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Front Cover:

♪ Kookaburra sittin' in the ol' gum tree, playin' lotsa war games on his ol' PC... ♪

Back Cover:

T'was just a doodle. ;7

DUSTING OFF THE BOOKS:

DRAGON WARRIORS

By Gary Johnson

There are times when you want to go back to the past and take a second look at game systems you haven't used in years. For me, the premiere role-playing game of my high school years was without a doubt Dragon Warriors. Six paperback books containing a complete fantasy role-playing system and pseudo-Medieval European setting, written by Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson and published between 1985 and 1986. The pre-generated scenarios (eleven in total) had a consistently moody and atmospheric tone that simply was not attained or emulated in other fantasy role-playing games.

My friends and I played Dragon Warriors in preference to 1st edition AD&D and D&D (hey, it was the 80s!) for much of high school. Eventually I took up AD&D, with its greater detail and numerous scenarios in White Dwarf, and then came to university and encountered Champions, source of many happy hours of gaming throughout the 90s. The Dragon Warriors books sat on my bookshelves, waiting for my attention to return. A one-off game at Briscon one year in the mid-90s was my last experience of Dragon Warriors, but when I set out to find a game system to use for one-off games at QUGS this year, it caught my eye.

After an hour or so re-reading the rules, my appreciation for the game setting was rekindled. I was interested to see how the system runs when played by experienced and practiced gamers (something that describes neither my friends nor myself back in the 80s). A decision reached, I set out to gather the game system rules together in one document for my future players (there's no way I'm lending out my precious books!). Along the way, a few things stood out that I believe should be altered for play balance and to match up with common sense. This article presents several suggestions for your consideration, some brief, some lengthy. As always, your comments are appreciated.

Skills and Abilities

In my opinion, the skills and abilities that increase with Rank should conform to the scale of the five primary characteristics and the seven derived characteristics whenever possible. That is, the player should have to roll less than or equal to the score on 1d20, the score should increase by 1 point with each increase of Rank, and so on. Having some abilities as percentage chances when they increase in multiples of 5% seems wasteful to me.

Mystic Senses

Premonition and Extra-Sensory Perception (the sixth and seventh senses respectively) are good examples of abilities that should, in my opinion, be changed to a 1d20 scale. Premonition would begin at 8 and Extra-Sensory Perception at 2 for a 1st Rank Mystic, and both would increase at +1 per Rank. Given the limited effects of these abilities on game play, I don't see any problem with increasing the chances of success (quite dramatically in the case of mid- to high-level Mystics using ESP). Also, why don't Mystics with exceptional Psychic Talent find it easier to sense danger or thoughts? Add +1 for Psychic Talent of 13 and up, increasing to +2 at 16.

Chance of a Flawed Magic Item

The published chance for Mystics to produce a flawed item seems to have an error somewhere. Apparently, an Adept ability is that the Mystic cannot make a flawed item. However, Mystics must be 8th Rank to seek enlightenment and become an Adept, and at 8th Rank there is automatically no chance of failure! As a way of making this aspect of being an Adept more valuable, consider having a 30% chance +10% per magic bonus of producing a flawed item at 4th Rank, decreasing by 10% for each Rank above 4th. Thus, an 8th Rank character has a 0%, 10% and 20% chance of creating a flawed +1, +2 or +3 item respectively. Naturally, a Mystic always knows when a finished item is flawed.

Assassins to Thieves

Assassins, in my opinion, are grossly powerful when compared to other character classes. Certainly there's a place for ninja-clones in any game, but I think they're ridiculously good at what they do and unbalance a game too easily. That aside, my major concern is that anyone who wishes to play a thief in Dragon Warriors must play an Assassin. There's no Profession in the published material for a character who wants to break into people's homes, filch purses, and be dashing and daring without having the ability to enter trance states that make you a killing machine and without knowing how to concoct poisons. Thus, I offer the Thief Profession as a replacement for or alternative to the Assassin.

Character Creation Summary

- A. Strength, Reflexes, Intelligence, Psychic Talent and Looks: 3d6 for each. Reflexes must be at least 9.
- B. Health Points: 1d6+5.
- C. Basic ATTACK 13, DEFENCE 5
- D. Basic MAGICAL DEFENCE 3
- E. Basic EVASION 5
- F. Basic STEALTH 18, PERCEPTION 8
- G. Initially equipped with 1 suit of hardened leather armour, 1 sword OR staff, 1 crossbow, 1 quiver containing 5 quarrels, 1 dagger, 1 lantern, 1 flint & tinder, 1 10m rope, 1 set of lock picks, 1 backpack, 3d10 Florins.

Special Abilities

Climbing: Because learning to climb up to second story windows is part of every Thief's training, Thieves subtract half their Rank (rounded down) from the Difficulty Factor of the climb. They also learn how to fall up to 4m without sustaining injury. A Thief who rolls less than or equal to Reflexes + Rank on 2d10 can fall up to 4m without taking any damage. A roll of 20 will always fail. Falling greater distances will cause the same damage to a Thief as to any other character.

Combat Penalties for Armour: Thieves take -2 to Attack and Defence in chain mail and -4 to Attack and Defence in plate armour.

Picklock: Padlocks are often used in the market towns and ports to secure cash or valuables, but are rare elsewhere. Other sorts of locks are rare: most doors are barred, not locked. Thus, only a Thief will know the tricks and techniques for opening a lock.

The published rules for Picklock are both time-consuming and use percentages where a 1d20 scale would do. Instead, I suggest that a 1st Rank Thief has a Picklock score of 5. This starting score is modified by +1 for a Reflexes score of 13 or more, increasing to +2 at 16, -1 for Intelligence of 5 or less and +1 for Intelligence of 16 or more.

The average lock has a Difficulty Factor of 12, and more expensive and complex locks may have a Difficulty Factor of 20 or more. Attempting to open a lock, whether automatically successful or not,

takes one Combat Round. If the Thief does not match the Difficulty Factor of the lock and has to roll to open it, the GM will firstly roll to see if the Thief is capable of opening the lock.

If the GM has determined that the Thief is capable of picking the lock, a roll of 1 by the Thief will always succeed, and a roll of 20 will always fail. If the GM rolls greater than the Thief's Picklock score or rolls a 20, the Thief cannot succeed at this time, and the GM will tell her so once the Thief rolls equal to or less than the Picklock score. The Thief can try again after one week has passed or on gaining a Rank, whichever is sooner.

Lock picks are needed to use the Picklock skill effectively. If the Thief is using tools other than a proper set of lock picks, the Picklock score is halved (rounding down). It is not possible to pick locks without an implement of some kind, and it may not be possible to open a complex lock without proper tools.

Circumstances may reduce the Thief's chance of success. If the Thief is moving or uses Defence in combat, the attempt to Picklock will automatically fail.

Condition	Modifier to Die Roll
Pitch Darkness	+4
Extraneous Noise or Bustle	+3

Thieves gain +1 Attack, Defence, Magical Attack, Stealth, Perception, Picklock and Health Point every Rank, plus +1 Evasion at 5th and 9th Rank and a bonus +1 Stealth and Perception at 7th and 12th Rank. They do not gain new abilities at high Ranks, but become increasingly adept at using Stealth and Perception.

Stealth and Perception

All characters other than Thieves and Mystics begin with Stealth 13 and Perception 5. Mystics have a bonus of +1 to both scores. Stealth increases by +1 every three Ranks (i.e. at 4th, 7th, 10th, etc); Perception increases by +1 every two Ranks (i.e. at 3rd, 5th, etc).

Furthermore, all characters can use the Disguise and Pilfer skills, not just Thieves. However, Thieves are much better with these skills because of their much higher Stealth and Perception scores.

The following modifiers apply to the Stealth Roll when using Disguise. Do not forget that the circumstances must allow a plausible explanation of how the character is being disguised.

Condition	Modifier
Inadequate Time to Prepare	-1 to -5 Stealth
Unfamiliar with Type of Person	-1 to -5 Stealth
Very Familiar with Type of Person	+1 to +5 Perception

Example: Johannes, a young Thief from Albion, finds himself on the run from the guards of Baron Nikolaos of Analika. He finds a group of fishermen returning from the docks, and uses the Disguise skill to attempt to pass himself off as one of them. As a foreigner, Johannes is unfamiliar with the type of person he is impersonating: however, fishermen are similar the world over, so the GM sets the penalty to his Stealth score at -2. Johannes isn't really dressed as a fisherman and hasn't time to change into something more appropriate, so the GM adds a further -2 penalty to his Stealth score.

Things will only get worse for Johannes if one of the guards insists on questioning him: his foreign accent will make it impossible to pass himself off as a local fisherman.

In most circumstances, the character trying to avoid being seen will make a Stealth Roll. However, sometimes it's important to know if a character noticed some small detail or something happening nearby (e.g. when a character fails an attempt to Pilfer something). In such cases, the character may attempt a Perception Roll by rolling less than or equal to Perception on 1d20. A roll of 1 always succeeds, and a roll of 20 always fails. If there is a group of characters, the one with the highest Perception score makes the Perception Roll. If that character does not spot the detail, the others will not either.

Skills and other Professions

The Professions system falls down alarmingly when it attempts to cover characters with other skills. A quick search on the Internet came up with several home-brewed Professions, including Herbalists. Browsing through the published scenarios brought forward a number of characters like Jenk from *The One-Eyed God*: hunter, tracker, and unranked human. All of this raises two questions. Firstly, what should and shouldn't be a Profession in *Dragon Warriors*? Secondly, how can additional skills be handled for unranked characters (i.e. how do they get better at what they do)?

To my way of thinking, the first is simple. A character belonging to any of the published *Dragon Warriors* Professions is a capable fighter and adventurer. Advancing a Rank in a Profession improves the character's combat, spell-casting and adventuring skills. Thus, if a particular skill or set of skills isn't associated with fighting or adventuring, it shouldn't be a Profession as such, but a skill or ability. That way you avoid Professions where the combat skills and Health Points never improve and Professions where they improve without good reason to do so.

As for the second question, one approach I'm mulling over is to assign Rank-equivalent scores in each specific skill or skill group to characters with non-combat skills. Thus, the 0th Rank normal human can be a 6th Rank-equivalent apothecary, with whatever abilities that conveys (e.g. the Alchemy skill possessed by Sorcerers). Could a character in a trade be considered an apprentice at 1st Rank, a journeyman at 4th and a master at 8th? Perhaps a base score of 10 can be assumed for each skill, modified by the appropriate characteristics (e.g. Reflexes for acrobats, Intelligence for doctors) and increased by +1 for each Rank-equivalent? If most tasks are assigned Difficulty Factors, suitably experienced characters will not have to risk making a mess of a loaf of bread or thinking that sowing the fields in mid-winter is a good idea.

Under this model, characters who spend an appropriate amount of time and money learning a new skill would start as 1st Rank-equivalent in that skill, no matter what their Rank. Their Rank-equivalent could increase as they gain Experience Points for adventuring, or perhaps the GM will require them to practice or use the skill and give out dedicated Experience Points. It's all starting to sound terribly complex, but that's what happens when you take a class- and level-based system and try to add non-combat skills to the mix. In any case, I think it's a better approach than multiplying the number of Professions many times over.

Gary will be running several one-off Dragon Warrior adventures at QUGS meetings in the first half this year. Up to six people are welcome to come and play pre-generated characters. You can contact Gary at garyjohnson@uq.net.au or by phoning 3392 1760.

D&D Third Edition FAQ

THE BASICS

Q: Will there be a 3rd Edition of Dungeons & Dragons?

A: Yes.

Q: When will it be released?

A: The first book, the Player's Handbook, will be released in August of the year 2000. The Dungeon Master's Guide will be released in September of 2000, and the Monster Manual in October of 2000.

Also in August we will release a Conversion Guide to help ease the transition between previous editions and 3rd Edition.

Q: How much will it cost?

A: The three core rulebooks will each have a US\$19.95 Suggested Retail Price. We haven't set pricing yet for the Conversion Book.

Q: \$19.95! That's a lot less than the current books!

What's going on?

A: The three core rulebooks of D&D are printed in quantities far beyond every other tabletop RPG product. That means that we get an incredible economy of scale for printing in such huge volumes.

We've worked to design the 3rd Edition books to maintain the same presentation that you've come to expect (hard covers, color interior art, paper quality, etc.), and allow us to keep printing costs as low as possible. Some of those savings are being passed along to you.

We believe in getting 3rd Edition into as many hands as possible, as fast as possible. We think our target price will help accomplish that objective.

Q: How many books will I need to buy to play 3rd Edition?

A: Just the Player's Handbook. The PHB will contain all the rules necessary to play the game. Players will not need any other book to play. DMs will need both the DMG and the Monster Manual.

Q: What's in the DMG then?

A: The DMG will contain loads of advice, special tables and charts for the DM to aid in adventure and campaign design, and information on how to use the new 3rd Edition mechanics under a lot of in-game situations.

The DMG will also have many magic items not described in the PHB, as well as other information that is not required for play but does add flavor or additional options. Also the rules for special types of attacks (like level draining) are covered in the DMG. The DMG also contains the material related to calculating and awarding experience points.

We want the 3rd Edition DMG to echo the strengths of the 1st Edition version - lots of really cool stuff for DMs.

Q: Is this game the same as Basic DUNGEONS & DRAGONS?

A: No. This game is the third version of the rules formerly titled "ADVANCED" DUNGEONS & DRAGONS.

Q: Why drop the ADVANCED?

A: The game system formerly marketed as DUNGEONS & DRAGONS (no ADVANCED) is no longer in print. So there's nothing for 3rd Edition to be "advanced" from. There has also been a longstanding concern that the "Advanced" keyword was causing some people to bypass the game; it implies that purchasers should have some

level of mastery of the game.

Q: Why are you doing a new version of the game?

A: It's been ten years since 2nd Edition AD&D debuted. During that time, both D&D and RPGs in general have evolved significantly. We felt that it was time to upgrade the basic mechanics to reflect ten more years of game design advances, eliminate any contradictions, and provide our fans with the definitive RPG as we move into the 21st Century.

Q: Isn't this just a chance for WotC to make me pay money for books I already own?

A: We feel that the 3rd Edition will be so sufficiently exciting that most people will look forward to the update, rather than feeling forced to buy new product.

Q: Isn't it in WotC's interest to make a game that is as incompatible as possible with previous material to force people to buy a whole new game?

A: No.

In fact, it is against WotC's best interests to make a game so incompatible that the majority of existing players would perceive it to be a "new game". Part of the value of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS is related to the number of people who know how to play the game. That community of existing players is a valuable resource that no other RPG in the world can draw on. We want you to be able to take your 3rd Edition character to your local game convention, sit down at any D&D game being played, and be able to join right in with a modicum of disruption. Rendering 3rd Edition totally incompatible with the games that the existing network of players enjoy would not support that objective.

Q: Who designed the 3rd Edition?

A: The designers of 3rd Edition are Monte Cook, Jonathan Tweet, and Skip Williams. The core rulebooks are being edited by Julia Martin, Kim Mohan, Jon Pickens, John Rateliff, and Jennifer Clarke-Wilkes. Peter Adkison, Rich Baker, Skaff Elias, Bill Slavicsek and Ed Stark also contributed substantially to the new rules. From time to time, Keith Strohm, David Wise, Jim Butler, Cindi Rice and Ryan Dancey assisted with the work. The whole Wizards of the Coast RPG R&D group has been involved with the design for more than two years, and many other WotC staff members have contributed to the effort.

Q: I've heard that WotC is run by a bunch of suits who don't game, and products are designed by marketers who wouldn't know an orc from a bugbear. Why should we expect this bunch to do a good job updating the game we love?

A: It might surprise you to learn that most of the managers at Wizards of the Coast are long time gamers. Peter Adkison, the CEO, published a small-press product called "The Primal Order" long before the first trading card game was even conceived, when Wizards of the Coast was still run out of his basement.

In fact "the Wizards of the Coast" are an active guild of spellcasters in Peter's long running homegrown D&D campaign (known as Chaldea), which he has been running since the late 1970's.

The rest of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS team have been playing D&D for years, and many have been working on D&D products for more than a decade. Far from being designed by suits with no gaming experience, 3rd Edition is

being created by a team of people who love playing DUNGEONS & DRAGONS so much they've made a career out of working on the game!

Q: Did you playtest this game?

A: Extensively. More than 1,000 people participated in the external playtest over more than a year and a half of time. Playtesters included those new to D&D as well as those who have been playing the game since its inception.

Q: Where did these playtesters come from?

A: Many were drawn from the ranks of the RPGA. Having a chance to playtest new D&D materials is one of the many perks of RPGA membership.

Q: Will 3rd Edition make all my 2nd Edition books obsolete?

A: There is no hard and fast answer to that question. Much of the 2nd Edition material is "source". In other words, it presents characters, places, adventures, histories, etc. as informational content without reference to specific game mechanics. All of that material, obviously, will remain usable with the 3rd Edition.

Other types of products will be less usable - either because they have been superseded by 3rd Edition rules, or because they represent game systems we do not intend to support further.

Finally, there will be a lot of material that is fairly easy to convert between the two systems, and presupposing that you're willing to do a little bit of work, you should be able to continue to use those products with the 3rd Edition without substantial disruption.

Q: Great. Now I have to go out and spend thousands of dollars to upgrade or replace my 2nd Edition library. How fair is that?

A: If you have an extensive TSR library, chances are most of it is campaign source material. Although some adjustments (such as character stats) may be necessary, most of that material remains as valuable as ever.

The good news is we don't plan to replace your library with another one of equal size. One very important lesson Wizards of the Coast learned from TSR: Don't saturate the market. We don't expect to produce nearly the same number of different items for 3rd Edition as we did for 2nd. We'd like to see the number of basic rulebooks kept to a small number, and we want to keep the number of books that players will use equally manageable.

Q: Will you continue to produce new 2nd Edition books once 3rd Edition is released?

A: No.

Starting in August of the year 2000, all new D&D products will be 3rd Edition products, including the material for the D&D worlds.

Q: So you're going to blow up the worlds again like the Time of Troubles did in the FORGOTTEN REALMS when 2nd Edition came out?

A: No.

There are a few products on the 2000 schedule that are designed for DMs who want to wind down a 2nd Edition campaign in preparation for starting a 3rd Edition one, but they are not setting-specific and continuity in the various Worlds will not be excessively affected by the change in systems.

Q: Will you continue to print and make available for sale any 2nd Edition products?

A: Yes.

There are a substantial number of existing products that will continue to be available for some time after the 3rd

Edition is released. These include (but are not limited to), the PHBR Complete Handbooks, the Magic Encyclopedia, the Priest and Wizard Spell Compendia, and the basic materials for the D&D worlds.

Over time, some of these items may be replaced by new 3rd Edition products, and when that happens, the 2nd Edition version will go out of print.

CHARACTER QUESTIONS

Q: Do characters still have six basic stats?

A: Yes.

Characters are defined essentially the same way they always have been. The six basic stats, and what they mean, are unchanged. No stats have been added. The normal Human range for these stats is 3-18. Player Character stats will tend to be slightly higher than average.

Q: Do you still roll dice to determine your stats?

A: Yes, although we have standardized the mechanic for generating the six basic Abilities.

First, you roll 4d6, and keep the best three dice, and second, you create six totals, then assign them to the six Abilities as you wish.

Q: Does the game still have Classes and Levels?

A: Yes.

Characters still have a class, and a level. Some characters will have more than one class. 3rd Edition is designed to handle PCs from 1st to 20th level.

Q: What happens after 20th level?

A: Really high level characters (and campaigns) will be addressed in a future book.

Q: Are there demihuman level limits?

A: No.

Any character can rise to any level in any class, regardless of race. Any character can be any class, regardless of race.

Q: Does 3rd Edition support multiclassed or dualclassed characters?

A: Yes.

We've worked to increase the flexibility and balance of the multiclass system. Most class and race combinations are possible. There will be Gnome Paladin Wizard characters.

Q: What about alignment?

A: We've tried to do a better job of explaining how to use it and what its effects in the game are. In the DMG, a discussion is presented about how to use a few different alignment options that are less strict than the classic alignment graph.

SKILLS & POWERS

Q: What about Weapon/Non Weapon Proficiencies?

A: W/NWP's have been totally replaced by a fully integrated Skill System. The Skill System uses a standard resolution mechanic.

Q: What is a standard resolution mechanic?

A: In 3rd Edition, die rolls to determine successes are used the same way for making a Saving Throw, hitting an opponent in combat, or using a Skill. In each case, the player makes a d20 roll, where higher is always better. Depending on the type of the roll and the situation, the die will have various modifiers added to, or subtracted from it. The final value of the modified roll is compared to a target number (called a "Difficulty Class", abbreviated to "DC").

and if the roll is equal to or greater than the DC, the roll was successful.

Q: How do the Thief abilities work?

A: They've been converted to the standard skill system.

Q: Can any character have any skill?

A: No.

There are many skills that are available only to certain classes, or only to characters of certain levels in certain classes.

However, most skills are available to most classes. Skills not commonly associated with a given class are harder for characters of that class to learn.

Our objective was to reinforce the class stereotypes for players that need or want an easy path of character development, but also allow players who demand more flexibility to create a character to express their creativity.

Q: What if nobody in the party has the right skill for a given situation?

A: The rules for skills anticipate the need to use some of the skills without being trained in their use.

Q: If you're not going to use W/NWPs, how can I convert my existing 2nd Edition character?

A: That is an excellent question.

There are many direct matches between Non-Weapon Proficiencies and the new Skills. For many obscure NWPs, it will not be difficult for you and your DM to agree on a house rule.

The "kit system" will also be handled in a similar fashion. The conversion book will touch extensively on both of these topics.

Q: What is more important: My character's class or my character's Skills?

A: In most cases, the character's class will be more important. The Skill system is designed to allow you to round out the basic skeleton provided by class and race. So much of the game relies on the classes, however, that they will always be the pre-eminent defining aspect of your character.

COMBAT & TACTICS

Q: How does combat work?

A: Just like it always has. You roll a d20, add a bunch of modifiers for things like Strength, magic bonuses, etc. If your modified roll is equal to or greater than the Armor Class of the target, you hit.

Q: Wait a minute. Armor Class goes up?

A: Yes.

Armor works exactly like it always has, except instead of starting at AC10 and going down, it starts at AC10 and goes up. A character with an AC-2 in 2nd Edition would have an AC22 in 3rd Edition.

Q: So - no more THAC0?

A: Right. You don't need to do any calculation on your attack roll. You just figure out the total of the die roll plus modifiers, and that's the AC you hit.

Q: So the DC of an attack roll is the AC of the target?

A: [grin] That's exactly right!

Q: How does damage work?

A: Damage works just like it always has. Each weapon delivers a specific range of damage.

Q: What about critical hits?

A: There are critical hits in 3rd Edition.

Q: How long is a 3rd Edition combat round?

A: Six seconds.

Q: How is initiative handled?

A: 3rd Edition initiative is not rolled from round to round. Instead, at the beginning of combat, each participant rolls for initiative, and that's the order they take actions in throughout the conflict. We've also adopted one of the most popular house rules: characters' Dex scores will affect their initiative rolls! There are also standard actions a character can take to move "up" or "down" the initiative order for tactical advantage.

This is one of the areas of the rules that will cause a lot of controversy. We've tested a whole lot of options, and cyclic initiative has proven to be the best of the lot. Some playtesters prefer to roll every round; others love the streamlined, roll-once system. You owe it to yourself to try the faster system, but it's up to you which way you play

Q: Nobody in my group will ever use this silly new initiative system. What about those of us who WANT to roll for initiative each round?

A: The DMG will contain a fairly detailed discussion of initiative, including some suggestions for how to use a roll-each-round initiative system. We honestly hope that most gamers will give the new system a whirl and see how it really works in play. Given a fair shake, we think a lot of you will like it.

Q: What about weapon speed factors?

A: Since a D&D combat round is an abstraction of a variety of feints, attacks, parries, etc. there is no correlation between the size or weight of a weapon and how soon in the initiative order that weapon should score a hit that inflicts damage. Weapon speed factors have been removed from the game in 3rd Edition.

Q: Do characters get multiple attacks?

A: Yes they do. Multiple attacks are a function of Level and Skills. And in 3rd Edition, every class eventually gets multiple attacks - not just fighters!

Q: Are there still "fractional attacks", like 2 attacks per 3 rounds?

A: No. When characters earn an additional attack, they may take it every round.

Q: How about Saving Throws?

A: The basic concept of the Saving Throw has been retained. Sometimes, your character has a chance to avoid or reduce a severe negative outcome via a die roll. In order to make a successful save, you roll a d20. Higher is always better. There will probably be modifiers to the die roll based on your character's stats, class, level and the situation. The DM will know what the DC of the Save is, and if your modified roll is equal to or greater than the DC, you make the Save!

Q: What about hit points?

A: The hit point system is essentially unchanged. There have been some modifications to the rules dealing with character death. The "optional rule" of hovering on death's door when your HP total is reduced below 1 has become a standard part of the system. There are also rules for handling unconsciousness, trauma and shock. The rules also handle non-lethal subdual damage as well.

Q: Hit points and armor class are so silly. Why didn't you use a more realistic combat system?

A: For three reasons. First, we want the game to remain strongly compatible with previous versions. Second, we want a combat system that is fast and exciting. Third,

feedback from our customers overwhelmingly supported leaving hit points and armor class unchanged.

Q: But I want more realism! Plate armor doesn't make you harder to hit!

A: First, understand that it will be far easier for you to use a house rule for more realistic combat and convert 3rd Edition to those rules than it would be to put a hyper-realistic combat system in 3rd Edition and ask the millions of gamers who don't want it to try and convert back to the classic system. Second, please realize that Armor Class has never represented how hard it is to score a hit. AC has always been an abstraction of how hard it is to score a hit that *inflicts damage*. Heavy armor makes it harder to inflict damage than light armor. All the variables that go into an AC calculation (Dex bonus, armor, magic effects, combat modifiers, etc.) all eventually produce a single value that represents how hard it will be for an opponent to hurt you, not hit you. That's a subtle distinction, but an important one.

Q: What about attacks that armor wouldn't block?

A: 3rd Edition has a standard rule for attacks that ignore armor. For these types of attacks, plate armor doesn't help at all!

SPELLS & MAGIC

Q: Do spells still work the same way?

A: Yes.

We kept the existing classic spell system, which requires most spellcasters to memorize the spells they want to cast, and lose the ability to cast a given spell once it is cast (the so called "fire and forget" system).

Q: Level for level, do 3rd Edition characters cast more spells than their predecessors?

A: Overall, yes. Wizards, for example, now get bonus spells for high Intelligence scores. Spellcasters can also prepare basic spells (such as detect magic) without taking up a 1st-level slot.

Q: Are there separate spell lists for the spellcasting classes?

A: Yes, but spells are presented differently than in previous editions of the game.

In 3rd Edition, there is one unified spell chapter. Each spell indicates what classes can cast it, and at what level. A spell such as "Light" that can be cast both by Wizards and by Priests appears in the spell list once, and it works the same way for both types of spellcasters. However, when cast by a Wizard, the spell is considered an "arcane spell", and when cast by a Priest, it is considered a "divine spell". Priest and Wizards have mostly different lists. There are a handful of spells that are cast by both Arcane and Divine spellcasters, but they are the exception rather than the rule. There are spells in the list that can only be cast by one class (such as "Druid"), but they are the exception rather than the rule.

There will be a "reverse index" so each class can quickly reference what spells they can cast and at what level.

Q: How is magic resistance handled?

A: Each spell (and spell like effect) in the game contains a description of how it is affected by magic resistance. This should remove substantially all the confusion over how to adjudicate the effects of Magic Resistance. Also, in a return to a 1st Edition rule, the higher the level of the spellcaster, the easier it will be for that caster to affect creatures with magic resistance!

Q: How are illusions handled?

A: The 3rd Edition system takes special pains to codify the

type, nature, and effects of various illusions. Under 3rd Edition, the DM and the players should have no problem figuring out how illusions affect characters and are perceived by opponents.

THE WORLDS OF D&D

Q: Will there still be campaign settings?

A: Yes.

Q: Which settings will you continue to support with published products?

A: The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting will continue to be developed much as it has been for the past ten years. DRAGONLANCE will continue to be primarily supported by the novels and products linked to the novels. GREYHAWK will again be recognized as the default D&D setting.

In the short term, there will be no other published products for the other D&D worlds. Some material for the older worlds will appear from time to time in DRAGON and on the D&D website.

In the long term, new settings will be added or older settings revived when the number of people playing D&D has again grown large enough to accommodate them.

Q: What will happen to the FORGOTTEN REALMS?

A: The Realms is going to embrace the fact that it has been so extensively developed, making that a feature rather than a drawback.

A CD-ROM product featuring most of the out of print material published for the Realms will be released in either 2000 or 2001, depending on how fast the material can be scanned and prepared for distribution. That product will become the cornerstone of the setting, allowing future designers to reference even the most obscure part of Realmslore safe in the knowledge that locating more detailed information is only a mouseclick away for the DM. The second part of this strategy is the creation of a new hardback book that will be the standard reference for the Realms under 3rd Edition. This hardback will replace the current 2nd Edition FORGOTTEN REALMS boxed set. We expect to release this book in 2001.

Q: What do you mean when you say the DRAGONLANCE products will be linked to the novels?

A: Currently, our plans for DRAGONLANCE gaming products are not finalized. We may do a hardback book like the one planned for the Realms sometime after 2001. The new DRAGONLANCE trilogy (The "War of Souls") starts in 2000, and the third book will be released in 2002. We think the best strategy for gaming product is to work closely with the evolving War of Souls trilogy. As the DRAGONLANCE plan evolves, we'll continue to update everyone as to what we're working on in terms of RPG products.

Q: What does it mean for GREYHAWK to be the "default" D&D setting?

A: Starting with the 1st Edition AD&D Player's Handbook, the GREYHAWK world has been inextricably connected with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game.

Even in those earliest days, the proper names associated with many spells, such as Bigby, Tenser, and Mordenkainen were all major NPCs in GREYHAWK. The names of certain artifacts and magic items are similarly connected with GREYHAWK, featuring the names of powerful NPCs like Keoghtom, Kwalish, and Murlynd. The basic monster lists for D&D were based on the creatures of Oerth as featured in the GREYHAWK adventures Dungeon Mastered by the game's co-creator Gary Gygax. With 3rd Edition, we are embracing that historical connection. GREYHAWK could be defined as "the world you adventure in when all you use is the PHB and DMG,

unless your DM tells you otherwise."

We're going to keep development of GREYHAWK materials to a minimum. GREYHAWK is for the DM to explore, create and define, not WotC. Those who want to share their ideas with other players and DMs will find a wealth of connections in the RPGA Network's planned "Living Campaign" which will be set in GREYHAWK. When we publish an adventure product or sourcebook that does not carry a campaign setting logo, that product will use GREYHAWK references as the standard, and it will assume a basic level of GREYHAWK information. That information will all be included with the PHG and DMG - you won't be required to purchase a GREYHAWK world book in order to understand the context of that information. That said, it will still be easy to convert anything produced for core DUNGEONS & DRAGONS for use in any of the basic fantasy worlds TSR has previously published, or to homegrown campaign worlds created by DMs for their own use.

Q: What about PLANESCAPE?

A: Unlike previous editions of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, 3rd Edition has no specifically defined cosmology. The PLANESCAPE setting will become one of many possible options for how the universe works.

Q: What about RAVENLOFT?

A: The concept of gothic horror (and other types of horror) roleplaying has been with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game since the publication of the original RAVENLOFT adventure in the mid 1980's. We will continue to produce products designed to support horror-based campaigns, but they will be designed to support that type of play without requiring the use of the RAVENLOFT source material.

WHAT'S MISSING

Q: Will 3rd Edition support Psionics?

A: Not in the PHB.

What we intend to do for 3rd Edition is release a stand alone Psionics book in 2001 that will provide a complete system for integrating psionic powers into the core rules. That integration will include the interaction between magic and Psionics, how to use psionic monsters, how to deal with the effects of clairvoyance, telepathy, teleportation, and other powers that circumvent the normal physical limitations of the game.

That product will be referenced by any subsequent material produced for 3rd Edition that uses Psionics. Such products will be fairly rare.

This strategy will allow players and DMs who want to allow Psionics into the game to do so in a controlled and consistent fashion, and for those who do not wish to deviate from the standard fantasy archetypes to ignore Psionics entirely.

This product will contain rules for psionic PCs, an extensive list of psionic monsters, psionic empowered items, spells that affect Psionics, and everything else needed to use the powers of the mind effectively.

There will be a very brief treatment of Psionics in the Dungeon Master's Guide, primarily to support the use of psionic-enabled monsters like Mind Flayers, Intellect Devourers and Yuan-Ti. Those monsters will be extensively developed in the Psionics book, but will appear in a simplified form in the 3rd Edition Monster Manual.

Q: What happened to the Planes?

A: We decided that each DMs should have the option to create a cosmology to suit their individual tastes. In 2001, we will release a new hardback Manual of the Planes book. Instead of being a catalog of the planes, the new Manual of the Planes will present rules and techniques

for DMs to create custom cosmologies. It will also support the spells, items, and monsters one is likely to encounter during planar travel. We currently plan to revisit the classic planar structure as an example in this product. We may also cover the DRAGONLANCE cosmology, and perhaps the DARK SUN cosmology as well.

The 3rd Edition PHB and DMG will contain a few references to the planes. Planar travel will be possible with the spells and items in the PHB, to a limited degree. Those basic building blocks are provided with an eye toward short episodes set on planes other than the Prime Material, with the anticipation that those DMs interested in a much more detailed planar campaign will use the new Manual of the Planes material in that effort.

Q: I've heard from some of the playtesters that 3rd Edition requires miniatures - is that true?

A: No.

For a substantial portion of the playtest period, the 3rd Edition manuscript included a fairly detailed combat system that encouraged the use of miniatures for determining facing and relative positioning.

Those aspects have been somewhat toned down in the final manuscript. 3rd Edition will still support miniatures use far better than any previous version of D&D, but by no means are miniatures required to use the rules.

The current set of rules is complete enough to support battles at the "skirmish level" - that is, conflicts where the number of opponents is limited to no more than few dozen. For battles larger than that, a dedicated wargaming system is going to be helpful. There are plans to develop such a system, compatible with 3rd Edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, at some point in the future. As more details are finalized, they will be made public.

Q: What about the Player's Option books?

A: They will no longer be supported after the release of 3rd Edition.

MORE 3rd EDITION INFO

Q: Where do I look for official 3rd Edition information?

A: There are two official sources for 3rd Edition updates. www.3rdedition.com will be your primary online reference. It will feature news, special announcements, lots of interaction with the 3rd Edition team, etc.

DRAGON magazine will be your primary in-print source for news and updated information. There will be some 3rd Edition content in DRAGON monthly up to the release next August.

LEGAL STUFF

To learn more about Wizards of the Coast and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS in general, link your browser to www.wizards.com

Requests to add a FAQ, other questions, comments or general feedback about this FAQ can be sent to dancey@wizards.com

Surface mail can be sent to the D&D Brand Team care of Wizards of the Coast, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707. This FAQ may be distributed freely, provided that it is not altered, all copyright and trademark information is left unchanged, and this section is included.

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Don't Be a Vidiot

What Computer Game Designers Can Learn From Non-Electronic Games

by Greg Costikyan. Reprinted with permission.

Continued from issue 51 of the *Queensland Wargamer*.

Although toy soldiers had been around for millenia, the first commercially-published set of rules for gaming with military miniatures was designed by H.G. Wells, the great novelist and humanitarian. LITTLE WARS, published in 1911, and FLOOR GAMES, in 1913, were very simple, indeed minimalist rules sets with differential movement rates for infantry, cavalry, and artillery, a very simple algorithm for the resolution of melee, and artillery fire through the use of spring-loaded cannon. Basically, you aimed your spring-loaders, fired matchsticks, and what they hit was killed. Miniatures gaming is still a thriving, if small, hobby. There are two pretty distinct groups of miniatures gamers. Military gamers, mostly men in their 40s and older, tend to have regular gaming groups with on-going campaigns, and a war metagame with the battles they fight affecting the course of the war. The rules they used are published in small quantities by hobbyists, and their figures cast by a small group of specialist manufacturers.

Fantasy and science fiction miniature gamers are younger, mostly in their teens. The most popular games in this category—WARHAMMER and WARHAMMER 40K—are produced by Games Workshop, the largest hobby game publisher in Britain, and the second largest worldwide, after Wizards of the Coast/TSR. It's a narrow but deep industry; if you're a serious miniatures gamer, you want a couple of hundred figures, which will cost you several hundred dollars, plus the cost of paint and the rules themselves. And the time involved is enormous as well; in addition to the time spent playing, you must paint your figures. Even if you get very good at that, we're talking a minimum of 15 minutes per figure, and when you start off, you'd better plan on 45 minutes. It's a hobby for fanatics.

The appeal of miniatures gaming should be obvious, if you've ever seen a well laid-out table. Gaily-painted figures march in serried ranks across the field. Visually, it's striking, and miniatures fans love showing off their hard work. The game appeal is similar to that of the board wargame; tactical planning, plenty of time to think about your moves. There's a bit of collectors' appeal, too; you can't use the dwarven assault wagon if you don't have the figure for it, for instance. The figures you possess dictate the nature of your army.

For us, there are two important things to note about miniatures gaming. The first is the business model: It's not about selling you the game, it's about selling you the figures. As a result, the manufacturers can pull far more bucks out of your wallet than they could on a single game product. You get into this, you're always going to want a cool new figure.

The second the activity external to the game. Miniatures gamers spend more time painting their figures than they do actually playing. They find that task enjoyable and interesting, in the same fashion as kit modellers. It is a form of modelling, in a way, particularly for those who get into "kit-bashing".

That's a point worth thinking about, again particularly for online games; is there a way to give players an offline activity that supports the game and is enjoyable in its own right but doesn't require them to consume bandwidth and server time?

The wargaming industry began with TACTICS, published privately by Charles Roberts in 1953. In 1958, he founded the Avalon-Hill Game Company, and began publishing both wargames and mass-market games for adults. Avalon Hill published just one or two titles a year, but quickly attracted a substantial cult audience for their games. They launched a magazine, *The General*; classified opponents-wanted ads in the back pages helped to create a community of wargamers, as the letter columns of the science fiction pulps did in days of yore. Titles like STALINGRAD and PANZERBLITZ established enough of a reputation that they're still available 35 years later—or maybe they aren't, given A-H's takeover by Hasbro.

In 1968, James F. Dunnigan and Redmond Simonsen took over a gaming fanzine called *Strategy & Tactics* from its founder, Chris Wagner, with the intention of making it the center of a game publishing enterprise. They began to publish a complete original wargame in each issue, a great deal for wargamers who got 6 games a year, plus the zine, for the price of a couple of boxed titles from Avalon Hill. It was an instant success, and SPI started publishing games outside the magazine too, using the zine as a promotional vehicle. By the late 70s, SPI was publishing dozens of titles annually, there were national game conventions and clubs across the country, and specialty game shops were springing up to serve the demand—and to sell roleplaying games, which were starting to become popular. In other words, this was an industry, albeit a small one, probably no more than \$10 million at retail at the time.

SPI and Avalon Hill were always the largest of the wargame companies, but there were numerous other small publishers, too, including some reasonably professional ones like GDW. In the heyday of gaming, roughly from 1972 through 1980, there were hundreds of titles published. The typical wargame was far more complex, in terms of rules for the player to master, than any gaming category before or since. A typical rulebook was 16 unrelieved pages of 9 point type, and some games had as many as 96.

Rules complexity was not necessarily matched by strategic complexity; the only real choice for the German player in a strategic World War II game, after all, is "Britain first" or "Russia first". The attraction of the wargame lies in mastering a complex system; and in the difficult, complicated *tactical* decisions to be made--exactly how to position your counters to deliver an attack of maximal effectiveness.

Wargaming is a treasure trove of systems design.

Wargamers placed a premium on innovation and novelty in pursuit of clean military simulation. The variations on lines of supply, initiative, and combat resolution are many. If you take any three wargames at random, you'll find more fundamental differences in approach and design, even though these are all hex-based military simulations, than you will among three real-time strategy games selected at random. Of course, this was an industry convinced that innovation in design rather than in technology was what the audience wanted.

It is true, however, that these systems are all in support of military conflict simulation, with a fairly limited repertoire of physical components. But still, designers of real-time strategy games, in particular, need to study board wargames to learn that you can emphasize many, many different aspects of conflict in different games--it need not all be about building up crap and blowing up more crap. You can emphasize lines of supply, fog of war, combined arms, maneuver, formation, the quality of commanders, the importance of artillery and air power, morale, home-front production, even the willingness of the civilian population to sustain a war. You just need different systems to emphasize different things.

To toss off an example, Jim Dunnigan's WORLD WAR I is in some ways a very boring game; counters rarely move, an advance of a hex is a major victory. Like the war. But the tension comes from the casualties; you have a little counter that represents how many young men you get this year in the draft, and you never have to retreat as long as you have more men to throw into the maw of the enemy's machineguns. Those counters slide down and down and down as millions go over the top to get cut apart on the barbed wire. The simple motion of a square of cardboard gets across the utter senselessness and barbarity of the war.

Let's see something that fine from you lot.

Wargaming as an industry survives, something of a shadow of its former self, sustained by a few hobbyist publishers and, up until now, Avalon Hill. It's one of those hobbies that has ceased to attract teenagers, however, and consists mainly of 40 and 50something males, still grinding out the kilometers as the Nazis advance on Stalingrad as they did when they were young. But you can find good games out there, in Avalon Hill's inventory, in *Decision Games* (decisiongames.com) product, and by scouring the postings on *rec.games.board.marketplace*.

Science fiction and fantasy boardgaming was an outgrowth of wargaming, and sold primarily through the same hobby distribution channels as wargames. The first successful such project was Howard Thompson's STELLAR CONQUEST, still in print from Avalon Hill; Thompson followed it up with a series of small, cheap games with limited components, many of them designed by Steve Jackson. These were successful as well. SPI, then a major wargame publisher, also published quite a few sf&f boardgames, and launched a magazine,

Ares, that included an sf&f game in each issue. Like wargaming, sf&f boardgaming attracted a core audience

SF&F boardgaming's heyday, however, was very brief; like wargaming, its popularity nose-dived when SPI, one of the largest publishers of such, was taken over by TSR, and TSR refused to honor the subscriptions of subscribers to SPI's magazine, an event that turned thousands of committed gamers off the field entirely.

Most of the early product is now out of print, although Steve Jackson keeps OGRE and CAR WARS around. However, games like BATTLETECH from FASA and ROBO RASCALS from Wizards still attract players; at this point, sf&f gaming is a minor appendage to the hobby games industry, but still sees the occasional new release.

SF&F boardgames have fairly complex rules, although generally simpler than those of historical wargames. They tend to be less narrowly typecast, too; the nature of SF&F allows you to justify just about anything you want to do in a game by inventing some theory for why things work this way. As a result, hexagonal grids are rarer, there are more multiplayer games and economic games, and so on.

Roleplaying games began in 1973, with the first publication OF DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. D&D was published by Tactical Studies Rules, a small miniatures rules publisher run by Gary Gygax, whose day gig was as a shoe salesman. It was an outgrowth of the CHAINMAIL miniatures rules for fighting fantasy battles. The originator of the concept was David Arneson, whose name was later removed from the credits by Gygax after TSR became big and arrogant. Of course, Gygax's name was also later removed after he was purged from TSR; the current edition of the game is credited to Zeb Cook.

The original "brown box" rules set for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS was one of the most poorly-written set of rules I've ever seen, rife with confusing rules susceptible to multiple interpretations. It was, in other words, an extremely poor implementation of a startlingly original and vital concept and, despite its poor design, quickly became a massive cult hit.

The key novel notion behind D&D, and the roleplaying games industry it spawned, was to have each player control a single character in an imaginary world--to play, in other words, not with a set of components or, as in a wargame, as the commander of an imaginary army, but as a single living person. One person would act as gamemaster or referee, both enforcing the rules impartially among the players and also playing all non-player characters encountered by the players, describing the world, and providing the story.

For many traditional gamers, this was far too loosey goosey. Not only were the rules ill-defined, their enforcement was subject to the whim of a potentially arbitrary gamemaster; there were no victory conditions or clear ways to "win"; the game world was open-ended and potentially boundless; and worse yet, you had to cooperate rather than compete with your fellow players to get anything done.

But for many, this was an invigorating and exciting way to play. For one thing, it meant being able to experience much more directly the kind of fantastic adventures about which many of us read. It was a form of participatory fiction.

And the very open-ended nature of the game was exhilarating, too. Anything could happen; a whole world lay out there. The poor quality of the rules was perversely an open invitation to creativity as well. You pretty much had to design your own rules set using these as a base, since they were incomprehensible as written. Not only did you have to create and imagine a world, and a character within it, but build the systems that made it live.

At first, the natural instinct of players was to play the game as the rules implied; as a hack-and-slash combat game of dungeon exploration. But the nature of roleplaying lent itself to more sophisticated gaming styles with real stories in which character interaction became important, and many gamers quickly began to play that way. For adolescents, particularly, this was an appealing gaming style, because by playing a role in a fantasy world, you could experiment with all sorts of personalities and actions you'd be hesitant or unwilling to explore in real life... For me, at least, and I suspect for many others, roleplaying was vitally important in our adolescent socialization, helping us to explore behaviors and interact with others in a non-threatening way that ultimately allowed us to be better, more fully-rounded people in the real world as well.

D&D became a massive hit; roleplaying games soon outsold wargames, with which they shared the hobby distribution channel. Other companies began to publish roleplaying games as well... Chaosium published Steve Perrin's RUNEQUEST, still one of the cleanest and most interesting fantasy RPGs, set in Greg Stafford's well-conceived world of Glorantha. GDW, a wargame publisher, had considerable success with TRAVELLER, a science fiction RPG. Soon, there were roleplaying games for virtually every fictional genre, and publishers began to cast about for other paradigms. An obvious one was licensing; the second wave of roleplaying games began, with Lord of the Rings and Star Trek and Star Wars and Marvel Superheroes.

In 1984, West End Games published Gelber, Costikyan, and Goldberg's PARANOIA, which pointed the way to another way to do roleplaying games: to create a universe with its own rules and culture, and set a game within that. Variations on that theme, like SHADOWRUN, a strange fantasy/cyberpunk hybrid, quickly appeared. And Steve Jackson experimented with another approach to roleplaying with G.U.R.P.S., an ugly acronym for "generic universal roleplaying system," a base set of rules with supplements extending the rules set for all kinds of different genres, worlds, and roleplaying environments--another quickly-imitated approach.

Mark Rhein*Hagen's VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE innovated in a different way: like PARANOIA and others before it, it created a universe of its own, but this time with a difference. It was designed specifically to appeal to the Ann Rice/Goth sensibility, and its emphasis was on atmosphere and mood, its rules set minimal. It found a new audience not merely among existing RPGers, but among people who had never roleplayed before. For the first time, roleplaying was not the preserve of nerds and geeks, but something *tres* hip, something Goth girls with long black nails and sable hair would and could play. Today, you can walk down St. Marks Place in New York and, amid the Sonic Youth and Squirrel Nut Zippers and Chumbawumba t-shirts, find ones for VAMPIRE and WEREWOLF. Roleplaying is officially cool.

In recent years, the feeling that the basic configurations of the roleplaying game have been explored has not, as it has in computer gaming, led to conservatism and reluctance to innovate. Rather, it has bred a desire to do original and different work. The result has been fine products like OVER THE EDGE, a surrealistic RPG set in an espionage-cum-conspiracy modern world, and DEATH LANDS, a horror/western RPG, and HOL, which stands for Human Occupied Landfill, a bizarre science fiction RPG set in the literal trashbin of the universe.

Despite breakdowns in the hobby games distribution channel that parallel the catastrophe that befell comics two years ago, roleplaying remains one of the most creative, vital, and interesting gaming styles. The greatest threat at present to that creativity is that the consolidation of the industry's two largest companies---TSR and Wizards of the Coast---and the change in distribution patterns will ultimately create barriers to entry for new firms and ideas. We can only hope that does not come to pass.

The collectors card industry began with the publication of Richard Garfield's MAGIC: THE GATHERING in 1993 by Wizards of the Coast, then an obscure Seattle-based roleplaying games publisher. Garfield had submitted a boardgame to Wizards that they had rejected--but asked him to design something else for them, maybe a simple little card game that leaned itself to convention play. Garfield came up with MAGIC; neither he nor Wizards had any idea that it would become the phenomenon it is today.

MAGIC is of the class of what we call an "exceptions" game; another good example is the boardgame COSMIC ENCOUNTER. An exceptions game has a very simple, limited rules set; but some game components have additional rules printed on them that alter, modify, or break the basic rules. As a result, they can be quite complicated when viewed *in toto*, but are quite simple to learn in the first instance.

In MAGIC, virtually every card has some special power or ability. The genius of the design, however, is in the open-ended nature of the game. When you buy a MAGIC deck, you get 80 cards, which is, in fact, enough to build a playable deck. However, the basic MAGIC game has more than 300 cards, some of them quite rare; to build a powerful deck, you must go out and buy additional booster packs and basic decks, then select the cards you wish to play in your deck. Expansions since the original publication have created a universe with literally thousands of different cards.

You play against other people who have each assembled their own deck. As a result, you never know quite what you're going to be up against; out of the thousands of available cards, your opponent has selected perhaps 60 to play against you. Part of the fascination of the game lies in this wide variability, the fact that you never know what you'll be up against.

Perhaps more important is the "meta-game" of MAGIC. The literal game is, of course, you against another player with a deck, and what happens over the table. The meta-game is what occurs beforehand: the purchase of cards, the construction of a deck of cards that support and interact with each other in interesting ways, the trading of cards with other players, and the interaction among a group of gamers that leads players to build decks

precisely to take down the decks of other players in the group, and so on.

Never mind the game itself: MAGIC was also a brilliant marketing concept, for at least two reasons. First, hobby games, particularly roleplaying games, are frequently sold in the same outlets that carry comics and other pop-culture "collectibles"--including non-game collectors cards, sports cards, illustration cards, and the like. Consequently, this was a kind of product that outlets which already carried game products knew how to sell and market; it was a wide-open channel.

Second, the nature of the game--the desire to build a hot new deck and blow away your friends--means that avid MAGIC players are always buying new cards, in the hopes of getting something really cool. Thus, it shares with the WARHAMMER model the ability to pull hundreds, in some cases thousands, of dollars out of each individual gamer's pocket. No one forces these guys to spend this much, but there's always the temptation to buy just a few more booster packs. And while the first taste may not be free, it's awfully cheap--maybe \$12 bucks for a basic deck and a couple of boosters.

Like DUNGEONS & DRAGONS before it, MAGIC became an instant runaway hit, more than tripling the size of the hobby games industry. Wizards of the Coast quickly ballooned past TSR--for more than a decade the single largest publisher of hobby games--in terms of gross sales. And last year, TSR, which has been poorly managed for decades, finally sold out to Wizards, which has been making intelligent moves to revive the company.

Scads of other companies jumped on the CCG bandwagon, hoping to profit by the craze. The next few years saw dozens of new CCG launches, most of which have fallen by the wayside. Interesting, these games were launched not only by hobby game publishers, but also by companies like Decipher and Fleer/SkyBox which are mainly publishers of non-game collectible cards.

Sales of MAGIC have fallen from their peak; it is no longer the mass-market phenomenon that it once was. But it's still a large enough market to keep Wizards very happily in business, and it has established itself as a perennial. Barring incredibly stupid management by Wizards, Magic, like D&D, is likely to be around for decades to come. MAGIC is now available in virtually every major language across the globe, and has recently been adopted by the government of the People's Republic of China as an authorized non-Olympic sport (I'm not making this up). Wizards sponsors tournaments across the world, with international winners flown into the States for the world championship each year. Wizards/TSR may not have the market capitalization of an Electronic Arts--it's privately held, among other things--but this is not small potatoes, folks. This is a real industry.

It has proven very difficult to launch additional successful CCGs, however, particularly if all you're doing is a me-too game. The most successful CCGs other than MAGIC have mainly derived from licensed product, including Decipher's STAR TREK COLLECTIBLE CARD GAME, and Fleer/SkyBox's OVERPOWER, a comics card game with licenses from both DC and Marvel.

However, at a lower level of sales, some companies have achieved modest cult success, sufficient to sustain continued release of additional product. Among the best, in my opinion, are LEGEND OF FIVE RINGS, a fantasy CCG with a strong Japanese/Chinese tone; and

ILLUMINATI: NEW WORLD ORDER, Steve Jackson's goofy conspiratorial CCG.

Live Action Roleplaying, by contrast, is not an industry and probably never will be. It's run by hobbyists for hobbyists, with no thought of commercial gain in mind.

LARPs, as they're called, differ from table-top RPGs in a number of ways. First, players don't sit about a table, they wander around and engage each other in conversation. Second, in most LARPs, some or all actions are taken by engaging in some literal, physical action in the game-space--for instance, in some games, combat is performed with rattan weapons, and a "hit" is a "hit." In others, combat is abstracted to eliminate the possibility of injury, but "picking someone's pocket" might be accomplished by placing a small colored sticker somewhere on their person without them noticing what you've done.

Third, most LARPs involve dozens, sometimes hundreds of players, and multiple gamemasters.

Fourth, the basic rules set of LARPs is generally far simpler than that for table-top RPGs; you want rules that players can pick up very quickly and get playing.

There are essentially three main LARP sub-genres: the "adventure" or "line" LARP; the "interactive" or "freeform" LARP; and the commercial LARP, which is really a subcategory of the freeform.

"Adventure" LARPs usually take place out of doors; it's easier to borrow a stretch of forest than to build a dungeon in a basement. Typically, they involve a sequential set of challenges the players must overcome--some combat-oriented, others involve physical challenges (e.g., locks to pick), mental challenges (puzzles to solve) or pure roleplaying (chatting up a non-player character and getting information from him). Encounters with enemies, monsters, and other NPCs are with actual people provided by the gamemasters, adventure LARPs are often staged by groups who play together frequently, so you might agree to be a monster this week and play as one of the adventurers next.

Essentially, you and a group of other players go down the line, having each encounter and ultimately solving the plot and winning--or losing, of course. Combat is often performed with padded weapons, spells by using thrown-powder bombs or the like. Multiple parties of adventures can be at various stages down the line, much like groups of golfers at different holes on a course.

A number of organizations with hundreds of participations stage LARPs, including the New England Roleplaying Organization (NERO), and the International Fantasy Gaming Society. This LARP style, incidentally, seems to be even more popular in Europe than it is here; when I was in Finland last year for RopeCon, their national games convention, I was startled to find that there were actually more LARPers than traditional RPG players in attendance. I was even more startled to find that some of these guys actually fight with steel, something unthinkable in the States with our more draconian liability laws. But that's another story.

It doesn't seem possible to ascribe the "line" LARP to any particular creator; the idea seems to have spontaneously arisen at more or less the same time--around 1980--in the U.S., Britain, and Australia.

The "freeform" LARP, by contrast, is ascribable to an individual designer--Walt Freitag, co-founder of the

Society for Interactive Literature, and creator of REKON I, the first freeform LARP, which was staged at Boskone, a regional science fiction convention, in 1983. Freitag, incidentally, is now working as a computer game designer.

In a freeform, each of dozens or hundreds of players is handed a character that is designed and written in advance by the game designer. (Because of the amount of work involved, games are usually designed by teams rather than individuals.) Thus, you don't play a generic character, but someone who has a specific role to play in a pre-established plot. Plots often involve a crisis or turning point in the game work, like a war on the verge of breaking out, or first contact between alien species.

Each character has his or her own goals and objectives in the game; designers establish these to get players talking and give them things to do. Objects are distributed throughout the game world, frequently in the form of index cards that say "Sword of Spiegel" or whatnot on them, with rules for their use. Players are provided with brief rules books explaining how the game works. And then they're set free to chat with, connive with, steal from, backstab, and play with each other. Generally, there's always a headquarters where players can find gamemasters when they want a ruling on something; frequently, other gamemasters wander about to keep an eye on the action. Often, the gamemasters will announce some special event to keep the action moving.

A free-form like this usually lasts a weekend, and is usually staged at a hotel, often in connection with a science fiction or gaming convention. But other free-forms can last a few hours and be held at a home or bar or church basement.

A freeform LARP is as close to actual immersion in an interactive story that you'll get anywhere in the world. And computer game designers with an interest in true interactive story-telling would be insane not to learn about this form.

There have been few attempts at commercial LARPs as yet. Among the most interesting attempt was White Wolf's VAMPIRE LARP, an attempt to capitalize on the fact that many VAMPIRE players run it as something close to a LARP anyway, with people dressed up and hanging out and conversing someplace, rather than crowded around a table. Of course, if you're a Goth, you've got an appropriate costume already.

It's hard to see how you can really make a commercially viable genre out of this game-style, anyway: the amount of preparation involved is enormous, and the experience is not repeatable.

However, it may not be wholly impossible. Consider first the mystery party game, a genre that had a burst of popularity in the mid-80s and has since fallen off the radar screen. A mystery party game is, in essence, a kit that allows you to stage a mystery LARP at a small party for your friends. It typically includes character sheets for the players, name badges, and a few other items. The host may be required to hide some objects about the house, but more often, solving the mystery involves talking to the other players, finding out what they know, and piecing the solution together.

If this could be a commercially viable genre for even a brief moment, it is not inconceivable that something similar could be done with other LARP styles as well.

The last category I want to discuss isn't a category at all, or rather, no one but me considers it such. That's the branching story game.

The interesting thing about branching story games is that they can be implemented in so many different media. In computer gaming, they're called adventure games.

In publishing, they're called "choose your own ending" books, or "whichway" books, or game books. These had their peak of popularity in the mid-90s, but they're still around. The basic idea is that you begin by reading a page or two, and at the end of that, are presented with a decision. Your decision determines which page you turn to next. And so on, working your way down the decision tree to an ultimate resolution.

If poorly done--as it usually is--this is jejune in the extreme. In the States, Bantam had the most success with its "Choose Your Own Ending TM" line for young adults, some of which are still in print, and most of which were dismal. But the best-selling whichway books internationally were the FIGHTING FANTASY GAMEBOOK series, written by the British Steve Jackson (not to be confused with the American Steve Jackson) and Ian Livingston.

The Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks posed more than a simple turn this way/turn that way choice. They contained a rudimentary game system, and required players to slay monsters, pick locks, solve puzzles, and so on, with the choice of page dependent on luck or failure. They were, in other words, essentially solitaire roleplaying adventures, and reasonably fun as such. I mean, this isn't great art, but you get a couple of bucks worth of entertainment out of these things, which is all they cost.

The Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks are, worldwide, the best-selling gamebooks of all time; they were best-sellers in every country where they were released, with the sole exception of the United States, where Penguin really botched the marketing. Steve Jackson and Ian Livingston became rich off them. Incidentally, Jackson is currently working for a London-based developer, and Livingston is Chairman of Eidos.

The "branching story game" doesn't end here. There are roleplaying equivalents: solitaire roleplaying adventures for use with game systems published separately. There are boardgame equivalents, games that come with a book of paragraphs to which the players must refer at times.

And there are even movie equivalents, like the much-ballyhooed I'M YOUR MAN which ran in theaters a couple of years ago. That movie, promoted as the interactive future of film, allowed the audience to vote at key decision points in the movie as to where they wanted it to go. This was widely reviewed as hip, hot, innovative and exciting--never mind the fact that exactly the same experiment was made in an interactive film at the Polish Pavilion in the New York World's Fair--in 1939.

It's been done in theater, too; witness THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD, based on an unfinished story by Charles Dickens. The play breaks off where the story does; the audience votes on whom they wish the murderer to be, and the cast improvises the outcome.

The theater-gaming cross-over needs further exploration. Theater and story-telling games--computer adventures and paper RPGs--all share some degree of scripting, plots, and characters. Traditional theater is inherently non-interactive, scripted to the last line.

But not all theater is that way. Newcomers to tabletop roleplaying often have difficulty getting their heads around this open, unscripted, imaginative form; actors never do. "Oh," they'll say, "it's improv." A lot of actors in my local gaming group.

Plays like TONY & TINA'S WEDDING are intermediate between LARPs and traditional theater. In TONY & TINA'S, the professional cast play the bride, groom, and family; the audience, which does not sit in seats but wanders about the banquet hall, take the role of guests, and when they enter, are asked whether they're on the bride's party or the groom's. They are free to speak with the cast members--and their experience of the play varies depending on where they choose to be and whom they choose to converse with over the course of the evening.

Or there's my own BESTIAL ACTS, an audience-improvisation drama/roleplaying game based on the dramatic theories of Bertolt Brecht that has never been performed and probably never will be--too loony for either audience.

The point here is that the dividing line between theater and roleplaying can be blurred--and thinking about how to blur it further, and how, for instance, to import theatrical techniques into a graphical MUD, may be a fruitful avenue of exploration.

From snow-draped forests filled with lunatics carrying paint guns, to convention centers filled with people wearing costumes and playing 'in character,' to schoolyards where kids pore over looseleaf binders containing MAGIC cards, to pudgy 40-something guys in glasses hunched over a sandtable where lead Napoleonic armies clash, to blaring arcades and smart-assed 20somethings with near-obscene online nicks, the sheer variety of game styles is staggering.

So how come you're working on another goddamn shooter?

If the universe of gaming is filled with so many diverse styles, why is computer gaming stuck in such a rut?

Let's see some imagination, guys.

Names to Know ➤

Mass Market Boardgaming

George Parker, founder of Parker Brothers and designer of most of its early games (including ROOK and PIT).

Milton Bradley, founder of Milton Bradley and designer of most of its early games.

Charles Darrow, ostensible designer of MONOPOLY.

Lizzie Magie, "single-tax" advocate and designer of THE LANDLORD'S GAME, the precursor to MONOPOLY.

Sid Sackson, the finest game designer of mid-century; designer of ACQUIRE and BAZAAR.

German Adult Boardgaming

Reiner Knizia, perhaps the greatest master of this form, designer of MODERN ART and EUPHRATE & TIGRIS.

Klaus Teuber, designer of SETTLERS OF CATAN, the single most popular boardgame of this decade--more than 3 million copies sold in Germany alone.

Alan Moon, designer of ELFENLAND.

Miniatures Gaming

H.G. Wells, socialist, novelist, father of science fiction--and designer of LITTLE WARS and FLOOR GAMES.

Fletcher Pratt, eminent fantasist of mid-century--and creator of the FLETCHER PRATT NAVAL RULES, the first successful rules for naval battles with military miniatures.

Wargaming

Charles Roberts, founder of The Avalon Hill Game Company and designer of most of its early products.

Don Greenwood, multi-decade veteran of Avalon Hill, largely responsible for shaping its wargame line for most of that time.

James F. Dunnigan, founder of Simulations Publications, Inc. (SPI) and designer of more than 100 wargame titles, among them some of the finest work to see publication in this field, including PANZERBLITZ, one of the best-selling wargames of all time.

Redmond A. Simonsen, co-founder of SPI, its art director throughout its history; he was the first to put designers' names on the cover of games, and set the standard for graphic design in the field. He also coined the term "game designer" (previously, 'game author' or 'game inventor' were commonly used).

Frank Chadwick, founder of Game Designers' Workshop and one of the finest wargame designers.

John Hill, designer of SQUAD LEADER, the single best-selling wargame in history.

Science Fiction & Fantasy Boardgaming

Steve Jackson, founder of Steve Jackson Games and designer of OGRE, CAR WARS, and G.U.R.P.S.

Jordy Weissman, founder of FASA and designer of BATTLETECH.

Roleplaying Games

Dave Arneson, the originator of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS.

E. Gary Gygax, co-credited with the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, and designer of ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS.

Greg Stafford, founder of Chaosium, designer of WHITE BEAR & RED MOON, and creator of Glorantha, the world in which RUNEQUEST is set.

Mark Rhein-Hagen, designer of VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE.

Jonathan Tweet, designer of OVER THE EDGE and EVERWAY.

Sandy Petersen, designer of CALL OF CTHULHU and GHOSTBUSTERS (the RPG)--and not incidentally, designer of DOOM and QUAKE.

(Steve Jackson belongs here, too, but he's already listed above.)

Collectors Card Games

Richard Garfield, designer of MAGIC: THE GATHERING.

Live Action Roleplaying Games

Walt Freitag, co-founder of the Society for Interactive Literature, and designer of REKON, the first "interactive" LARP.

Diplomatic Games

Allan Calhammer, designer of DIPLOMACY.

Avernleigh

A campaign setting for *Superheroes* RPG

Belinda Kelly

Avernleigh has often been described as the 'Playground of Europe.' Because of its close proximity to the EU countries whilst remaining politically independent from them, Avernleigh has served as a gathering place and melting pot for people of all races and backgrounds.

Located on the southeast coast of Britain, Avernleigh has become one of the UK's most vibrant cities. When 'the Big One' cracked California open, and the movie industry moved elsewhere, Avernleigh's Channelwood Studios became a major player in the international entertainment market. Many big-screen stars (and young up-and-coming ones) have been attracted to Avernleigh, which offers that 'old-world' charm and style. Famous personalities who have built their mansions in the exclusive (and over-priced) Maritime District include Pale Horse lead singer Kaji Husang and mega-star Linda Roxwell. However, Avernleigh is not only distinguished by its glitz and stardust, but by its contribution to the scientific community as well. The prestigious Avernleigh University, and its commercial development arm, Coldstar Technologies, have created items that are part of the everyday household, such as the OpNet converter and the vatmeal extractor.

A minor township at the start of the 19th century, Avernleigh only developed when quantities of iron and coal being produced nearby required an export outlet. The most important influence at this time was the Crenshaw family, who owned much of the land around the docks and saw the opportunity for creating a city based on trade. They built the docks, bringing in labour from far and wide to undertake the construction work. In the nature of things, many of the immigrants married and settled in the area so that by the second half of the last century, Avernleigh had a far more cosmopolitan population than similar towns of the south. By the middle of the 19th century, Avernleigh had become the metallurgical capital of the world, with three hundred chimneys pumping their toxic gases into the Avernleigh

River Valley. Diseases included cholera, typhoid and even an outbreak of yellow fever. There were sixty Beggars' Hotels and crime was endemic. However, as Avernleigh grew in importance to the British economy, the freewheeling port community was developed into a law-abiding township under the thumb of Mayor Maurice de Clare. Known as the 'man who made the Avern straight', de Clare belonged to one of the township's most influential families. He began the process urban containment and initiated a project to turn the acres of mined-out slag heaps and quarries into a park. Over the past twenty years, 400 hectares of industrial wasteland has been brought back to life to create one of Britain's largest urban forests, complete with pony trekking and river walks.

The local legend states that when William de Clare first came into Britain in 1066 and met the Saxon Aelfric Crenshaw at the Battle of Hastings, the two promptly slew another in a fierce battle and started an enmity between the two families that lasts to this day. This rivalry is captured in the architecture of Avernleigh. Signs of the Crenshaws can be seen all over Avernleigh, especially in the docklands they created. There is the famous Crenshaw Street, Crenshaw Docks, Crenshaw Park and Crenshaw Town. However, the de Clares have also left their mark: Filbert de Clare, later Earl of Glamorgan (who died in 1292) did much to strengthen the defenses of Avernleigh by building the castle's 'Black Tower' and the Great Hall of the Keep. There is the Guillaume de Clare Gallery, the De Clare Marina, Lady Anne de Clare Park and the impressive De Clare Bridge that connects the Victoria Park district with Channelwood Heights.

Traditionally, Avernleigh's strongest cultural influence came from the Irish; many of those who did not emigrate to America or find their way to Liverpool after the potato famine of the 1840s came to build Avernleigh's docks and the canal and railways that linked the city to its

hinterland. Avernleigh had, and continues to have, a strong Roman Catholic population, strong enough to warrant a Catholic cathedral alongside an Anglican church. Avernleigh also has a vibrant coloured community, descended from the Lascars who often jumped ship, where they had worked as donkeymen feeding coal into the boilers. However, good community relations have always existed in Avernleigh between Victoria Park and the infamous 'Donkeytown' ghetto has been redeveloped into a marvelous cultural district, complete with its own customs, cuisines and celebrations.

The Districts

Maritime District

The Marina District is the most exclusive part of Avernleigh; a curving line of theatres, studios, steak houses, discos, terraced cafés and over 800 exclusive homes festooned with carvings and sculptures that relate the city's maritime history. The **Marina** can accommodate 600 yachts.

Donkeytown

The 'black' part of town, redeveloped in the 1970's to become a fashionable, upmarket district. Crammed with 1970's apartment blocks (they were fashionable then), open plazas and fountains sculptured by the famous artist Rodney de Clare-Bartholomew, Donkeytown is becoming an exclusive address. However **Donkeytown South**, the poorer section of the district that runs into **Steel Harbour**, still has a somewhat infamous reputation.

Steel Harbour

Miles of grubby docklands that served as a place for Mayor Maurice de Clare to push the poor-folk and vagabonds into while he concentrated on developing the Maritime District. While currently it is in a much better state it was in the 19th Century, Steel Harbour remains the poor area of town. However, if you know where to look, it's good for cheap eats, cheap rent and one of the best places to find iso clubs.

Victoria Park Square

The central business district of Avernleigh, where coal was traded as stocks and shares were traded on the London Markets. The price of coal in Bremen or Buenos Aires was once set by **The Exchange** in Avernleigh. Although the Exchange is a gaunt, Victorian building, Avernleigh's civic centre is perfectly Edwardian in design, built out of Portland stone in 1904. Since that time, buildings have been designed with an empathy for the whole. The buildings themselves enclose a wide rectangle, within which wide, tree-lined avenues bisect **Victoria Park**. The western flank of the civic centre comprises the **Law Courts**, **City Hall** with the **Crenshaw Clock Tower** and the **National Avernleigh Museum**.

Channelwood Heights

Located on the hinterlands on the north side of Avernleigh, Channelwood Heights was formerly a forgettable district built on top of old slag heaps and mine tailings. However, with rerouting of the railway after the Avern flooded its banks in 1931 and the gradual development of the city's industrial wasteland into parks led to Channelwood having a sudden rise in popularity. The site of the famous Channelwood Studios, this district has recently seen the influx of a number of studios as Avernleigh's movie industry started to boom. Bordered by national parks, property in Channelwood has been on the increase as the stars and movie developers reshape the district.

Crenshaw Town

In the 1960's, this former red-light district was replaced with modern council flats and houses replaced the mean streets (pushing the ghettos into Donkeytown South and Steel Harbour.) Crenshaw Town remains a friendly place where you can come in on a Saturday night and visit in the local pub, or stop for a bet on the dogs at the Prince of Wales Racecourse. The prestigious **Avernleigh University** is wedged at the back of this district against a vast expanse of pleasant green hinterland.

Castle Beach

In the summer, the population of this district swells with summer tourists who come to be by the seaside. Castle Beach has filled with resorts in recent years, much to the grumblings of the locals who still collect mussels by hand at high tide. Castle Beach is a pleasant place, overlooked by the crumbling remains of **Avernleigh Castle** that sprawls over the great cliffs of **Castle Hill**.

The Hinterland

Avernleigh is bordered on its north by over four hundred hectares of protected parkland, formerly reclaimed industrial wasteland. The **St Helen Caves** are thought to be the oldest occupied site yet excavated in Europe and in 1924 the famous Black Lady was excavated here. Many Neolithic burial chambers have been discovered on the wild moorlands and areas have names like **Druid's Lake**, **Hangman's Bridge** and the **Devil Stones**, reflecting their connection to the area's mysterious Celtic past.

Locations of Note

Four Corners

One of the largest modern shopping centres in the UK. Alongside is a vast glass aircraft hanger of an indoor market that offers everything from ice cream to antiques and laver bread to carpets.

Museums

The Maritime Musuem houses a working woollen mill alongside other exhibits of the city's industrial and maritime past. Outside is a replica tram from the world's first passenger railway that trundled along the front from 1807 until 1960. The Brecknock Museum contains mostly folk exhibits and has one of the largest bottle collections in Britain. The National Avernleigh Museum is a compact, interesting place, housing a famous set of paintings donated by Monique de Clare that include the works of Daumier, Manet, Miller, Monet, Morisot, Renoir and van Gogh.

Places of Worship

The All Saints Cathedral dominates the skyline of Victoria Park Square, whilst its smaller Anglican counterpart, St Aidan's Church, is located almost directly opposite the tree-lined expanse of Crenshaw Street.

Restaurants / Bars / Pubs / Clubs

Many restaurants, pubs and even nightclubs are named after historical ships. It was the tradition for sailors to settle down and name their pub after their favourite vessel.

- Picton Sea Eagle: A reconstructed man-o'-war, now a somewhat tacky pub and restaurant.
- Yellow Rose of China Pub: A pub popular with the younger, yuppie set.
- Leviathan: A historical pub now converted into a popular terr'r club, whilst still maintaining its nautical theme. Think of it as the abode of the damned and drowned - artificial seaweed on the walls, watery green lighting, smashed sea chests with clutching skeletal hands rising up out of them. 'Interesting'.
- Octopus: A pub/restaurant catering to the summer tourists in the resort end of town.
- Bailey's Bones: Sicky iso bar run by ex-hippies and art student dropouts.
- Queen Victoria's Arms: A popular white-collar gay club.
- Crenshaw Wine Bar: Regulars claim it to be the best pub in the world. There's sawdust on the floor, dust carefully preserved on the wine racks and antiques unselfconsciously littering the bars. Its checkered history has provided a marvelous riot of architectural styles that together create a charming harmony unmatched by any public building in the city.
- Red Dragon Inn – Traditional Welsh-themed pub, where you may be equipped with a pair of clogs and have to serve the cawl (traditional thick vegetable soup). Along with the food and wine, three hours of entertainment is provided: harp playing, singing and clog dancing.
- The Farlight: A nova club with private rooms that are novas only, aimed at the various celebrities that cruise through Avernleigh. Many fans and groupies hang outside, waiting to catch a glimpse of their idols.

CLAWS OF BAGH NAKH: A CHAMPIONS COLUMN

MODIFYING DAMAGE FROM VELOCITY

By Tim Nieminen and Gary Johnson

As all thoughtful Champions players will realise, the additional dice of damage a character gains from traveling at high (effectively non-combat) velocities can quickly become ludicrous. However, because of the exponential structure of power and damage in Champions, a more reasonable approach is possible.

For those of you with no interest in physics, here is the quick answer. 1" of velocity per segment equals 1d6 damage up to 30"/segment (30d6). Beyond that point, the number of dice is determined by the following table. Find the character's v/3 (for Move Throughs) and v/5 (for Move Bys) in the inches/segment column, and that's how many dice the character adds. Simple, no?

inches/segment	number of dice	inches/segment	number of dice	inches/segment	number of dice
30-32	30	186-220	41	1048-1245	51
33-38	31	221-261	42	1246-1481	52
39-46	32	262-311	43	1482-1761	53
47-55	33	312-370	44	1762-2094	54
56-65	34	371-440	45	2095-2491	55
66-77	35	441-523	46	2492-2962	56
78-92	36	524-622	47	2963-3523	57
93-110	37	623-740	48	3524-4190	58
111-130	38	741-880	49	4191-4983	59
131-155	39	881-1047	50	4984-5926**	60
156-185*	40				

* Mach One

** Orbital Velocity

For those of you interested in how this table was built, these are the calculations.

Given that:

2 more dice = double the energy

At some energy E0, the damage is D0

the following formula must apply:

$$D = 2 * \log_2(E/E0) + D0$$

where D is the damage corresponding to energy E. The first 2 is due to 2 dice being a doubling, and the log2 is a log to base 2, because we are interested in a doubling.

This isn't a useful formula yet, because we're interested in velocity, not energy, and log2 will be a PITA (pain in the arse).

Energy is proportional to velocity squared, so $E = v^2$, $E0 = v0^2$.

$$D = 2 \log_2((v/v0)^2) + D0$$

and convert the log2 to a natural log (i.e. the "ln" button on your calculator) (or log10 if you prefer)

$$D = 2/\log(2) * \log((v/v0)^2) + D0$$

We can also get rid of the squared in the log:

$$D = 4/\log(2) * \log(v/v0) + D0$$

And to simplify even further

$$D = 4/\log(2) * \log(v) + D0 - 4/\log(2)*\log(v0)$$

This is the magic formula!

If we are using natural logs, and $30'' = 30D$, the numbers are equal to

$$D = 5.77 * \log(v) + 10.37$$

If we are using logs to base 10,

$$D = 13.29 * \log_{10}(v) + 10.37 \text{ (the 10.37 doesn't depend on the base of the log)}$$

The formula doesn't agree with the existing system for $v < 30''$, so we agree to use $D = v$ (the old method) for slow speeds, and the new method to stop the 8000D6 attacks that might otherwise turn up.

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If you answered yes to all of those questions, why not submit to the *Queensland Wargamer*?? If you didn't answer yes, we'd be happy to hear your feedback.

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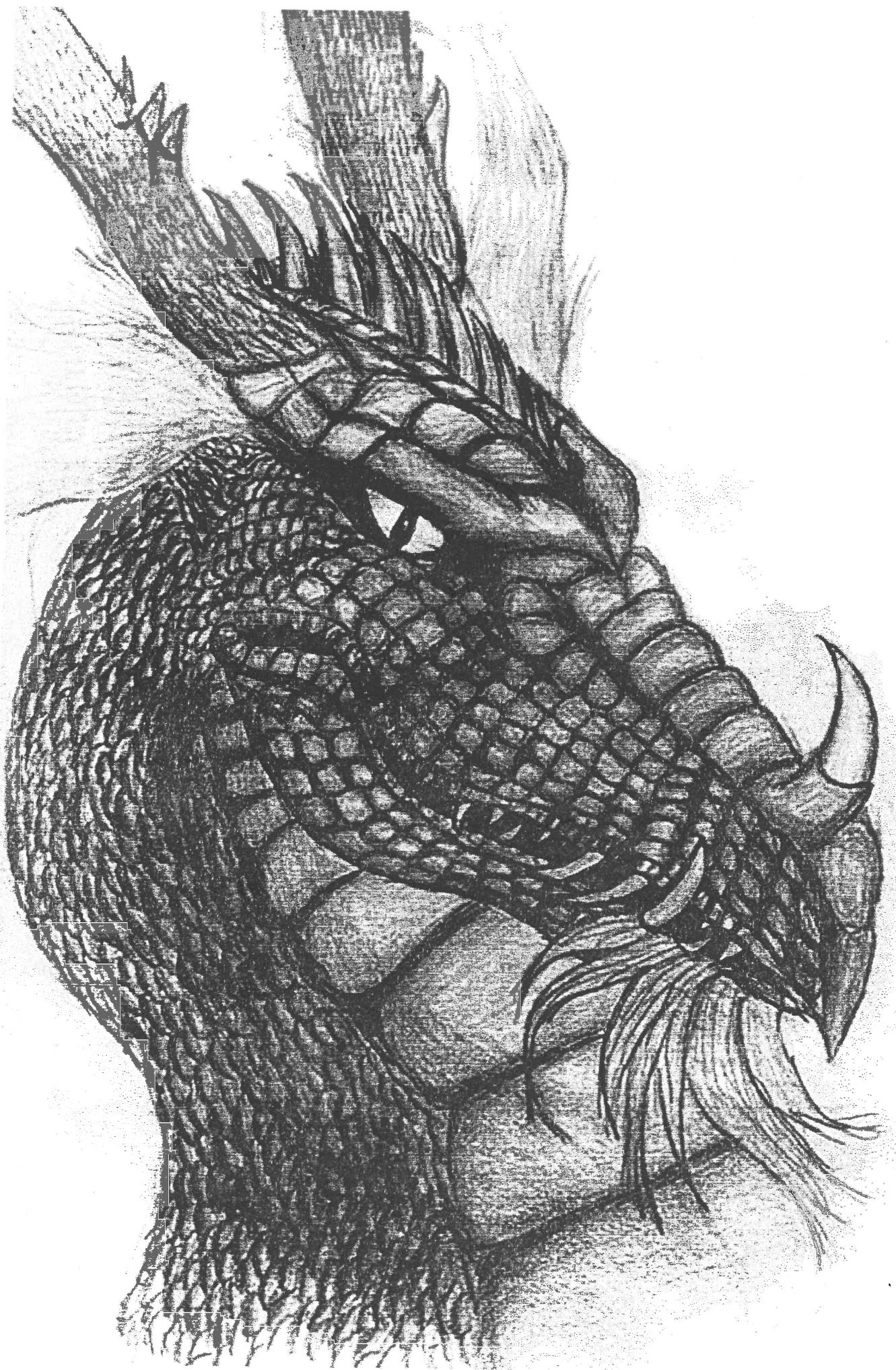
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