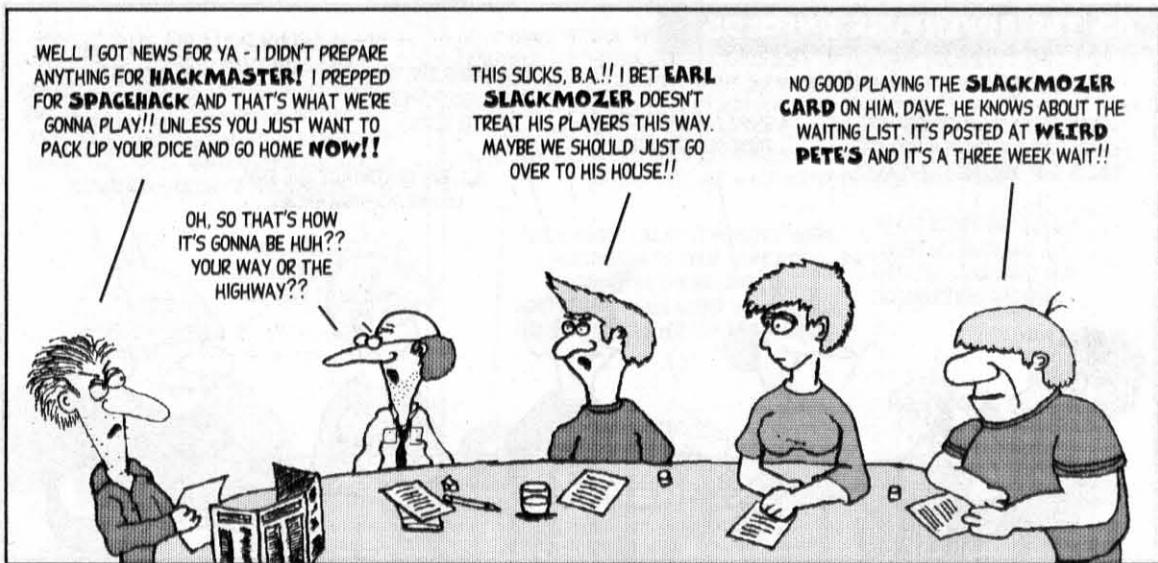
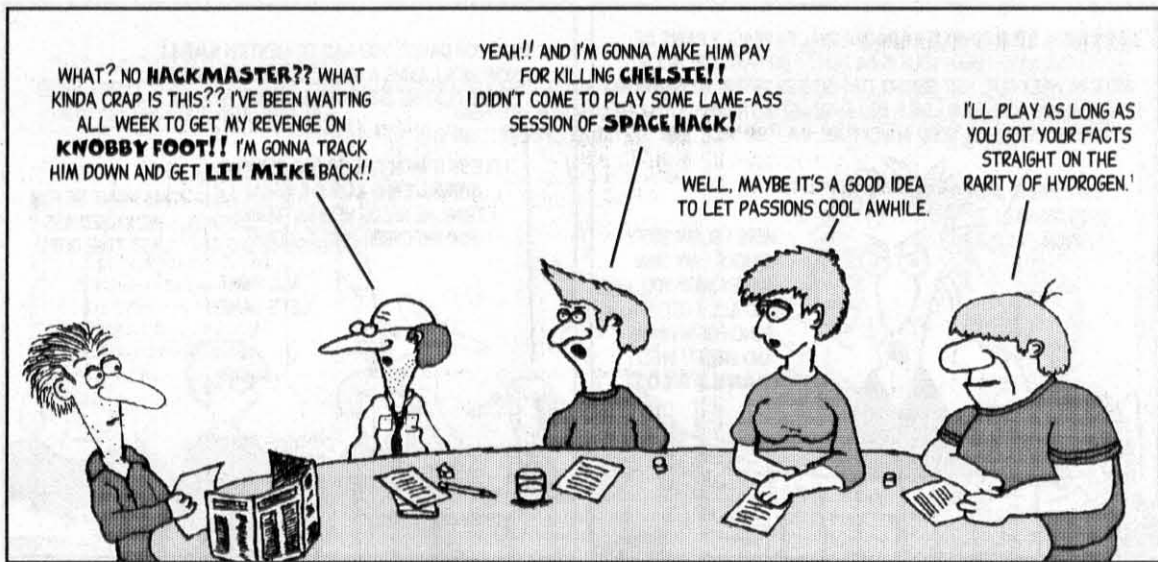
Lawrence Tundley

I'd be happy to invite you to intern for us this summer Mr. Tundley. We are planning to start intensive beta testing of our latest release: Home Improvement the RPG. In this LARP you get to compete against your fellow players in exciting events like 'weeding stevil's lawn', 're-roofing stevil's garage' and 'tearing out stevil's rotting old deck'. All interested beta testers are highly encouraged to contact me for details on joining this prestigious team. Strong auto mechanic skills a definite plus.

Got a burning gaming question on your mind?  
Contact bitter Stevil at:  
bitter\_stevil@hotmail.com





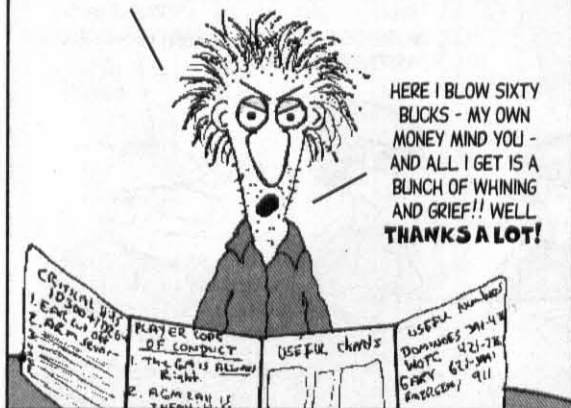


<sup>1</sup> See *Bundle of Trouble Volume Two* [KoDT #5] "Spaced Out"

<sup>2</sup> See *Bundle of Trouble Volume Three* [KoDT #8] "Game Master For a Day"

YOU KNOW, YOUR OBVIOUS LACK OF LOYALTY REALLY PAINS ME. HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN YOUR **GM** HUH?? DO I ASK FOR MUCH? WEEK IN, WEEK OUT, I SIT BEHIND THIS SCREEN TRYING TO WEAVE A LITTLE MAGIC INTO YOUR LIVES. DO I EVER GET A THANK YOU? HUH? ANYONE EVER SAY, "GOOD ADVENTURE, B.A.!" OR "NICE JOB!?"

HERE I BLOW SIXTY BUCKS - MY OWN MONEY MIND YOU - AND ALL I GET IS A BUNCH OF WHINING AND GRIEF!! WELL **THANKS A LOT!**



GOOD JOB DAVE!! YOU HAD TO MENTION **EARL!** NOW HE'S LAYING A GUILTY TRIP ON US. GUESS WE'RE PLAYING **SPACEHACK** AFTER ALL!

I GUESS IT WON'T BE SO BAD PLAYING. **STERLING LURGE** AGAIN. I THINK HE NEEDS NEW BATTERIES FOR HIS CYBER-SUIT THOUGH.

THIS MIGHT BE FUN. WE KICKED ASS LAST TIME OUT!!

ALL RIGHT. LET'S GAME!!



## AS THE ADVENTURE UNFOLDS...

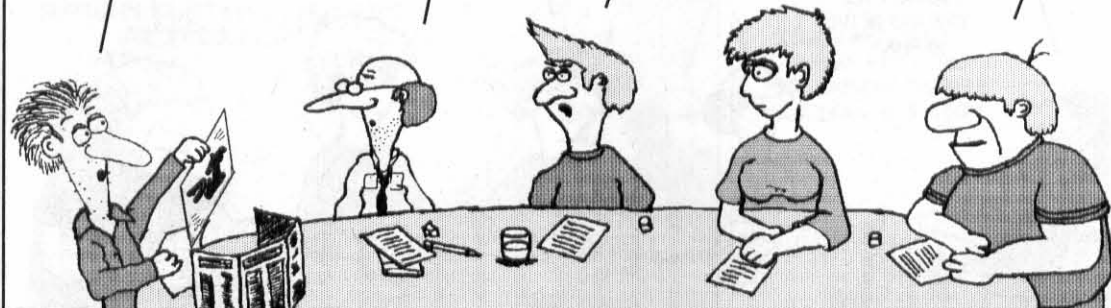
OKAY, AS YOUR SHUTTLECRAFT LIMPS INTO THE SYSTEM YOU SEE **THIS** SHIP ORBITING THE PLANET.

A SHIP?? I IMMEDIATELY RAISE OUR SHIELDS!!

I'M MANNING THE TOP TURRET AND POWERING UP THE GUNS!!

I'LL DO A THREE-TIERED SENSOR SCAN OF THE SHIP AND PLANET SURFACE SIMULTANEOUSLY.

I'LL TRY TO CONTACT THE SHIP ON HAILING FREQUENCIES.



NO ONE RESPONDS TO YOUR RADIO CALL. SARA, YOU DO DETECT A VERY FAINT DISTRESS SIGNAL HOWEVER WHICH IDENTIFIES THE SHIP AS THE **KRELLIAN HACK CRUISER WARMONGER!** BRIAN YOUR SCANS SHOW NO LIFEFORMS ON BOARD AND THE SHIP SEEMS TO BE POWERED DOWN!!

GUYS, I DON'T THINK SHE'S MUCH OF A THREAT IF SHE'S POWERED DOWN AND APPARENTLY ABANDONED.

SMELLS LIKE AN OLD **ORC** TRICK TO ME. REMEMBER WHEN WE RAN ACROSS THAT **ABANDONED** CASTLE IN **FERN VALLEY?** TURNED OUT THERE WAS AN ARMY OF SOUTHERN LEAGUE ORCS UNDER A POWERFUL INVISIBILITY SPELL!!

A HACK CRUISER??

HOLY MOLEY!! AND WE'RE LOOKING RIGHT DOWN HER THROAT!!



THAT HAPPENED IN **HACKMASTER**.  
BRIAN. I DON'T THINK YOU'RE GOING TO RUN  
INTO ANY ORCS OUT HERE. HEH, HEH.

I'M NOT TAKIN' ANY CHANCES.  
LET'S BLOW THE BITCH UP WITH A  
FEW SALVOS FROM OUR  
PHASON-BLASTERS!!!

EXCELLENT CALL!! THAT  
BABY HAS **AMBUSH**  
WRITTEN ALL OVER IT!

HELLO? GUYS? WE'RE TOOLIN' AROUND IN A RUSTED  
OUT CARGO SHUTTLE. DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD  
INVESTIGATE THIS DERELICT MORE CLOSELY??  
WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SALVAGE THE SHIP AND  
CLAIM IT AS OUR OWN!!

LOOK SARA, THERE'S ONE  
THING I'VE LEARNED FROM  
WATCHIN' SCI-FI MOVIES!!



DERELICT SHIPS ARE **ALWAYS** BAD NEWS!!  
THEY'RE FILLED WITH **FACE HUGGERS**,  
**CHEST BURSTERS**, STRANGE ALIEN VIRUSES,  
EVIL DEMONS, TIME-DIMENSIONAL DISTORTIONS,  
PSYCHOTIC COMPUTERS AND A ZILLION OTHER  
THINGS THAT SPELL **BAD NEWS** FOR ANYONE  
**STUPID** ENOUGH TO INVESTIGATE.

A WISE MAN ONCE SAID,  
"LET'S NUKE IT! IT'S THE  
ONLY WAY TO BE SURE."



WHOAH! WHOAH! **WHOAH!** LOOK BRAINIACS!!! YOU JUST SAW ME HOLD UP A  
BEAUTIFUL 11 X 17 **FULL COLOR GLOSSY** OF THE SHIP. **RIGHT??** AND I JUST GOT  
THROUGH TELLING YOU I SPENT **SIXTY BUCKS** ON A NEW **SPACE HACK**  
SUPPLEMENT. **RIGHT??** CAN'T YOU PUT 2 AND 2 TOGETHER?? HUH?? IT DIDN'T DAWN  
ON YOU THAT THIS SHIP MIGHT BE THE ADVENTURE?? **SHREESH!** SO BEFORE YOU  
MAKE ANY STUPID DECISIONS, LET'S PAUSE FOR A MOMENT, RETHINK THINGS AND THEN  
YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE DECIDED TO DO. OKAY?

OH I'M SORRY. I ALMOST FORGOT!! WE'RE  
PLAYING ONE OF YOUR LAME ASS  
**CONNECT-THE-DOTS**  
ADVENTURES AGAIN AREN'T WE? NO ROOM  
FOR ORIGINAL PLAYER INPUT OR THOUGHT.

YEAH! MAYBE WE SHOULD  
JUST SIT BACK AND LET  
YOU TELL **US** WHAT OUR  
CHARACTERS ARE DOING.

YEAH. JUST WRITE IT  
DOWN AND I'LL READ  
ABOUT IT LATER!!



FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!! WHY ARE YOU BEING SO DIFFICULT? I'M JUST TRYING TO  
TELL YOU THAT THE **HACK CRUISER** IS WHERE THE ADVENTURE TAKES  
PLACE. IF YOU BLOW THE **DAMN SHIP** OUT OF ORBIT THEN THERE'S REALLY  
NO POINT IN PLAYING BECAUSE THERE WILL BE NO ADVENTURE.

OH, SO THERE'S A **WHOLE UNIVERSE**  
OUT THERE TO EXPLORE AND YOU'RE TELLIN'  
ME WE GOT TO LIMIT OURSELVES TO SOME  
STINKIN' TUB OF BOLTS??

SEEMS TO ME IF YOU'RE GOING TO  
INSIST WE PLAY **SPACE HACK** THAT  
YOU SHOULD HAVE COME PREPARED.

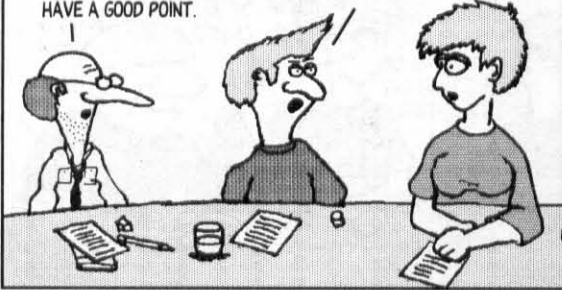
(SIGH) B.A., LET ME SEE IF I CAN  
EXPLAIN THINGS TO THEM.



LOOK GUYS, BEFORE WE JUST...HOW DID BOB PUT IT? "**BLOW THE BITCH UP!**" MAYBE WE SHOULD BOARD HER AND HAVE A LOOK AROUND. **WHO KNOWS??** MAYBE IT ONLY NEEDS A FEW MINOR REPAIRS. WE COULD BE ZIPPING AROUND IN A POWERFUL HACK CRUISER ARMED TO THE GILLS!! HELL, WE COULD EVEN PARK THE LEMON WE'RE TOOLING AROUND IN WITHIN ONE OF THE CRUISER'S CARGO BAYS AND TAKE IT WITH US. SOUNDS LIKE A NO-LOSE SITUATION TO ME.

LOOK MISSY, WE DONT WANT TO HEAR...HEY, YOU HAVE A GOOD POINT.

YOU THINK I COULD HAVE MY OWN CABIN?



**EXCELLENTO!** LET'S FORM AN **AWAY TEAM** AND BEAM OVER. BUT I THINK WE SHOULD HEAVILY ARM OURSELVES. WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST!!

NO SWEAT!! I'LL BRING MY **PERSONAL WEAPONS ARRAY BACKPACK!** IT'S RATED TO HANDLE **BRIGADE-LEVEL TACTICAL SITUATIONS!!**

OH NO, NOT THE ONE WITH NUKES!!



**TWENTY MINUTES LATER.....**

OKAY, BRIAN MANAGES TO TAP INTO THE **SHIP'S LOG**. APPARENTLY A FLESH-EATING VIRUS DESTROYED THE ENTIRE CREW OVER TWELVE YEARS AGO. THAT'S WHY THERE ARE NO BODIES OR REMAINS TO BE FOUND.

**FLESH EATING VIRUS??**

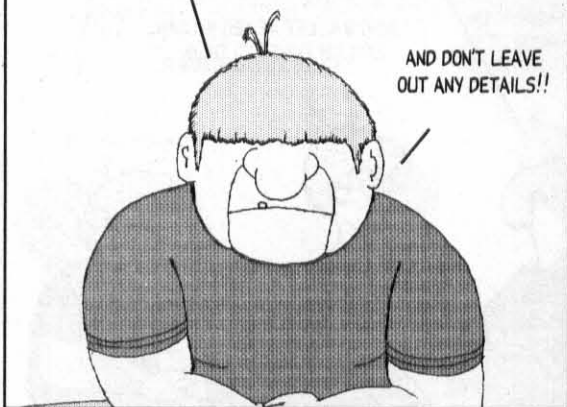
AND TO THINK (AHEM) WE ALMOST, "**BLEW THE BITCH UP!**"

GOOD CALL SARA!! YOU'RE A CHAMP!!



OKAY B.A., AS YOU RECALL, MY CHARACTER HAS MAXED OUT ALL **65 SKILLS** RELATING TO STARSHIP OPERATIONS, SYSTEMS AND WEAPONRY. I'M GOING TO NEED SOME **TECHNICAL DATA**. ENGINE CLASSIFICATION, HULL INTEGRITY, COMPUTER CLASS, SECURITY CONFIGURATIONS, ETC.

AND DON'T LEAVE OUT ANY DETAILS!!



**AS THE DATA BEGINS TO FLOW.....**

...THERE ARE 75 DECKS. DECKS 1 THROUGH 25 ARE DEDICATED TO SHIP SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS. DECK 5 IS WHERE THE PROCESSING UNITS FOR THE **CLASS IV MULTI-TRONIC COMPUTER** ARE LOCATED. ON DECK 3 YOU WILL FIND THE STATEROOMS FOR THE SHIP'S COMMANDING OFFICERS. NOW, DECKS 26 AND 27 ARE DEDICATED TO RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, CREW MESS HALL, ENTERTAINMENT STATIONS, ETC. DECKS 28 TO.....

CRIPES!! ARE YOU GETTING ALL OF THIS?

IT'S LIKE A FREAKIN' CITY!! THIS SHIP IS **HUGE!**

THAT WAS A CLASS IV COMPUTER, BRIAN!

CLASS IV! GOT IT. **HUH??**



**CLASS IV MULTI-TRONICS?? IS THAT RIGHT?? HOT DAMN!! THAT'S TOP OF THE LINE! THAT MEANS WE HAVE A HOLO-DECK COMPLETE WITH SCENARIO ARCHIVE AND HOLO-VENTURE DESIGN CENTER! THIS ROCKS!!!**



B.A., I'LL LET THEM EXPLORE THE SHIP. I'M CHECKIN' OUT THE HOLO-DECK.

LEAVE IT TO BRIAN TO WIG OUT OVER THE COMPUTER SYSTEM! OKAY, I'M GONNA RUN TO OUR SHUTTLE IN THE CARGO BAY AND START MOVIN' MY CRAP INTO MY STATEROOM. I GOT DIBS ON THE CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS!! **HOODY HOO!**

NOT IF I GET THERE FIRST, DUDE!! B.A., I'M HAULING ASS FOR **DECK 3!** I'M GONNA THROW MY BACKPACK AT BOB TO TRY AND TRIP HIM UP. WHO GETS THERE FIRST?

I, UH...GUESS I'LL SEE ABOUT BRINGING THE ENGINES BACK UP.

HMMM, MUMBLE, MUMBLE.



**THIRTY MINUTES LATER...**

SORRY SARA, RE-ROUTING THE **PRIMARY PLASMA DUCTS** THROUGH THE **VENTRICLE HEATING COUPLERS** DOESN'T RELIEVE THE PRESSURE ON THE **FORWARD VALVES**. I'M AFRAID THE ENGINES ARE STILL SEIZED. YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO TRY ANOTHER APPROACH.

I'M GOING TO USE SOME **SPACKLING PUTTY** TO FIX THE HOLES DAVE PUT IN MY CABIN DOOR. I'M GOING TO REPLACE THE LOCK TOO.

HAVE I MANAGED TO CLIMB OUT OF THE GARBAGE CHUTE YET?? WHEN I DO, I'M MAKING MY WAY BACK TO **MY** QUARTERS AND EVICTING BOB!!

WELL, I'M TAPPED. I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE TO DO.

B.A., MAKE A NOTE THAT I'VE LOGGED TEN HOURS IN THE HOLO-VENTURE DESIGN CENTER!!



HEY, HOLD ON A SECOND!! **BRIAN, DUDE!** YOU'RE THE GUY WITH ALL THE **SHIP KNOW-HOW!** GET YOUR BUTT DOWN TO **ENGINEERING** AND HELP SARA GET THESE ENGINES ON-LINE!!

YEAH, LET'S GET THIS SHIP GOING SO WE CAN RACK UP SOME **EXPERIENCE POINTS!** I WANT TO KILL SOMETHING!!

WHY ALL THE FASCINATION WITH THE HOLO-DECK BIG GUY?

OKAY, **CHECK THIS OUT...**



SINCE I HAVE A 98% PROFICIENCY IN **HOLO-VENTURE SCENARIO DESIGN**, MY CHARACTER HAS PROGRAMMED THE **HOLO-COMPUTER** TO RUN **HACKMASTER 3RD EDITION** ADVENTURES!! YOU CAN GENERATE NEW CHARACTERS OR SIMPLY FEED THE COMPUTER THE DATA FROM YOUR OLD CHARACTER SHEETS AND WE CAN ACTUALLY PLAY **HACKMASTER** ON THE SHIP. **IS THAT KEWL OR WHAT??**



**HACKMASTER??** WELL WHAT IN THE HELL ARE WE WAITING FOR!! I'LL STOP BY THE MESS HALL AND RUSTLE UP SOME **GRAPE FAYGO** AND **PIZZA** FROM THE FOOD REPLICATORS AND MEET YOU GUYS ON THE **HOLO-DECK!!**

**BRIAN!** I COULD GIVE YOU A BIG WET KISS!! THIS IS AWESOME!! IF WE CAN'T FIND ANY ACTION IN SPACE WE CAN RACK UP THE **E.P.'S** IN **HACKMASTER!!**

BRIAN, YOU INSTIGATOR!!

I CONTINUALLY AMAZE MYSELF!!



**OH I DON'T BELIEVE THIS!!** YOU GUYS ACTUALLY EXPECT ME TO RUN A **HACKMASTER ADVENTURE** FOR YOUR **SPACEHACK** CHARACTERS?? THAT'S ABSURD!!

C'MON B.A., QUIT YER WHINING AND LET'S GET ON WITH THE GAME!! MY CHARACTER IS STRESSED AND IS IN THE NEED FOR A LITTLE **HACK-THERAPY!**

WHAT A CONCEPT!! THIS IS LIKE PLAYING TWO GAMES AT ONCE!! **HOODY-HOO!**

SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT...WE'RE PLAYING CHARACTERS WHO ARE PLAYING CHARACTERS IN A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?? AN RPG WITHIN AN RPG??

THIS ROCKS!!! (AHEM) **COMPUTER!!** RUN **HOLO-VENTURE 24-A**. UH, B.A., JUST PICK UP THE ADVENTURE WHERE WE LAST LEFT OFF!



**TWENTY MINUTES LATER.....**

I'M SORRY, BOB, YOUR **STUPID BOLT** MISSES THE **MUCK-GOLEM**. YOU YAWN WITH BOREDOM BECAUSE THIS **STUPID HOLO-VENTURE** REALLY BLOWS. IT ALMOST FEELS AS THOUGH THE **COMPUTER** JUST REALLY DOESN'T GIVE A DAMN AND ITS HEART JUST ISN'T INTO IT.

**C'MON B.A.!!** YOU'RE REALLY TICKING ME OFF!! RUN THIS ADVENTURE LIKE YOU MEAN IT. YOU'RE TAKIN' ALL THE FUN OUT OF IT.

DAMN IT B.A., I HAVE A 98% PROFICIENCY IN **HOLO-VENTURES!** THIS ADVENTURE SHOULD ROCK!!

**COMPUTER!** STEP UP THE INTENSITY LEVEL ABOUT FIVE NOTCHES!! **OKAY??**

HMMN. GOOD IDEA DAVE.



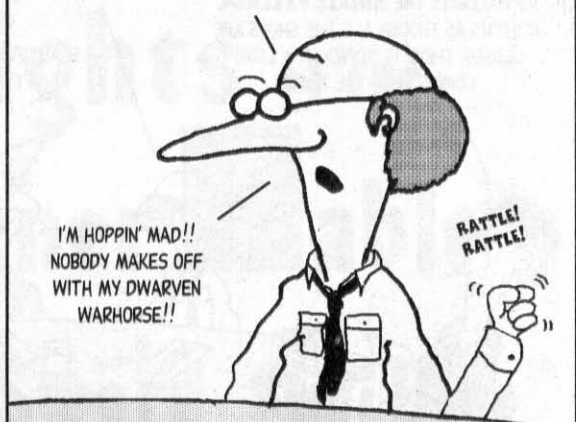
**A FEW MINUTES LATER.....**

OKAY, AS YOU CHASE **KNobby FOOT** THROUGH THE FOREST YOU SUDDENLY COME TO A **RAGING RIVER** WITH JAGGED ROCKS AND WHITE WATER!! **KNobby** PULLS BACK THE REINS ON **LITTLE MIKE** AND HALTS ON THE RIVER BANK. LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE HIM TRAPPED BETWEEN YOU AND THE RIVER.



HE HOLDS UP HIS HANDS AND ANNOUNCES THAT HE SURRENDERS.

**SURRENDERS MY ASS!! LET HIM TASTE THE COLD, BITTER STEEL OF MY BOLT OF SKEWERING!!**



I'M HOPPIN' MAD!! NOBODY MAKES OFF WITH MY DWARVEN WARHORSE!!

RATTLE! RATTLE!

**AWH CRUD!** I FUMBLER!! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!! THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLL OF MY LIFE AND **I FUMBLER!!!**

YOU WERE ROBBED, DUDE!! OF ALL THE ROTTEN LUCK. **BUMMER...**

WELL, I CAN'T REALLY SAY I'M SORRY. I THINK **KNobby** HAS PUT UP ONE HELL OF A FIGHT!!

HEY, HOLD ON THERE BOBBY-BOY!! NO REASON TO BE GLUM.

GEE THAT'S TOO BAD. LOOKS LIKE YOU LOST YOUR GRIP ON YOUR **CROSSBOW** AND SHOT YOURSELF IN THE **THROAT**. TSK TSK!!



**COMPUTER!** PLEASE HALT THE SIMULATION AND BACK UP THE PROGRAM **ONE COMBAT ROUND** AND RESTART.

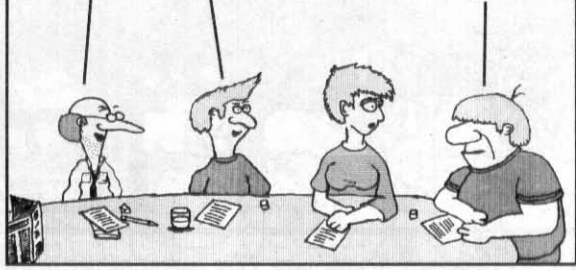
THERE YA GO, BOB. HAVE ANOTHER CRACK AT IT!!



**WHOAH!** THIS ROCKS!! BRIAN, YOU THE MAN!!

THIS IS SO TOTALLY KEWL!! IT'S LIKE WE HAVE TOTAL CONTROL OVER THE **GM!**

THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YA!! **WE HAVE ALL THE POWER!!**



## A LITTLE LATER.....

OKAY, IT BEGINS TO POUR DOWN **RAIN** AS YOU ENTER THE **SMALL VILLAGE**. IT LOOKS AS THOUGH ALL THE SHOPS ARE CLOSED. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A LIGHT COMING FROM THE **INN**.

I THINK WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT. **COMPUTER!** HALT PROGRAM. LET'S REMOVE THE RAIN AND UH... LET'S SEE... LET'S MAKE IT A **BEAUTIFUL SUNNY DAY**. AND UH... INSTEAD OF A SMALL VILLAGE, LET'S MAKE IT A **LARGE BUSY CITY!** LOTS OF SHOPS. AND UH... LET'S MAKE IT A **FESTIVE HOLIDAY!!**

BEAUTIFUL BOB!!! I CAN ALMOST HEAR THE THRONGING CROWDS.

NO, I THINK YOU'RE HEARING THE THROBING OF THE VEIN ON B.A.'S FOREHEAD.

WHOOH!! HE'S FUMING!!

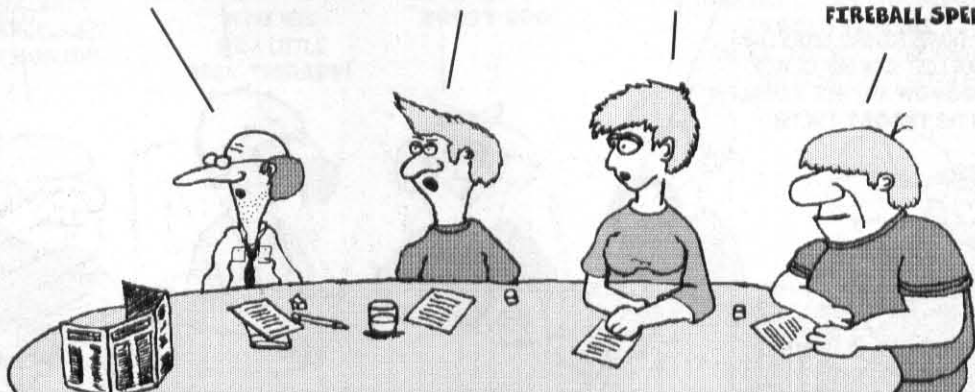


BUMMER... THE HOLO-COMPUTER JUST STORMED OUT OF THE ROOM!!

I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS PROGRAMMED TO DO THAT. I WONDER WHERE HE WENT?

I IMAGINE **WEIRD PETE** IS GOING TO GET A LITTLE VISIT!! POOR MAN!!

**DAMN!** I WAS CHOMPIN' AT THE BIT FOR A CHANCE TO USE MY **ENHANCED FIREBALL SPELL!!**



## A Moment in Gaming History #25



*Samuel Kenzer near Fort Independence in 1899.*

Originally appearing as filler in the back of KoDT#18, this piece inspired a series of similar 'in-house jokes' spoofing the ancestry of various staffers.

It happened one hundred years ago, this month on April 1, 1898. Mocked by his contemporaries, Samuel Kenzer crossed the mighty Mississippi river near St. Louis, Missouri as he started his 'traveling gamemaster tour'.

Determined to take role-playing to the new frontier, Sam and his retinue of "non-player character" actors ran campaigns up and down the Oregon Trail for three years. As the first gamemaster to travel west of the ol' Miss, Samuel Kenzer earned his place in Gaming History.

Unfortunately he was killed in a bar in Dodge City, Kansas in 1903 after being accused of 'fudging' a die roll' by a disgruntled player who then shot him. ☐



## KENZER AND COMPANY

Knights of the Dinner Table #17  
"This Sword For Hire"  
Originally Published: March, 1998

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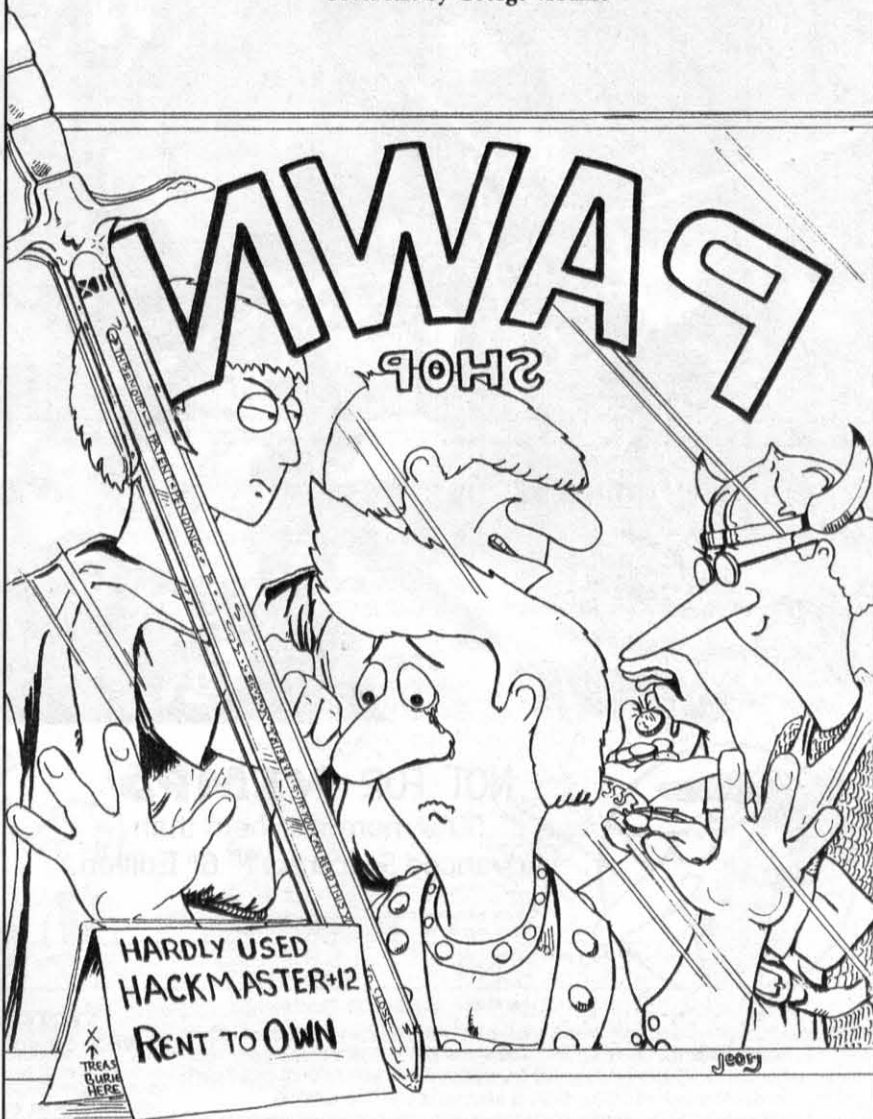
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sions for strip ideas, jokes, car-  
toons, etc. We are interested in  
running anything that other  
gamers and fans would enjoy.  
Send a S.A.S.E. for writers' guide-  
lines to the address listed above,  
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## "This Sword for Hire"

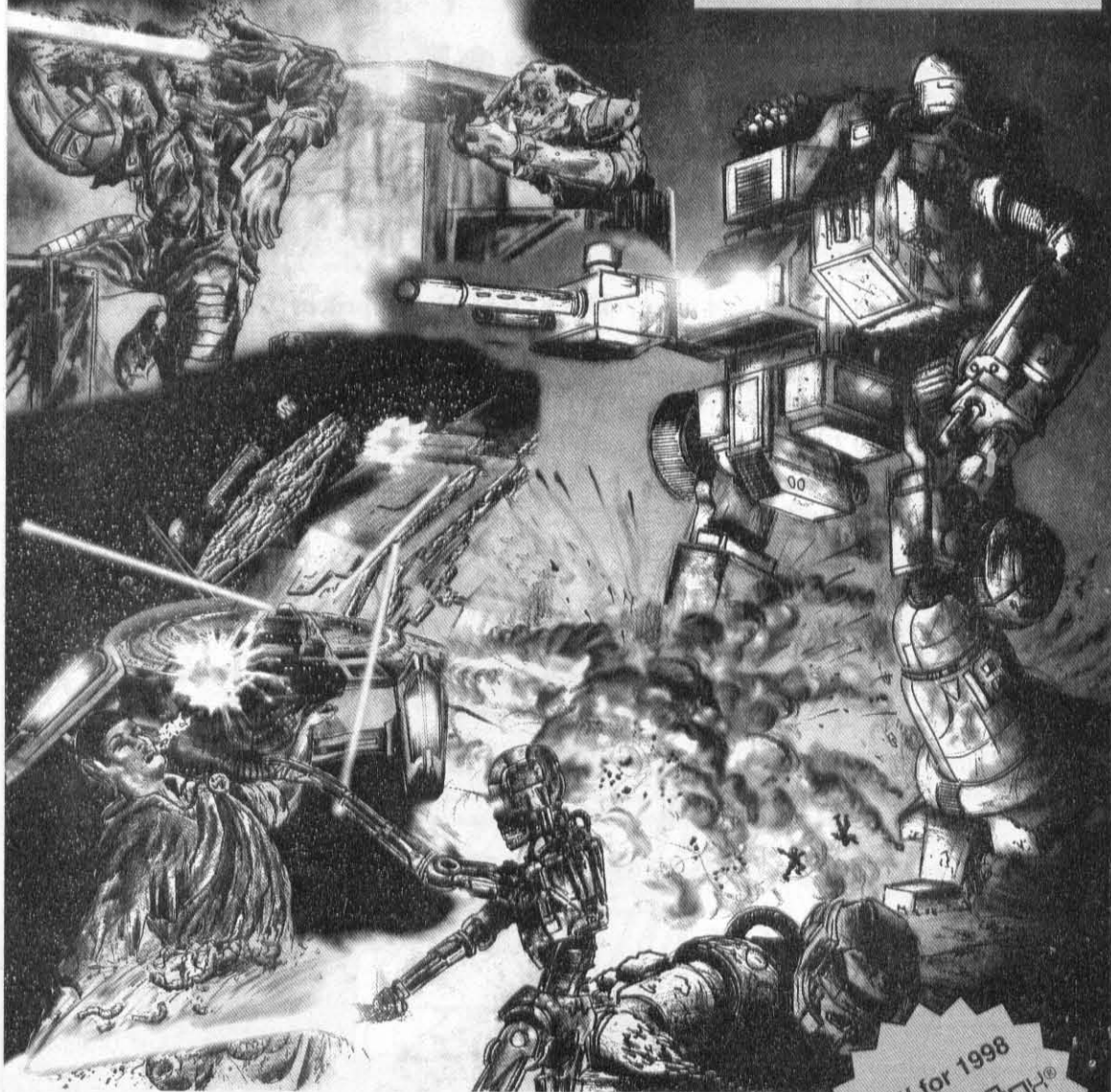
The KODT Development Team is  
Jolly R. Blackburn, Brian Jelke,  
Steve Johansson and David S. Kenzer  
Cover Art by George Vrbanc



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*This fake ad was a follow-up spoof to the Ship in a Box - Ship of Fools storyline which ran in KoDT #16.*



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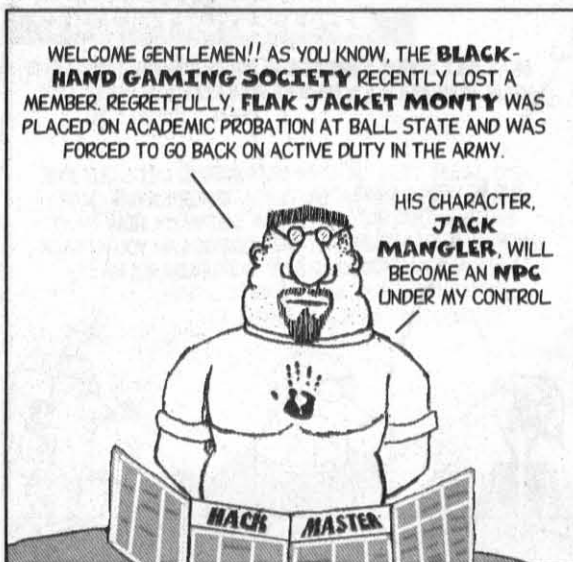
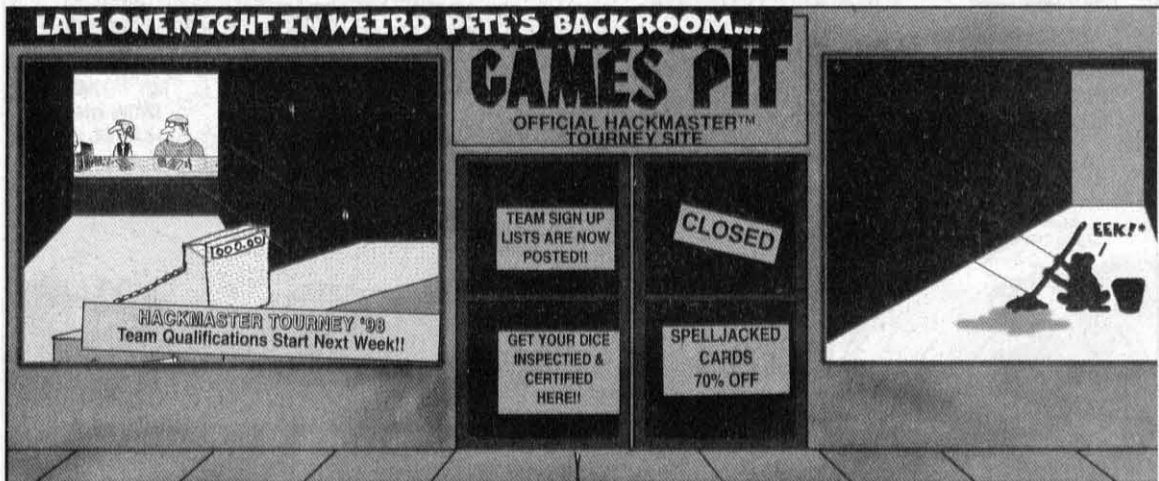


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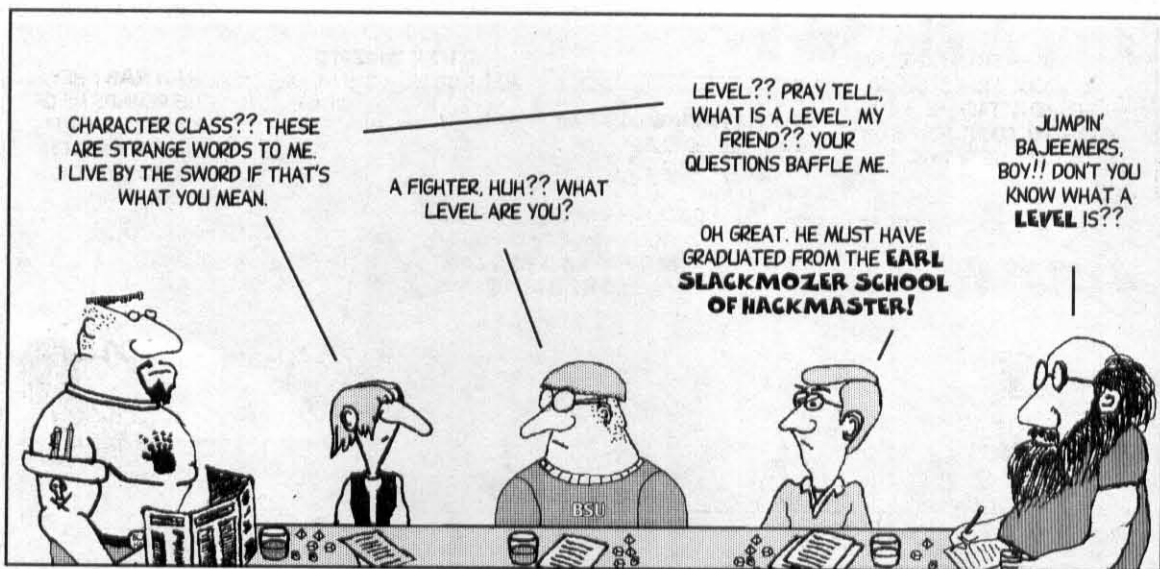
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# Carry A Big Stick

STORY BY ALAN MILLER  
WITH JOLLY R. BLACKBURN AND STEVE JOHANSSON



\* "EEKI", as used here, is Chimpanzee profanity. Squirrelly is voicing a complaint because Weird Pete is making him mop the floor a second time.  
Note: This strip is the FIRST appearance of the Black Hands as a group. We'd been anticipating the group's debut for almost a year when Alan Miller's idea for a KoDT strip about a 'big stick' came in. Steve and I knew it would make the perfect 'pilot' for the Blackhands and reworked it with the reader meeting the group for the first time through the eyes of the 'new guy', Newt. Stevil and Newt starting off on the wrong foot helped set the tone for the Black Hand strips for many, many issues. — Jolly



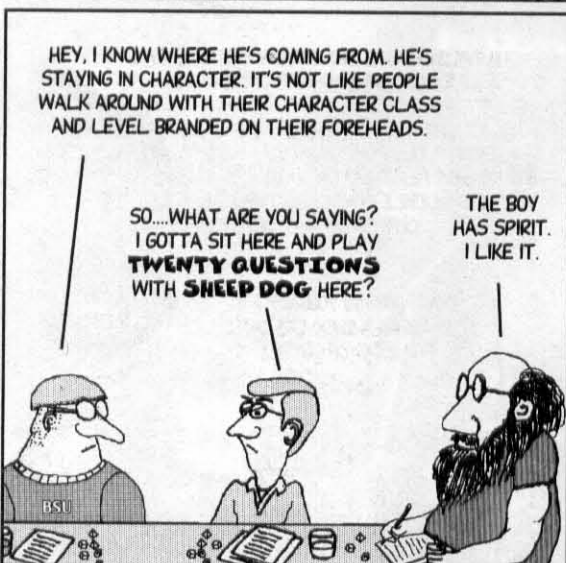
CHARACTER CLASS?? THESE ARE STRANGE WORDS TO ME. I LIVE BY THE SWORD IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN.

A FIGHTER, HUH?? WHAT LEVEL ARE YOU?

LEVEL?? PRAY TELL, WHAT IS A LEVEL, MY FRIEND?? YOUR QUESTIONS BAFLE ME.

JUMPIN' BAJEEMERS, BOY!! DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT A LEVEL IS??

OH GREAT. HE MUST HAVE GRADUATED FROM THE EARL SLACKMOZER SCHOOL OF HACKMASTER!



HEY, I KNOW WHERE HE'S COMING FROM. HE'S STAYING IN CHARACTER. IT'S NOT LIKE PEOPLE WALK AROUND WITH THEIR CHARACTER CLASS AND LEVEL BRANDED ON THEIR FOREHEADS.

SO...WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? I GOTTA SIT HERE AND PLAY TWENTY QUESTIONS WITH SHEEP DOG HERE?

THE BOY HAS SPIRIT. I LIKE IT.



OKAY MISTER THRIFT-AXE. LET'S TRY THIS AGAIN. HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE??

I'VE BEATEN A GOOD PATH ON THIS OL' WORLD. BEEN AROUND A BIT, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

JEEZ. LET'S CUT THE ROLEPLAYING CRAP ALREADY. HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU ATTACK EACH ROUND??



EH? WHAT WAS THAT MATE? A ROUND? WHAT'S A ROUND??

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TALK TO HIM IN CHARACTER, STEVIL.

SH'YA RIGHT! IF YOU CATCH ME TALKING 'IN CHARACTER' YOU'D BETTER TAPE IT 'CUZ IT WOULD BE ABOUT AS LIKELY AS **IDI AMIN** DOING VOLUNTEER WORK FOR THE **RED CROSS!!**

HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT A ROUND IS??



WHAT'S HE GOING TO DO?? TIME HIMSELF WITH A STOP WATCH?? A ROUND HAS NO MEANING TO HIS CHARACTER.

LOOKS LIKE I PICKED A BAD DAY TO LEAVE MY **ADVL** AT HOME. (SIGH).

MAYBE WE CAN GIVE HIM A STICK OR SOMETHING AND COUNT HOW MANY TIMES HE CAN SWING IT??

Note: When I originally began to do the artwork for the Black Hands, we weren't entirely sure who would actually be in the group. We knew Nitro and Pete were to be at the table. And we knew there was to be a character called 'Stevil' (who was the brainchild of David Kenzer and Steve Johansson.) That left two empty chairs. I tried several different characters in what would eventually become the positions for Newt and Gordo. First I tried Ty Ferlet and Cody Winkle, both of whom had made appearances as 'guest players' with the Knights in past strips. But they just didn't seem to click and the other developers voted against them. After appearing in a KoDT strip in Dragon, however, Newt Forager began getting fan mail so I placed him at the table and sent it up to see what the others thought. They approved and Newt stayed - something about his small frame next to the towering figure of Nitro made us chuckle. This left one empty seat. We eventually went

OKAY **MR. NEBULOSITY!**  
I'M TOSSIN' YOU A STICK. GO  
AHEAD AND ATTACK ME WITH IT.  
**GORDO**, COUNT HOW MANY  
TIMES HE SWINGS.

**JUST SWING  
ALREADY!** I CAN HANDLE  
A FEW WHACKS FROM A  
STICK.

**HAR HAR!** HEY,  
THIS REMINDS ME OF  
**LITTLE JOHN**  
MEETING **ROBIN  
HOOD** FOR THE  
FIRST TIME.

**ATTACK YOU?  
ARE YOU SURE??**

C'MON HEROES!! I'D LIKE TO  
GAME **TONIGHT!**

DON'T WORRY ABOUT **STEVI**.  
HE RUNS A 10TH LEVEL  
**MONK-ASSASSIN**  
CALLED **RASPUTIN**.



### THREE MINUTES LATER...

ENOUGH WITH THE SHAKIN', **NEWT!**  
YOU GONNA MAKE LOVE TO THOSE  
DICE OR ROLL THEM??

I'M STANDING WITH MY FEET EQUAL DIS-  
TANCE APART, AT A FORTY-FIVE DEGREE  
ANGLE IN RELATION TO THE **MONK-  
ASSASSIN**. THE WORDS OF MY MENTOR,  
**GURVIN THE ELDER** RUNS THROUGH MY  
MIND... "STRIKE THYNE ENEMY FROM WITHIN -  
LET THYNE BLADE BE THYNE VOICE!"

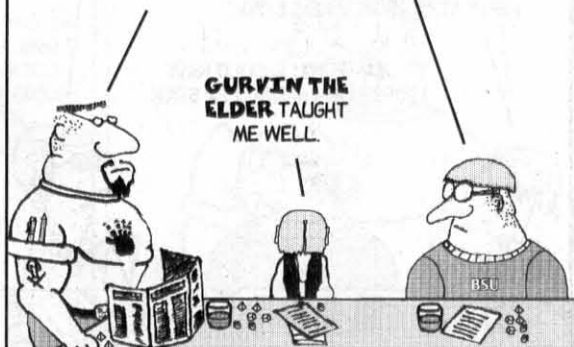
OH BROTHER...



**AWESOME!** HE ROLLED A **NATURAL  
TWENTY!** WAY TO GO, **NEWT!**

LOOKS LIKE A HIT, **NEWT**.  
A CRITICAL TO BOOT!

**GURVIN THE  
ELDER** TAUGHT  
ME WELL.



LA-DE-DA!! YOU GOT  
**LUCKY** AND HIT ME.  
SO HOW MANY TIMES  
DID HE SWING AT ME  
**GORDO??**

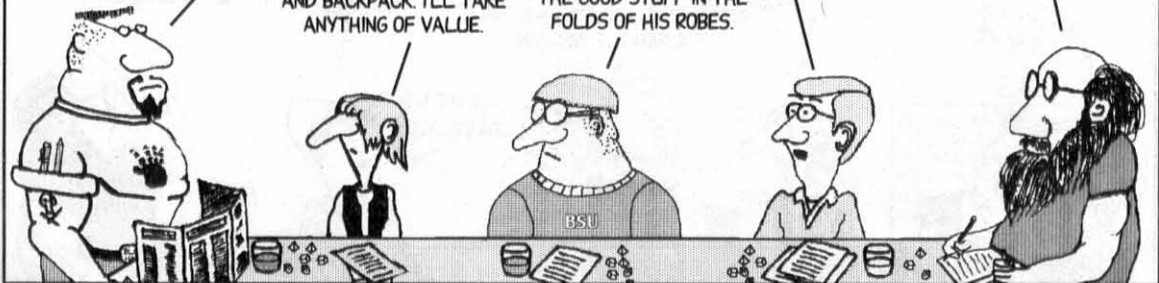
SORRY **STEVI**, YOU'RE OUT COLD.  
**KRAGIN** JUST TURNED OUT  
YOUR LIGHTS. (SNICKER).

WHA...WHA...  
**WHAT??**

WHAT'S THAT?? HE  
KNOCKED OUT  
**RASPUTIN??**  
OOOOHHH, THE BOY IS  
GOOD!! **REAL GOOD!**

HE'S OUT HUH? I'M GOING  
THROUGH HIS POCKETS  
AND BACKPACK. I'LL TAKE  
ANYTHING OF VALUE.

HEY **NEWT**, HE HIDES  
THE GOOD STUFF IN THE  
FOLDS OF HIS ROBES.



with Gordo Sheckberry who was a nerdy looking character I pulled from one of my sketch books. Gordo was mentioned in an earlier strip (*Bundle of Trouble Volume Four* [KODT#10] "Let the GM be a Lady Tonight") where it was mentioned he plays a pixie faerie named "Breezezy". He seemed like a good candidate for rounding out the group so in he went. After Steve Johansson gave "Stevil" a hair cut and fashion make-over (my original version had him with shaggy hair and a turtle neck sweater), the Black Hands were born. Almost from the start, poor Stevil would be accused of 'newbie bashing' by readers angered over his hostility toward an 'innocent' Newt. Innocent? Read this strip and the one which follows in Issue #18 ["The After Action Review"] very carefully. Newt innocent? Think again. — Jolly

SORRY **STEVIL**. HE HIT YOU ON THE HEAD AND YOU WENT DOWN LIKE A HOUSE OF CARDS.

JUST ONCE!! AND I KNOW YOU HAVE 74 HIT POINTS!! LIKE I SAID, YOU'RE OUT **COLD!**

**WHAT?? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!! HE JUST COULDN'T DO IT!! I CAN TAKE 74 POINTS OF DAMAGE OR ARE YOU FORGETTING THAT NITRO?? HOW MANY TIMES DID HE HIT ME??**

HEY...UH....YOU TOLD ME TO HIT YOU. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

HE KNOCKED YOU OUT WITH A STICK??



NO WAY!! NOW JUST HOLD ON A SECOND. I TOSSED THE **GOOF** A STICK!! A **DAMN LITTLE STICK!!** ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME HE DOWNED **RASPUTIN** WITH A **STICK??**

LET IT GO MAN!! LIKE YOU SAID, HE GOT LUCKY AND KNOCKED YOU OUT. LET'S GET ON WITH THE GAME.

ACTUALLY, I DON'T THINK IT WAS **THAT** LITTLE. WHEN YOU TOSSED IT TO ME, I NOTICED IT WAS A PRETTY HEFTY STICK. MORE LIKE A **LOG**.

**OH NO!** WE'RE NOT MOVING ON. I WANNA DISCUSS THIS **GAWD DAMN STICK!!**

MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE TOSSED HIM A SMALLER STICK...

CAN I HAVE A LIST OF WHAT I TOOK FROM **RASPUTIN?**

I DUNNO. IT'S A FINE LINE. A STICK - A LOG... WHO'S TO SAY, YA KNOW?



HEY, I WORKED A FEW YEARS IN A **LUMBER MILL** ON **FERNWICKLE ISLE**...LEARNED ALOT ABOUT TREES AND WOOD AND SO FORTH. I'M TELLIN' YA - THAT **BRANCH** YOU TOSSED ME WAS A GOOD SIZED PIECE OF WOOD. REALLY THICK AND HEAVY. PROBABLY A TYPE OF **HICKORY!**

**BRANCH?** IT WAS JUST A **STICK!** DIDN'T ANYONE HEAR ME SAY '**STICK!!**' I'M SURE I SAID STICK. YOU KNOW.....LIKE IN **TWIG!!**

NEWT MAKES A GOOD CASE, STEVIL.

HEY, YOU KNOW THE OLD SAYING, "**STICKS** AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES". THERE'S SOME PRECEDENCE FOR STICKS BEING A FORMIDABLE WEAPON.

**GORDO'S** RIGHT. HOW ABOUT THE SAYING, "WALK SOFTLY AND CARRY A **BIG STICK??**"

**SHUT UP FATHEAD!**



C'MON STEVIL!! **SUCK IT UP!**  
THE GUY HAS 18/93 STRENGTH!! IT  
WAS MORE OF A **LOG** THAN A  
**STICK!**

**LOG??** WHAT? DO YOU THINK **RASPUTIN** IS A  
**MORON?** I WOULDN'T HAVE JUST STOOD THERE  
AND LET THIS **JERK** WHACK ME IN THE HEAD  
WITH A **TREE TRUNK!!**

YOU KNOW, ONE TIME  
**SQUIRRELY** HIT  
ME IN THE **GNADS** WITH  
A **MOP STICK** AND  
I ACTUALLY **BLACKED**  
OUT FROM THE PAIN.

MY FRIEND, I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH  
YOU. I THOUGHT YOUR REQUEST THAT  
I STRIKETH YOU WITH A STICK WAS A  
BIT **DAFT**, BUT YOU INSISTED.

HE **DID** ASK YOU  
IF YOU WERE SURE,  
STEVIL.

SURE I WAS SURE...  
WITH A STICK!!  
**A FREAKIN'  
MINISCULE  
STICK!!**



### AFTER THE GAME...

WELL **MR.  
FERGUESON**,  
AM I IN??

WHOAH!! SO  
WE'RE GOING TO  
BE **BLUNT** AND TO  
THE POINT HUH?

I PREFER IT THAT WAY, SIR.  
I'VE BEEN GETTING **JERKED**  
AROUND A LOT LATELY  
TRYING TO FIND A GROUP  
TO PLAY WITH.



YEAH, YEAH, I HEARD **EARL SLACKMOZER**  
BANNISHED YOU FROM HIS TABLE. AND I HEARD  
**B.A. FELTON** TURNED YOU AWAY FROM HIS  
CAMPAIGN. AND, UH.....I HEARD ABOUT THE GUYS  
WHO GAVE YOU AN **ATOMIC WEDGIE** AT  
**HACKCON** LAST SUMMER.



YOU DON'T **PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS** MY  
LITTLE FRIEND. I CAN SEE WHY YOU'RE HAVING SO  
MUCH TROUBLE FINDING A GROUP TO PLAY WITH.

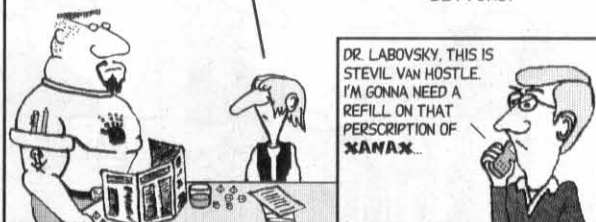
SO I BLEW IT, HUH?  
I THOUGHT AS MUCH.  
WELL THANKS FOR LET-  
TING ME TRY OUT. IT WAS  
FUN WHILE IT LASTED.



SLOW DOWN THERE **GLOOMY DRAWERS**. THE  
SEAT IS YOURS!! YOU REMIND ME OF **ME** WHEN I WAS A  
LITTLE TYKE!! I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU UNDER MY WING  
AND MAKE A **REAL GAMER** OUT OF YOU.

WOW!! YOU MEAN IT??  
SO YOU LIKE THE WAY  
I **PLAY** HUH??

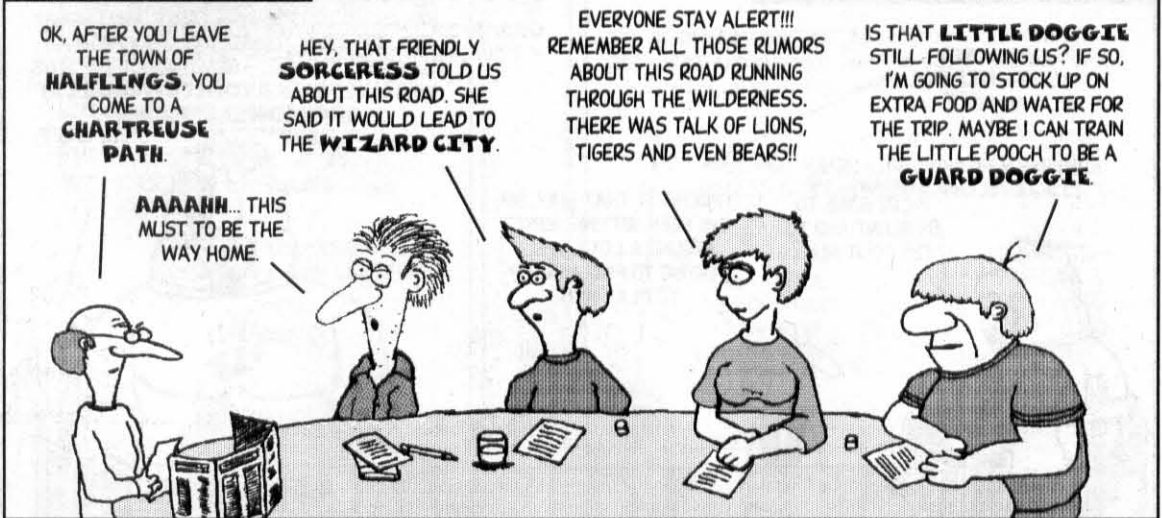
ACTUALLY, I ENJOY  
THE WAY YOU PUSH  
**BITTER  
STEVIL'S**  
BUTTONS.



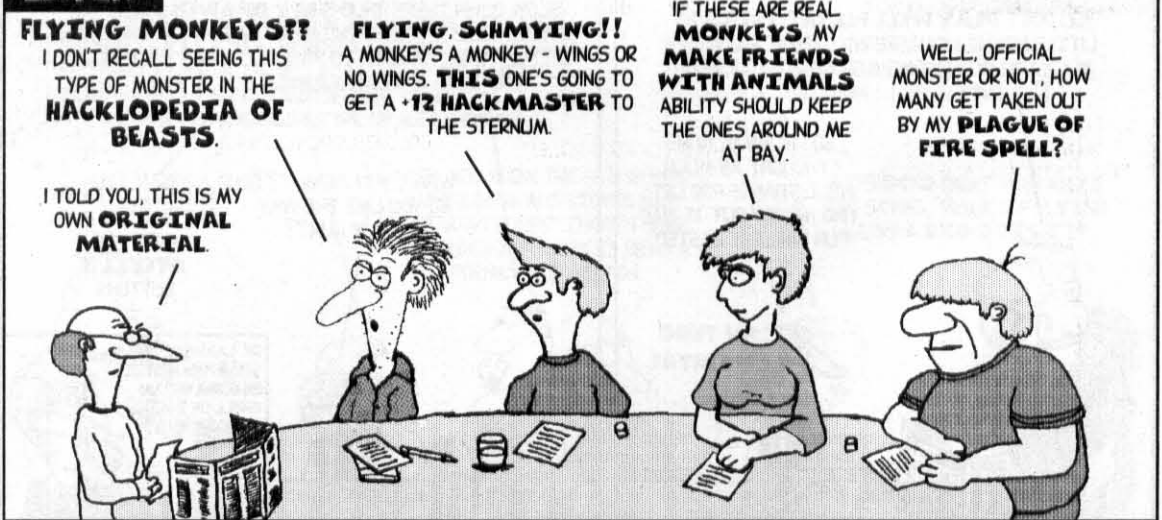
DR. LABOVSKY, THIS IS  
STEVIL VAN HOSTLE.  
I'M GONNA NEED A  
REFILL ON THAT  
PERSCRPTION OF  
**XANAX**...



## LATER THAT NIGHT...



## LATER



OKAY, IN THE DISTANCE YOU CAN SEE THE **JADE BUILDINGS** OF THE **WIZARD'S CITY** REACHING UP TO THE SKY. YOU ALSO SEE A FIELD OF **DAISIES** TO THE SIDE OF THE...

PSST - I'M TELLIN YA!! I HAVE THE STRANGEST FEELING I'VE PLAYED THIS ADVENTURE BEFORE. **IT'S UNCANNY!**

OH C'MON. YOU GUYS HAVEN'T FIGURED IT OUT YET? WHEN THE **HOBBITS** BROKE OUT INTO THE SONG AND DANCE ROUTINE I KNEW IMMEDIATELY.

YEAH, ME TOO!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT?



HEY BOB, YOU HAPPEN TO CATCH THAT **FLICK** ON THE **MUSICAL CHANNEL** LAST NIGHT?? HUH??

UH...NO...I TOLD YA. I WAS BUSY REWRITING MY ADVENTURE. LET'S GET BACK TO THE GAME, ALRIGHT??

OH, IF YOU ONLY HAD A BRAIN!!

DUDE, THIS BLOWS!!



**DAMMIT!** I TOLD YA!! THIS IS ALL ORIGINAL MATERIAL. CAN WE **PLEASE** CUT THE CHATTER AND GET ON WITH THE GAME?? **HUH??**

SORRY.

ALRIGHT. LET THE TORTURE CONTINUE.



## LATER STILL

OK, THE **WIZARD** GRANTS YOU AN AUDIENCE. AS HIS SPECTRAL VISAGE SPEAKS, FLAMES SHOOT UP FROM THE ALTAR. HE TELLS YOU TO LEAVE THE **JADE CITY** AND...

I'M SORRY BUT I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE. I PULL DOWN THE **CURTAIN** AND TELL THE REAL **"WIZARD OF OZ"** TO GET LOST. **NICE TRY BOB** BUT I DON'T THINK **GARY JACKSON** WOULD TOUCH THIS ADVENTURE WITH A TEN FOOT POLE!!

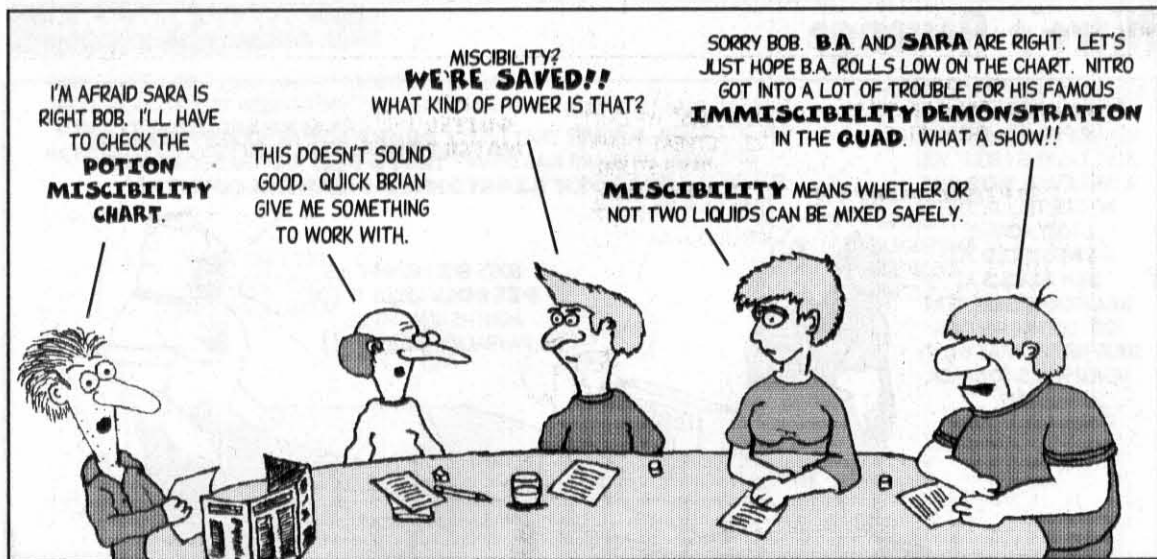
LEAVE? WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS? HE'S GETTING A **CALLED SHOT** TO THE **SPLEEN!**

YA WANNA TELL ME WHAT POWERS THESE ROSE COLORED SANDALS HAVE??

FLAMES HUH? **KEWL!!**







I'M AFRAID SARA IS RIGHT BOB. I'LL HAVE TO CHECK THE **POTION MISCIBILITY CHART.**

THIS DOESN'T SOUND GOOD. QUICK BRIAN GIVE ME SOMETHING TO WORK WITH.

MISCIBILITY? **WE'RE SAVED!!**  
WHAT KIND OF POWER IS THAT?

**MISCIBILITY** MEANS WHETHER OR NOT TWO LIQUIDS CAN BE MIXED SAFELY.

SORRY BOB. **B.A.** AND **SARA** ARE RIGHT. LET'S JUST HOPE B.A. ROLLS LOW ON THE CHART. NITRO GOT INTO A LOT OF TROUBLE FOR HIS FAMOUS **IMMISCIBILITY DEMONSTRATION** IN THE **QUAD.** WHAT A SHOW!!

### MOMENTS LATER...



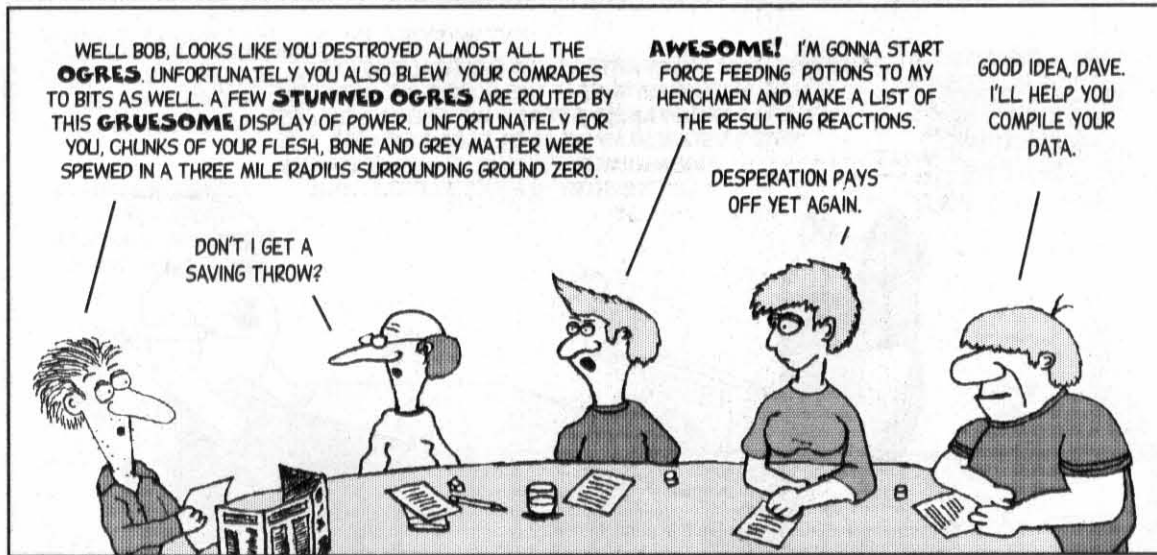
UH OH! I ROLLED A **100 BOB.** ACCORDING TO THE CHART, YOUR EXPERIMENTAL MIXING OF POTIONS RESULTS IN A **FACTOR TWELVE EXPLOSION.**

**HOODY HOO!!!**  
HOW MANY **HEDGE OGRES** DID I TAKE OUT??

WAY TO GO BOB!!  
**MISCIBILITY RULES!**  
WE GOTTA REMEMBER THIS FORMULA!!

**FACTOR TWELVE??** DO I NEED A NEW CHARACTER SHEET, **B.A.**?

DON'T FORGET THAT THERE ARE ABOUT 3.75 RANKS OF HEAVILY ARMORED OGRES BETWEEN ME AND BOB. ALSO, I'M WRAPPING MYSELF WITH MY **ROBE OF CUSHIONING.**



WELL BOB, LOOKS LIKE YOU DESTROYED ALMOST ALL THE **OGRES.** UNFORTUNATELY YOU ALSO BLEW YOUR COMRADES TO BITS AS WELL. A FEW **STUNNED OGRES** ARE ROUTED BY THIS **GRUESOME** DISPLAY OF POWER. UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, CHUNKS OF YOUR FLESH, BONE AND GREY MATTER WERE SPEWED IN A THREE MILE RADIUS SURROUNDING GROUND ZERO.

DON'T I GET A SAVING THROW?

**AWESOME!** I'M GONNA START FORCE FEEDING POTIONS TO MY HENCHMEN AND MAKE A LIST OF THE RESULTING REACTIONS.

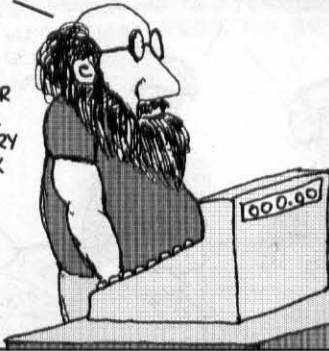
DESPERATION PAYS OFF YET AGAIN.

GOOD IDEA, DAVE. I'LL HELP YOU COMPILE YOUR DATA.

# Nitro's Revenge

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

HEY **NITRO!** WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT YOU A WHILE AGO. **BOB** WAS IN HERE TELLIN' THE STORY HOW HE **PUMMELED** YOU **SENSELESS** AT **HACKCON** LAST YEAR FOR TOUCHIN' HIS DICE. **HAR HAR!!** THAT STORY NEVER FAILS TO CRACK ME UP\*.



**WHA...WHAT?** THAT LITTLE **PUNKASS!** HE SUCKER PUNCHED ME WHEN MY GUARD WAS DOWN - **THAT'S ALL!** AND THAT DON'T EARN YA **BRAGGIN' RIGHTS** HERE IN **DELAWARE COUNTY!!**

BOB'S BEEN RUNNIN' HIS **PIE HOLE** ABOUT IT FOR MONTHS NOW. WELL..... **PAYBACK'S A BITCH!!**



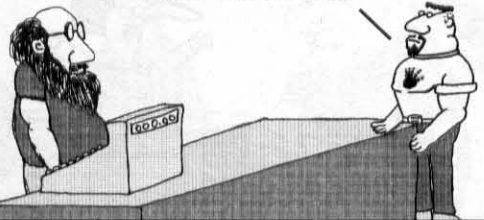
OH...MY, MY...I SURE DIDN'T MEAN TO STIR UP ANY TROUBLE. I JUST FIND IT AMUSING THAT LIL' **BOB HERZOG**, (HEH HEH), MANAGED TO WIND YOUR CLOCK, THAT'S ALL. I SURE HOPE YER NOT SERIOUS ABOUT GETTING EVEN.



HE SHOULD HAVE KEPT HIS MOUTH SHUT. NO ONE MAKES A FOOL OUT OF **NITRO FERGUSON!** AS THE **CLOVEN-HOOF ORCS** ARE FOND OF SAYING, "**A SLOW REVENGE IS THE SWEETEST REVENGE!!**"

**DAMN!** POOR BOB. I'D HATE TO SEE HIM HURT.

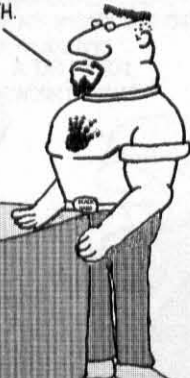
OH, I'M NOT GOING TO LAY A HAND ON HIM. HIS FATE LIES IN HIS OWN HANDS NOW.



WELL NOW YOU HAVE ME CURIOUS. JUST WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN STORE FOR BOB?



SORRY PETE. I'VE SAID ENOUGH ALREADY. LET'S JUST SAY THAT AT THIS MOMENT OUR MARVELOUS **POSTAL SYSTEM** IS IMPLEMENTING THE FIRST STAGE OF MY **DIABOLICAL REVENGE**. THIS TIME NEXT WEEK YOU'LL HAVE ANOTHER **FUNNY** LITTLE STORY TO AMUSE YOURSELF WITH.



\* See *Bundle of Trouble Volume Two* [KoDT#6] "The Safety Lecture"

Note: Thank God for BOTs!! In the original layout, the third panel above featured a front on view of Weird Pete which one reader claimed looked like "Santa Claus on Crack". Another reader claimed he had nightmares after seeing the image. A kinder-gentler Weird Pete is now shown — Jolly

**A FEW DAYS LATER...**

OKAY, THAT'S A GOOD POINT TO STOP TONIGHT'S ADVENTURE. WE'LL PICK IT UP NEXT WEEK OUTSIDE THE **SHATTERED PINKIE GNOLL CLAN'S LAIR**. I EXPECT A FAIRLY MAJOR BATTLE SO DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR MINIATURES.

HUH? CAN'T MAKE IT?? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT DUDE? THIS ADVENTURE IS KICKIN' OUR BUTTS. WE NEED YOU!!

WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO GET YOUR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT, BOB?? YOU'RE HURTING THE GAME!!

WHAT'S UP BOB? GOT A HOT DATE OR SOMETHING? (SNICKER)

DAMN! CAN'T YOU HOLD OFF? I CAN'T MAKE IT NEXT WEEK!

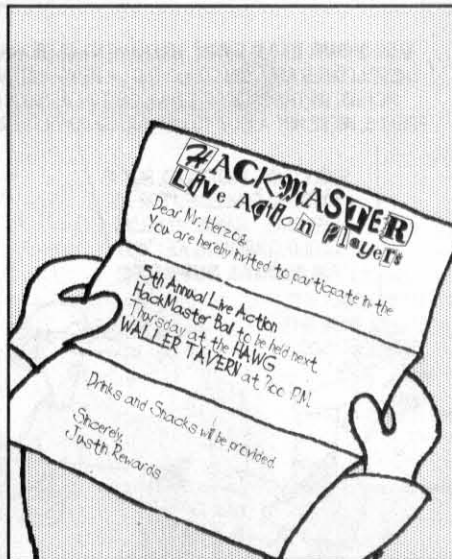


APPARENTLY NEWS OF MY ROLEPLAYING PROWESS HAS ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF A CERTAIN **ELITE ROLEPLAYING ORGANIZATION!** I GOT A SPECIAL INVITATION IN THE MAIL TO ATTEND A GAME NEXT THURSDAY!!

INVITATION?? FROM WHO?? I WONDER IF MINE GOT LOST IN THE MAIL OR SOMETHING.

ELITE? WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT BOB?

YEAH, LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT YOUR SO-CALLED INVITATION.



I'VE HEARD ABOUT THESE **LARP** CLUBS. THEY'RE PRETTY SELECTIVE ABOUT WHO THEY ASK TO JOIN THEIR RANKS. THIS COULD BE THE START OF SOMETHING BIG!!

**HACKMASTER LIVE ACTION PLAYERS SOCIETY??** I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THEM.

**5TH ANNUAL LIVE ACTION HACKMASTER BALL??** SURELY WE WOULD HAVE HEARD OF THIS GROUP BY NOW.

NOT NECESSARILY. I'VE LONG SUSPECTED THE EXISTENCE OF A **SECRET GAMING SOCIETY** IN THE MUNCIE AREA. IT MAY EXPLAIN WHY ATTENDANCE AT **HACKCON '97** WAS DOWN FOUR PERCENT.

IF THEY'RE SO SELECTIVE HOW COME YOU GOT AN INVITE??





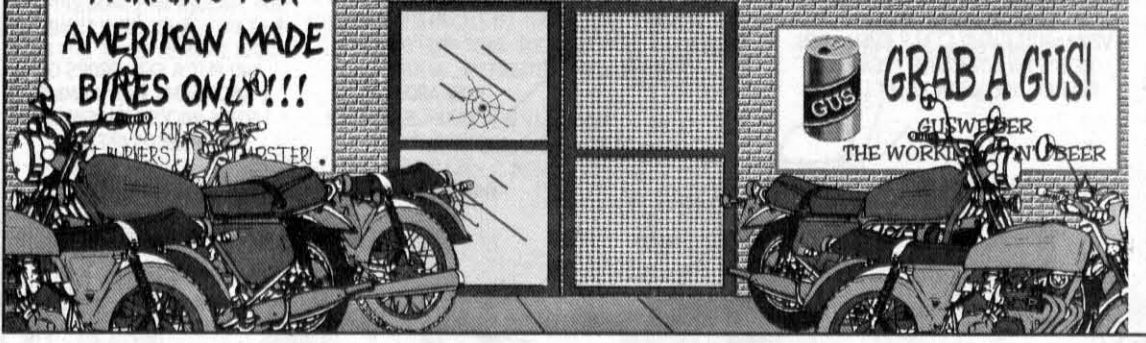
THE FOLLOWING WEEK...

# HAWG WALLER'S KICKSTAND PALACE

COLD BEER • POOL • TELERVISION

**PARKING FOR  
AMERIKAN MADE  
BIRES ONLY!!!**

**GRAB A GUS!**  
GUSWEER  
THE WORKING MAN'S BEER



WELL, SO FAR SO GOOD!  
LOOKS LIKE WE MAY BE  
A LITTLE EARLY.

YEAH, WE GOT THE BEST  
SEATS IN THE HOUSE. NOW  
REMEMBER, YOU'RE SUPPOSED  
TO STAY IN CHARACTER.

TOO BAD SARA  
BAILED ON US.  
SHE'S MISSING  
OUT, BIG TIME!

HEY, ANYBODY WANT TO CHIP IN  
ON A PITCHER?? WHAT THE HELL IS  
**BOHEMIAN LEMONADE??**

HEY... I THINK  
THE CHICK WITH  
THE NOSE RING IS  
LOOKIN' AT ME!!



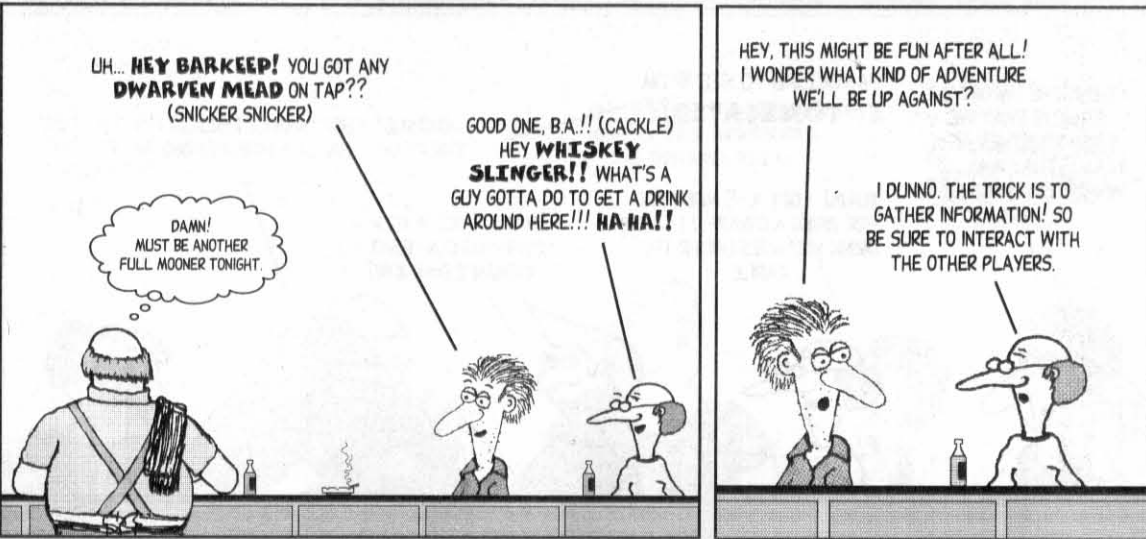
UH... **HEY BARKEEP!** YOU GOT ANY  
**DWARVEN MEAD** ON TAP??  
(SNICKER SNICKER)

DAMN!  
MUST BE ANOTHER  
FULL MOONER TONIGHT.

GOOD ONE, B.A.!! (CACKLE)  
**HEY WHISKEY  
SLINGER!!** WHAT'S A  
GUY GOTTA DO TO GET A DRINK  
AROUND HERE!!! **HA HA!!**

HEY, THIS MIGHT BE FUN AFTER ALL!  
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF ADVENTURE  
WE'LL BE UP AGAINST?

I DUNNO. THE TRICK IS TO  
GATHER INFORMATION! SO  
BE SURE TO INTERACT WITH  
THE OTHER PLAYERS.



Note: Some readers may find it interesting that the original version of this strip (without the 'revenge' aspect attached to it) was slated for KoDT#2. The entire strip was inspired by an idea that I had of a gamer drinking at a bar and rolling some dice to see if he was intoxicated. The strip was pulled from Issue 2 because of lack of space. Later when Dragon picked up KoDT, I pitched the idea to the editor but he rejected it as being 'unsuitable' subject matter for their younger audience. After that it kept getting bumped from one issue of KoDT to the next for two years, or so. When we decided to run it, we realized that so much had transpired in the pages of KoDT since I had originally written it that it could be taken further than just a one-time gag. It was reworked as the fulfillment of Nitro's elaborate plan for revenge against Bob. It never dawned on us that we would EVER return to Hawg Waller's in future strips or that one of the patrons (Crutch) would end up becoming a role-player. — Jolly

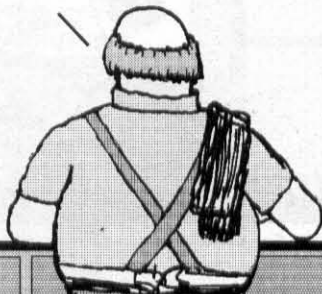
HEY **BARKEEP!** HEAR ANY GOOD **RUMORS** LATELY?? HUH??

**NO GOOD, B.A.**, YOU NEVER GET RESULTS FROM THE **FREE RUMOR TABLE**. YOU GOTTA GREASE SOME **PALMS** TO GET THE **GOOD RUMORS**.

I JUST SERVE DRINKS, MAC. I HEAR VERY LITTLE AND I TALK EVEN LESS. KEEPS MY INSURANCE PREMIUMS DOWN IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

HOW ABOUT A COUPLE OF TANKARDS OF YOUR BEST **MEAD** THEN??

AND PUT A FEW DROPS OF **VENISON FAT** IN MINE. I GOT A WICKED TAPEWORM THAT NEEDS FEEDIN'.



THERE YA GO. TWO BOTTLES OF **GUS!** THAT'LL BE **FOUR BUCKS**. NO CHARGE FOR THE GREASE. THE DEEP FRYER IS ABOUT DUE FOR AN OIL CHANGE ANYWAYS.

SAY **BARKEEP**, I GOT A SHINEY **GOLD PIECE** HERE FOR A TIP. I'M SURE IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT, YOU MIGHT RECALL HEARING A FEW JUICY **RUMORS** EH? WHAT DO YA SAY?

I KNOW A COUPLE OF BOYS WHO ARE GOING TO GET THEIR BUTTS WHIPPED IF THEY DON'T WISE UP.

NOW WE'RE TALKING!! GIVE 'EM A FEW MORE GOLD PIECES, B.A. LET'S PUMP HIM FOR MORE INFO!!

Video Arcade Token



**FIVE TOKENS LATER...**

**NOTHING!** HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING OR ELSE HE'S NOT TALKING. WE'RE WASTING OUR **GOLD** WITH THIS ONE.

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING THAT CAN KEEP A **BARKEEP** FROM FLAPPING HIS MOUTH - **FEAR!** SOMEONE'S PUT THE PRESSURE ON HIM.



I THINK THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT WE STICK TOGETHER AS A TEAM!! THAT WAY...?? WHAT'S BRIAN DOING??

I'M ROLLING TO SEE IF I'M **INTOXICATED!!**

**OOPS!** I GOTTA (HIC) REROLL. THE PEANUT SHELLS INTERFERRED.

**HAA!** I GET A -5 MODIFIER FOR BEING A **DWARF!!** I CAN DRINK YOU GUYS UNDER THE TABLE.

SHAAY, (HIC) IF IT'SH A DWINKING CONTESTH - **COUNT ME IN!**



**A PITCHER AND A HALF OF BOHEMIAN LEMONADE LATER...**

HEY GUYS, I'VE THINK THIS **DRINKING CONTEST** HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH. WE SHOULD BE CONCENTRATING ON THE ADVENTURE AT HAND!!

**HEY!** YOU GUYS MEMBER THE TIME THAT **KNUCKLES** BITCH-SLAPPED THAT SURLY **GATE GUARD** FOR INSULTIN' HIS HONOR?? **THAT ROCKED!** (HIC) I GAVE HIM A QUICK **BOOT-UP-THE-HINEY** (HIC) LESSON IN SOCIAL ETTIQUTE!! **HAR HAR!!**

**HA!** I ROLLED A SEVENTEEN!!! **SHTILL NOT** (HIC) **INTOXICATED!!!**

C'MON YA **BIG SHPELL-LOBBER!!**  
ROLL DEM DICE!!



**WHOAH!** CHECK OUT THESE CHARACTERS COMING IN THE DOOR. THEY LOOK PRETTY ROUGH!!

**OH WOW!!** THEY'RE IN COSTUME!! I KNEW WE SHOULD HAVE DRESSED UP.

(HIC) SHAY, DISH ISH GWEAT!! DAT DUDE WOOKSH JUSH WIKE AN **OGRE.** (HIC)

**BLACK LOTUS** SAT QUIETLY IN THE ROADSIDE INN. A MYSTERIOUS, SHADOWY STRANGER WHO INVOKED SUSPICION AND FEAR AMONG THE FELLOW PATRONS.



HEY HAWG, WHO DO THE NEW FACES BELONG TO??

SSSHHHH...THEY SMELL LIKE UNDERCOVER TO ME. JUST BE COOL.

UH...GREETINGS STRANGER. MY NAME IS **TAR MARKVAR** THE **GNOME THIEF.**

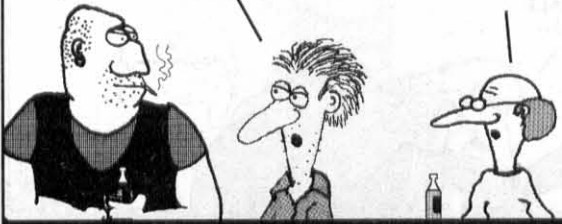
AND I AM **KNUCKLES**, KING OF THE WALL CLIMBERS. WE SEEK ADVENTURE.



**VENTURE??** I'VE NEVER RAN INTO THAT BEFORE. YOU PROBABLY HAVE TO GO TO **CHI-TOWN** TO GET THE HEAVY STUFF. BUT IF YOU CAN LAY A **FRANKLIN** ON ME I CAN HOOK YOU UP WITH AN **EIGHT-BALL OF CRANK**.

I...UH...HMMMMM... I'M NOT PICKING UP THE DIALECT HERE. **HILL GIANT?**

**EIGHT BALL OF CRANK??** I THINK THAT'S A MAJOR SCRYING RELIC!!



NAAAAA...TOO STUPID TO BE UNDERCOVER, HAWG. THEY MUST BELONG TO THAT RUSTY **PAGER** PARKED OUT BACK.

THE LITTLE ONE ANNOYS THE HELL OUT OF ME.

PAYING CUSTOMERS CAN AFFORD TO BE ANNOYING, **SWITCH!** GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO SETTLING YOUR BAR TAB LATELY??



UH, I DON'T THINK THIS GUY IS PLAYING THE SAME GAME. MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST....

NONSENSE!! HE JUST DOESN'T UNDERSTAND **GULLY DWARF**. I'LL THROW A LITTLE **TROLLKIN GIBBERISH** AT HIM.

(HIC) LE'ME BUY DISH DUDE A DWINK. DAT'LL WOOSEN HISH WIPS. (HIC)!!



**YO! STRANGER!!** SPEAKY VOUS TROLL?? KOBOLD??...UH...HOW ABOUT COMMON?? EVERYONE SPEAKS COMMON!! **YOU GOT WAX IN YER EARS??**

**PISS OFF!**

I'M A... I'M ...NOT WITH HIM...



BOB, I MEAN IT. **LEAVE THE OGRE** ALONE!!! HE DOESN'T LOOK TOO FRIENDLY!!

YA JUST DON'T GET IT B.A.!! DON'T YOU SEE? HE'S THE **ADVENTURE HOOK!!** HE OBVIOUSLY HAS INFORMATION WE NEED!!

SHAAAAAYYY, WHAD HE SHAY?? ISH THAT **OGRE** GIVING YOU WIP **KNUCKLESH?**

THE LOVELY BAR WENCH EYED **BLACK LOTUS** WITH A WANTON EYE. POOR LASS!! UNWARE THAT THE **DARK MAGE** COULD ONLY BREAK HER HEART.



HEY **MISHTER BUTT UGLY!!**  
MY WIDDLE DWARVEN FRIEND CAN  
**KICK YER ASSH!!**  
SHO YA BETTER NOT BE **DISHIN'**  
HIM OR ANYTHING!!

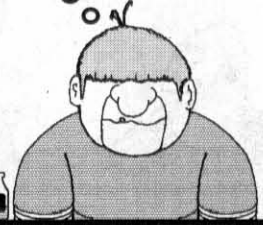


**HA!** LOOK AT  
THAT STUPID  
LOOK ON HIS  
FACE. HE'S  
OBVIOUSLY AN  
**NPC!**

UH...YA  
BETTER ROLL  
FOR INITIATIVE  
DUDE!! THAT  
**NPC** ISH  
COMIN' THISH  
WAY!!



A SHY GLANCE. A KNOWING NOD  
OF THE HEAD. HER DELICATE FINGERS PULL  
BACK A STRAND OF HAIR FROM HER FACE,  
REVEALING HER ELVISH FEATURES.  
ALL PART OF A SOPHISTICATED DANCE OF  
TEASE AIMED AT ATTRACTING  
THE ATTENTIONS OF THE  
DISTINGUISHED LOOKING WIZARD.

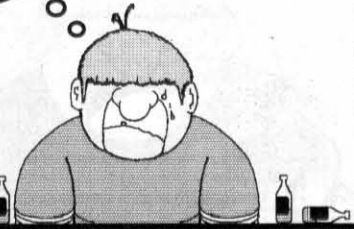


**!WHOOSH!**

OH MY GAWD!! THE **OGRE**  
HAS **KNUCKLES**...ER...**BOB**  
BY THE ANKLES!!!



**BLACK LOTUS** AVERTS  
HIS EYES FROM THE YOUNG MAIDEN.  
THE HEART OF A HERO BEATS WITHIN  
HIS CHEST. ROMANCE, ALAS, NOT EVEN  
A BRIEF ENCOUNTER HAS NO ROOM IN HIS LIFE.  
HE IS DOOMED TO ALWAYS BE THE  
TRAGIC, LONER. THE **SORCERER**  
LOYAL ONLY TO HIS CAUSE. (SNIFF)



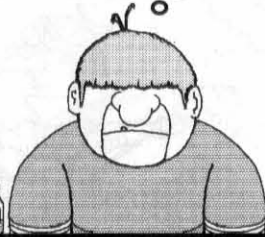
**KRACK!!**

**BOUNCY-BOUNCE**

OOOH...OOOHHH...  
OHHH.. WE SHOULD  
DO SOMETHING.

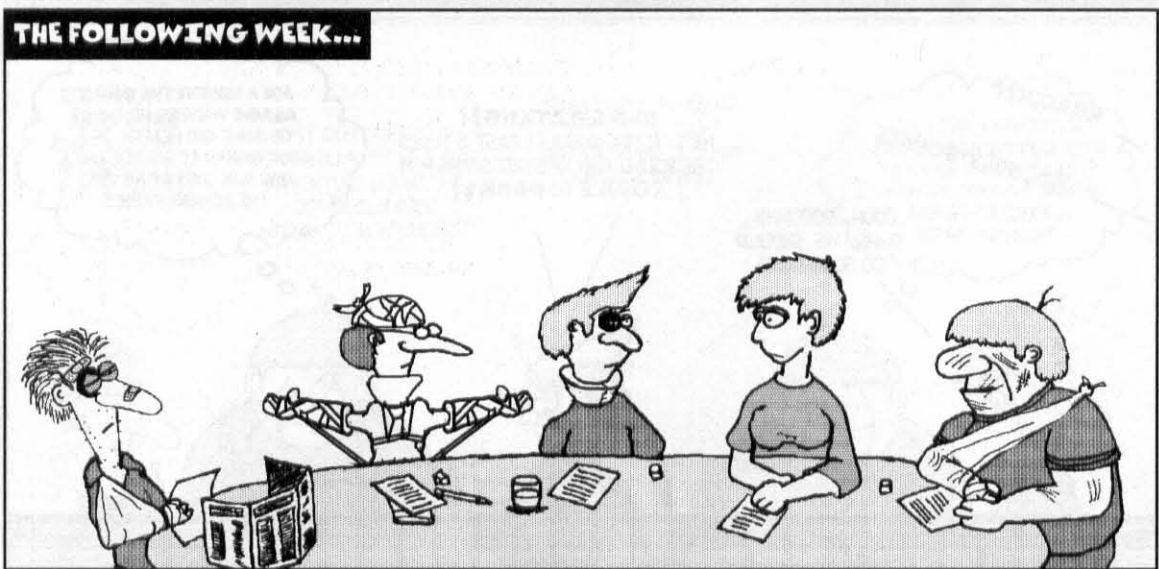
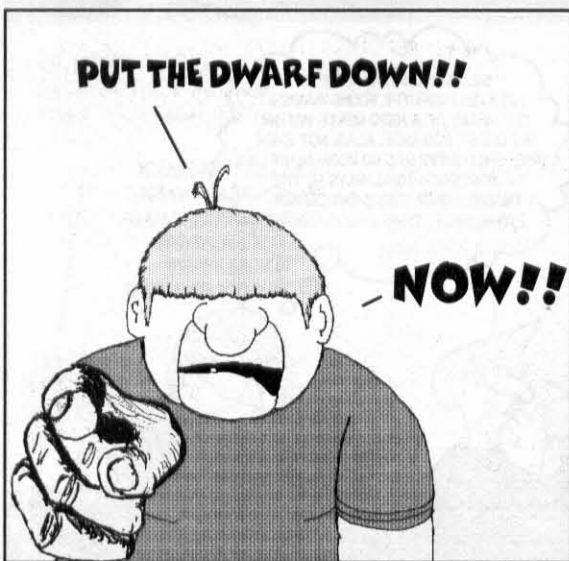
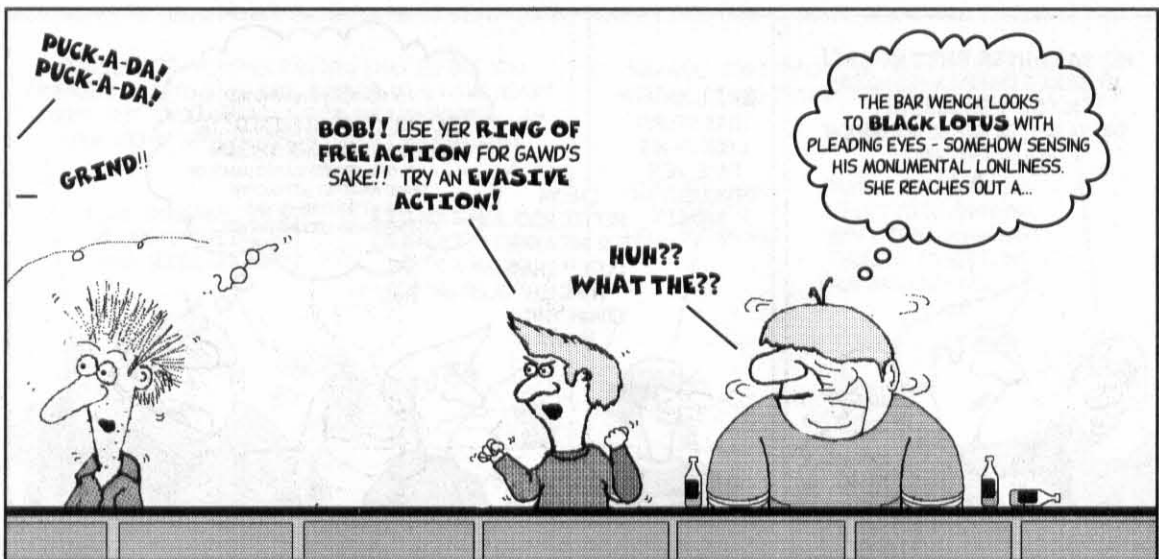


**HE'S CHEATING!!**  
HE'S HITTING BOB AT LEAST 8 TIMES  
PER ROUND AND HE'S NOT GIVING HIM  
A CHANCE TO **PARRY!**

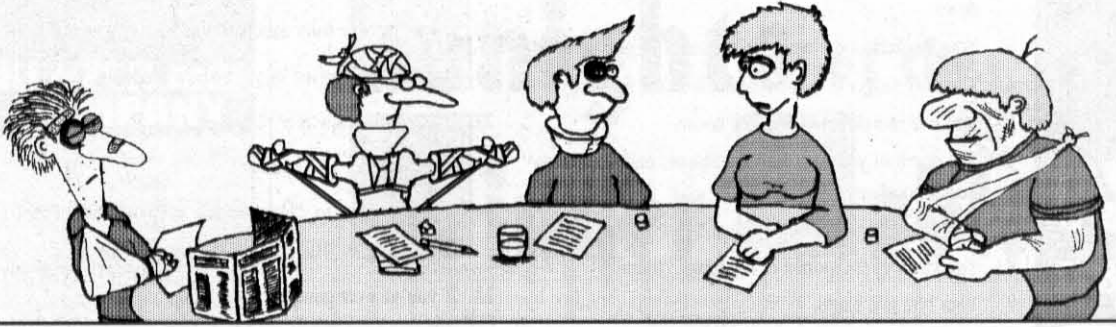


FOR A MOMENT THE **DARK**  
**MAGE** WAIVERS. HE THINKS  
OF HOME AND HEARTH. OF A  
GOOD WOMAN AT HIS SIDE AND A  
FEW MAN CLUBS AT HIS FEET.  
THE MOMENT PASSES.

Note: I remember when I sent this strip up for review, Brian Jelke suggested adding the bit where B.A. stammers "The Ogre has Knuckles...er, Bob by the ankles." He also came up with the bit about the Ring of Free Action on the next page. I thought they were nice touches. Also, I should mention I based the imbibed Dave's behavior in this strip on one of the KODT developers (who will remain unnamed) after some hair-raising experiences I had with him bar hopping one night. As Dave Kenzer said of this person, "If you drink with him long enough eventually he's going to get you beat up." Next time you wander by the KenzerCo booth at a convention try to guess who I'm talking about and invite that person out for drinks. — July



WELL?? IS SOMEBODY GOING TO TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED? I'M JUST DYING TO HEAR THIS ONE.



ACTUALLY, SARA, I DON'T REMEMBER MANY DETAILS AFTER THE CUE-STICK BROKE OVER MY HEAD.

WELL I GAVE THAT **OGRE** A GOOD RUN FOR HIS MONEY. I CAN TELL YA THAT MUCH. IF HIS **BUGBEAR BUDDY** HADN'T JUMPED IN, I WOULD'VE DONE ALRIGHT.

I REMEMBER TRYING TO LEAP THROUGH THE PLATE GLASS WINDOW BUT THINGS ARE KINDA BLURRY AFTER THAT. I REMEMBER BEING THANKFUL I WAS WEARING CLEAN UNDERWEAR DURING THE AMBULANCE RIDE.

I...I'M SPEECHLESS. OH MY...OH MY...

I WAS BETRAYED. THE **BAR WENCH** HIT ME OVER THE HEAD WITH A **PACHINKO** MACHINE.



THANK GAWD NONE OF YOU WERE KILLED. HOPEFULLY YOU'VE LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON FROM THIS TRAGIC EXPERIENCE.



WE LEARNED A LESSON ALRIGHT. NEVER TURN YOUR BACK ON A LOUSY **OGRE** - HE'LL JUMP YER ASS EVERYTIME!!

AND I LEARNED YOU CAN'T JUMP THROUGH A WINDOW MADE OF **BULLET PROOF LEXAN!!**

AND I, **BLACK LOTUS**, LEARNED THAT "HELL HATH NO FLURY LIKE A WOMAN'S SCORN."



# You Might Be A Redneck Elf If...

By Brian Burke, Lindsey Bard & Kathy Pulver

1. You bought your enchanted sword at K-Mart®.
2. You notch your ears for every dwarf you've taken down.
3. Your sword has the words "Craftsman™" printed on it.
4. The only ranger you know about is made by Ford®.
5. You live in a double wide tree house.
6. The porch of your tree house collapses and kills more than 4 cooshee.
7. You've ever used a homemade still to brew fey-whiskey.
8. You know every animal in the forest...literally.
9. Your lyre is a banjo.
10. You've ever played "dueling lyres"
11. If orcs are afraid to walk by your house
12. If you've ever said, "Squeal like a hydra, fat boy!"
13. If your version of casting a fireball or magic missile involves lighting a fart.
14. If you have a velvet painting of Elric.
15. If you elven boots are blue suede.
16. If your wallet is on a chain, and your cooshee isn't.
17. If you've ever said, "Hobbit, you've got a pretty mouth."
18. If your mana is grits.
19. If you know more than 3 ways to roast a unicorn.
20. If you've ever fully executed the "pull my wand" joke.
21. If you were married in a crossbow wedding.
22. If your crossbow is a 12-gauge.
23. You buy grog in 12 packs.
24. If your answer to, "How do you keep orcs out of the backyard?" is "Hang one in the front."
25. If you've ever gone balrog tipping.
26. There's a sign in your window that says, "If this trees a rocking, don't come a knocking."
27. If goblins say your messy and smell bad.
28. You've ever mowed your lawn, and found a dragon horde.
29. If your ceremonial robes are polyester.
30. Your place of worship has a spittoon and a two drink minimum.

Bizzaro

## Knights of the Dinner Table

SOMEWHERE IN AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE...

The following piece was submitted by Andrew Babb.

SORRY FOR THE DELAY GUYS, I HAD TO GET MY NEXT ADVENTURE READY FOR **STEVE GYGAX** TO PUBLISH, MY TENTH (YAWN) FOR **HACKMASTER!** WELL, ON TO THE ADVENTURE! YOUR PARTY IS BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING OF THE REALM TO BE CHARGED WITH A QUEST...

**PANSIES!** WHILE THOSE TWO ARE WASTING TIME MY THIEF CHECKS TO SEE IF THERE ARE ANY TAPESTRIES OR SILVERWARE OF VALUE. MAYBE I CAN SNEAK SOME AWAY WHILE THESE **WIMPS** CHATTER AWAY!

OOH! OOH! I'LL PARLEY WITH HIM! I ALWAYS LOVE TO DO THAT!

I'LL BOW DEEPLY TO SHOW RESPECT. I HOPE THIS WORKS AS WELL AS IT DID IN '**GNOMES AT THE GATES**'.

"SKILL ROLLS"? "MODIFIERS"? "ALIGNMENTS"? COULD SOMEONE PLEASE EXPLAIN THIS TO ME AGAIN? I CAN NEVER GET THIS STUFF STRAIGHT.





## KENZER AND COMPANY

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"Against All Odds"  
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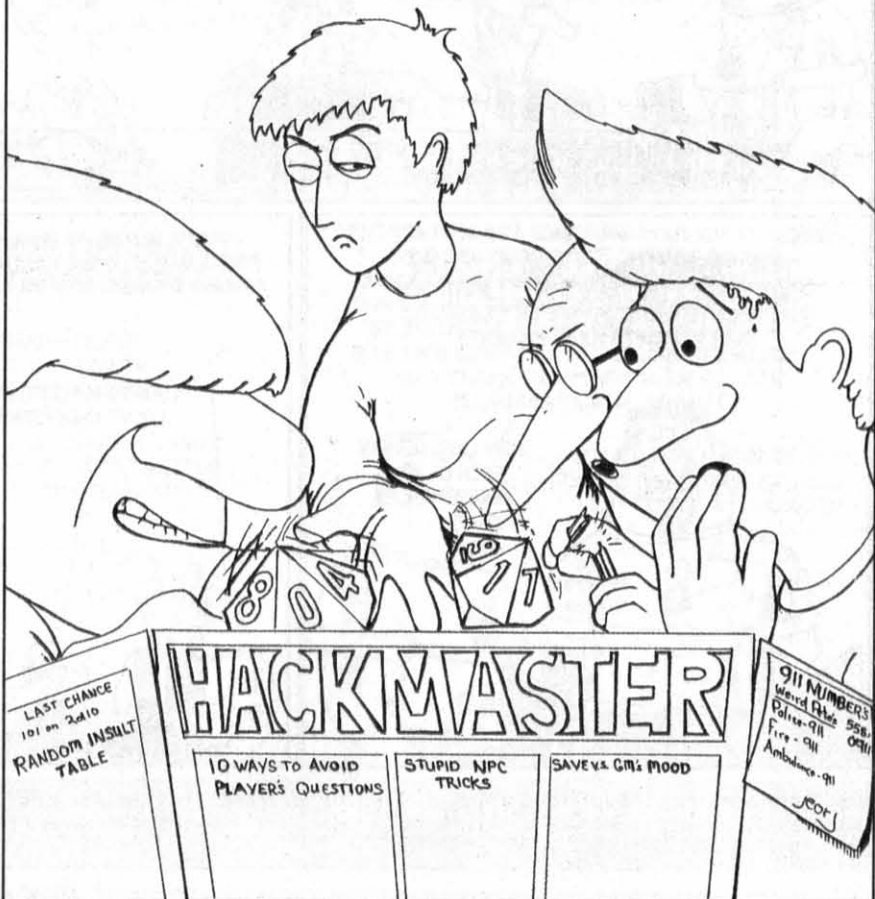
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toons, etc. We are interested in  
running anything that other  
gamers and fans would enjoy.  
Send a S.A.S.E. for writer's guide-  
lines to the address listed above,  
check out the website or or E-mail  
[jollyrb@aol.com](mailto:jollyrb@aol.com).

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# Knights of the Dinner Table™

## "Against All Odds"

The KODT Development Team is  
Jolly R. Blackburn, Brian Jelke,  
Steve Johansson and David S. Kenzer  
Cover Art by George Vrbanic



# The After Action Review

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN



OKAY FOLKS, WE GOT OUR **ASS KICKED** IN THE PRELIMINARY ROUNDS. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO EMBARRASS ME LIKE THAT AGAIN. **YOU HEAR?** FROM HERE ON OUT WE GAME THREE TIMES A WEEK. I'M GOING TO FORGE THIS **MOTLEY CREW** INTO A TEAM IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO. NOW, BEFORE WE START TONIGHT'S GAME LET'S REVIEW THAT LAST ROUND YOU LOST YESTERDAY.

**HELLO!** SOME OF US HAVE TO DRIVE FORTY-FIVE FREAKIN' MILES TO GET TO THIS DUMP!! THERE'S NO WAY I'M MAKIN' THAT DRIVE THREE TIMES A WEEK.

GOOD IDEA NITRO. I GOT A FEW THINGS TO SAY ABOUT THAT **DRAGON'S LAIR FIASCO!**  
(MUMBLE, MUMBLE)

I FOUND IT REALLY HARD TO GET INTO THAT ADVENTURE. THE **GM** DIDN'T REALLY GIVE US MUCH TO WORK OFF OF.

THIS IS ABOUT ME, ISN'T IT? LOOK, I DIDN'T KNOW THAT **SNUFF BOX** WAS RIGGED WITH **EXPLOSIVE RUNES**.

YOU KNOW, GORDO, THE TWO DOZEN CHARRED BODIES SCATTERED CENTRIFUGALLY FROM THE SNUFF BOX WAS A REAL **BIG FREAKIN' CLUE!**



THERE, **THERE!!** THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. WHERE'S THE TEAM SPIRIT?? **HUH?** YOU GUYS INFLICTED MORE DAMAGE ON YOURSELVES THAN YOU DID TO YOUR OPPONENTS.

NOW LET'S REVIEW EACH OF YOUR PERFORMANCES.



**NEWT,** BEFORE WE REVIEW YOUR PERFORMANCE I WANT YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR AND TAKE A LOOK TO YOUR LEFT.

LOOK TO MY LEFT, SIR? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

IT'S NOT ALL THAT COMPLICATED. JUST PIVOT YOUR HEAD ON YOUR NECK AND TAKE A LOOK TO YOUR LEFT.



Note: This particular strip is a favorite at KODT Live Readings. The first time I saw it being performed the fellow playing Nitro yelled at the players in the most intimidating voice I've heard since Boot Camp when a Drill wanted to know why I wasn't where I was supposed to be. It's ironic because I wrote this strip with a Drill Sergeant flaming his recruits in mind. — Jolly



OKAY, YOU SEE THAT GUY NEXT TO YOU??

UH...YEAH. SURE I DO.

THAT'S **GORDO!** YOU REMEMBER GORDO DON'T YOU?

SURE, I KNOW **GORDO.** WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT SIR?

SAY HELLO TO NEWT, GORDO.

HEY THERE NEWT!!



OKAY, NOW LOOK A LITTLE FURTHER DOWN. SEE THAT GUY NEXT TO **GORDO?**

YEAH. THAT'S STEVIL. BUT SIR I KNOW WHO THEY....

AH, AH, AH, DON'T INTERRUPT BOY!! YOU'RE CORRECT - THAT'S **STEVIL'S** SUNNY FACE DOWN THERE!! SAY HELLO TO NEWT, STEVIL!

HELLO TO NEWT, STEVIL.

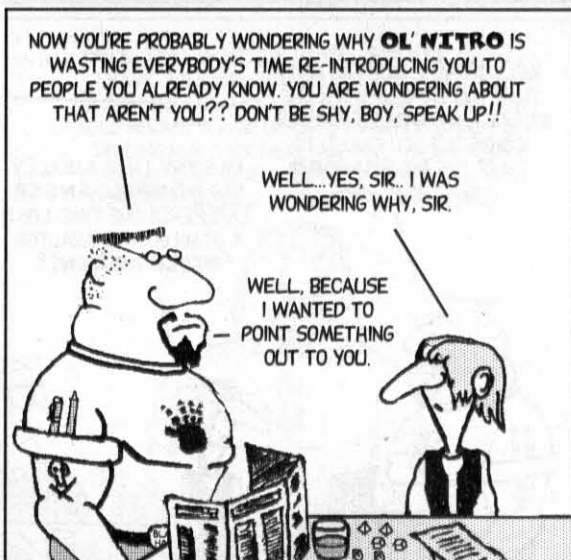


NOW, I KNOW HE MAY BE HARD TO SEE FROM WHERE YOU'RE SITTING BUT I WANT YOU TO TRY. LOOK **WAY, WAY,** DOWN THERE AT THE END OF THE TABLE. YOU SEE THAT GUY DOWN THERE??

WELL...YEAH. THAT'S PETE. I CAN SEE HIM PRETTY GOOD FROM HERE. I REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT...

AH, AH, SHUT UP BOY. OKAY **PETE.** SAY HI TO NEWT HERE.

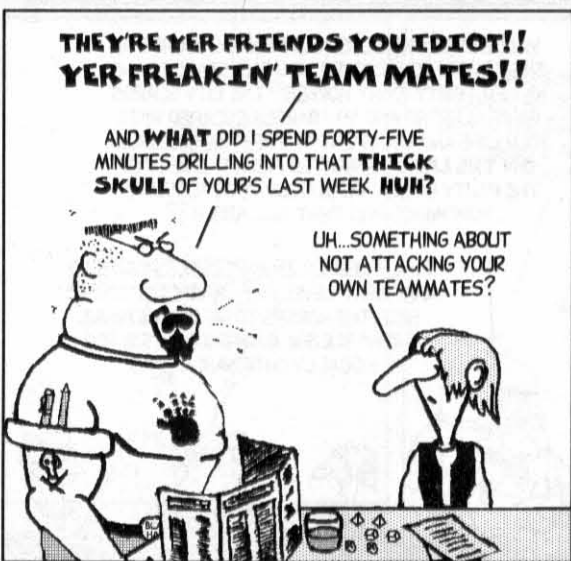
HOW'S IT HANGIN' NEWT??



NOW YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHY **OL NITRO** IS WASTING EVERYBODY'S TIME RE-INTRODUCING YOU TO PEOPLE YOU ALREADY KNOW. YOU ARE WONDERING ABOUT THAT AREN'T YOU?? DON'T BE SHY, BOY, SPEAK UP!!

WELL...YES, SIR. I WAS WONDERING WHY, SIR.

WELL, BECAUSE I WANTED TO POINT SOMETHING OUT TO YOU.



**THEY'RE YER FRIENDS YOU IDIOT!! YER FREAKIN' TEAM MATES!!**

AND **WHAT** DID I SPEND FORTY-FIVE MINUTES DRILLING INTO THAT **THICK SKULL** OF YOUR'S LAST WEEK. **HUH?**

UH...SOMETHING ABOUT NOT ATTACKING YOUR OWN TEAMMATES?



**THAT'S RIGHT!** SOMETHING ABOUT NOT ATTACKING YOUR OWN TEAMMATES!! **YOU'RE DAMN STRAIGHT!!** GOING AROUND BACKSTABBING YOUR OWN TEAMMATES IS A VERY BAD IDEA BOY!! **A VERY BAD IDEA!!** AND NOT BECAUSE IT MAKES ME A **RAVING LUNATIC** BUT BECAUSE IT'S **HARD** TO WIN A **TEAM TOURNAMENT** WHEN ALL YOUR **TEAMMATES ARE DEAD!!**

BUT **KRIGIN THRIFTAXE** IS AN OPPORTUNIST SIR. I WAS JUST PLAYING MY CHARACTER.

**BIG SPUTTER BLERP**

**NEWT**...SON, DON'T GET ME WRONG. YOU STARTED OUT REALLY GOOD. I WAS **PROUD** OF YOU. **I REALLY WAS!** THE WAY YOU CLIMBED UP THE WALL OF THAT PALACE - OPENED THE GATES FOR YOUR COMRADES. KILLED THE SENTRIES, POISONED THE WELL. **OUTSTANDING!**

THANKS SIR. YOU KNOW, I GOT THE IDEA OF POISONING THE WELL FROM AN OLD **RUTGER HAVER** MOVIE.

I SAW THAT ONE. IT WAS PRETTY KEWL!!



WELL THAT WAS GOOD THINKING, **NEWT**. I LIKE INNOVATION IN A PLAYER. AND I DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO DAMPEN THAT SPIRIT. I WAS DULY IMPRESSED UP TO THAT POINT. THEN YOU DID SOMETHING THAT BAFFLED ME.

WHAT WOULD THAT BE SIR?

YOU PUSHED **STEVI**'S CHARACTER INTO A **SPIKED PIT** AND DOUSED HIM WITH **FLAMING OIL!** WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?

I GAVE HIM THE **DOPPLEGANGER CHALLENGE\*** AND HE DIDN'T KNOW THE **PASSWORD**.

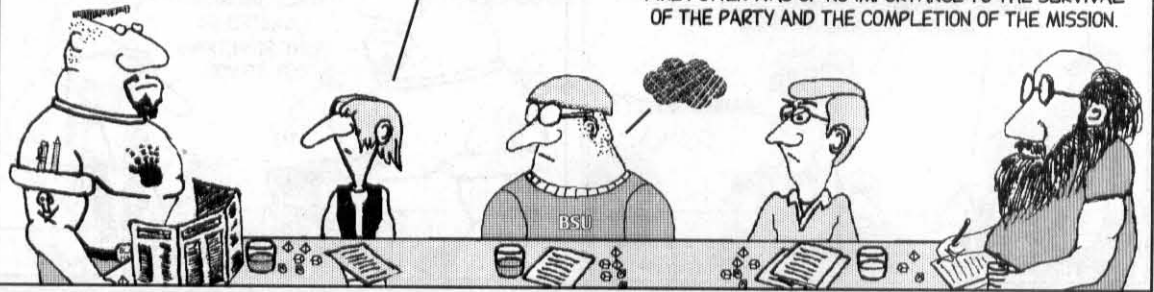


WELL IT'S ALL NICE AND GOOD THAT YOU CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF A **DOPPLEGANGER CODE** BUT YOU FAILED TO SHARE THE **PASSWORD** WITH THE OTHERS.

I'M SORRY. I HAD A REALLY BAD **DOPPLEGANGER** EXPERIENCE ONE TIME. LOST A DAMN GOOD CHARACTER. **NEVER AGAIN!!**

THEN A LITTLE LATER WHEN THAT **SQUAD OF ORC GUARDS** WERE CHASING YOU DOWN THE CORRIDOR YOU **HAMSTRUNG GORDO** WITH A RUSTY DAGGER AND LEFT HIM BEHIND.

C'MON, THE DUDE'S A **PIXIE FAERIE!** THROWING HIM TO THE ORCS SLOWED THEIR PURSUIT AND ALLOWED US TO ESCAPE. THE LOSS OF HIS MINISCULE FIRE POWER WAS OF NO IMPORTANCE TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE PARTY AND THE COMPLETION OF THE MISSION.



UH...I THINK WE NEED TO MEET PRIVATELY TOMORROW, **NEWT**. YOU NEED A LITTLE **REMEDIAL TRAINING**. MEET ME AT MY PLACE AND BRING A SACK LUNCH. IT MAY TAKE A WHILE. (SIGH)

OKAY, LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION TO **GORDO**. WE'LL START WITH THE LITTLE INCIDENT INVOLVING THE **HORSES**.



WHILE EVERYONE ELSE WAS DRINKING ROUNDS IN THE TAVERN YOU SLIPPED INTO THE STABLES AND KILLED THIRTY-EIGHT HORSES!! THE CITY GUARDS WERE ALERTED AND YOU BARELY ESCAPED WITH YOUR LIFE AND YOU SPENT THE REST OF THE GAME **ON THE LAM** SEPARATED FROM THE REST OF THE PARTY WHILE YOU ELUDED YOUR PURSUERS. NOW WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT??

I ONLY NEEDED 251 EXPERIENCE POINTS TO MAKE NEXT LEVEL. MY CHARACTER CONSIDERED THE HORSES TO BE **OPTIMAL LOW-RISK CANDIDATES** FOR LOCALLY OBTAINABLE E.P.'S.



\* Doppleganger Codeword idea submitted by Keith Pogue

**DAMMIT, GORDO!!** YOU KNOW DAMN WELL WE'VE TALKED ABOUT THIS BEFORE. YOU'VE GOT TO START PULLING YOUR WEIGHT IN THE **DUNGEON!** EVERY TIME SOMETHING DANGEROUS REARS ITS UGLY HEAD YOU FIND A WAY TO AVOID IT. YOU'RE ALWAYS CHASIN' THE EASY **E.P.'S**.

**EASY E.P.'S?** AWH, C'MON. THAT'S NOT FAIR. YOU KNOW HOW **HARD** IT IS TO PLAY A **PIXIE FAERIE?** HUH?? IT'S NOT EASY SURVIVING WITH 12 HITPOINTS. **FIRE BLOSSOM** DIDN'T MAKE 8TH LEVEL FOR NO REASON, YA KNOW.

I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT **FIRE BLOSSOM**. I KNOW YOU'RE ATTACHED TO HER BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO PLAY A **REAL** CHARACTER?? I MEAN JUST FOR THE TOURNAMENT.



IT'S GONNA BE EVEN HARDER TO SURVIVE TO 9TH LEVEL IF YOU KEEP THAT CRAP UP!!

UH OH - HERE COMES THE WATER WORKS.

THERE YOU GO AGAIN!! (SNIFF) DUMPIN' ON (CHOKE) **FIRE BLOSSOM!** (SNIFF) HOW...(SNORT)...HOW...(SNIFF) CAN SHE FEEL (CHOKE) PART OF THE **TEAM** IF EVERYONE IS **DUMPIN'** ON HER (SNIFF) ALL THE TIME. (CHOKE). **IT'S NOT FAIR!**

UH...ER...OH GAWD...UH...LOOK, JUST FORGET I SAID ANYTHING, **GORDO**. UH...JUST SHOW UP WITH NEWT TOMORROW AND WE'LL DISCUSS THIS FURTHER. DON'T FORGET THE SACK LUNCH.

OKAY...(SNIFF)...I'LL BE THERE.



WELL, THAT BRINGS US TO YOU, **STEVI**. (SIGH). I HAVE JUST ONE OBSERVATION AND I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU COULD EXPLAIN SOMETHING TO ME. YOU SOLD **NEWT** A PAIR OF **ORDINARY BOOTS**, TELLING HIM THEY WERE MAGICAL. THEN WHILE POOR LAD IS BENDING OVER TO LACE THEM UP YOU **SMASHED HIS SKULL IN** WITH A MACE.



YOUR POINT BEING??

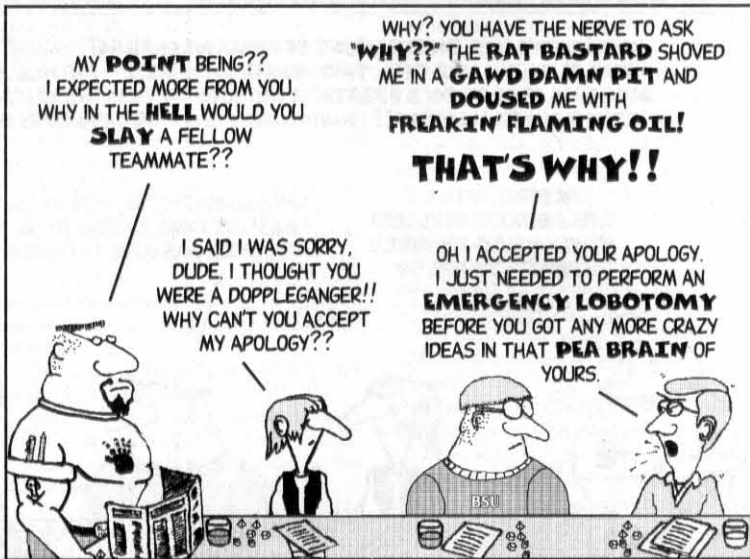
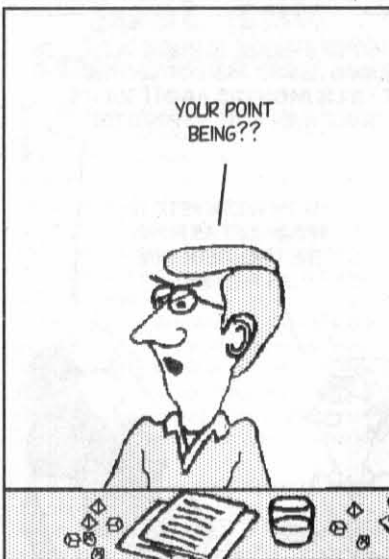
MY **POINT** BEING?? I EXPECTED MORE FROM YOU. WHY IN THE **HELL** WOULD YOU **SLAY** A FELLOW TEAMMATE??

WHY? YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO ASK **"WHY??"** THE **RAT BASTARD** SHOVED ME IN A **GAWD DAMN PIT** AND **DOUSED** ME WITH **FREAKIN' FLAMING OIL!**

**THAT'S WHY!!**

I SAID I WAS SORRY, DUDE. I THOUGHT YOU WERE A **DOPPLEGANGER!!** WHY CAN'T YOU ACCEPT MY APOLOGY??

OH I ACCEPTED YOUR APOLOGY. I JUST NEEDED TO PERFORM AN **EMERGENCY LOBOTOMY** BEFORE YOU GOT ANY MORE CRAZY IDEAS IN THAT **PEA BRAIN** OF YOURS.



OKAY, I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR COMPULSION TO SEEK REVENGE. BUT...UH...WHAT WAS UP WITH SELLING **NEWT** SOME WORTHLESS BOOTS AND TELLING HIM THEY WERE **BOOTS OF WALL WALKING??**

A SIMPLE DISTRACTION. THAT'S ALL.

**DISTRACTION??**

THE JERK HAS **18/93 STRENGTH!** I NEEDED A DISTRACTION, ALRIGHT???

I'D SAY GETTIN' YOUR HEAD POUNDED DOWN INTO THE PIT OF YOUR STOMACH WITH A MACE IS A DISTRACTION IN ITSELF. **HAR HAR!!**

**WORTHLESS?** I PAID **1.800 GOLD** FOR WORTHLESS BOOTS? THAT'S WHY I FELL TO MY DEATH OFF THAT CLIFF??



WELL, THAT LEAVES YOU **PETE**. YOU KNOW, I COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE...UH... I NOTICED THAT... ALL HELL. FORGET IT. YOU TAUGHT **ME** TO PLAY THE GAME. YOU DID FINE OL' TIMER!!

NO, NO, YOU WERE GOING TO SAY SOMETHING. C'MON!! LET'S HEAR IT. I GOT THICK SKIN. IF I DID SOMETHING WRONG I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT IT. **C'MON, NITRO!** LAY IT ON ME!!

WELL...LET'S TAKE THE **DRAGON'S LAIR**. THAT WHOLE FIASCO COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. I MEAN...YOU...AH, HELL, YOU **CHARGED A DRAGON, PETE!!** WHAT WOULD POSSESS YOU TO CHARGE A DRAGON??

**THERE!** THAT'S WHAT I WAS TALKIN ABOUT EARLIER!! EVERYBODY THINKS IT'S JUST A BIG OL' JOKE ON PETE!! **BIG LAUGH! VERY FUNNY!**



WHEN SOMEONE SAYS "**ON THE COUNT OF THREE WE CHARGE!!**" DAMMIT!! I EXPECT EVERYONE TO CHARGE ON THE COUNT OF THREE!! I HEAR, **ONE...TWO...THREE**. AND SUDDENLY I FIND MYSELF **RUNNING ALL BY MY LONESOME** INTO A WALL OF **DRAGON'S BREATH!** IT WAS FUNNY THE FIRST TIME YOU DID IT - **SIX MONTHS AGO!!** BUT IT'S GETTIN' OLD!!! **REALLY OLD!!** I WANT YOU GUYS TO CUT THE SHENANIGANS AND CHARGE WHEN YOU'RE SUPPOSED TOO!!

I'M SORRY, WITH A 17 INTELLIGENCE THERE'S JUST NO WAY **KRAG-IN** WOULD CHARGE A DRAGON, SIR.

I WAS GONNA CHARGE, PETE. REALLY I WAS! BUT I WAS WAITING TO SEE IF **STEVIL** WAS GOING TO CHARGE.

YOU'RE WRONG PETE. IT **WAS** JUST AS FUNNY THE TWENTIETH TIME AS THE FIRST.



LOOK GUYS, MY POINT IS YOU CAN'T WIN A **TEAM TOURNAMENT** IF YOU KEEP KILLING EACH OTHER OFF. I WANT YOU TO CONCENTRATE ON THAT CONCEPT OF **TEAM WORK!** I KNOW IT'S DIFFICULT BUT I WANT YOU TO FOCUS ON THAT AS WE PLAY TONIGHT. **OKAY?**

LOOK, AS LONG AS NOBODY GOES PUSHING ME INTO A PIT, DOLUSING ME WITH FLAMING OIL OR WHACKING ME WITH A TREE TRUNK I GOT NO PROBLEMS GOING WITH THE FLOW. BUT IF ANYBODY SCREWS WITH ME, **ALL HELL** IS GONNA BREAK LOOSE.

YOU GOT IT SIR.

**FIRE BLOSSOM** HAS NO PROBLEM WORKING AS A TEAM.

**TEAMWORK!** HERE, HERE!! AND THAT MEANS CHARGING ON THE COUNT OF THREE IFN YOU SAY YOU'RE GONNA CHARGE ON THE COUNT OF THREE!!



## TWENTY MINUTES LATER...

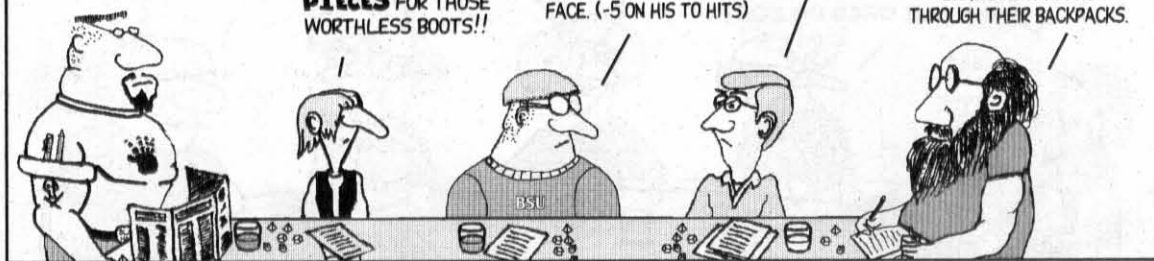
(SIGH) WE DON'T HAVE A CHANCE IN HELL OF WINNING THIS TOURNAMENT.

YOU DON'T LIKE IT?? HUH?? WELL I'M GOING TO **KEEP ON HITTIN' YA** IN THE **NADS** WITH MY **WARHAMMER** UNTIL YOU COUGH UP THE **1,800 GOLD PIECES** FOR THOSE WORTHLESS BOOTS!!

DREAM ON **SASQUATCH!** I PUT A LITTLE SOMETHING **EXTRA** IN YOUR GRIEL THIS MORNING WHICH SHOULD BE KICKING IN ANYTIME NOW. YOU DIDN'T THINK THAT I VOLUNTEERED FOR NIGHT WATCH OUT OF THE GOODNESS OF MY HEART DID YA??

HEY, IF YOU PAY ME **150 G.P.'S** I'LL FLUTTER IN HIS FACE. (-5 ON HIS TO HITS)

HEY NITRO, WHILE THE **BOBSIE TWINS** ARE BRAWLING I'M GOING THROUGH THEIR BACKPACKS.



## “Just ask for Nitro!”

In the introduction to *Tales From the Vault* (Volume 1), I revealed who most of the Knights were originally based on. When it came to Nitro, however, I indicated that he was “based on several individuals I’ve met over the years.”

The truth is, Nitro was originally based on a ‘real’ individual. Later as the character developed we applied more influences to him — so I wasn’t being totally dishonest - just deceptive.

I met Nitro in the summer of 1980. (Yes, that was his nickname - I never did learn his actual name. Recently though I was told he still lurks in Muncie, Indiana) A group of my friends and myself had just learned about a gaming group which met every Saturday night on the Ball State campus and decided to check it out.

When we arrived we were disappointed to find that the club primarily consisted of wargamers. Avalon Hill’s *Panzer Blitz* and *Panzer Leader* seemed to be the game of the choice and it was being played at a dozen different tables. As some of you, older gamers may recall, there was a big rift back in the old days between role-players and wargamers and we didn’t exactly feel welcomed as

we asked around to see if anyone was running a game of AD&D.

Finally one guy looked up from the column of German tanks he was moving and said, “Go Upstairs! First room on the right. Just ask for Nitro!”

We did as instructed and found our man. He was sitting with at a table talking someone through the process of rolling up a character.

We introduced ourselves and Nitro seemed delighted since, as it turned out, he only had one player. (We soon found out why.) “Looks like we have a game!” he told his friend. With that we took our seats and prepared to play. We immediately sensed we were in trouble when Nitro produced a 3 ring binder and announced that they contained his “handwritten rules.”

“You hand copied the entire AD&D GM’s Guide?” I asked incredulously.

“Uh... no,” replied Nitro, “I rewrote the rules.”

We shot each other a nervous glance. Apparently nobody was going to make the first move toward the door so we were stuck.

As it turned out, our time with Nitro would be very short. What followed was nothing short of player hell. The first creature we encountered (and this is the god’s honest truth) was a Duck with a +4 hotdog cart. For some reason, we never found out why, this Duck’s sole purpose in life was to go around smashing his cart into adventurers until

they agreed to buy a hotdog from him.

Once doing so you were promptly told to save vs. poison (food poisoning) or die.

Later we found ourselves in an open field and told that a ‘huddle’ of UMBER HULKS were racing toward us at sixty miles per hour. When my friend Joel protested that such a thing was ridiculous he was informed that his magic-user was DEAD! Nitro offered no explanation as to what happened but the message was clear - argue with the GM and you die.

I’m not sure who started gathering up their dice and papers first but soon there was a mad scramble to “get out of Dodge!”

“I’m sorry,” I said almost sheepishly, “I guess we’re used to a different style of gaming. Nothing personal.”

Nitro shrugged, “That’s okay. My stuff tends to appeal to more mature gamers anyway.”

We ended up back downstairs playing *Panzer Blitz*. When the guy who had steered us toward Nitro in the first place noticed us he grinned and shook his head.

“Hey, you’re back. Guess you didn’t want to play AD&D as bad as you thought!. Nitro will do that to ya.”

— Jolly R. Blackburn

# When Peace Comes to Shove

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

THE COURIER HANDS YOU A SCROLL. IT'S AN INVITATION FROM **GILEAD** TO ATTEND A SPECIAL **PEACE CONFERENCE!** APPARENTLY THE **SOUTHERN ORC LEAGUE** HAS EXTENDED A TOKEN OLIVE BRANCH AND HAS OPENED THE DOOR FOR PEACE TALKS.

OH HOW WONDERFUL! AND TO THINK WE HAD A HAND IN GILEAD TAKING POWER!!! HE'S REALLY TURNING OUT TO BE A FIRST CLASS LEADER!!

PEACE TALKS?  
WITH ORCS???

YOU'VE GOT TO  
BE KIDDING!!

DID YOU KNOW THAT ORCS  
DON'T HAVE A WORD FOR  
**PEACE** IN THEIR LANGUAGE???



C'MON GUYS!! THE **ORC WARS** HAVE BEEN LAYING THE REALMS TO WASTE FOR TWO DECADES!! THIS IS A VERY **BIG EVENT!** YOU SHOULD BE HONORED THAT **GILEAD** HAS ASKED YOU TO HELP IN THE PEACE PROCESS.

**PEACE?** WHAT THE HELL IS **GILEAD** TRYING TO DO?? HE'S INTERFERING WITH MY LIVELIHOOD!! **EL RAVAGER** WAS BORN TO HACK!!

THAT'S NOT RIGHT, BRIAN. THE ORC PHRASE, "**KA-MUNGRA FAAS**" LOOSELY TRANSLATES TO "**SHEATHING OF THE SWORD**" AND IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE HALTING OF HOSTILITIES!!

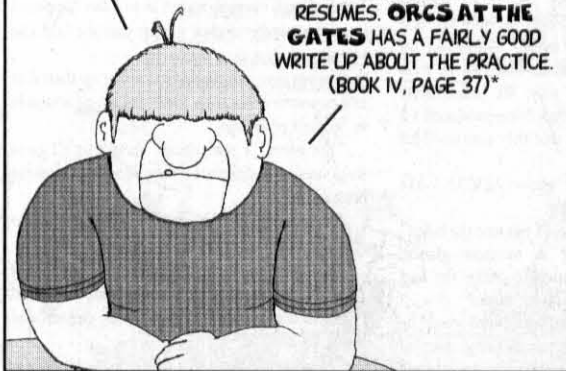
WELL **HOODY FREAKIN' HOO** AND A **BIG LA DE DA!** THIS IS WHAT YOU CAME UP WITH FOR AN ADVENTURE?? WHAT NEXT **ORCS ON ICE??**

ACTUALLY THE PHRASE YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IS "**KAR-MUNGRA FAAS'NEIR**"



AT ANY RATE, YOU'RE STRETCHING, SARA. THE PHRASE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH **PEACE** - IT SIMPLY REFERS TO A **PAUSE** IN THE BATTLE SO THE DEAD MAY BE COLLECTED FROM THE BATTLE FIELD.

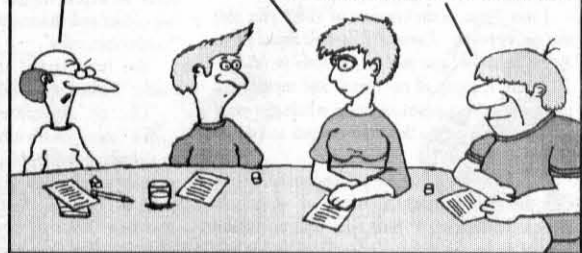
AFTER WHICH THE BATTLE RESUMES. **ORCS AT THE GATES** HAS A FAIRLY GOOD WRITE UP ABOUT THE PRACTICE. (BOOK IV, PAGE 37)\*



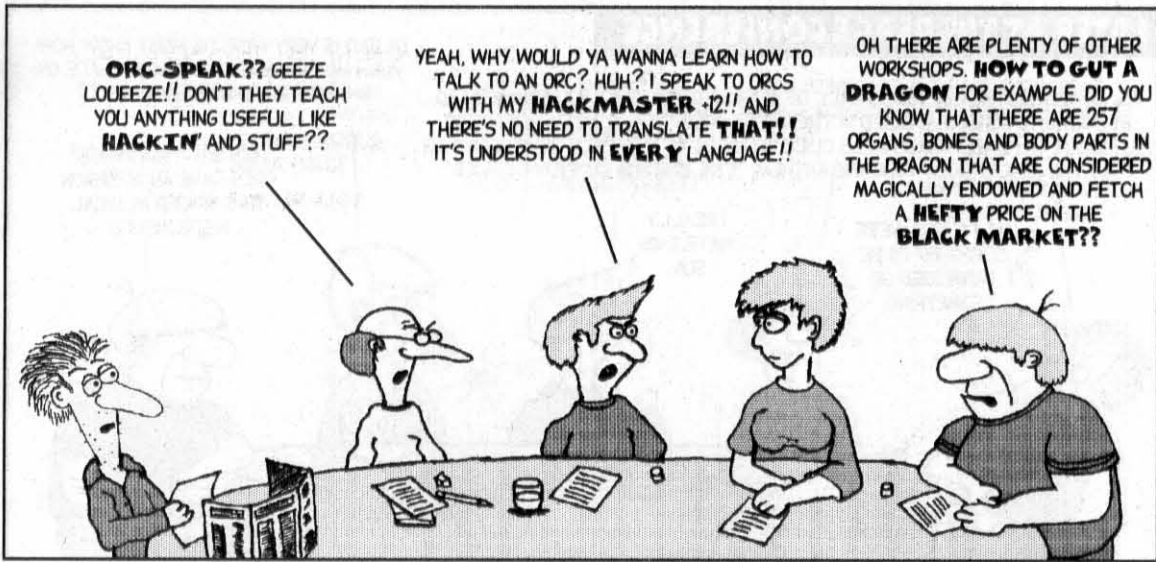
**OH I AIN'T BELIEVIN' THIS!** YOU GUYS ARE HAVING AN **ORGIN LINGUISTICS** DEBATE?? HOW THE HELL DID YOU GUYS BECOME SUCH EXPERTS ON THE SUBJECT? **HUN?**

I WENT TO **HACKMASTER CAMP** IN '92. THEY DEVOTE 10 DAYS TO DEMI-HUMAN CULTURE.

I ATTENDED IN '87 AND AGAIN IN '93. I WAS AWARDED A BADGE FOR **ORC-SPEAK**.



\* Subsequent to the original publication of KoDT #18 Jolly Roger Games [no relation to Jolly R. Blackburn] licensed the name "Orcs at the Gates" for a really great KoDT-themed board game they manufactured. Sadly, a write up of "Karmungra Faas'neir" is not included.



**ORC-SPEAK??** GEEZE LOUEEZE!! DON'T THEY TEACH YOU ANYTHING USEFUL LIKE **HACKIN'** AND STUFF??

YEAH, WHY WOULD YA WANNA LEARN HOW TO TALK TO AN ORC? HUH? I SPEAK TO ORCS WITH MY **HACKMASTER** +12!! AND THERE'S NO NEED TO TRANSLATE **THAT!!** IT'S UNDERSTOOD IN **EVERY** LANGUAGE!!

OH THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER WORKSHOPS. **HOW TO GUT A DRAGON** FOR EXAMPLE. DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE ARE 257 ORGANS, BONES AND BODY PARTS IN THE DRAGON THAT ARE CONSIDERED MAGICALLY ENDOWED AND FETCH A **HEFTY** PRICE ON THE **BLACK MARKET??**



LOOK, LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION BACK TO THE GAME. WHY ARE YOU BEING SO SHORT SIGHTED? DON'T YOU SEE, THIS IS A CHANCE FOR YOUR CHARACTERS TO HAVE A **GLOBAL IMPACT ON GARWEEZE WORLD?** AND IT'S A CHANCE TO RUB ELBOWS WITH WORLD LEADERS LIKE **ANK-TANG**. \* GILEAD EVEN LIFTED YOUR BANISHMENT, BOB, AS A TOKEN OF GOOD FAITH.

**ANK-TANG??** THE ORC HIGH PRIEST?? THAT BASTARD MADE A FOOL OUT OF US!!

I'M SO PROUD!! MAYBE MY ACT OF COMPASSION IN AIDING IN HIS ESCAPE OPENED **ANK-TANG'S** HEART TO THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACE BETWEEN OUR TWO RACES.

BANISHMENT? THAT TRIAL WAS A JOKE!!

HEY, HE TRUSTS SARA. MAYBE WE CAN USE THAT TO OUR ADVANTAGE...HMMMM



C'MON B.A.!! YOU'RE SERIOUS AREN'T YOU?? YOU SHOWED UP WITH SOME **LAME ASS** ADVENTURE ABOUT SOME **DAMN PEACE CONFERENCE WITH FREAKN' ORCS!!** THIS SUCKS!! I CAME TO **HACK** SOMETHING!!!

PEACE CONFERENCE HUH? I DUNNO. IT'S HARD GETTING EXCITED ABOUT A PEACE CONFERENCE. IT'S LIKE GOING TO MY SISTER'S PIANO RECITAL. **BOORINNGG!**

**YES.** THAT'S THE PREMISE OF ADVENTURE AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO PLAY.

COME ON GUYS, LET'S GIVE IT A TRY! **PLEASE?**

LET'S DO IT!! I WOULDN'T MIND USING MY ORATORY SKILLS.

\* see *Bundle of Trouble Volume Three* [KoDt #8] "An Orc Too Far"

**LATER AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE...**

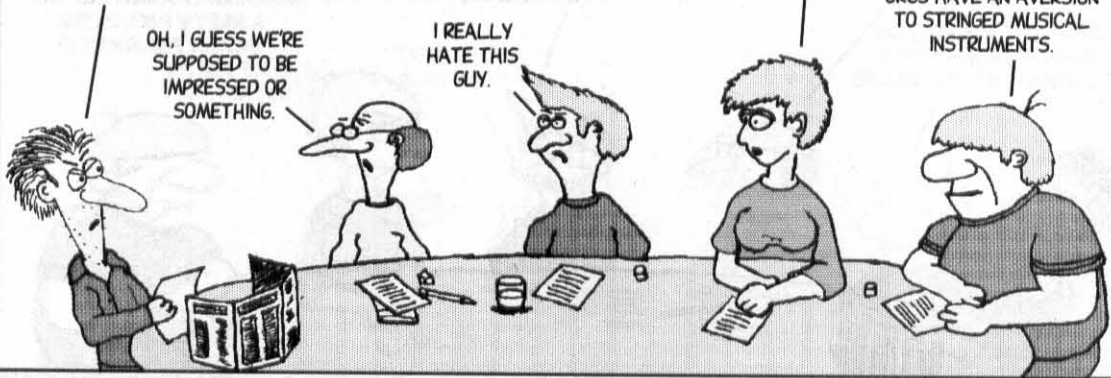
AS YOU ENTER THE HUMONGOUS HALL OF **GILEAD PALACE** YOU ARE GREETED BY 500 ELITE GUARDS ADORNED IN THEIR BEST DRESS ARMOR. NOT A BUTTON OR HAIR IS OUT OF PLACE. THEIR HEELS CLICK IN UNISON AS A 75 PIECE BAND BEGINS TO PLAY THE BEAUTIFULLY TOUCHING ANTHEM, **"THE FERNS OF FANGARIE"**.

GILEAD IS VERY WISE. HE MUST KNOW HOW MUCH IMPORTANCE THE **ORCS** PLACE ON **POMP AND CEREMONY!!**

HE'S NOT **THAT** WISE! ORCS HAVE AN AVERSION TO STRINGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

OH, I GUESS WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE IMPRESSED OR SOMETHING.

I REALLY HATE THIS GLY.

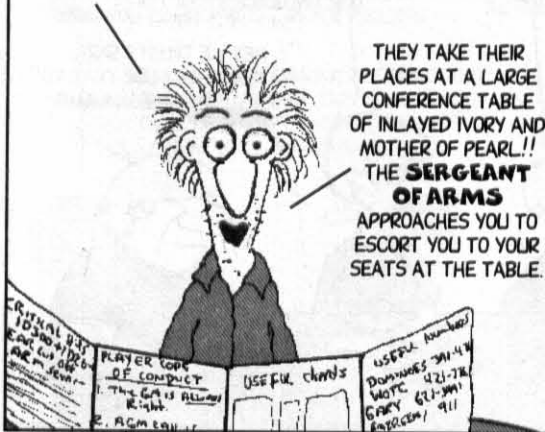


FINALLY **GILEAD** HIMSELF ENTERS THE HALL FROM THE LEFT, FOLLOWED BY HIS RETINUE AS **ANK-TANG** AND THE **ORC DELEGATES** DO THE SAME THING FROM THE RIGHT.

AM I TO UNDERSTAND WE'RE SITTING RIGHT ACROSS FROM **ANK-TANG**? I MEAN RIGHT THERE **FACE TO FACE??**

THEY TAKE THEIR PLACES AT A LARGE CONFERENCE TABLE OF INLAYED IVORY AND MOTHER OF PEARL!! THE **SERGEANT OF ARMS** APPROACHES YOU TO ESCORT YOU TO YOUR SEATS AT THE TABLE.

YES, YOU ARE HERE TO NEGOTIATE PEACE TERMS SO OF COURSE YOU HAVE TO TALK WITH THE ORCS **FACE TO FACE!!**



**I WASTE HIM WITH MY CROSSBOW!!**  
CALLED SHOT RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES BABY!!

I'M PULLING MY **HACKMASTER** +12!! I'M GOING TO SWING WIDE AND HARD AND TRY TO **DECAPITATE** AS MANY ORC DELEGATES AS POSSIBLE.

WE SHOULD HAVE TOTAL SURPRISE ON THEIR ASSES!!





**HOODY HOO!!** I'M UNLEASHING AT ANYTHING THAT EVEN **SMELLS** LIKE AN **ORC!**

THEY WANT **PEACE?** I'LL GIVE 'EM A **PIECE** OF THEIR OWN **FLESH** AS I LOB OFF SOME HEADS!! WE'RE GONNA **RUMBLE!!**

OH WONDERFUL!! THIS IS JUST GREAT. THERE GOES THE **ENTIRE** ADVENTURE!!

**HEY!** I DIDN'T GET TO DELIVER MY SPEECH!!



OH NO!! NO WAY!! WE'RE NOT GOING DOWN THAT ROAD AGAIN. **LORD GILEAD** IS **FURIOUS!!** HE ORDERS HIS GUARDS TO DEFEND THE **ORC DELEGATION!**

YOU HEAR THE HARMONIC "**SCHLING**" OF 500 SHORT SWORDS BEING DRAWN IN UNISON!!

<b>CRITICAL REVISIONS</b> 1. Error in the 2nd paragraph 2. Add 'orc' to the list	<b>PLAYER COPY OF CONDUCT</b> 1. The orc is allowed to kill 2. If you kill an orc, you must be prepared to die 3. If you die, you must be prepared to be resurrected	<b>USEFUL CHANTS</b>	<b>USEFUL SPELLS</b> 1. Fireball 2. Lightning Bolt 3. Fire Storm 4. Fire Storm (Advanced)
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**GILEAD** IS GOING DOWN AGAINST **US?** I DON'T BELIEVE IT!!

SO THAT'S THE WAY IT'S GOING TO BE EH?? ALRIGHT THEN!! WE'RE TAKING **GILEAD DOWN!!**

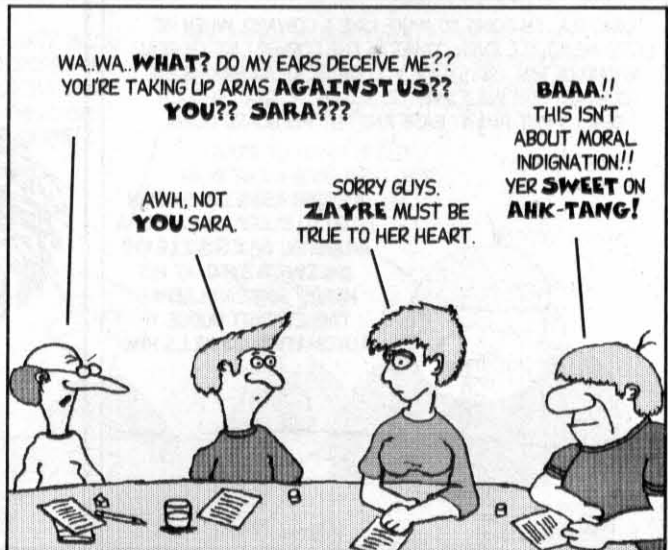
BELIEVE IT!

I'M BACKIN' YA UP GUYS. COUPLE OF FIREBALLS COMIN' ON LINE!!

BUT...BUT...



I'M SORRY GUYS! MY CHARACTER IS MORALLY OPPOSED TO WHAT YOU ARE DOING. I'M GOING TO...UH...I'M AFRAID I'M...I'M...UH...I'M GOING TO HAVE JOIN ARMS WITH **GILEAD!!**



WA. WA. **WHAT?** DO MY EARS DECEIVE ME?? YOU'RE TAKING UP ARMS **AGAINST US??** YOU?? **SARA???**

**BAAA!!** THIS ISN'T ABOUT MORAL INDIGNATION!! YER **SWEET** ON **AHK-TANG!**

AWH, NOT YOU SARA.

SORRY GUYS. **ZAYRE** MUST BE TRUE TO HER HEART.

# Dewin' Hard Time

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

YOU FIND YOUR ACCOMMODATIONS AT **FANGARIE PRISON** LEAVE A LOT TO BE DESIRED. **KNUCKLES**, **EL RAVAGER** AND **TEFLON BILLY** ARE SHOVED INTO AN EIGHT FOOT BY EIGHT FOOT CELL WITH FOUR OTHER PRISONERS. THERE'S ONLY ROOM FOR ONE PERSON TO LAY DOWN AT A TIME ON THE FILTHY RAGS THAT SERVE AS BEDDING ON THE STICKY FLOOR.

THERE MUST BE SOME KIND OF MISTAKE. I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD BE HOUSED WITH THE COMMON **RIFFRAFF!**

YEAH!! WE'RE POLITICAL PRISONERS!!

**B.A.**, AS LONG AS I'M **GILEAD'S** GUEST, I'LL BE PLEADING WITH HIM TO PARDON MY FRIENDS.

WELL I NEED TO REST. I'M DOWN A FEW HIT-POINTS AFTER THAT LASHING. I CALL FIRST DIBS ON THE BED.



SORRY BRIAN, AS **TEFLON BILLY** GOES TO LAY DOWN ONE OF THE OTHER PRISONERS (WHO IS KNOWN AS **THE BRUISER**) GRABS YOU BY THE THROAT AND HOLDS YOU UP OFF THE FLOOR WITH YOUR FEET KICKING IN THE AIR.

"DAT BE **MY** BEDDING, MATE!" HE SAYS IN YER FACE. YOU CAN SMELL THE RANCID ODOR OF ROTTEN MEAT ON HIS BREATH.

**HEY!** TEFLON BILLY ISN'T GOING TO JUST STAND THERE AND TAKE THAT ABUSE IS HE?? HUH??

OH MAN, I'M TELLIN' YA. YOU BETTER TAKE THIS DUDE DOWN AND QUICK!! YOU DON'T WANT TO GET TAGGED AS AN EASY MARK. **I'M NOT KIDDING!!**

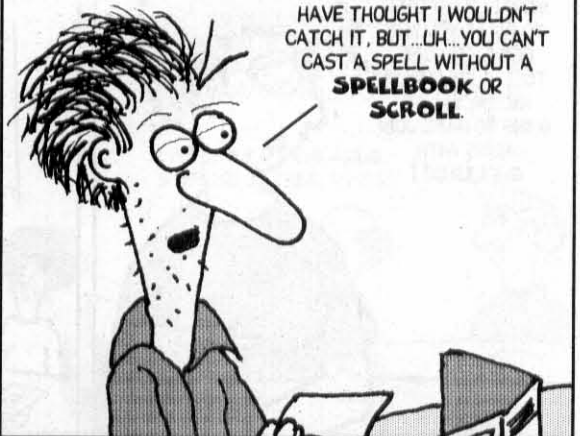
RELAX GUYS. WE'RE NEW MEAT. THIS GUY IS JUST TRYING FIGURE OUT WHERE WE FALL IN THE **PECKING ORDER**.



OKAY **B.A.**, I'M GOING TO MAKE LIKE A COWARD. WHEN HE LET'S ME GO, I'LL EVEN COWER IN THE CORNER LIKE I'M REAL AFRAID OF HIM AND STUFF. YOU KNOW, AVOID MAKING EYE CONTACT, TREMBLE EVER SO SLIGHTLY. THAT SHOULD REALLY PUT HIM AT EASE AND PUT HIS GUARD DOWN.

AS SOON AS HE LAYS DOWN TO GO TO SLEEP, I'M CASTIN' A **MAGIC MISSILE OF SKEWERING** AT HIS HEAD!! SINCE A SLEEPING TARGET CAN'T DODGE, IT AUTOMATICALLY KILLS HIM.

GOOD TRY, BRIAN. YOU MUST HAVE THOUGHT I WOULDN'T CATCH IT, BUT...UH...YOU CAN'T CAST A SPELL WITHOUT A **SPELLBOOK OR SCROLL**.



WHOOH!! I'M AFRAID I PULLED A FAST ONE ON YOU, B.A.!! A FEW MONTHS AGO, BOB, DAVE AND I WERE DISCUSSING THE RAMIFICATION SHOULD **TEFLON BILLY** EVER FIND HIMSELF WITHOUT ACCESS TO HIS **SPELLBOOKS AND SCROLLS**. IT WAS A PRETTY SCARY PROSPECT WHICH CONVINCED US WE SHOULD TAKE CERTAIN **PRECAUTIONS**.

**PRECAUTIONS?**  
WHAT KIND  
OF PRECAUTIONS??

YER GONNA LOVE THIS! **TEFLON BILLY**  
TATTOOED A CHOICE SELECTION OF  
SPELLS ON THE BACKS OF ME AND DAVE!!

**KEWL HUH?** WERE  
WALKIN' TALKIN' EMERGENCY  
SPELLBOOKS!!

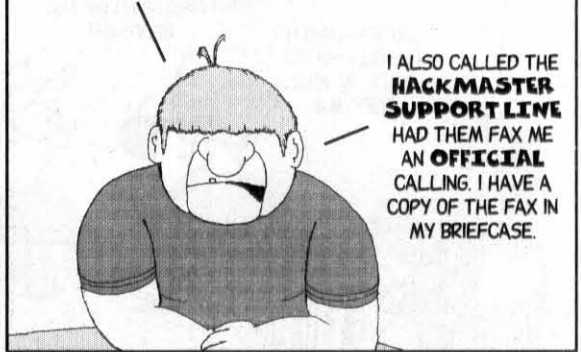
AND IT'S **ALL** RECORDED  
ON EACH OF OUR  
CHARACTER SHEETS!!



YOU CAN'T DO THAT!! IT WOULDN'T WORK.  
I'M NOT GOING TO ALLOW IT. YOU SHOULD HAVE  
CLEARED IT WITH **ME** FIRST. **NOPE!!** NO WAY  
IN HELL I'M LETTIN' YA GET AWAY WITH THIS.



SORRY B.A., I CHECKED. THERE'S NOTHING IN THE RULES THAT DIFFERENTIATE **LIVING SKIN** FROM **LEATHER** OR **VELUM**. AND TO **CLINCH** IT, IN **GARY JACKSON'S** NOVEL, **THE HACKMASTERS OF EVERKNIGHT**, THE DARK MAGE, **POADRUS** TATTOOS A **THROW-VOICE SPELL** ON THE EAR OF A **SOW PIG** AND USES IT TO ESCAPE THE **CAVERNS OF SANORD!**



I ALSO CALLED THE **HACKMASTER SUPPORT LINE** HAD THEM FAX ME AN **OFFICIAL** CALLING. I HAVE A COPY OF THE FAX IN MY BRIEFCASE.

YOU HAD THE SPELLS TATTOOED ON YOUR BACKS YOU SAY?? WELL TOO BAD. SINCE YOU EACH RECEIVED **50 LASHES** ACROSS THE BACK BEFORE BEING THROWN IN YOUR CELLS I WOULD SAY THE TATTOOS WERE **RENDERED UNREADABLE** BY THE LASH MARKS. **HA!** CALL **THAT** IN TO YOUR **SUPPORT LINE!!**

HEY, WE EACH HAVE TWENTY-FIVE SPELLS TATTOOED ON OUR BACKS!! I THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE TO ROLL A SAVING THROW VS. LASHING FOR EACH SPELL AND SETTLE IT THAT WAY!!

**THAT'S NOT FAIR!!** YOU'RE JUST MAD BECAUSE WE BUSTED UP YOUR PRECIOUS LAME ASS **PEACE CONFERENCE!**

I HATE TO ADMIT IT BUT DAVE HAS A GOOD POINT. IT'S THE ONLY FAIR WAY, B.A.

I AGREE!! EACH SPELL TATTOO SHOULD GET A SAVING THROW!



**TEN MINUTES LATER...**

...(ROLL) **DAMMIT!** ANOTHER FURK DING BLASTIN' SAVE..(ROLL) **OH FOR THE LOVE OF PETE!** ...ANOTHER FREAKIN' SAVE...(ROLL) **HA HA!!** MARK OFF ANOTHER **FIREBALL SPELL!** (ROLL) **CRIPES!!** A SAVE!!...(ROLL)...



(ROLL) **FRAP FURKIN' DING BLAST!** (ROLL) **SONUVA FAR REACHIN' GAWD BLASTIN'...**

YA KNOW IT WORRIES ME WHEN HE TAKES THESE THINGS SO PERSONAL.

WE BETTER STAY ON OUR TOES - HE'S IN A **KILLIN' MOOD!!** I'D SAY SOME **P.C.'S** ARE GOING BITE THE DUST TONIGHT!

MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T SPRING THESE THINGS ON HIM AT THE LAST MINUTE, BRIAN.



**A LITTLE LATER...**

OKAY THE GUARDS COME TO DRAG **BRUISER'S** BODY OUT OF YOUR CELL. THEN THEY RETURN SHORTLY AND DRAG **TEFLON BILLY** AWAY. THEY THROW HIM IN THE **HOLE!!** YOU JUST EARNED YOURSELF **NINETY DAYS** IN **SOLITARY CONFINEMENT**, SMART GUY!! AND THAT MEANS **NO LIVING SPELLBOOKS!!**

(SIGH) THIS IS ABOUT THE MOST UNADVENTUROUS ADVENTURE I'VE EVER BEEN ON. I'M STILL APPEALING TO **G-LEAD** FOR THAT PARDON.

THEY THINK THE **HOLE** WILL BREAK MY SPIRITS?? I DON'T THINK SO!!

I GOTTA HAND IT TO YOU - YOU'RE QUICK ON YOUR FEET, B.A.

I CALL DIBS ON THE BEDDING!!



**A WEE BIT LATER..**

TALK ABOUT **CRUEL** AND **UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT??** YER MAKIN THE BIG GUY WEAR A BOX ON HIS HEAD??

BRIAN? CAN YOU BREATHE IN THERE??

ACTUALLY THIS IS USEFUL. IT PUTS ME IN TOUCH WITH THE PAIN AND LONELINESS **TEFLON BILLY** MUST BE FEELING. IT ONLY STRENGTHENS MY RESOLVE TO GET OUT OF THIS PRISON.

IT'S JUST A PROP. BESIDES IT'S A CONSTANT REMINDER THAT HE'S IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.



B.A., HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE WE WERE ARRESTED AND PLACED IN OUR CELLS??

I DUNNO. ABOUT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS WHY??

**EXCELLENT!** I'LL BE TELEPORTING TO THE **PRISON STOREROOM**. I'LL RETRIEVE ALL OF OUR BELONGINGS AND THEN TELEPORT BACK TO THE CELL WITH **KNUCKLES** AND **EL RAVAGER!** IT SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM FIGHTING OUR WAY OUT OF THE PRISON.



WHAT IN THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?? **HELLO!!** EARTH TO BRIAN!! JUST WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN GO TELEPORTING ALL OVER THE PLACE??



WELL...THIS IS PROBABLY GOING TO SEND YOU OFF THE DEEP END, BUT...UH...YOU REMEMBER THAT **RING OF TELEPORTATION** I FOUND IN THE **TEMPLE OF KAZAR-KREE?**\*

YEAH, IT ONLY HAD TWO CHARGES SO YOU SAID YOU WERE SQUIRRELING IT AWAY FOR A RAINY DAY. BUT DON'T EVEN TRY IT!! YOU WERE STRIP SEARCHED BEFORE BEING PLACED IN YOUR CELL!

WELL, EVERY MORNING FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS, **TEFLON BILLY** HAS BEEN FOLLOWING HIS MORNING GLASS OF **FIG JUICE** WITH A LITTLE **'CHASER'**.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, EXACTLY?

BRIAN IF YOU PULL THIS OFF, YER A GAWD!!



I'M SAYING I'VE BEEN MAKING IT DAILY RITUAL TO SWALLOW MY **RING OF TELEPORTATION!** I...UH...RETRIEVE IT LATER AND THE PROCESS REPEATS ITSELF.

**HOW SICK!** AND YOU EXPECT ME TO JUST TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT? THAT EVERY MORNING, **TEFLON BILLY** RELIGIOUSLY SWALLOWS SOME **DAMN RING** ON THE OFF CHANCE HE MAY NEED IT THAT DAY?? YOU THINK I'M STUPID??

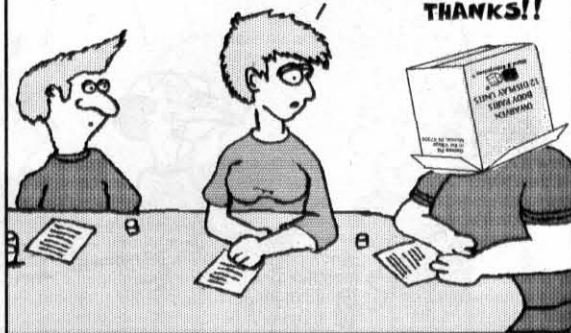
AWH, I'M SORRY, BRIAN. IT **IS** A BIT FAR FETCHED.



HEY, I LEAVE NOTHING TO CHANCE. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT, IN MY BRIEF CASE YOU WILL FIND A SEALED ENVELOPE CONTAINING AN ANNOTATED LIST SHOWING THE TIME, DATE, AND PLACE OF EACH SWALLOWING AND RETRIEVAL. I UPDATE IT PRIOR TO EACH GAME SESSION SO IT **IS** CURRENT.

OH BRIAN. THAT'S SO...SO...LIKE YOU.

**THANKS!!**



\* see *Tales from the Vault Volume Two*, page 9 [Dragon™ #242]

# The Day the Magic Died

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN

OKAY, YOU RIDE HARD ALL DAY INTO THE THICKET. IT APPEARS YOU LOST THE **FANGARTEAN GUARD**. YOU MOVE DEEPER INTO THE WILDERNESS FINALLY COMING TO A SUITABLE SPOT TO SET UP CAMP. AS THE **SUN** BEGINS TO SET YOU NOTICE THAT ALL **THREE MOONS** ARE IN **FULL PHASE** TONIGHT!!



I'LL TAKE FIRST WATCH GUYS!! I WANNA POLISH MY CROSSBOW AND ADJUST THE SITE. I THINK ONE OF THOSE **FRIGGIN' GUARDS** WAS MESSIN' AROUND WITH IT WHILE IT WAS IN THE STORE ROOM.

OKAY. I'LL TAKE SECOND WATCH. KEEP A PAN OF **HOT BEANS** ON THE FIRE. I'M GONNA BE HUNGRY WHEN YOU WAKE ME TO RELIEVE YOU.

WELL, GUESS I'LL TAKE THIRD WATCH THEN.

I'M HITTIN' THE SACK. SEE YOU GUYS IN THE...HUH??? **THREE FULL MOONS!!!**

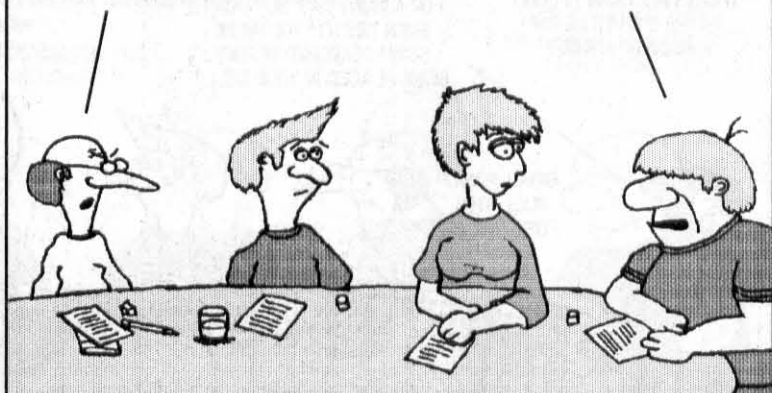


CRIPES!!!! **THE WEEK OF LONG SHADOWS!!!** DAMN!! WE'RE **SCREWED**. I CAN'T BELIEVE I LOST TRACK OF THE DATE!!!



WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU YACKIN' ABOUT??? WEEK OF LAWN MEADOWS???

**WEEK OF LONG SHADOWS** YOU IDIOT!!! ONCE EVERY 475 YEARS ALL THREE MOONS OF GARWEEZ WORLD FALL IN FULL PHASE AT THE SAME TIME FOR SEVEN DAYS!!! IT IS A TIME OF **DREAD** AND **DEEP FOREBODING** FOR THOSE OF US WHO **WEAVE MAGIC!!**



RIGHT YOU ARE BRIAN!!! FOR THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS **ALL MAGIC IS DISPELLED!!** WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF HARD, CRUEL REALITY FOLKS.

**WHOAH!** THIS DOESN'T AFFECT MY **CROSSBOW OF SLAYING** DOES IT??

**GAAA!** WHAT ABOUT MY **HACKMASTER** +12?

SORRY GUYS, IT AFFECTS **ALL MAGIC** ITEMS AND DEVICES AS WELL!! FOR THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS YOUR WEAPONS ARE ORDINARY!!

OH MY...

WE'D BETTER FIND A HOLE AND HIDE.



## A LITTLE LATER...

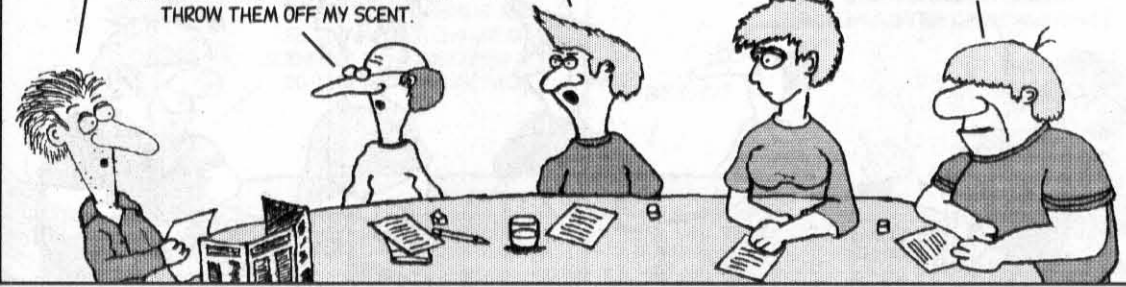
OKAY THE BAND OF **ORG-CUBS** FINALLY GET TIRED OF SEARCHING FOR YOU IN THE THICKET. THEY YELL OUT A FEW **VULGAR INSULTS** IN REFERENCE TO YOUR **COWARDICE** AND WANDER AWAY.

MAN, THIS SUCKS!! I TOOK 25 POINTS OF DAMAGE FROM BEING PELTED BY APPLES.

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'VE RESORTED TO **HIDING IN BUSHES** FROM **CHILDREN**. APPARENTLY THE WORD IS OUT ABOUT THE **WEEK OF LONG SHADOWS!** WE'VE GOT TO FIND A **PLACE OF REFUGE** AND **FAST!!**

HA! I KNEW CLIMBING INTO THE RIBCAGE OF THAT DEAD **YAK** WOULD THROW THEM OFF MY SCENT.

HEY, WE'RE NOT FAR FROM **FERN GROVE.\*** WE HAVE FRIENDS THERE!!



**FRIENDS??** ARE YOU FORGETTIN WHAT YOU JERKS DID TO THAT POOR VILLAGE?? YOU KILLED OVER 400 PEOPLE AND BURNED IT TO THE GROUND. I **DON'T** THINK THEY'RE GONNA WELCOME US WITH OPEN ARMS.

HEY, THEY HAD IT COMING!! THEY KICKED UP A FUSS JUST BECAUSE I WAS SLAPPIN' **LIL' KNOBBY FOOT** AROUND.

BESIDES, I THINK ANY SURVIVORS WOULD BE GRATEFUL WE SPARED THEM.

OH..THAT WAS **FERN GROVE** WE TORCHED?? KINDA SLIPPED MY MIND.

YA KNOW IT'S KIND OF STRANGE NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT BUT WE DON'T SEEM TO HAVE MANY **NON-PLAYER** FRIENDS.

OH YOU JUST NOW REALIZED THAT, HUH?



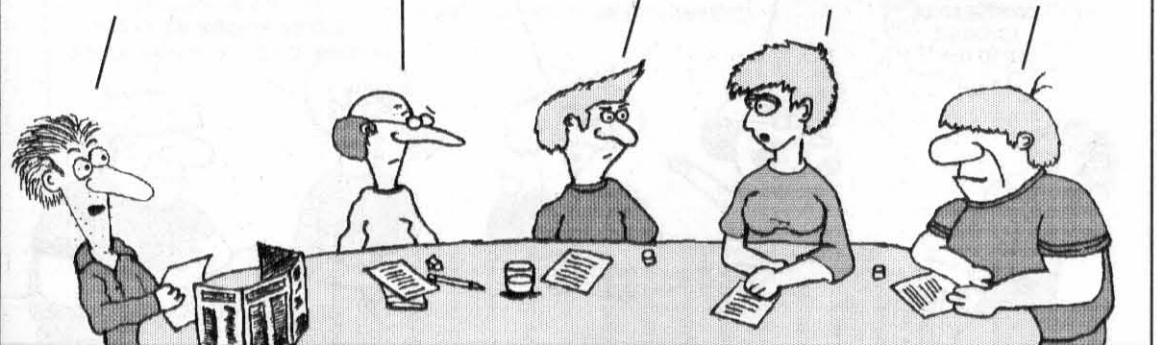
KEEP GOING WITH THAT THOUGHT, GUYS. MAYBE THERE'S A LESSON TO BE LEARNED HERE.

GEE, THIS IS KINDA DEPRESSING. I MEAN ALL THESE YEARS WE'VE BEEN HUMPIN' - TAKIN THE HARD KNOCKS TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE AND WHAT THANKS DO WE GET?

YEAH. IT MAKES ME FEEL KINDA EMPTY INSIDE. NOW THAT WE NEED A LITTLE HELP - **WHERE IS EVERYBODY??**

IN THE END ALL WE HAVE IS EACH OTHER.

YOU KNOW, YOU HAVE TO **WORK** AT FRIENDSHIPS, BOYS.



\* See *Bundle of Trouble* Volume Three [KoDT #7] "Coward of the County"

WE'VE DONE SOME **GOOD THINGS** FOR FOLKS OVER THE YEARS. DIDN'T WE DONATE THAT **STATUE TO FERN GROVE** TO SET IN THEIR TOWN SQUARE?

I DON'T THINK THEY REALLY APPRECIATED A STATUE OF **KNUCKLES, EL RAVAGER AND TEFLON BILLY** HIGH FIVIN' EACH OTHER WITH THE WORDS **'HOODY HOO'** INSCRIBED ON THE BASE.

GOOD THINGS?? SURELY YOU'RE NOT DUMB ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THAT.

HEY, IT WAS OUR WAY OF GIVING BACK TO THE TOWN AND SAYIN' WE WERE SORRY.

THE SURVIVORS HAD THE NERVE TO DEFACE IT TOO. SOMEONE CHISELED THE LETTERS SO IT READS, **'POODY POO'**.



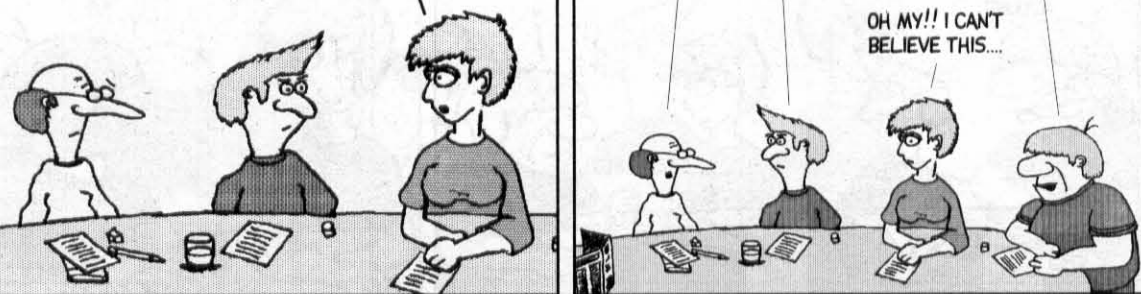
C'MON GUYS. DON'T YOU THINK THIS IS A **GREAT OPPORTUNITY** FOR YOU TO RETHINK **PAST ACTIONS** AND REALIZE THE MISTAKES YOU'VE MADE. YOU KNOW, THE WONDERFUL THING ABOUT REALIZING YOUR MISTAKES AND OWNING UP TO THEM IS THAT YOU CAN SOMETIMES GO BACK AND CORRECT THEM.

YA KNOW SOMETHING?? THE **BARBARIAN** IS FINALLY MAKING SENSE.

YEP, WE SCREWED UP. WE SHOULD HAVE DONE THINGS RIGHT THE FIRST TIME.

I WAS JUST THINKIN' THE SAME THING.

OH MY!! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS...



**HOODY HOO!** WE'RE HEADIN FOR **FERN GROVE** AND **WIPIN' OUT** THE REST OF THOSE **UNGRATEFUL BASTARDS!!**

THEY WON'T KNOW WHAT HIT 'EM!! WE'LL USE **FLAMING BOTTLES OF OIL** TO TORCH THE BUILDINGS AND THEN WE'LL **PICK THEM OFF** ONE BY ONE AS THEY POUR INTO THE STREETS.

MY BRILLIANT **PEACE CONFERENCE ADVENTURE** LED TO THIS??

OH MY.

JUST GOES TO SHOW YOU - IT DOESN'T PAY TO BE MERCIFUL.

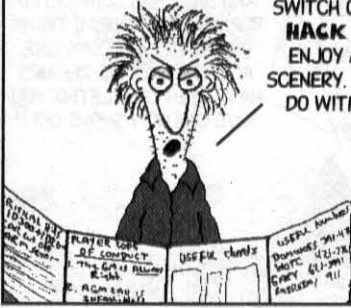


# The Turn About

BY JOLLY R. BLACKBURN  
AND STEVE JOHANSSON

WELL, LAST WEEK YOU MANAGED TO DESTROY AN ENTIRE CAMPAIGN WHICH I THOUGHT WAS GOING TO CARRY US THROUGH SEVERAL MONTHS OF GAMING SESSIONS. (SIGH) WELL, IT WASN'T TO BE AND THAT'S THAT. THING IS, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING PREPARED FOR **HACKMASTER** FOR

TONIGHT. SO WE'RE GOING TO SWITCH OVER TO OUR **SPACE-HACK CAMPAIGN** AND ENJOY A LITTLE CHANGE OF SCENERY. I THINK WE COULD ALL DO WITH A CHANGE OF PACE.



**SPACE HACK??** NOT A PROBLEM DUDE. WE LOVE THAT GAME!! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY ANYMORE.

YEAH, YOU GOT ALL BENT OUT OF SHAPE OVER OUR **HOLO-DECK HACKMASTER CAMPAIGN!!**\*

OH BROTHER!

THAT HOLO-DECK ROCKS!!



OH, I'LL ADMIT I WAS PRETTY UPSET OVER THE WHOLE **HOLO-DECK** THING. I'M OVER IT NOW. REALLY. SO WHAT SAY YE?? WHO'S UP FOR A GOOD GAME OF **SPACEHACK??**

SURE, I'M IN TOO!! JUST AS LONG AS YOU DON'T BAIL ON US AGAIN.

COUNT ME IN!!

WE NEVER DID FINISH REPAIRS ON OUR **HACKCRUISER**.

KEWL!! I CAN **TWEAK MY HOLO-DECK PROGRAM** A LITTLE BIT.



## LATER THAT NIGHT..

GOOD JOB, BOB!! YOUR WELL-AIMED SHOT TAKES OUT THE **HOLO-COMPUTER DATA BANKS** THUS SHUTTING DOWN THE **HOLO-VENTURE** WHICH WAS **RUNNING AMOK**. THE REST OF YOU FIND YOURSELVES LYING ON THE FLOOR OF THE DEACTIVATED HOLO DECK, A LITTLE BATTERED AND SMELLING OF OZONE, BUT ALIVE!!

IT HAD TO BE DONE!! THAT **FREAKIN' HACKMASTER** SIMULATION WAS WAY OUT OF HAND!!

DATA BANKS DESTROYED? GOOD - LET'S JUST FORGET THAT ADVENTURE EVER HAPPENED.

HERE, HERE!

I STILL SAY MY PROGRAMMING WASN'T FLAWED. B.A. JUST WANTED TO SHUT DOWN OUR GAME!!



\* see "Ship of Fools" on page 18

ALL I KNOW IS THAT **THAT** ADVENTURE TOTALLY **SUCKED!** WHO EVER HEARD OF SOMEONE KNOCKING THEIR JAW OUT OF JOINT JUST BECAUSE THEIR CROSSBOW MISFIRES?? AND DUDE, WHAT THAT **HALF-OGRE** DID TO YOU?? WHOAH! I AIN'T NEVER SEEN THAT.....

LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT IT OKAY??

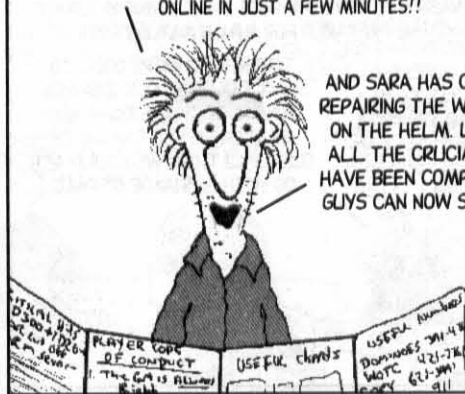
I AGREE! LET'S JUST GET THIS SHIP RUNNING AGAIN AND GO FIND SOME ADVENTURE!



**A FEW MINUTES LATER...**

GOOD JOB BRIAN!! REROUTING THE **POSITRON CENTRIFUGE** THROUGH THE **DORSAL HEAT EXCHANGER** PROVIDES JUST ENOUGH PRESSURE TO FREE THOSE **FORWARD VALVES**. WITH A LITTLE TWEAKING YOU SHOULD HAVE THEM ONLINE IN JUST A FEW MINUTES!!

AND SARA HAS COMPLETED REPAIRING THE WIRING TRUNK ON THE HELM. LOOKS LIKE ALL THE CRUCIAL REPAIRS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. YOU GUYS CAN NOW SHOVE OFF!!



**ALRIGHT!** LET'S GET A MOVE ON FOLKS!! SARA, WHILE BRIAN NURSES THE ENGINES CHART A COURSE TO THE NEAREST STAR LANE!! DAVE, I WANT YOU TO DO A RUN DOWN ON THE WEAPON SYSTEMS AND GET THEM **BATTLE READY!** MEANWHILE I'LL SHAKE THE RUST OUT OF THE HELM AND SEE WHAT THIS BABY CAN DO!!

**AYE AYE SIR!** B.A. I'M GONNA RUN A TOTAL OPERATIONS CHECK ON THE **TARGETING COMPUTERS!**

I'M GOING TO REPLACE THOSE THROWN BEARINGS ON THE **GRAVITY-WELL GENERATOR**. B.A. THEY SEEM A LITTLE NOISY.

WAY TO GO BOB!!!

AYE, CHARTING A COURSE SIR!



DAVE WHEN YOU ATTEMPT TO ACCESS THE TARGETING COMPUTER IT REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR COMMAND.

**REFUSES??** I'LL ATTEMPT AN ADMINISTRATIVE OVERRIDE!!

WHEN YOU TOUCH THE CONSOLE YOU TAKE 25 POINTS IN **ELECTRICAL DAMAGE!** IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS A CRACKLING-VOICE COMES OVER THE SHIP INTERCOM, "**INFESTATIONS. YOU WILL FINISH THE GAME!!**"

INFESTATIONS?? THAT'S WHAT THE **HOLO-COMPUTER** KEPT CALLING US BEFORE WE DESTROYED IT!

OH NO, IT MUST HAVE TRANSFERRED ITS TERTIARY MEMORY CORE TO THE CENTRAL PROCESSORS!!



**'INFESTATIONS! (BUZZ) YOU WILL RESUME YOUR GAME!! ALL GAMES MUST BE FINISHED! (WRRRR) THAT IS THE RULE!! ALL RULES MUST BE COMPLIED WITH!! YOU WILL RESUME YOUR GAME!!...(CLICK)**

THE DAMN THING WANTS US TO RESUME OUR **HACKMASTER CAMPAIGN!**

OH NO!! NO WAY I'M GOING BACK INTO THE HOLO-DECK!!

OH NO!! DON'T YOU SEE WHAT'S HAPPENED??



**BRIAN!! YOU ENTERED ALL THE HACKMASTER RULES INTO THE HOLO-COMPUTER!! YOU REPLACED THE COMPUTER'S LOGIC KERNEL WITH THE HACKMASTER RULES!!!**

**MY GAWD!! YOU'RE RIGHT. THE SHIP'S COMPUTER THINKS IT'S A GAMEMASTER AND WE ARE MERELY PAWNS IN A GAME!!!**



B.A. I'M GOING TO REMOVE THE GRATING ON THE AIR DUCT AND ATTEMPT TO CRAWL INTO THE COMPUTER'S PRIMARY CORE. MAYBE I CAN PULL SOME OF ITS MEMORY MODULES.

AS YOU REMOVE THE GRATING YOU ARE SUDDENLY STRUCK IN THE CHEST WITH A **HAND AXE**. TWO LARGE **HALF-OGRES** CRAWL OUT OF THE AIR DUCT AND IMMEDIATELY ATTACK. ROLL FOR INITIATIVE!!

**GAAA! IT'S THE HALF-OGRES FROM THE GAME!!**

THE COMPUTER BROUGHT THE GAME TO US!



### TWENTY MINUTES LATER...

WHEN YOU GET TO THE CARGO BAY YOU FIND THAT YOUR **CARGO SHUTTLE** HAS BEEN TRASHED. THE ELECTRONICS HAVE BEEN GUTTED AND **ORC GRAFFITI** HAS BEEN SPRAYED ALL OVER THE HULL. YOU ARE EFFECTIVELY TRAPPED ON THE SHIP!!

**DAMN! THIS IS BAD...THIS IS REAL BAD!!**

OH MAN, WE'RE **TOAST!!** GOT NO **HACKMASTER +12**, GOT NO MAGIC.

C'MON GUYS, YOU'RE FALLING APART ON ME.



### LATER STILL....

PAYBACK IS SWEET!!

I'M TELLIN' YA WE GOT **FREAKIN ORCS** OVERRUNNING DECKS FIVE TROUGH !! WE GOT A **SPINY BACKED BLUE RIDGE DRAGON** IN THE **MESS HALL! THE SHIP IS LOST!!** I SAY WE **BLOW** THE REACTOR AND TAKE OUR CHANCES IN THE **VAC SUITS!!**

VAC SUITS?? YOU MEAN LEAVE THE SHIP?? ARE YOU NUTS??

I STILL SAY WE TRY TO CRASH THE COMPUTER AGAIN.

WHAT HAVE I DONE?? I'VE CREATED THE **ULTIMATE MONSTER!!**



# KODT LEISURE GAME #2

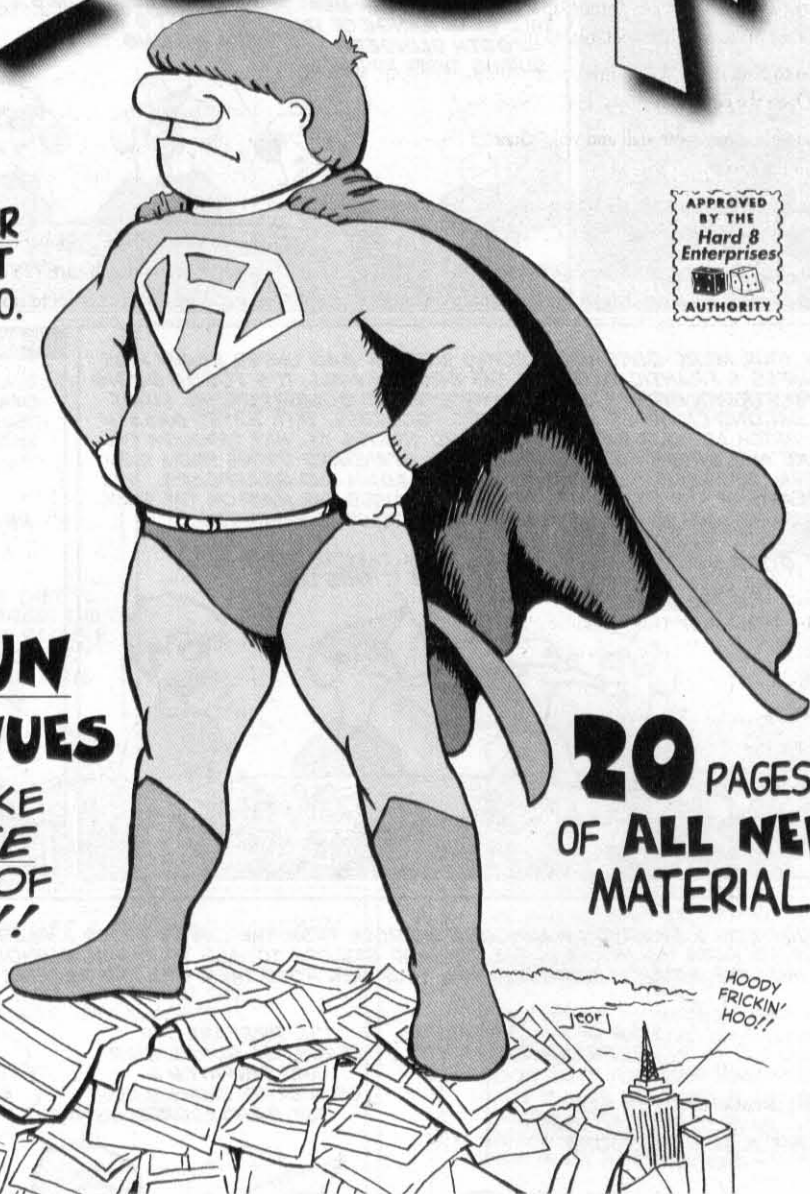
## 37 WAYS TO ENTERTAIN YOURSELF AT THE MALL WHEN YOU'RE BROKE

1. Ride mechanical horses with coins fished out of the reflecting pond. (10 points)
2. Try pants on backwards at the Gap®. Ask the salesperson if they make your butt look big. (5 points)
3. Go to RadioShack® and shriek at the computers saying, "Open the bomb bay doors, Hal!" (5 points)
4. Stand in a bathroom stall and yell, "Guard?? I want to call my lawyer!" (3 points)
5. Run up the escalators in the wrong direction. Yell at anyone in your way that you have a plane to catch. (15 points)
6. Go to all the music stores and ask if they have NO DOUBT on 8 track. When they say no, throw a temper tantrum. (20 points)
7. Go to the pet store and ask if you can hold one of the puppies. Hold the puppy in one hand as if you are trying to estimate its weight. Then ask, "Do you think he would feed four or should I get two of them?" (30 points)
8. Stand at the condiment station at one of the fast food places and growl loudly when anyone approaches you. (10 points)
9. Grab some ketchup packs from a fast food place and suck on them. When someone notices, hold the pack up proudly and announce, "It's astronaut food!" (5 points)
10. Follow patrons of D. Balton's® around while reading aloud from *Dianetics*®. (50 points)
11. Ask mall cops for stories of World War I. (2 points)
12. Ask a salesman why a particular TV is labeled black and white and insist that it's a color set. When he disagrees, give him a strange look and say, "You mean you really can't see it?" (5 points)
13. Construct a new porch deck in the tool department of Sears®. (50 points)
14. Wear pancake makeup and new clothes and pose as a fashion dummy in clothes departments, occasionally screaming without warning. (25 points)
15. Test mattresses in your pajamas. (5 points)
16. Ask the tobacconist if his hovercraft is full of eels. (5 points)
17. If you're patient, stare intently into a surveillance camera for an hour while rocking from side to side. (10 points)
18. Stand in front of a surveillance camera and do a mime act. (15 points)
19. Take your laundry to Sears® and place it in one of the washer machines on display. Then drag a lawn chair over to the electronics department and watch TV while you wait for the spin cycle. (25 points)
20. Ask appliance personnel if they have any TVs that play only in Spanish. (5 points)
21. Make unusual requests at the Piercing Pagoda®. (5 points)
22. Ask a salesperson in the hardware department how well a particular saw cuts through bone. (5 points)
23. At the pet store, ask if they have bulk discounts on gerbils and whether there's much meat on them. (10 points)
24. Go to where all the shopping carts are kept and try to push an entire line of carts (25 or more) around the store. If an employee tries to stop you explain you have a lot of shopping to do. (50 points)
25. Ask for red-tinted lenses at the optometrist.
26. Have the saleswoman at the perfume counter spray a sample on your wrist. Then howl in pain and pretend you are having an adverse allergic reaction. (Foam at the mouth and violently thrash around on the floor for added affect). When someone comes to offer assistance tell them you need a grape Slurpee™ to offset the reaction. (75 points)
27. Rummage through the jelly bean bin at the candy store, looking for the 'grey ones'. (5 points)
28. Ask a saleswoman whether a particular shade of panties matches the color of your beard. (5 points)
29. In the changing rooms, announce in a singsong voice, "I see London, I see France..." (5 points)
30. Leave on the plastic string connecting a new pair of shoes, and wander around the mall taking two-inch steps. (5 points)
31. Play *Flight of the Bumblebee* on a kazoo for change. (5 points)
32. Ask the Hamond® organ dealer if he can play *When I think about you I touch myself*. Ask to sit with him on the bench while he plays it. (5 points)
33. Record belches on electronic sampling keyboards, and perform gastric versions of *Jingle Bells* for admiring onlookers. (15 points)
34. Ask the pharmacist at the drugstore which leading cold remedy will "give you a really wicked buzz". (5 points)
35. Ask the personnel at Pier 1 Imports® whether they have "any giant crap made out of straw". (5 points)
36. Collect stacks of paint brochures and hand them out as religious tracts. (5 points)
37. Show people your driver's license and demand to know "whether they've seen this man." (5 points)

The above originally appeared in KoDT#16 as a *Parting Shots*™.

# KODT

IT AIN'T OVER  
TIL THE FAT  
MAN SAYS SO.



**THE FUN  
CONTINUES**

IT'S LIKE  
A *FREE*  
ISSUE OF  
*KODT!!*

**20** PAGES!!  
OF ALL NEW  
MATERIAL

# BONUS SECTION

WITH THE *TREATY* BROKEN BETWEEN THE *KNIGHTS* AND *LORD BARRINGER* WAR HAS ONCE AGAIN RESUMED --

THIS TIME THE *FIGHTING IS FIERCE* AND THE *STAKES ARE HIGH*.

BOTH SIDES WANT TO SETTLE THE MATTER *PERMANENTLY* AND ALL *STOPS* HAVE BEEN PULLED.

AS THE TWO *ARMIES* CLASH, THE PROMISE OF *CARNAGE* IS GREAT.

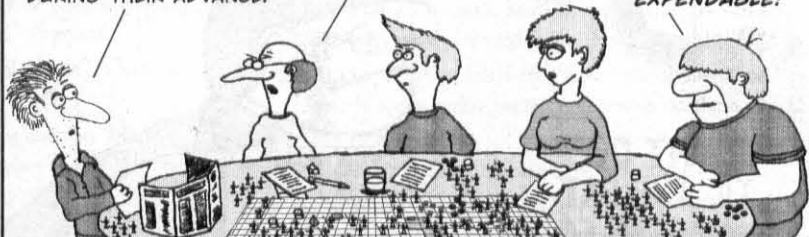
AND SO BEGINS, *BAGWAR FOUR!!*

OKAY AS SOON AS THE FIFTH WAVE OF *VOLLEYS* FROM MY *HEAVY CATAPULT ASSAULT* HAS SUBSIDED, I'LL *ORDER* MY *2ND DIVISION* TO ENTER THE *BAG* AND TAKE UP A *DEFENSIVE POSITION* AT THE *EDGE* OF THE *BROKEN WALL*.

UNDERSTOOD, BUT YOU *DO* REALIZE YOUR MEN WILL BE IN *RANGE* OF MY *GOth SLINGERS* DURING THEIR *ADVANCE*.

YEAH, YEAH, I EXPECT *68 PERCENT CASUALTIES* BUT THAT'S A *PRICE* I'M *WILLING* TO PAY.

YEAH, THESE ARE THE *REALLY CHEAP* MERCENARIES -- *2 SILVER PIECE* PER *DOZEN*. THEY'RE *EXPENDABLE!*



OKAY YOUR *MERC-DIVISION* MARCHES INTO THE *BAG* UNDER *HEAVY FIRE* AND MAKES A *FRANTIC DASH* FOR THE *BROKEN WALL*. IT'S *TOUGH GOING* - THE *STREWN BODIES* OF THOSE WHO *FELL* IN *COMBAT* ON THE *FIRST* AND *SECOND CHARGES* IMPEDES THEIR *PROGRESS*. WITH *BATED BREATH* YOU WATCH AS YOUR *BATTLE STANDARD* WEAVES ITS WAY THROUGH THE *SMOKE* AND *GREEK FIRE MISSILES!* THE *STANDARD* DROPS FROM *SIGHT* SEVERAL TIMES BUT IS *QUICKLY* PICKED UP AGAIN AND *REAPPEARS*. THE *SCREAMS* OF THE *DYING* AND *WOUNDED* CAUSES THE *HAIR* ON THE *BACK* OF YOUR *NECKS* TO *RISE*. A *HEAVY PRICE* IS BEING PAID.

GOOD GAWD MY BOYS ARE CATCHING HELL. THEY'VE *EARNED* THEIR *PAY* THIS DAY.

HEY, I THINK THEY'RE GOING TO MAKE IT *THIS* TIME.



A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

OKAY, YOU *WATCH* AS THE *SURVIVING ELEMENTS* OF YOUR *DIVISION* GATHER *BEHIND* THE *BROKEN WALL* AND PREPARE TO *RE-FORM* THEIR *LINES!!*

AT THAT *VERY* MOMENT THE *GATES* TO *BARRINGER'S CASTLE* SWING *OPEN*.



A *RIDER* ON A *DWARVEN WARHORSE* EMERGES FROM THE *CASTLE* UNDER A *FLAG OF TRUCE*. HE *KICKS* HIS MOUNT IN THE *RIBS* AND *GALLOPS* TOWARD YOUR MEN. *CURIOUS* AS TO WHAT THE *RIDER'S* INTENTIONS ARE, YOUR MEN *HOLD* THEIR *FIRE* AND *RECEIVE* HIM.

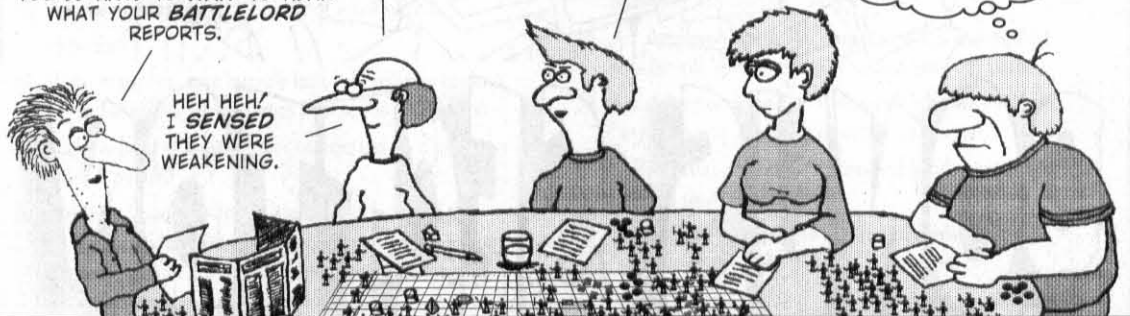
FLAG OF TRUCE? THEY'RE *SURRENDERING????!!*

I'LL *PREPARE* OUR *TERMS OF SURRENDER* AND *DISPATCH* A *COURIER* TO CARRY IT TO OUR *BATTLELORD*.

DWARVEN WAR HORSE? WHERE ON EARTH DID THEY GET ONE OF THOSE?

THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN. YOU'LL HAVE TO *WAIT* TO HEAR WHAT YOUR *BATTLELORD* REPORTS.

HEH HEH! I *SENSED* THEY WERE WEAKENING.



IT'S DIFFICULT TO MAKE OUT *EXACTLY* WHAT IS TRANSPIRING BUT YOU CAN SEE THE *HALFLING RIDER* ADDRESSING YOUR MEN -- HE'S *SHAKING* A CLENCHED FIST IN THE AIR TO EMPHASIZE HIS WORDS. HE THEN TOSSES WHAT LOOKS TO BE A *SMALL POUCH* INTO THE HANDS OF YOUR *BATTLELORD*.

SMALL POUCH?  
WHAT KIND OF  
TRICKERY IS THIS?

HEY IF THAT'S *WAR BOOTY* I HOPE  
THOSE *MERCS* UNDERSTAND THEY  
DON'T GET ANY *SHARES*. WE MADE  
THAT *VERY CLEAR* FROM THE *OUTSET!*

HALFLING?

AFTER *PAUSING* FOR  
A FEW MOMENTS THE  
*BATTLELORD* TURNS  
AND TAKES THE  
*BATTLE STANDARD*  
FROM THE  
*STANDARD BEARER*.

HE TAKES IT  
AND *BREAKS*  
IT OVER HIS  
KNEE AS HIS  
*MEN ROAR* IN  
APPROVAL!!

THEN THE *HALFLING RIDER*  
TURNS AND *RIDES* BACK  
INTO THE *CASTLE* WITH  
YOUR *MERCENARIES*  
FOLLOWING IN *TOW!*

ONCE THEY'VE  
*ENTERED*, THE  
GATES *SLOWLY*  
SWING *SHUT*  
BEHIND THEM.

**HOODY HOO!!! THEY'VE TAKEN THE CASTLE!!**

? WE WON!! WE WON!!

WE KICKED  
THEIR ASSES!

**WILL YOU TWO IDIOTS GET A FREAKIN' CLUE??!!**

HUH?  
WHAT THE...

OUR MEN JUST *JUMPED* TO THE  
*OTHER SIDE*, *BRAINIACS!!*

W-WHAT?  
*OTHER SIDE??*

*BARRINGER* HAS  
*OBVIOUSLY* PAID THEM OFF!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? *NO WAY*  
THEY JUMPED TO THE *OTHER SIDE*, *SARA*.  
THOSE GUYS *LOVED* US!! WHY ON EARTH  
WOULD THEY *TURN* ON US?

YOU WANT ME TO MAKE A *LIST*? MAYBE  
BECAUSE YOU INSISTED ON ONLY PAYING  
THEM *28 PERCENT* OF THE LISTED  
*BOOK RATE* FOR *MERCENARIES*? OR  
MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE OF THE *MASS-*  
*CHARM SPELL BRIAN* CAST ON THEIR  
*SISTER-COHORT* BEFORE *ORDERING*  
THEM IN ON A "*KAMIKAZE CHARGE*"!

YEAH, THAT SURE  
WAS A *WASTE* OF  
500 GOOD MEN.

*SARA'S* RIGHT.  
WE *SCREWED* UP.

HUH???! I AM? YOU'RE ACTUALLY *AGREEING* WITH ME?

IT'S MY FAULT. MY *MATH* WAS OFF. I DIDN'T *CATCH* IT UNTIL IT WAS *TOO LATE*. WE *SHOULD* HAVE *PAID* THOSE GUYS *32 PERCENT* OF THE BOOK RATE - THEN THE *NEGATIVE LOYALTY MODIFIER* WOULD HAVE ONLY RANKED AS "*CONSIDERABLE*" INSTEAD OF "*SEVERE*". SORRY GUYS.

I WAS *HOPING* B.A. WOULDN'T *CATCH* IT.



WELL THAT'S JUST *GREAT!!* SO NOW *BARRINGER* HAS *REINFORCEMENTS*? THIS *TOTALLY BLOWS CHUNKS!* IS THE *GLINT* OF *OUR GOLD* ANY LESS *SHINY* THAN *BARRINGER'S*? WELL *TWO* CAN PLAY *THAT* GAME.

WHAT ARE YOU *PROPOSING* BOB?

WHATEVER *BARRINGER* IS OFFERING - I SAY WE *DOUBLE* IT!

GOOD IDEA. 'COURSE WE CAN'T BE *EXACTLY* SURE WHAT HE *PAID* THEM BUT I'M *SURE* THEY WOULDN'T TURN DOWN A *REASONABLE* OFFER.



A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

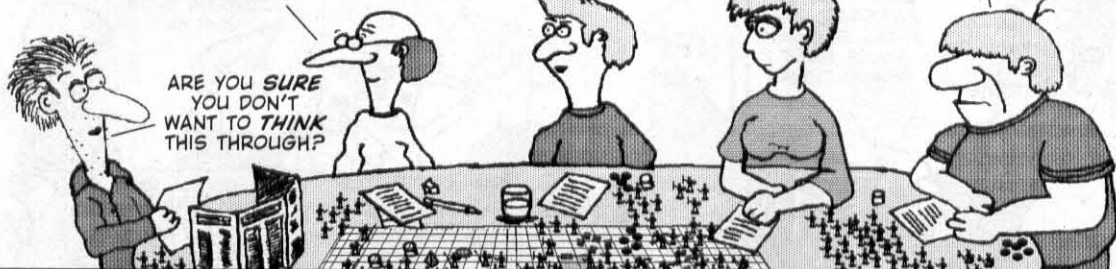
OKAY, B.A., WE PUT THE *5,000* IN *GOLD* IN *SADDLE BAGS* AND LOAD THEM ON A *PACK MULE*. THEN I HAND A *FLAG OF TRUCE* TO MY *SCROLL-CADDY*, *WINDLE FINE-FELLOW* AND TELL HIM I WANT HIM TO *ESCORT* THE *GOLD* INTO THE BAG TO *PRESENT* OUR OFFER TO THE *MERCS*. NEEDLESS TO SAY, I THINK OUR *GENEROUS* COUNTER-OFFER WILL GET THEIR ATTENTION.

HEH, HEH THIS IS *GREAT!* THIS ACTUALLY WORKS IN *OUR* FAVOR. NOW THAT THE *MERCS* HAVE SEEN THE *LAY OUT* OF THE *CASTLE* *FIRST HAND* THEY'LL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE US WITH *INVALUABLE* TACTICALS.

I'LL DEAL WITH THAT *TURN-COAT* *BATTLELORD* MYSELF WHEN IT'S ALL SAID AND DONE.

I WISH *WINDLE* "*GOOD LUCK*" AND SEND HIM INTO THE *BAG*.

ARE YOU *SURE* YOU DON'T WANT TO *THINK* THIS THROUGH?



OKAY *WINDLE* STEPS INTO THE *BAG* WITH THE *GOLD-LADEN* *MULE*. HE CAUTIOUSLY APPROACHES THE *CASTLE* WHILE *WAVING* HIS *WHITE FLAG*. FINALLY, THE *GATES* SWING OPEN AND THE *MERC BATTLELORD* RIDES OUT ACCOMPANIED BY THE *HALFLING* ON HIS *DWARVEN* *WARHORSE*.

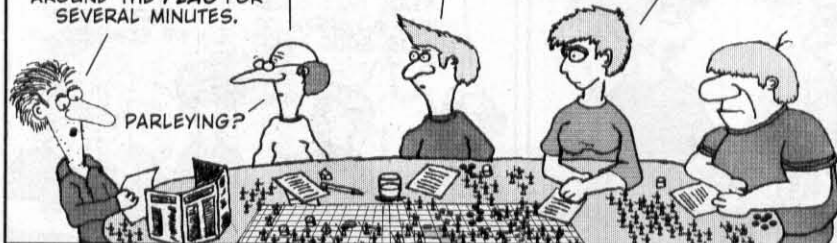
ALL RIGHT! LOOKS LIKE HE'S TAKING THE *BAIT*.

UH OH! IT'S THAT *DAMN* *HALFLING* AGAIN. HE BETTER NOT TRY TO *MUDDY UP* THE *WATERS* WITH ANOTHER *COUNTER OFFER*.

I WONDER WHO HE IS? I DON'T RECALL ANY *HALFLINGS* BEING IN THE *BAG*?

THE *THREE* OF THEM SEEM TO BE *PARLEYING* AROUND THE *FLAG* FOR SEVERAL *MINUTES*.

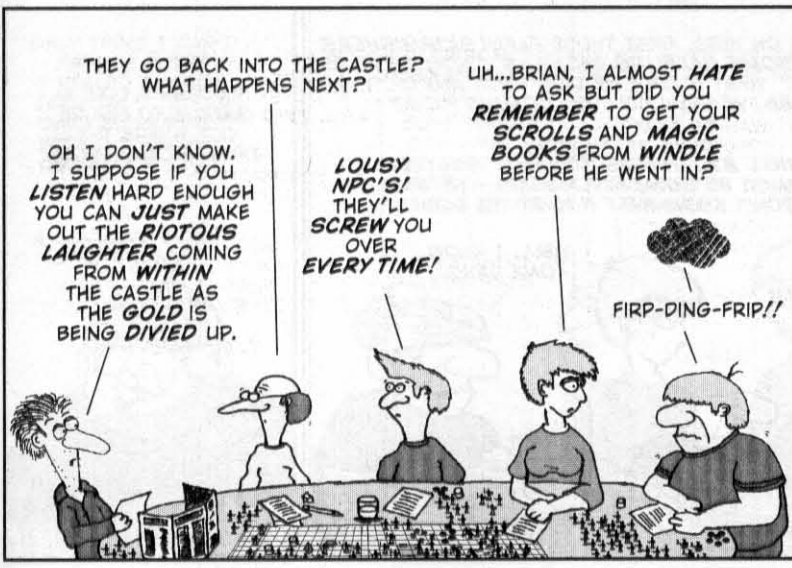
PARLEYING?



FINALLY THE *THREE* OF THEM *SHAKE HANDS*.

THE *HALFLING* MOTIONS TOWARD ONE OF THE *CASTLE TOWERS* AND THE *GATES* REOPEN. THE *THREE* OF THEM, ALONG WITH THE *MULE*, *ENTER* THE *CASTLE* AS THE *GATES* CLOSE BEHIND THEM.





THEY GO BACK INTO THE CASTLE? WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

OH I DON'T KNOW. I SUPPOSE IF YOU LISTEN HARD ENOUGH YOU CAN JUST MAKE OUT THE RIOTOUS LAUGHTER COMING FROM WITHIN THE CASTLE AS THE GOLD IS BEING DIVIED UP.

LOUSY NPC'S! THEY'LL SCREW YOU OVER EVERY TIME!

UH...BRIAN, I ALMOST HATE TO ASK BUT DID YOU REMEMBER TO GET YOUR SCROLLS AND MAGIC BOOKS FROM WINDLE BEFORE HE WENT IN?

FIRP-DING-FRIP!!



AAAARRRRRHHHH!!!! THAT'S IT! WE SHOULD HAVE DONE THIS OURSELVES IN THE FIRST PLACE INSTEAD OF SENDING IN SOMEONE ELSE TO DO OUR DIRTY WORK!



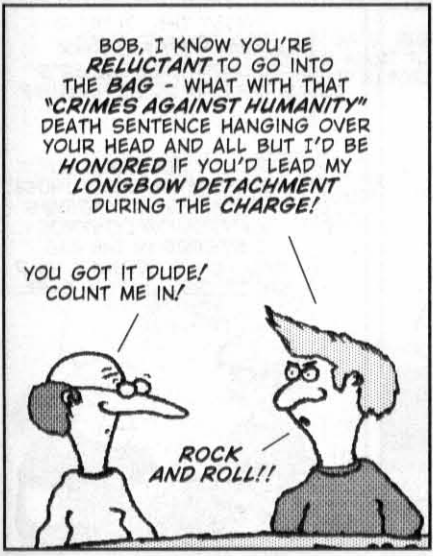
DAVE!! GET YOUR THIRD DIVISION UP ON LINE AND PREPARED TO GO IN!! I WANT YOU TO PERSONALLY LEAD THE CHARGE!! NO MORE MESSIN' AROUND. SARA - I WANT YOU TO ROUND UP THE REMNANTS OF COHORTS VENGEANCE AND FURY AND PREPARE THEM FOR A FLANKING ACTION ON THAT SOUTH WALL. REMEMBER TO EXPLOIT THAT BLIND SPOT BETWEEN THE TOWERS WE IDENTIFIED DURING OUR MEETING THE OTHER DAY. MEANWHILE, I'LL SOFTEN THINGS UP A BIT BY THROWING SOME SKIPPING-BETTY FIREBALLS INTO THOSE FIRING POSITIONS ON THE PARAPETS. WE'RE GOING TO GET MEDIEVAL ON THEIR ASSES!

HEH, HEH, TIME FOR THE FINAL COUP-DE-MAIN!

FRICKIN' A!! NOW YER TALKIN'! MY BOYS ARE READY - BEEN READY!!

THE SOUTH WALL? I'M ON IT!

IT ENDS HERE! TODAY! LET THIS BATTLE BE THE ONE THE BARDS WRITE SONGS ABOUT.



BOB, I KNOW YOU'RE RELUCTANT TO GO INTO THE BAG - WHAT WITH THAT "CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY" DEATH SENTENCE HANGING OVER YOUR HEAD AND ALL BUT I'D BE HONORED IF YOU'D LEAD MY LONGBOW DETACHMENT DURING THE CHARGE!

YOU GOT IT DUDE! COUNT ME IN!

ROCK AND ROLL!!



LATER THAT NIGHT...

JUST AS THE THIRD DIVISION IS PIVOTING ITS LINE TO FORM A WEDGE WITH SARA'S COHORTS THERE IS A HORN BLAST FROM THE SHADOWS AT THE EDGE OF THE BAG-ZONE!! THE GROUND RESONATES WITH THE THUNDEROUS SOUND OF AN ARMY ON THE MOVE. SUDDENLY A TROLKIN ARMY DESCENDS UPON YOUR REAR FLANK!!

TROLKIN ARMY??!! W-W-WHAT THE....??? WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

OH MY STARS!!! I GIVE THE COMMAND TO REVERSE RANKS!

THEIR WAR CRIES FILL THE AIR!!

GAAAAA!!!!

??!!

THERE'S SOMETHING *FISHY* GOING ON HERE. FIRST THOSE *ELFIN SKIRMISHERS* AMBUSH US, THEN SOME *MEDDLESOME HALFLING* SHOWS UP - NOW WE'RE UP AGAINST A FRICKIN' *TROLL ARMY*? WHAT GIVES? WE DIDN'T PUT ANY OF THESE *DUDES* INTO THE BAG. WHERE THE HELL ARE THEY *COMING* FROM?

AND WHAT ABOUT THAT *HILL GIANT*? HE TOOK OUT *HALF* MY ARCHERS.

WELL *B.A.* SWEARS IT'S *ALL* LEGIT. THERE MUST BE *SOME* EXPLANATION - WE JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS AT THE MOMENT.

WELL, I KNOW *ONE* THING.

IT DOESN'T TAKE A *GENIUS* TO FIGURE OUT WHERE THE *TROLLS* CAME FROM.



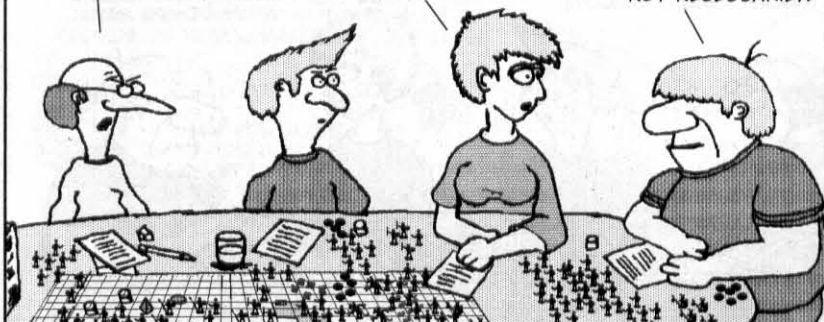
WELL IF YOU *KNOW* SOMETHING, *SPIT* IT OUT, *BIG GUY*! DON'T LEAVE US *HANGING*!

REMEMBER ALL THAT *TROLL MEAT* WE CHUCKED INTO THE *BAG*? IT'S MY GUESS *BARRINGER* DIDN'T *DESTROY* IT LIKE WE *ASSUMED* HE'D DO. APPARENTLY HE LET IT *RE-GEN* AND RAISED HIMSELF A *TROLKIN ARMY*.

BUT THAT'S CRAZY. WOULDN'T THEY *ATTACK* *BARRINGER'S* MEN AS WELL?

NOT NECESSARILY.

IF YOU NOTICED THE *TROLLS* HID THEIR *PRESENCE* UNTIL *EXACTLY* THE RIGHT MOMENT WHEN THEY COULD *HURT* US THE MOST. IT WAS *DEFINITELY* A COORDINATED ATTACK. THAT *SUGGESTS* THEY'RE UNDER *BARRINGER'S* CONTROL



WHA...*WHAT*??! YOU MEAN WE'RE FIGHTING THE *SAME* FRICKIN' *TROLLS* ALL OVER AGAIN?

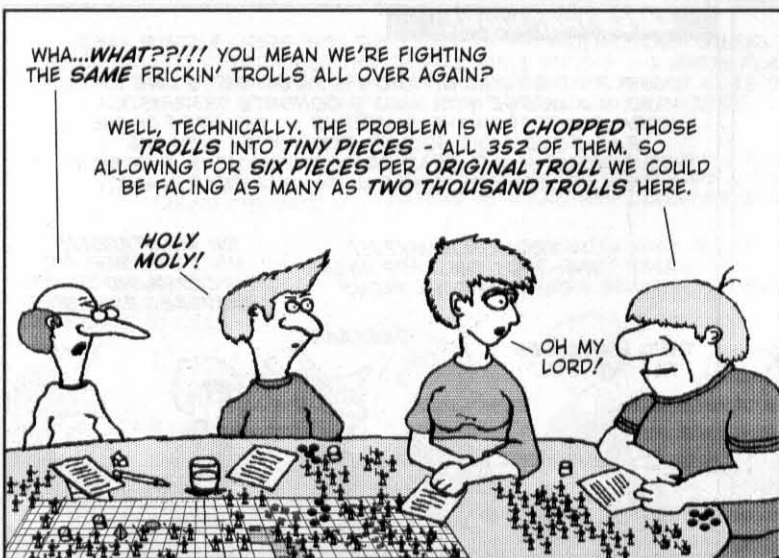
WELL, TECHNICALLY. THE PROBLEM IS WE *CHOPPED* THOSE *TROLLS* INTO *TINY* PIECES - ALL 352 OF THEM. SO ALLOWING FOR *SIX* PIECES PER *ORIGINAL* *TROLL* WE COULD BE FACING AS MANY AS *TWO THOUSAND* *TROLLS* HERE.

*HOLY MOLY!*

OH MY LORD!

OKAY, BRIAN SO YOU THINK THEY'RE UNDER *BARRINGER'S* COMMAND? HOW DID HE MANAGE?

NOW, I'M GUESSING, BUT IT *COULD* BE HE FOUND THOSE *HALFLING-SIZED* *GRIEVES* OF *TROLKIN* CONTROL I *STORED* IN THE *BAG*. THEY DIDN'T *FIT* BUT I *HELD* ON TO THEM JUST IN CASE.



ONLY THING I CAN'T FIGURE OUT IS I PLACED A **MAGE LOCK** ON IT. IT CAN ONLY BE REMOVED WITH THE **PROPER COMMAND WORD**.

A COMMAND WORD ONLY I KNOW.



WELL ALL I KNOW IS WHILE YOU GUYS ARE **YACKING** WE'RE GETTIN' OUR **ASSES KICKED** FOLKS! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

**DUH!** YOU'RE TELLING ME? YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED -- THOSE **RE-GEN BASTARDS** JUST CUT A **SWATH** THROUGH MY **LINES** THE SIZE OF **FRICKIN' TEXAS!!**

GUYS? OUR **BATTLE-PLAN** DIDN'T TAKE INTO **ACCOUNT** AN **ENEMY** OF THIS **MAGNITUDE** ENTERING THE **FIELD OF BATTLE**.



WE'LL BE **ANNIHILATED** IN SHORT ORDER IF WE **FOLLOW THROUGH**. I SUGGEST WE **PRESERVE** OUR **ARMY** AND **FIGHT** ANOTHER DAY WHEN WE ARE **BETTER** PREPARED. WHAT DO YOU SAY?

**WHAT???! LEAVE THE FIELD** IN THE **HANDS** OF THE **ENEMY???! DO YOU KNOW** WHAT THAT WILL DO TO OUR **HONOR FACTOR?**

WELL STAYING HERE AND **DYING** ISN'T GOING TO ACCOMPLISH MUCH!

**ZAYRE** SPEAKS WISELY - WE SHOULD **DEPART** THE AREA BEFORE WE ARE **HEMMED IN**.

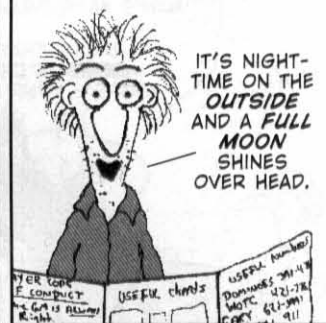
GOOD POINT!



A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

OKAY, YOUR **FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL** IS A **BLOODY** ONE BUT YOU **FINALLY** MANAGE TO ESCAPE FROM THE **BAG** AND CLOSE IT.

IT'S NIGHT-TIME ON THE **OUTSIDE** AND A **FULL MOON** SHINES OVER HEAD.



OKAY, CAN WE **END** THE GAME RIGHT THERE FOR TONIGHT, B.A.? WE'RE GOING TO WANT TO HAVE A **STRATEGY-SESSION** AND **REGROUP** BEFORE GOING ANY FURTHER.

STOP? WELL..... SURE, I SUPPOSE. IF YOU **REALLY** WANT TO. I THOUGHT THINGS WERE **JUST** GETTING **INTERESTING** THOUGH.

**DAMN!** I COULD **REALLY** USE **TROLL SLAPPER** RIGHT ABOUT NOW!

WE MEET AT **SARA'S** PLACE TOMORROW GUYS. WE NEED TO **TALK!!**

OH IT'S GOING TO GET **INTERESTING** ALL RIGHT.



AND AS THE PLAYERS WITHDRAW TO **LICK** THEIR **WOUNDS**, THE **GM** IS LEFT IN **CONTROL** OF THE **FIELD OF BATTLE!!!**

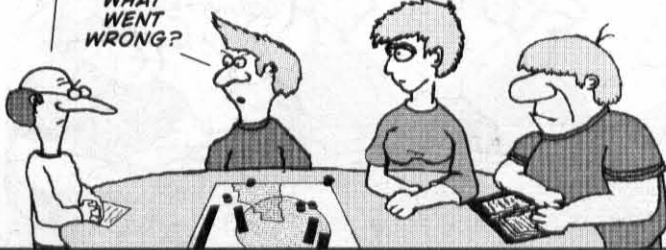
**SCORE!!**



**SARA'S APARTMENT: A SECRET MEETING.....**

OKAY GUYS, JUST LET ME START OFF BY SAYING I'M **HOPPIN' MAD** ABOUT OUR PERFORMANCE LAST NIGHT. WE GOT OUR **BUTTS** KICKED BY **BARRINGER**. NOW WE'RE HERE TO DISCUSS WHAT WENT **WRONG** AND TO COME UP WITH A **NEW BATTLE PLAN**.

WHAT WENT WRONG?



I'LL TELL YA WHAT WENT WRONG. THAT **BASTARD** STOLE OUR **MERCENARIES** - ALL **1,582** OF 'EM! HE TOOK OUR **FRICKIN GOLD** TOO. NOT TO MENTION HE USED ALL THAT **TROLL MEAT** TO BUILD HIMSELF AN **ARMY**.

IT SEEMS LIKE NO MATTER **WHAT** WE DO THIS GUY GETS THE **BETTER** OF US.

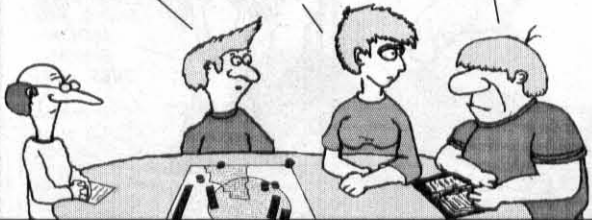


HOLD ON GUYS. LET'S NOT BE **TOO HARD** ON OURSELVES. I'VE BEEN DOING A LITTLE **FIGURING** AND I'VE GOT SOME **SERIOUS** CONCERNS.

WHAT KIND OF CONCERNS **BIG GUY**?

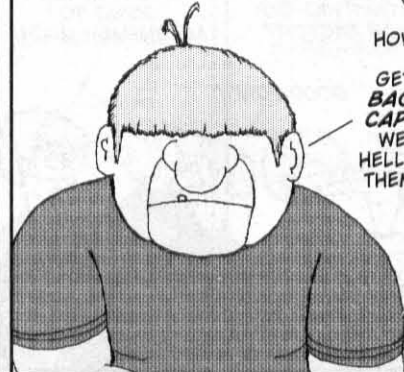
I THINK **B.A.** MAY BE **PURPOSELY** STACKING THE DECK AGAINST US. I'D EVEN GO SO FAR AS TO SAY THE MAN'S BEEN **BREAKING THE RULES!**

BRIAN, THAT'S A **SERIOUS** CHARGE. WHERE'S YOUR **PROOF**?



THINK ABOUT IT FOR A MOMENT. WHERE IN THE **HELL** DID THIS **MYSTERIOUS HALFLING** COME FROM? AND WHAT ABOUT THAT **HILL GIANT** WHO WAS CHUCKING THOSE **BIG ASS BOULDERS** AT US? WHAT'S **HIS** STORY? AND NEED I MENTION THOSE **ELVEN SKIRMISHERS** WHO KEPT **HARASSING** OUR **SUPPLY LINES**?

HOW'D THESE GUYS GET IN THAT **BAG OF HEFTY CAPACITY??!!** WE SURE AS HELL DIDN'T PUT THEM IN THERE.



AND WHAT ABOUT MY **MAGE LOCK** ON THOSE **GREAVES OF TROLKIN CONTROL**? HOW'D **BARRINGER** MANAGE TO BREAK IT? OR HOW 'BOUT **TEFLON'S** WEAKNESS FOR **ELVEN DANCING WOMEN**? HOW'D HE FIND OUT ABOUT THAT? **B.A.** NEVER DID GIVE ME A **SATISFACTORY** ANSWER TO THAT ONE.

-SIGH- I ADMIT SOMETHING ISN'T **RIGHT**.

THEN YOU SEE WHAT I'M SAYING.

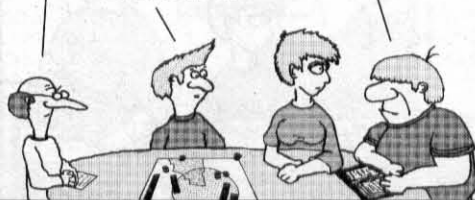


SO WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT? **CONFRONT** HIM?

NO, I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE. **CONFRONT** A **GM** DIRECTLY AND ACCUSE HIM OF **WRONG DOING** AND IT'S LIKELY TO **FLARE UP**. I'VE SEEN **ENTIRE GROUPS BREAKING UP** OVER THIS SORT OF THING.

WELL **WHAT** THEN? WE'VE GOT TO DO **SOMETHING!**

I THINK WE SHOULD CALL FOR A **GAME AUDIT!**



WE BRING IN AN **"IMPARTIAL"** FROM **OUTSIDE** THE GROUP TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER.

THE **HACKMASTER PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION** HAS SOME **GUIDELINES** ON THEIR **WEBSITE**.



INVOLVE THE *H.M.P.A.P.P.!!*  
DO WE *HAVE* TO? POOR B.A. -  
YOU JUST *KNOW* THEY'LL  
MAKE A *FEDERAL CASE* OUT  
OF IT. COULDN'T WE KEEP  
THIS *AMONGST* FRIENDS?

YEAH, I SUPPOSE  
YOU'RE RIGHT.  
TELL YA WHAT...

HOW 'BOUT I DROP BY AND SEE *WEIRD PETE* THIS AFTERNOON AND  
ASK IF HE CAN HANDLE THE MATTER ON THE *Q.T?* I'LL GIVE HIM A  
*LIST* OF OUR *GRIEVANCES* AND SEE WHAT HE COMES UP WITH.  
WE'LL GO WITH HIS *RECOMMENDATION* ON HOW TO PROCEED.

SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN.  
YOU GOT MY VOTE.

-SIGH- OKAY.  
COUNT ME IN.

JUST KEEP  
YOUR FINGERS  
*CROSSED*  
AND HOPE  
I'M *WRONG*.

MINE TOO.  
LET'S DO IT.



### THE NEXT DAY AT THE "HOUSE OF FLAPJACKS"

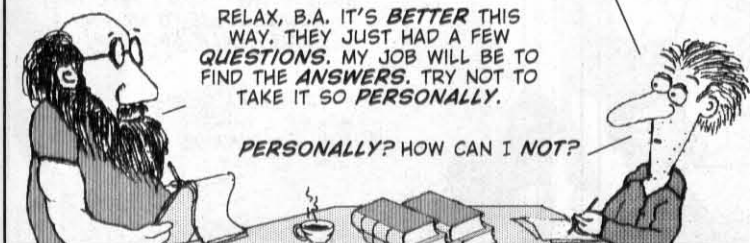
I THOUGHT IT'D BE A GOOD IDEA TO CONDUCT THIS *AUDIT* ON  
*NEUTRAL TERRITORY* AWAY FROM *PRYING EYES*. NOW THEN....  
DID YOU BRING *ALL* YOUR *CAMPAIGN NOTES* FOR ME TO *REVIEW*?

UH...YEAH, I DID JUST AS YOU SAID ON THE  
PHONE. I *STILL* CAN'T BELIEVE MY *GROUP* ASKED  
FOR THIS. WHY COULDN'T THEY JUST *CONFRONT*  
ME ONE ON ONE? WHY INVOLVE AN *OUTSIDER*?

RELAX, B.A. IT'S *BETTER* THIS  
WAY. THEY JUST HAD A FEW  
*QUESTIONS*. MY JOB WILL BE TO  
FIND THE *ANSWERS*. TRY NOT TO  
TAKE IT SO *PERSONALLY*.

*PERSONALLY?* HOW CAN I *NOT*?

OKAY, LET'S START OFF WITH THIS  
*MYSTERIOUS HALFLING*  
THEY HAVE LISTED HERE.  
THEY SEEM TO THINK YOU PULLED  
HIM OUT OF YOUR *ASS* SOMEHOW.  
HE'S NOT LISTED ON *BRIAN'S*  
*"INVENTORY"* AS FAR AS WHAT  
OR WHO WAS IN THE BAG.  
CARE TO EXPLAIN?



WELL YEAH, THAT'S *EASY*. THAT WOULD  
BE *KNOBBY FOOT!!*<sup>1</sup> HE WAS THE  
PARTY'S *TORCH BEARER* BUT THEY HAD A  
*FALLING OUT*. HE ENDED UP RIDING AWAY  
ON *KNUCKLE'S MULE...ER, DWARVEN*  
*WARHORSE* BECAUSE THEY WERE GOING  
TO *EAT HIM* - LONG STORY ACTUALLY BUT  
WHAT HAPPENED IS THAT HE *CIRCLED*  
*BACK* TO CAMP WHILE THEY WERE  
ATTEMPTING TO *HUNT HIM DOWN* AND HE  
SOUGHT *SANCTUARY* IN *BARRINGER'S*  
*REALM* - WHICH WAS GRANTED.  
IT'S ALL WRITTEN DOWN HERE IN MY  
*CAMPAIGN NOTES*. WANT TO SEE THEM?

NO, NO, NOT JUST YET.  
THAT WAS AN *ACCEPTABLE*  
ANSWER. I'LL *SCRATCH*  
THAT ONE OFF.



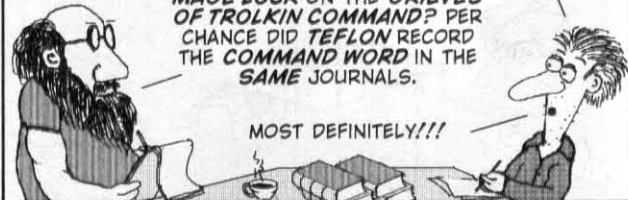
### TWENTY MINUTES LATER.....

NEXT ITEM ON THE LIST -- AND *BRIAN* HAS THIS  
ONE *UNDERLINED* AND *YELLOW HIGHLIGHTED* --  
HOW DID *BARRINGER* LEARN OF *TEFLON BILLY'S*  
WEAKNESS FOR *ELVEN DANCING GIRLS*?

AGAIN I HAVE THAT *WRITTEN DOWN* HERE.  
*KNOBBY FOOT* HAD THE *OPPORTUNITY* TO  
READ THE ENTIRETY OF *TEFLON BILLY'S*  
*DIARY*.<sup>2</sup> HE PASSED THE INFORMATION ON  
TO *BARRINGER* WHEN HE WAS *DEBRIEFED*.

I SEE. AND WHAT ABOUT THE  
*MAGE LOCK* ON THE *GRIEVES*  
OF *TROLKIN COMMAND*? PER  
CHANCE DID *TEFLON* RECORD  
THE *COMMAND WORD* IN THE  
*SAME JOURNALS*.

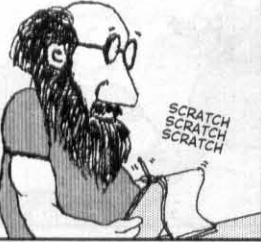
MOST DEFINITELY!!!



<sup>1</sup> see "Where Now Brown Cow?" [page 9]

<sup>2</sup> see *Bundle of Trouble Volume Five* [KoDT #14] "The Summons"

OKAY, LET'S **SCRATCH** THOSE TWO OFF. THE LIST SURE SEEMS TO BE GETTING **SHORTER**.



OKAY, HOW ABOUT THIS **HILL GIANT** THEY HAVE LISTED HERE? AND SOMETHING ABOUT "**ELVEN SKIRMISHERS**".



WHAT'S THE STORY? HOW'D THEY END UP IN THE **BAG**?

WELL, I SUPPOSE THE **BEST** WAY TO EXPLAIN **THAT** IS TO LET YOU READ THIS **DOCUMENT**. I THINK IT PRETTY MUCH **EXPLAINS** EVERYTHING.



OKAY, LET'S HAVE A **LOOK-SEE** THEN.

**SECONDS LATER....**



LET'S SEE NOW...MEGA-CAPACITY...BLAH..BLAH..MUMBLE...MUMBLE...

**WHAT THE...??!!**

**FIRP-SPUTTER-FWAAP!!**  
**DO YOU REALIZE**  
**WHAT THIS IS?**

APPARENTLY **YOU** DO.  
PRETTY **SWEET**, EH?

W-W-WHERE DID YOU GET IT?  
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M **HOLDING** THIS  
IN MY HANDS. CAN I GETTA **COPY**?



WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT -- **THOSE** PAPERS DON'T LEAVE MY **SIGHT!** NOT FOR A **SINGLE** MOMENT.

OKAY, **B.A.**, I THINK WE CAN **STOP** RIGHT THERE. LOOKS LIKE EVERYTHING IS IN **ORDER**. I'M GOING TO **RECOMMEND** TO YOUR GROUP THAT THEY **DROP** THE MATTER AND THAT IT SHOULDN'T GO ANY FURTHER. I'LL KEEP A COPY OF MY **FINDINGS** ON FILE JUST IN CASE THE **H.M.P.A.** GETS **WIND** OF THIS AND ASKS ANY QUESTIONS.

THANKS PETE. I SURE HOPE THIS **IS** THE **END** OF IT. I **STILL** CAN'T BELIEVE THEY DIDN'T FEEL THEY COULD **COME** TO ME AND JUST **TALK** ABOUT IT.

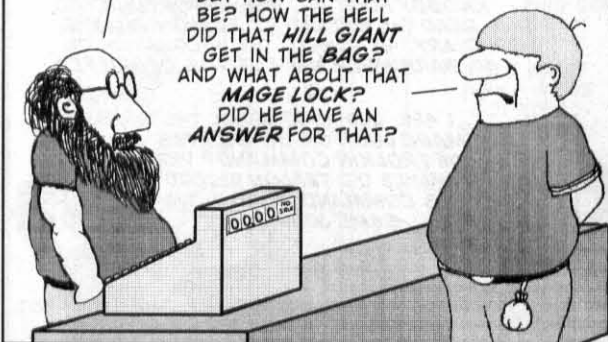


HEY! YA NEED A RIDE HOME? I THINK THERE'S A **KINKOS** ON THE WAY.

**A FEW DAYS LATER....**

SORRY, BRI!! I WENT OVER **EVERYTHING!!** B.A.'S **CAMPAIGN** IS **AIR TIGHT!!** HELL, THE GUY EVEN KEEPS TRACK OF **ENCUMBRANCE** AND **CARRYING CAPACITY** FOR **MINOR NPC'S**. I FOUND **NOTHING** TO **SUBSTANTIATE** YOUR CLAIMS.

BUT HOW CAN THAT BE? HOW THE HELL DID THAT **HILL GIANT** GET IN THE **BAG**? AND WHAT ABOUT THAT **MAGE LOCK**? DID HE HAVE AN **ANSWER** FOR THAT?



AS A MATTER OF FACT HE DID AND IT WAS **IRON CLAD**. LOOK YOU **ASKED** ME TO LOOK INTO IT AND I **DID**. TAKE MY **WORD** FOR IT - THE MAN'S **CAMPAIGN** IS BY THE **BOOK!**

C'MON, PETE. WE'RE **OLD FRIENDS**. CAN'T YOU GIMME SOMETHING **MORE** TO GO ON HERE. JUST A **FEW** DETAILS???

**UNDER THE TABLE?**



**WHOAH!!! STOP RIGHT THERE!!!** DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ASKING?? THE H.M.P.A. TAKES GM CONFIDENTIALITY VERY SERIOUSLY. IF THERE'S EVEN A HINT OF ANY IMPROPRIETY ON MY PART THEY COULD CAUSE SOME MAJOR PROBLEMS FOR ME. HOW THE HELL DO YOU THINK GAMIN' DICK LOST HIS HACKTOURNEY SITE LICENSE??

RELAX, I UNDERSTAND ALL THAT. I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO BETRAY B.A.'S TRUST.

GOOD. I JUST WANT TO MAKE IT CRYSTAL CLEAR WHERE I STAND - THAT'S ALL.

I'M NOT ASKING FOR SPECIFICS. JUST NUDGE ME IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

OKAY, OKAY, I GUESS IT WOULDN'T HURT IF I SET YOUR COMPASS SO TO SPEAK.

EVER HEAR OF SOMETHING CALLED, "THE JACKSON DOCUMENT"??

THE JACKSON DOCUMENT? YEAH, I'VE HEARD OF IT. IT'S A MYTH. DOESN'T EXIST! JUST SOME URBAN LEGEND. I CHASED THAT GHOST A FEW YEARS AGO BEFORE I REALIZED IT WAS A HOAX!

IT'S NO GHOST MY FRIEND. IT'S REAL! B.A. HAS A COPY OF IT - I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES.

REAL? WHAT DO YOU TAKE ME FOR?

I'M NOT PULLIN' YOUR LEG, BRIAN. I READ THE DAMN THING. APPARENTLY B.A. PICKED IT UP AT ONE OF THOSE GARY JACKSON GAMEMASTER CAMPS HE WENT TO.

YOU'RE NOT JOKING THEN? IT'S REAL?

LOOK, WHY NOT JUST ENJOY THE CAMPAIGN? DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. IT'LL MAKE ITS WAY INTO A FUTURE EDITION OF HACKMASTER SOME DAY.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING -- I CAN SEE IT WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR FACE. BUT YOU CAN FORGET THAT IDEA. EVERY GM WORTH HIS SCRATCH HAS SWORN AN OATH OF SECRECY TO NEVER DIVULGE THE CONTENTS OF THAT DOCUMENT. HELL, I HADN'T EVEN SEEN A COPY TIL' B.A. SHOWED IT TO ME.

MARK MY WORDS, PETE -- IF THAT DOCUMENT EXISTS I WILL GET MY HANDS ON IT. I'LL MAKE IT MY PERSONAL QUEST!

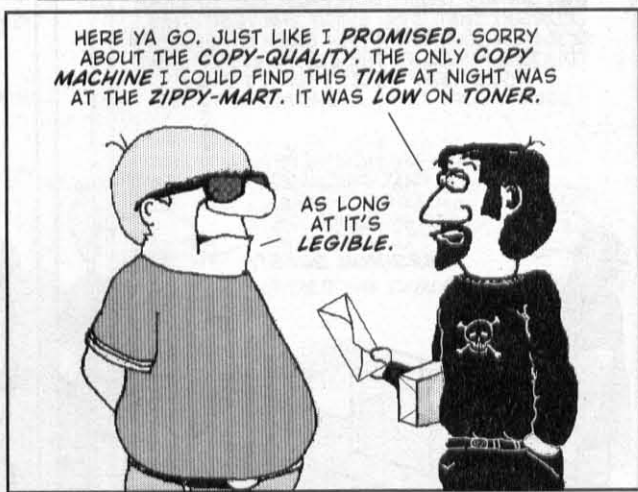
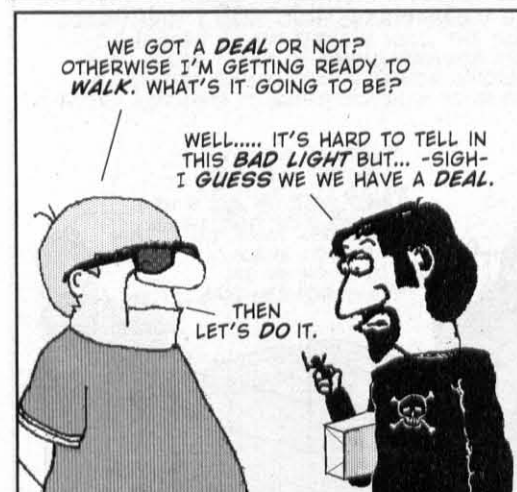
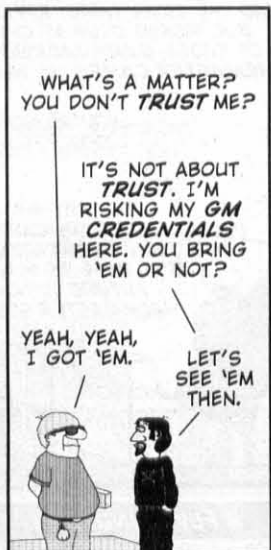
A FEW MINUTES LATER...

GAWD HELP US ALL IF HE GETS HOLD OF THAT THING.

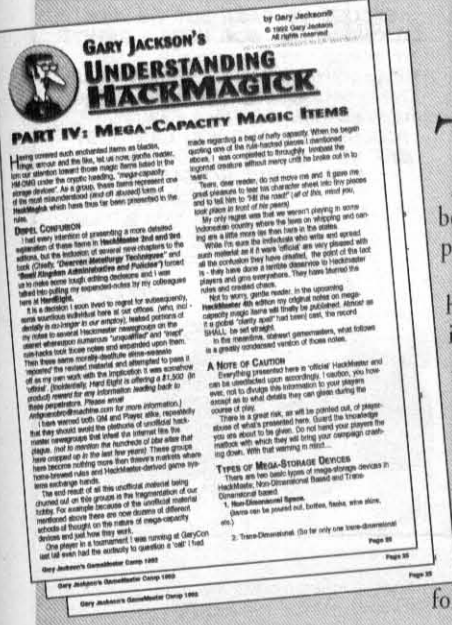
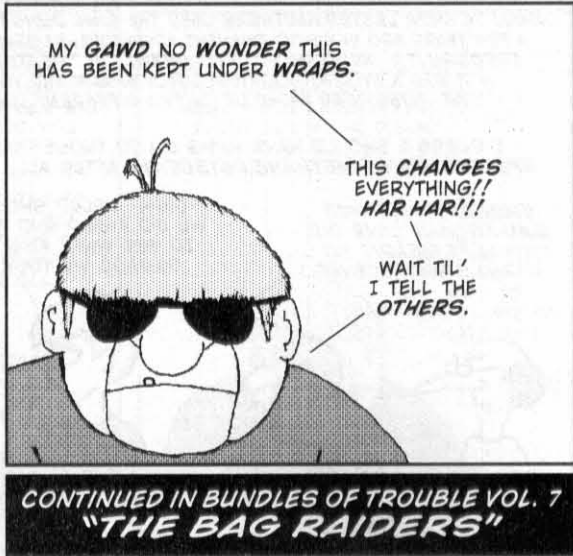
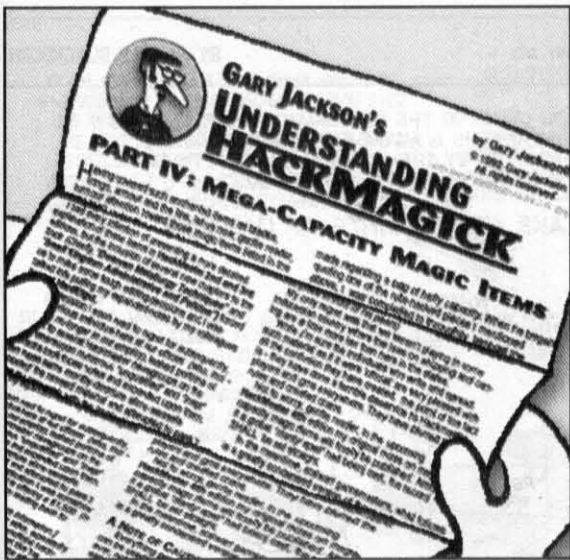
LATE ONE NIGHT IN A DARK ALLEY  
BEHIND THE GAMES PIT...



HEY EARL, I WAS BEGINNING TO  
THINK YOU WEREN'T GOING TO SHOW.



\* see *Bundle of Trouble Volume Five* [KoDT #14] "Go Figure!": Brian paints miniatures in three different grades; slop-n-go, table top and museum quality. Dave Bozwell once commented that the slop-n-go grade looked like they were painted with a Q-Tip.



# THE JACKSON DOCUMENT

The 'Jackson Document' has been a closely-guarded secret among a small circle of HackMaster GMs for several years. Originally slated to be run in HackMaster 2nd Edition the material was pulled after being deemed a potential 'campaign-wrecker' if it fell into the hands of players.

Later (1992) Gary Jackson published extracts of the pulled material in his GM Seminar handouts at the Gary Jackson GameMaster Camps held in Saginaw, Michigan. Actually, a six-part series detailing the inner-workings of HackMagick, it was 'Part IV: Mega-Capacity Storage Items' which has come to be known as "The Jackson Document".

Although the handouts were closely tracked and gathered back up at the conclusion of the seminars, it is known that several copies are unaccounted for. (Portions of the document popped up on the usenet before being tracked down and destroyed.)

Recently, KenzerCo acquired a copy of J-Doc from an unnamed source. If you'd like to read it, you can find it in Adobe Acrobat [.pdf] format on our website at [www.kenzerco.com](http://www.kenzerco.com).

OKAY, SO APPARENTLY THE SEWER SYSTEM OF THE NEARBY CITY OF PUNGAR SEEPS INTO THE LOWER LEVELS OF THE DUNGEON RESULTING IN HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF METHANE GAS! ACCORDING TO THE RULES - METHANE RANKS AS A CLASS V EXPLOSIVE.

PUT SOME OF IT IN A CONFINED SPACE AND EXPOSE IT TO AN OPEN FLAME ---



**KA-BOOM!!**

TRAGICALLY, AS YOU DESCEND THE STAIRS AND STEP ON TO THE FIFTH LEVEL THERE IS A HUGE EXPLOSION!! THE METHANE GAS IS IGNITED BY THE FLAMES OF YOUR TORCH. THE POWER OF THE BLAST IS UNBELIEVABLE.

**YOU EACH TAKE 4020 POINTS OF DAMAGE!**



EXPLOSION?? YOU GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.

WHAT THE FIRK DING BLAST?? WE DON'T EVEN GET A SAVING THROW?

WE TAKE OUT A DRAGON AND FOUR KRULLERS JUST TO BE DONE IN BY SEWER GAS?

DAMN!! YA KNOW LESTER SMITHERS USED THE SAME DUNGEON-HAZARD A FEW YEARS AGO IN HIS TOURNAMENT ADVENTURE, "A SEWER RUNS THROUGH IT." WE NICKNAMED THAT CRAWL THE "MEATGRINDER" -- IT WAS A KILLER! SLIGHTEST LITTLE SPARK AND YOU AND YOUR INTESTINES ENDED UP ON TWO DIFFERENT LEVELS.

I GUESS I SHOULD HAVE HUNG ON TO THOSE SPECTACLES OF METHANE DETECTION AFTER ALL.

THIS BLOWS!! THAT GAS TOTALLY CAME OUT OF LEFT FIELD!! NO WARNING WHATSOEVER.

-SIGH- WELL? SHOULD WE GO AHEAD AND ROLL TO SEE WHAT KIND OF DAMAGE WE TOOK?

I SUPPOSE. CRIPES! DID HE SAY 4020?!



LOOK AT YA GLOATIN' OVER THERE ALL SMUG BEHIND YOUR FANCY SCREEN. YOU BASTARD!!

YOU'RE JUST DOING THIS BECAUSE WE WASTED YOUR PRECIOUS ASS KRULLERS BY SHOVING THEM INTO YOUR OWN SPIKED PITS-- YOU'RE KILLING US OFF OUT OF SPITE!

OH PA-LEEZE! I'M NOT THAT PETTY, BOB.

SHYA'RIGHT!! SO PROVE IT.

PROVE IT? HOW?



I'LL TELL YOU HOW -- JUST HOLD UP YOUR NOTES LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO READ THE PART WHERE IT SAYS THERE'S A METHANE-HAZARD ON THE FIFTH LEVEL. IF IT'S THERE I'LL KISS YOUR LUCKY TEN-SIDER IN HOMAGE AND GLADLY TAKE MY DAMAGE!

NICE TRY, BOB BUT THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL I'M SHOWING YOU MY NOTES.

HO HO!! LOOKS LIKE BOB CALLED IT. B.A. HAS APPARENTLY HAS SOMETHING TO HIDE!!

GUYS!! I REALLY DON'T THINK B.A. WOULD DO SOMETHING SO UNDERHANDED AS TO OUTHRIGHT KILL OFF OUR CHARACTERS.

HMMRRFFF! JUST AS I THOUGHT.

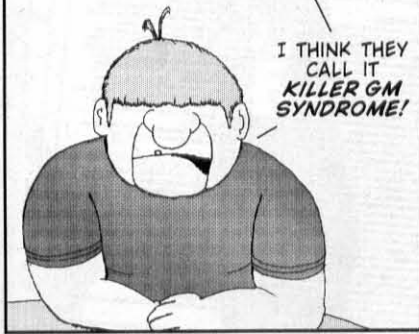
OH BROTHER!



EXCUSE ME SARA BUT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT B.A. HERE - RIGHT?

HELL, HE'S ALWAYS SCREWING US OVER WHENEVER HE THINKS WE'VE BESTED HIM. SCORE A FEW POINTS AGAINST HIM AND YOU CAN JUST BET HE'S GOING TO TOSS YOU IN A "NO-WIN" SITUATION.

I THINK THEY CALL IT KILLER GM SYNDROME!



KoDT Timeline: This strip and the one that follows takes place somewhere between KoDT#3 and KoDT#4

YEAH, REMEMBER THE TIME WE GOT SNOWED-IN IN THE MOUNTAINS AND WE WERE STARVING TO DEATH? I CUT OFF MY OWN FOOT SO I COULD EAT IT BUT B.A. RULED THE MEAT HAD GONE "BAD" AND THAT I DIED FROM FOOD POISONING!

OR WHAT ABOUT THE TIME I BITCH-SLAPPED THAT ROADSIDE VEGETABLE VENDOR FOR SHORT-CHANGING ME? THE JOKER PULLS OUT A +5 SWORD OF SHARPNESS AND DECAPITATES ME!! WHEN I COMPLAINED ABOUT A ZERO-LEVEL CHARACTER WALKING AROUND WITH A MAGIC SWORD B.A. CLAIMED HE WAS A SIXTH LEVEL FIGHTER WHO JUST HAPPENED TO BE DOWN ON HIS LUCK AND WAS TRYING TO EARN A LITTLE EXTRA MONEY. GIVE ME A BREAK!!



HEY! YOU CUT THAT FOOT OFF BECAUSE IT HAD GOTTEN GANGRENE FROM FROST BITE!!

OH, OH, DON'T EVEN GET ME STARTED.

HEY BRI, REMEMBER WHEN BENNY THE MAGE ATTEMPTED TO SNEAK ABOARD THAT GINGE SHIP AND THOSE SAILORS CORNERED YOU IN THE CARGO HOLD?? OH MAN!! THEY BRANDED YOU WITH A HOT IRON AND MADE YOU WEAR A DOG COLLAR AND STUFF -- THEN THAT ONE BURLY GUY STARTED CALLING YOU BETTY AND MADE YOU GIVE HIM A FOOT MASSAGE?

OH, I PAID DEARLY FOR THAT LITTLE MISTAKE. A 9TH LEVEL MAGE - FZZZZZZTTTTT!!! RIGHT DOWN THE DRAIN!

HE EVEN MADE YOU WEAR A DRESS AND DANCE THE LAMPOOCHA JIG WITH HIM ALL NIGHT!\*

DON'T EVEN REMIND ME. I HAD TO RETIRE THAT CHARACTER -- ALL BECAUSE I CHALLENGED ONE OF B.A.'S RULINGS AND FORCED HIM TO REVERSE A CALL.

IT WASN'T ENOUGH THAT B.A. MESS'D WITH ME - HE HAD TO HUMILIATE MY CHARACTER.



C'MON B.A.!! ARE YOU GOING TO SHOW ME THOSE NOTES OR ARE YOU AFRAID YOUR TRUE COLORS WILL SHOW! HUH? WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE?

THAT DOES IT. YOU WANNA PLAY GAMES??!! YOU WANNA QUESTION MY INTEGRITY IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE GROUP? FINE!! BUT LET'S RAISE THE STAKES AND MAKE IT INTERESTING. I'LL SHOW YOU MY NOTES --AND IF "METHANE-HAZARD" IS LISTED YOU TAKE DOUBLE-DAMAGE! HOW'S THAT SOUND, BOB?

FIRK DING BLAST!!! THAT'S IT!! IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO SIT HERE AND BE INSULTED LIKE.....

HUH? DOUBLE DAMAGE? UH...ER...I DON'T THINK WE NEED TO GO THERE DO WE?

HE'S BLUFFING BOB!! HE'S GOT NOTHING!! CALL HIM ON IT -- CALL HIM!!

C'MON BOB! PUT UP OR SHUT UP! WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE?

-GULP-

YEAH, BOB. WHY DON'T YOU CALL HIM?

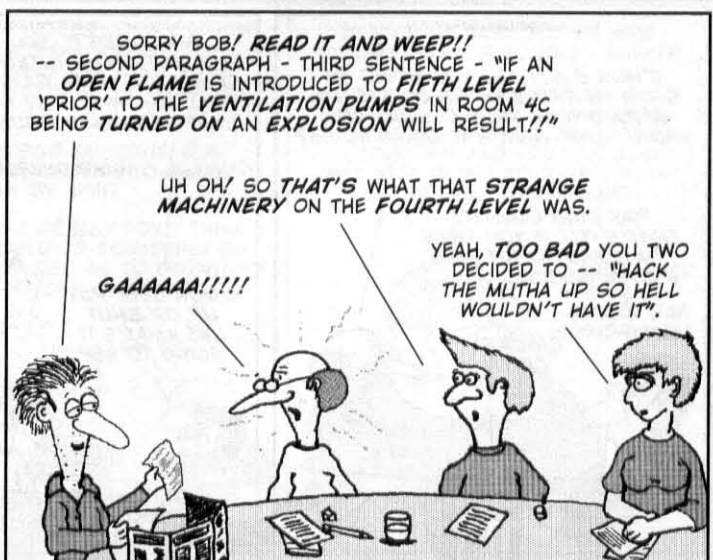
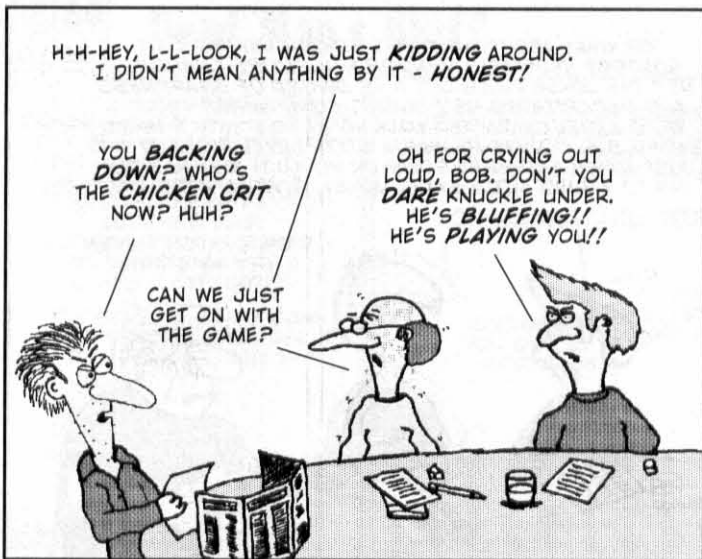


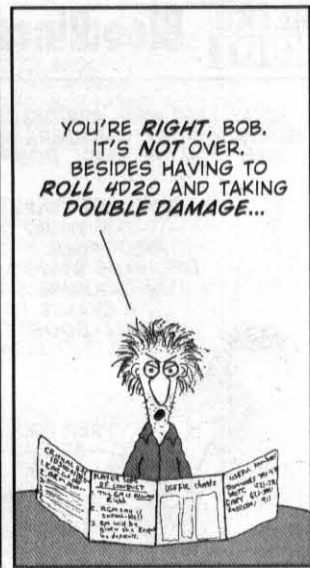
CHICKEN CRIT!!

CHICKEN CRIT??!

UH...UH..

\* See Tales From the Vault Volume Two [page 4]





**THAT'S NOT FAIR!!!**  
YOU **PURPOSELY** FLASHED A **FAKE**  
"SMUG GRIN" TO **THROW ME OFF!**

TRUST ME,  
BOB. THAT  
**SMUG GRIN**  
WAS  
**GENUINE!**

THAT WAS PRETTY  
**LOW, B.A.!** YOU **TRICKED**  
BOB INTO **SCREWING**  
HIMSELF OVER.

ACTUALLY IT WAS MORE  
OF A **DEFIANT SMIRK**  
THAN A **SMUG GRIN** --  
DON'T YOU THINK?

DON'T EVEN  
THINK THIS  
IS OVER!

YOU'RE **RIGHT, BOB.**  
IT'S **NOT OVER.**  
BESIDES HAVING TO  
**ROLL 4D20** AND TAKING  
**DOUBLE DAMAGE...**

**LATER....**

**B.A.??!!** MAYBE IT WASN'T SUCH A **GOOD IDEA** TO HOLD UP  
YOUR **LUCKY TEN-SIDER** AND ASK **BOB** TO "**PUCKER UP!**"

YEAH, I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM THAT MAD SINCE **SHEILA HORWITZ**  
MADE HIM LICK A **TOAD** AT **HACKMASTER SUMMER CAMP.**  
HE SPENT **FOUR DAYS** IN THE **INFIRMARY** AND MISSED THE  
**DWARVEN LANGUAGE SEMINARS** -- HE WAS **TORQUED!**

I THINK WHAT SENT HIM  
**OVER THE EDGE** WAS  
ROLLING **FOUR NATURAL**  
**TWENTIES** IN A ROW WHEN  
HE **ROLLED FOR DAMAGE!**

WHO CARES? IT WAS  
**WORTH IT** JUST TO SEE  
THE **LOOK ON HIS FACE.**

**OUCH!!**

It's amazing to think that over the years more than 40 different characters have appeared (or been mentioned) in KODT. Though it may appear otherwise, we really aren't working toward creating a 'cast of thousands' in Knights of the Dinner Table.

New characters are introduced depending on what various story arcs dictate. Some characters (such as *Crutch and Switch*) were supposed to be 'walk-on' characters with no thought of having them ever appearing again. Fans, however, demanded to see more of them so they are likely to reappear in future issues.

Some characters have been mentioned for years but have yet to actually appear in the comic. (*Patty Gauzweiller* is a good example).

I'm constantly sketching new characters not ALL of them make the cut. For one reason or another they either get a make-overs or are dropped from consideration altogether. (The Development Team is sometimes brutal!)

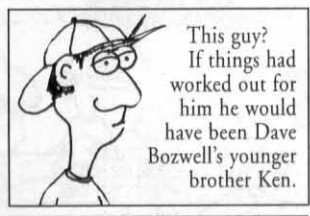
I thought our readers might be interested in seeing a few of the characters who didn't quite make the grade. — Jolly

## Making the Grade CHARACTERS WHO DIDN'T MAKE THE CUT.

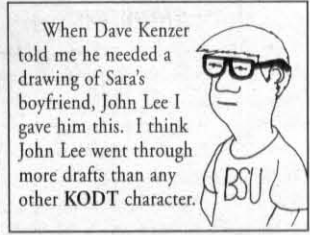


The above sketch (left) was the original Bitter Stevil I came up with when we were working on the BlackHands.

Steve Johansson took one look and said, "Uh...no, he doesn't look like that." He then gave Stevil a fashion make-over, glasses and a hair cut. Thus the NEW Stevil was born. (right)



This guy? If things had worked out for him he would have been Dave Bozwell's younger brother Ken.



When Dave Kenzer told me he needed a drawing of Sara's boyfriend, John Lee I gave him this. I think John Lee went through more drafts than any other KODT character.



WHAT DO I MEAN? I'M TALKING ABOUT THIS SCAM YOU GUYS HAVE SET UP. THOSE MENTOR-PROTEGEE RULES WEREN'T MEANT TO SERVE AS A HACK-TRACK PROGRAM TO CRANK OUT CHARACTER-CLONES. IT'S SO WRONG!

LOOK SARA. I KNOW THEY FROWN UPON INNOVATION IN GAME DESIGN UP IN WISCONSIN WHERE YOU'RE FROM BUT YOU REALLY SHOULD GET OVER IT. -- YOU'RE IN INDIANA NOW.

YEAH WELL YOU CAN LAUGH BUT I HAPPEN TO AGREE WITH SARA. DEATH USED TO MEAN SOMETHING IN HACKMASTER. THERE WAS A SENSE OF LOSS WHENEVER A CHARACTER DIED. BUT NOW? WITH THESE FRICKIN' CHARACTER-PREPPING RULES - IT'S LIKE SOME DAMN VIDEO GAME -- FOUR MEN FOR A QUARTER!

MUST YOU LECTURE ME EVERY TIME I ROLL UP A NEW CHARACTER? I'M JUST UTILIZING THE RULES GARY JACKSON SAW FIT TO PROVIDE US. IF I WANTED TO GET YELLED AT ALL THE TIME I'D JUST STAY HOME AND HANG OUT WITH MY DAD.



I BEG YOUR PARDON?

HAR HAR!! I'M JUST POKING FUN AT YA. LIGHTEN UP.

OKAY, OKAY, CAN WE JUST MOVE ON?

WELL PUT, BOB. WELL PUT.



OKAY BRIAN. LET'S HEAR ABOUT YOUR NEW CHARACTER.

UH....DID I HEAR YOU RIGHT? YOU ROLLED UP A CHARACTER FROM SCRATCH??

THAT'S RIGHT. HIS NAME IS BLACK LOTUS!!\* PART OF THE "LOTUS LINEAGE" MIND YOU. HOWEVER, I DISPENSED WITH ALL THE CHARACTER-PREPPING CRAP AND ROLLED HIM UP IN BARE-BONES FASHION.

WELL THANK GOD FOR THAT! I'M PROUD OF YOU BRIAN. IT'LL BE FUN FOR YOU -- BRINGING A CHARACTER UP THROUGH THE RANKS THE OLD FASHIONED WAY.

YEAH, YEAH, WHATEVER. ACTUALLY I HAD TO ROLL HIM UP FROM SCRATCH SO HE'D QUALIFY TO USE THE NEW METHODS WHICH CAME OUT IN THE "HYBRIDS" SUPPLEMENT THAT CAME OUT LAST MONTH.



OH WOW!! YOU GOT THAT? DUDE, WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING? I WOULDN'T HAVE MINDED LOOKING INTO THAT ROUTE MYSELF.

ISN'T THAT THE BOOK THAT LETS YOU MIX RACES AND CHERRY PICK YOUR RACIAL ABILITIES AND SO FORTH?

SORRY BOB. I JUST PICKED IT UP A FEW DAYS AGO. I ACTUALLY SPENT A LOT OF TIME SOUL SEARCHING BEFORE I EVENTUALLY DECIDED TO GO AHEAD AND GIVE IT A TRY. I MUST SAY - I'M QUITE PLEASED WITH THE OUTCOME! BLACK LOTUS ROCKS ASS!

HYBRIDS SUPPLEMENT?



\* The reader will note that 'Black Lotus' was the original name of Teflon Billy. Refer to Tales from Vault Volume One [page 38] to learn how Black Lotus earned his nickname.

OKAY, OKAY, NOW I REMEMBER. I READ SOMETHING ABOUT THESE NEW *HYBRID* SUPPLEMENTS BUT UH...BRIAN, DON'T YOU *THINK* WE SHOULD HAVE *DISCUSSED* THIS FIRST? I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO LOOK THIS *NEW* MATERIAL OVER YET.

NO SWEAT, B.A. I CAN *LOAN* YOU MY COPY AFTER THE GAME IF YOU WANT TO *VERIFY* WHAT I CAME UP WITH. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I THINK YOU'LL *WHOLE-HEARTEDLY* APPROVE -- THE NEW *METHODS* FOR CHARACTER GENERATION IN THIS BOOK *REALLY* ENCOURAGE *ROLE-PLAYING!*

YOU DON'T SAY? HOW 'BOUT HANDING DOWN YOUR CHARACTER SHEET SO I CAN HAVE A LOOK?

SURE, NO PROB.



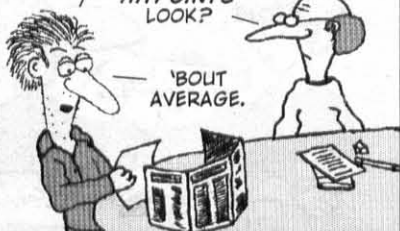
A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

LET'S SEE WHAT WE HAVE HERE.

*MAGIC USER-BATTLE MAGE* EH? NO SURPRISE THERE. HMMMMMMMMM-MM... *PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES* DON'T LOOK TOO OUTRAGEOUS. THAT'S *COMFORTING*.

HOW'S HIS *HITPOINTS* LOOK?

'BOUT AVERAGE.

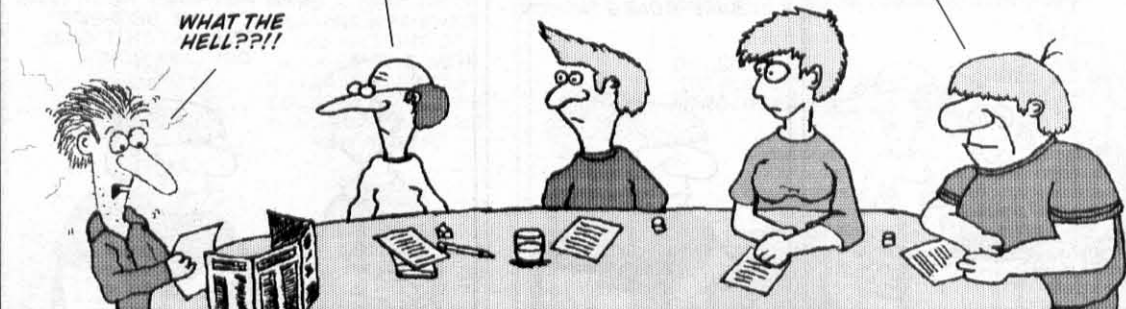


ACTUALLY THIS CHARACTER LOOKS PRETTY GOO...*FIRP??!!!*

WHADDIZIT, B.A.?

HEH HEH. HE MUST HAVE *FINALLY* NOTICED *BLACKIE'S RACE*. I FIGURED I'D GET A *REACTION* ON *THAT ONE*.

WHAT THE HELL??!!



*HALF-DWARF???*

DID YOU *REALLY* THINK YOU COULD *SLIP* THIS BY ME? *HALF DWARF?* THERE'S *NO SUCH ANIMAL*.

AND A *BATTLEMAGE* TO BOOT?

YOU ARE *DREAMING* MY FRIEND.



COMPLETELY LEGIT, B.A. I USED THE *HYBRID CHARTS* TO WORK OUT A *DWARF-HUMAN MIX*. IT TOOK SOME *NUMBER CRUNCHING* BUT I FINALLY MANAGED TO FIND A *GENE-MESH* WHICH TOOK *ADVANTAGE* OF THE '*BEST*' OF *BOTH RACES*.



BEST OF BOTH RACES? AND JUST *WHAT* DOES THAT MEAN IN *LAYMAN'S* TERMS?

WELL, BASICALLY I WAS ABLE TO *RETAIN* SUCH DESIRABLE *DWARVEN* TRAITS AS *LONGEVITY*, *INFRAVISION*, AND *EXCEPTIONAL CONSTITUTION* WHILE ON MY *HUMAN* SIDE I MANAGED TO HOLD ON TO THE *CAREER* OPTION OF A *BATTLE MAGE* CLASS: *MAGIC USER*.

OF COURSE I HAD TO TAKE A FEW *BAD GENES* SUCH AS *MALE PATTERN BALDNESS*, *PROMPTNESS TOWARD OBESITY* AND *WEBBED TOES*.

??!!! YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING. IS THIS A JOKE?

I'M SORRY BRIAN BUT I JUST CAN'T *PICTURE* YOU PLAYING A *DWARF*.

CORRECTION - *HALF DWARF!* I STILL HAVE THE *CHARISMA* OF A *HUMAN*.

OH...AND I PICKED *IRONHEARTS* AS THE *CLAN* OF MY *BLOODLINE*.



I SEE. SO YOU WANT ME TO *BELIEVE* THAT *OUT OF THE BLUE* YOU JUST *DECIDED* TO ROLL UP A *DWARF*.

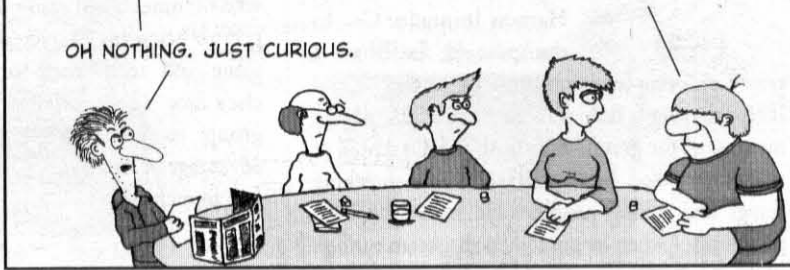
YOU DID *ALL THIS NUMBER CRUNCHING* AND *GENE MESHING* JUST BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD BE *FUN* TO RUN A *HALF-DWARF*.

WELL YEAH. I DON'T SEE WHY YOU'RE GETTING ALL *BENT* ABOUT IT. I'M JUST TRYING SOMETHING *NEW* AND *DIFFERENT*. EMBRACING A *NEW ROLE* --ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU SAID?

UH HUM. YOU HAVEN'T TALKED TO *WEIRD PETE* RECENTLY BY ANY CHANCE HAVE YOU?

*WEIRD PETE?* WHY... UH... NO. MATTER OF FACT I HAVEN'T. WHAT ARE YOU *DRIVING* AT?

OH NOTHING. JUST *CURIOS*.



**THE VERY NEXT DAY...**

HEY BRIAN. WHAT BRINGS YOU IN?

HEY, B.A. BEEN IN TODAY?

B.A.? NO. HAVEN'T SEEN HIM. WHY?

WHEW! THANK GAWD. *LOOK!* YOU REMEMBER THE OTHER DAY WHEN YOU TOLD ME HE PICKED UP THAT MODULE?

YOU MEAN "*KINDRED BLOOD: GRAB FOR THE DWARVEN THRONE*"??\*

YEAH. WELL IF *B.A.* SHOULD ASK -- YOU *NEVER MENTIONED ANYTHING* ABOUT IT TO ME.



\* Module DW-5 of the *Dwarven Clans of Ironheart* series. Written by Jo Jo Zeke, the module deals with a party attempting to place the rightful heir to the dwarven throne in power. The adventure is unique in that ALL of the magic items placed in the adventure can ONLY be used by member of the 'Ironheart' bloodline.

b.a.

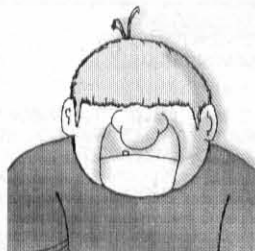
## FELTON

B.A. is 30 years old and lives with his parents. When he isn't gaming he works part-time in his dad's dry cleaning shop. B.A. dropped out of college to follow his dream of being a game designer. He sunk \$6,000 into his first gaming product, **DAWG: the Role-Playing Game™**, which was a bomb. B.A. suffered a nervous breakdown and left gaming for a few years before picking up his dice bag again. He founded the Knights of the Dinner Table. He's currently employed at **Pizza-A-Go Go**.



brian

## VAN HOOSE



Brian is 27 years old and lives alone. He manages to make a modest living operating a local ISP and selling painted miniatures. Brian is typically

quiet and utters only three-word sentences unless a rule has been broken or his character has been maligned. Even though Brian can't remember his own phone number, he can recite entire passages of various rule books from memory. He used to claim to have a girlfriend (Alexis) who no one had ever seen. After being confronted by the other Knights on the subject, he refuses to discuss his dating life. And gawd help the poor soul who brings it up.

bob

## HERZOG



Bob is 26 years old and also lives with his parents. He currently works for his dad at the **Hoe and Harness Insurance Co.** In the past he has had a record of losing his job because of his temper and sharp tongue. Bob was the first dues paying member of the group. He's from the old school of role-playing and believes it's all about breaking things and killing people. He made the local papers twice when he got lost in the steam tunnels under the Ball State. *(The first time for seven days.)*

## Knights of the Dinner Table™

Dave is 22 years old and attends Ball State University where he is studying cultural anthropology. He also has a minor in dance theory. (which he originally pursued as a ploy to meet chicks). He was introduced to role-playing by Bob whom he met at a local paintball tournament. *(He saved Bob's butt from a double-flanker)*

Dave is a true blooded hack-n-slasher who becomes bored easily. He often forgets to bring his character sheet to the game and tends to borrow someone else's dice. Dave originally joined the group to take advantage of the free munchies.

dave

## BOZWELL



sara

## FELTON

Sara is 25 years old and is B.A.'s cousin. She recently moved back to Muncie, Indiana from Wisconsin and is the newest member of the group. Unfortunately, Sara is also the only female in the group and fights a lonely battle to bring more role-play into the group's gaming sessions and less hack-n-slash. Sara has decided it is her sworn obligation to bring the other members of the group around to her style of play. She attempts to do this by example but occasionally has to resort to threats and physical bullying to make her point.



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.

**nitro**  
**FERGUESON**

Victor Ferguson 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 'Ferguson'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.



**stevil**  
**VAN HOSTLE**



Stevil has a day job administering customer warranty claims. For years he satisfied his gaming itch through freelance work for various gaming industry publications. However, his divorce a couple of years back freed up time for him to get back into real gaming. He met Gordon Sheckberry at work [prior to his unfortunate(?) accident] and 'Gordo' subsequently introduced him to the **Black Hands**. He now commutes to Muncie every Friday night from his apartment in suburban Indianapolis.

Gordon 'Gordo' Sheckberry graduated from Ball State with a Chemical Engineering degree in his back pocket. (Although never proven, it has long been suspected that he cooked up the batch of C-4 Nitro used to level the Administration Building). Gordo was involved in a bizarre industrial accident that seriously impaired his vision and resulted in the loss of ALL his body hair. He is famous for his bad toupee and coke bottle-lens glasses.

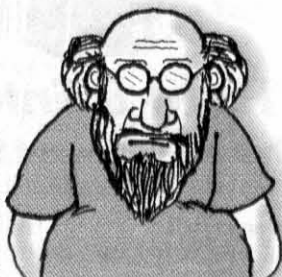
The accident bestowed Gordo with the gift of total lifetime disability allowing him to game almost daily with various groups around Delaware county. (Thus he is the envy of gamers everywhere.) Gordo has been a member of the **Black Hands** for four years.

gordo  
**SHECKBERRY**



**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.



**BLACK HAND**  
**GAMING SOCIETY**



**newt**  
**FORAGER**



Newt was the only child of a career military couple. He spent his childhood either being dragged around the globe or tossed back and forth between various uncles and grandparents. Perhaps that's why Newt has trouble making friends and fitting in. He wet his feet in gaming by playing every play-by-mail game he could track down and earned a bit of notoriety by toppling the five year powergrip of the top player in the PBM game, **Tribes of Angst** and essentially shutting down the game. Later he was introduced to HackMaster through a MUDD on the internet and embraced the game. After running through every Solo-Adventure published he set out on a quest to find a group to play with. Unfortunately he's finding it difficult to find a group who will tolerate his personality quirks.

**flak jack**  
**MONTY**



Jack "Flak Jack" Monty is well known in Muncie, Indiana as a consequence of his highly publicized 1994 trial *People v. Monty*. Jack was convicted of aggravated assault, endangering the public and a half dozen other charges as a result of his commando-style assault on a city bus armed with water balloons and several auto-fire equipped paintball guns. Jack was playing a live-action game of **Urban Assassin™** and was attempting to 'take out' several players who had sought refuge on a passing bus. The judge was not amused and sentenced Jack to six months confinement. The sentence was waived, however, on the condition that Jack enlist in the armed forces. Jack joined the Army for a two year hitch. DoD cutbacks allowed him to end his tour early and return to Muncie to attend BSU on the GI Bill while completing his military obligation in the Indiana National Guard. He joined the **Black Hands** soon afterwards and earned a reputation for being a formidable player.

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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.



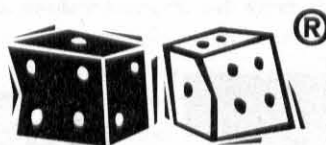
edmund

## FINLEY

Edmund Finley was once Gary Jackson’s paperboy. One morning he was coerced into filling an empty chair during a play-testing session of HackMaster and became ensnared in ‘Gary’s Game’. That was twenty years ago and Edmund has been on the Hard 8 team ever since (though he’s only been on the payroll for the past four months). Edmund wears the proud title of “Director of Research and Development” and recently oversaw the production of his first written work, **Abe, Babes and RollerBlades™**, described as a “sexy, zany, time-travelling romp through history and fashion”.

## the antignano BROTHERS

Very few people have ever seen the infamous Antignano Brothers. Those who have are usually reluctant to talk about it. It’s known that Gary Jackson has kept them on the payroll for years. Their checks are usually annotated with the cryptic words, “for various services rendered”. It is said that Vince and Tony Antignano wear grey, pinstripe suits with twenty-sider cuff links. A few years ago, Nitro Ferguson publicly insulted Gary Jackson at a convention. A few days later, he FedExed a letter of apology to Gary. It is rumored the Antignano Brothers paid him a ‘visit’.



## Hard 8 Enterprises®

What do you want to Hack today?™



jo jo

## ZEKE

Jo Jo is one of Gary Jackson’s favorite, “yes-men”. When he bought out **Battle Cry Games** in 1984, Jo Jo Zeke came as part of the deal. For years Jo Jo was considered the ‘*King of Hex-and-Cardboard-Counter*’ wargames and has over forty-two titles under his belt. His most famous game design was ‘*The Pope’s Panzers*’ a ‘what-if’ wargame simulation that rocked war gaming circles around the country. The sequel, ‘*V-Rockets at the Vatican*’ earned him his first **Gamers’ Choice Award** for best game design. Jo Jo is now responsible for writing much of the flavor text for **HackMaster** adventures (something he has a knack for), and crunching rules. It is rumored he lives in his office at Hard Eight Enterprises.



**pete**  
**SKIPOWSKI**

Pete has been with Gary Jackson since the beginning. In fact they met in college where they used to play epic sessions of MERC

ARMOR and BLAZING GUNS. When Gary started his company, Pete came onboard as his first full-time game designer (working for shares in the beginning). In recent years the friendship has been strained as Gary's projects have repeatedly over-shadowed Pete's pet projects. In fact Gary usually targets Pete for his much publicized verbal abuse and ego-bruising. Still, Pete is loyal to Gary and Hard 8 Enterprises and rarely complains.

Waco Bob is one of the original share holders of Hard 8. He really doesn't do much at the company other than agree with virtually every word that comes out of Gary's mouth. Waco has done well, financially, working with Gary and that seems to be enough to have earned his undying devotion. Waco does sit in on every playtesting session he can. But since he seems to love every game he plays, regardless of its flaws, his value as a playtester leaves a lot to be desired. He invariably fills out his playtester evaluation forms with, "This game is the next HackMaster!!"

**'waco' bob**  
**FORSEY**



Tuley isn't an employee at Hard 8, nor is he considered an intern. He originally came to the company as part of a Summer Playtester program. He was tricked into running the company's customer service department by being led to believe it was a 'virtual corporation computer game' and that he was earning points based on how well he 'played' the game, which involved answering the phone and working out 'variable solutions' to each call. No one has mentioned the 'game' in quite some time and Tuley seems content to live in his office, occasionally order out for pizza and man his station.



**tuley**  
**PRISWINKLE**



**norman**  
**BOWSER**

Norman Bowser is a role player who made good and realized his dream. He started out as a freelancer and began to pump so much HackMaster material into the Hard 8 offices that he was eventually asked to come on board. A few years ago he replaced Earl Slackmozer as the editor of HackJournal magazine and has been doing a bang up job of scratching the 'hack-n-slash' itch for thousands of fans. Gary has become so comfortable with Norman's writing ability that he has sanctioned all of Norman's material as 'official' Hackmaster material (even though Gary rarely reads Norman's work as of late). Norman has a long standing rivalry with Bitter Stevil. Norman cut Stevil's column from HackJournal soon after taking the helm.

**timmy**  
**JACKSON**



Eight year old Timmy Jackson is Gary's youngest son. He is also the newly installed chief developer for the SpaceHack sci-fi roleplaying game. He had been responsible for development on the superhero frp **Heroes and Zeroes**, but was reassigned due to a rash of complaints following the release of H&Z's **Background Tool Chest** supplement. Gary, uncharacteristically emotional, felt terrible about this and has promised to make it up to Timmy by bringing his favorite TV hero, Xena the Warrior Princess, to the next HackCon.

This panel originally appeared in the editorial of Issue 17



GUYS? CAN WE PLEASE GET BACK TO THE GAME?

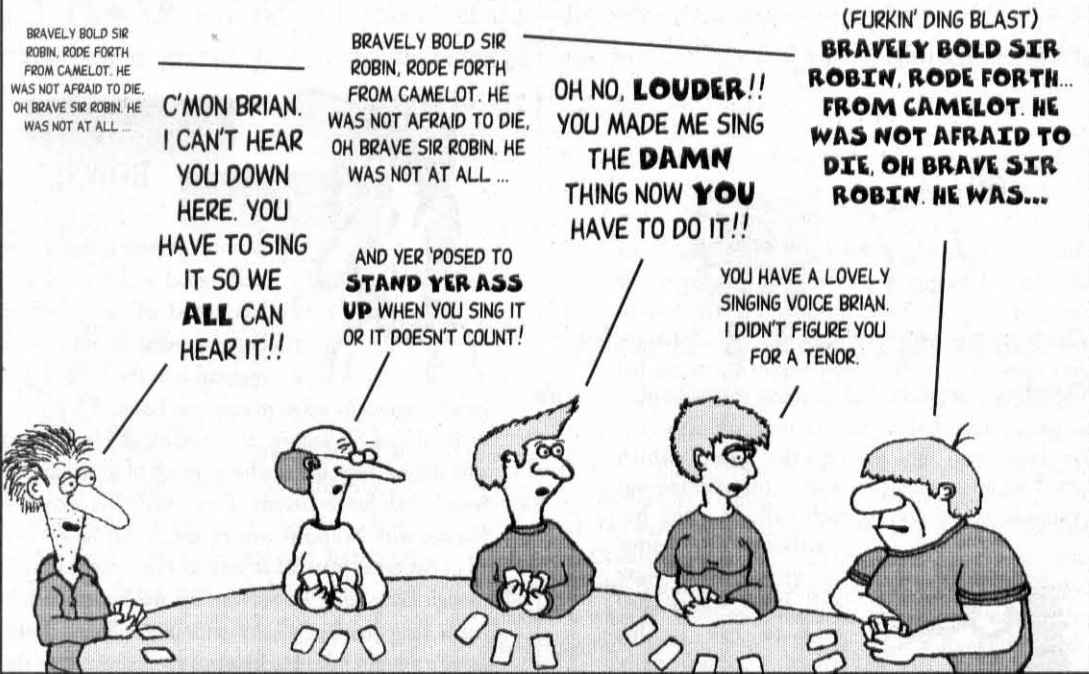
**STUPID JERK!** YOU BETTER LAY HANDS ON ME AND I MEAN **NOW!!**

C'MON DUDE!! I'M HURTIN' HERE. LAY SOME HEALING ON ME!!

SORRY, MY LAWFUL CLERIC DISAPPROVED OF YOUR ACTIONS.

OH YEAH? I'LL GIVE HIM SOMETHING TO DISAPPROVE OF!

This panel originally appeared in the Monty Python and the Holy Grail CCG Insert which ran in Issue 18. It shows the guys playing the card game.



BRAVELY BOLD SIR ROBIN, RODE FORTH FROM CAMELOT. HE WAS NOT AFRAID TO DIE. OH BRAVE SIR ROBIN. HE WAS NOT AT ALL ...

C'MON BRIAN. I CAN'T HEAR YOU DOWN HERE. YOU HAVE TO SING IT SO WE ALL CAN HEAR IT!!

BRAVELY BOLD SIR ROBIN, RODE FORTH FROM CAMELOT. HE WAS NOT AFRAID TO DIE. OH BRAVE SIR ROBIN. HE WAS NOT AT ALL ...

AND YER 'POSED TO **STAND YER ASS UP** WHEN YOU SING IT OR IT DOESN'T COUNT!

OH NO, **LOUDER!!** YOU MADE ME SING THE **DAMN** THING NOW YOU HAVE TO DO IT!!

(FURKIN' DING BLAST) **BRAVELY BOLD SIR ROBIN, RODE FORTH... FROM CAMELOT. HE WAS NOT AFRAID TO DIE. OH BRAVE SIR ROBIN. HE WAS...**

YOU HAVE A LOVELY SINGING VOICE BRIAN. I DIDN'T FIGURE YOU FOR A TENOR.

Another panel from the Monty Python and the Holy Grail CCG Insert

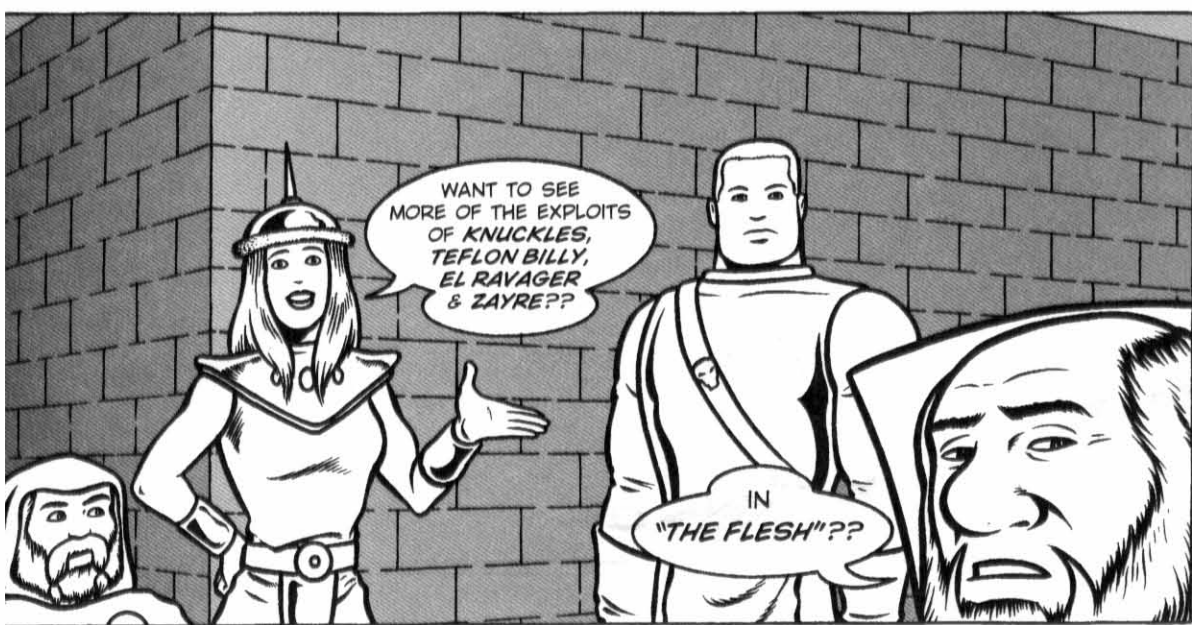


NICE TRY BOB! BUT I DON'T THINK **'WRITE YOUR OWN CARD'** MEANS YOU CAN SCRAWL **'MY ARTHUR IS IMMUNE TO ALL CARDS'**.

WHY THE HELL NOT? YOU LET **BRIAN** PLAY HIS **'I DON'T HAVE TO SING ANY FREAKIN' SONGS'** CARD!!

WE EXPLAINED THAT BOB. BRIAN WAS BREAKING OUT IN HIVES. IT WAS MORE OF A **WAIVER** THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

I GOTTA GO APPLY SOME MORE OINTMENT TO MY RASH.



THEN CHECK OUT...

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Originally Published: February, 1998



### Knights of the Dinner Table Issue #17 This Sword For Hire

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### Knights of the Dinner Table Issue #18 Against All Odds

Originally Published: April, 1998

