

# RPGA INTERVIEW with...

*E*(rnest) Gary Gygax is a graying, slightly portly gentleman with very thick glasses. He has achieved Top Executive status of a multi-million dollar corporation of his own creation while still in his forties, and has put in many 30-hour days during its formation. To appearances, he could be anything - a shoemaker, an insurance underwriter, a businessman.... In fact, he has been each of these things. He has a long and varied history of employment, interwoven with an extensive record of hobby gaming in all its shapes and sizes.

Gary is hard to get a hold on. One minute he'll be the archtypical Senior Executive; the next, a fanatical gamer executing a military coup. He occasionally gets tired of the business routine and dumps everything (unless of critical importance) to preserve his own peace of mind in any of a variety of ways: repeatedly shooting for a wastepaper basket across the room until he's banked it in...

**EGG:** Good morning. What can I do for you, sir?

**RPGA:** Well, I have a few questions for you, sir, representing the RPGA members and their upcoming newsletter. This is to be an article for our first newsletter, which will also contain articles by most of TSR's best game designers.

The first question is, almost of necessity, the much misused, much rumored "How did the D&D® game get started?"

**EGG:** How we started selling it, you mean, or...?

**RPGA:** Well, how was it created? And why?

**EGG:** The progenitor of the *Dungeons & Dragons* game was simply the fantasy component of the *Chainmail* game published in 1971 by Guidon Games. Those familiar with the rules for that particular thing will notice that heroes have four hit dice, superheroes have eight hit dice, magic-users can toss fireballs; there are various colors of dragons mentioned, orcs, giants, etc. It's all pretty closely tied to what you see later on in the original *D&D* game. Many of the spells, in fact, and so on are all tied to the system that was built into the *Dungeons & Dragons* game. We played miniatures games; the fellows enjoyed the fantasy so much

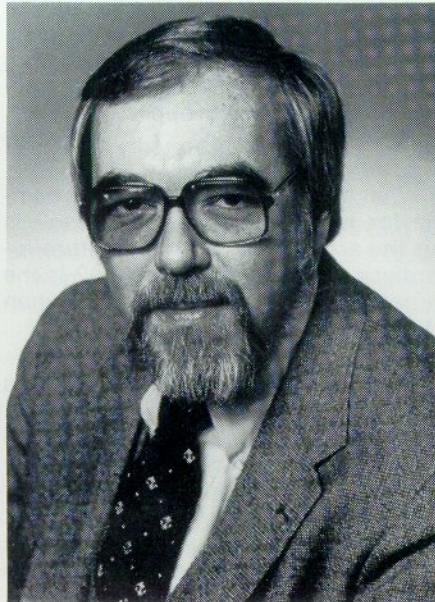
debating a very minor point of rules into absurdity or extinction... suddenly affecting a complete change of attitude about someone - only to unexpectedly revert to normal later. In short, Neutral Good with Chaotic tendencies.

Gary is hard to get a hold of, too. Whenever he ventures out of his office in the main headquarters of TSR Hobbies in Lake Geneva, a crowd of employees - some executives, most not - gather in his vicinity and dribble off behind him en masse, some hoping to get a quick solution to problems and others just seeking his opinions. He rapidly disappears into his own domain, however, often leaving hopefults in his wake still laughing over some bon mot he has cast off as a smoke screen for his retreat. He still works too hard, steering the now large corporation through the world of modern business.

Gary relaxes at his home in Wisconsin with his wife, one son, two daughters, and a large assortment of dogs and cats.

that about 1970 we began to play a lot of them.

After Guidon published *Chainmail*, and that became one of its most popular sellers - and what with all of the questions pertaining to fantasy - it became apparent that there was a larger element of people interested in fantasy than we had thought. So I began working on what I initially thought of as a supplement to *Chainmail*, and it eventually grew into its own game.



## E. GARY GYGAX

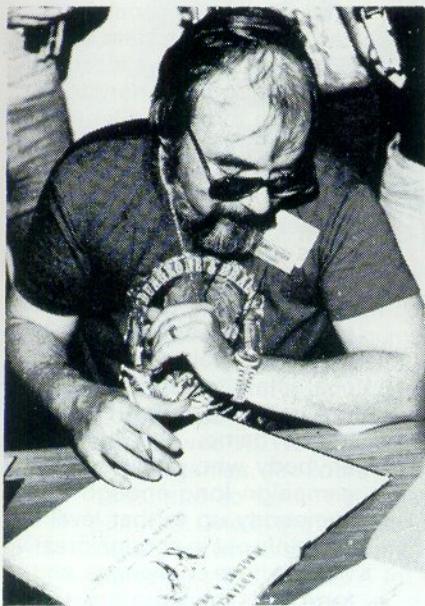
His eldest son Ernie drops in regularly, as does his eldest daughter Elise (both of whom work for TSR). The Gygax home is not huge but is secluded. Its location is not advertised, as many people have sought his time, advice, and attention since he became well-known as the creator of the *Dungeons & Dragons*® game.

When asked for an article for the first RPGA Newsletter, Gary indicated that he was far too busy - as indeed he is - to produce anything. He did seem willing, however, to be interviewed if time could be found. And so, one murky morning with tape recorder running, we managed to catch Gary in the right mood and with a little time. Thereby came this article; in fact, a whole interview series is planned, to be found in upcoming issues. After editing, trimming, and smoothing the results, we proudly present this profile of E. Gary Gygax, President of TSR Hobbies, Inc.:

You may notice that the early *Dungeons & Dragons* game was still kind of neither fish nor fowl, and referred the reader to *Chainmail* all the time. For the first six months after publishing the original *Dungeons & Dragons* game, we thought of the game as going only to those people who played miniatures. That's why the game was put together as it was, making a lot of assumptions. It was not what people said - incomprehensible; they were not miniatures players. Any miniatures player could pick it up and know how to handle it, easily.

**RPGA:** You mentioned, a few times, "we" and "the fellows," and so forth. Who are you really referring to?

**EGG:** At the time that they - *Chainmail* and then the original *D&D* game - were written, we had an active group of game players called "The Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association" whose membership included Jeff Perren, Lee Tucker, Mike Reese, myself of course, Rob and Terry Kuntz, and Don Kaye. Those were the active people in it. We had a few others. It grew; it grew amazingly by '73. We had perhaps twenty or thirty other people at various times.



**RPGA:** When the *D&D* phenomenon first started, of course, there were just a few players. We've been explaining to people how the first set was for hard-core gamers, and then the audience became more widespread. The version written by John Eric Holmes was a little bit easier, and now the latest version is easily understandable by anyone willing just to spend the time to read it. You've made the terms a little blander, and have been getting rid of a lot of the gamese; in general, improving it for the mass market. Do you like what has happened to the *D&D* game? I'm sure you like the widespread publicity and the approval it has received, but do you like the directions it has taken?

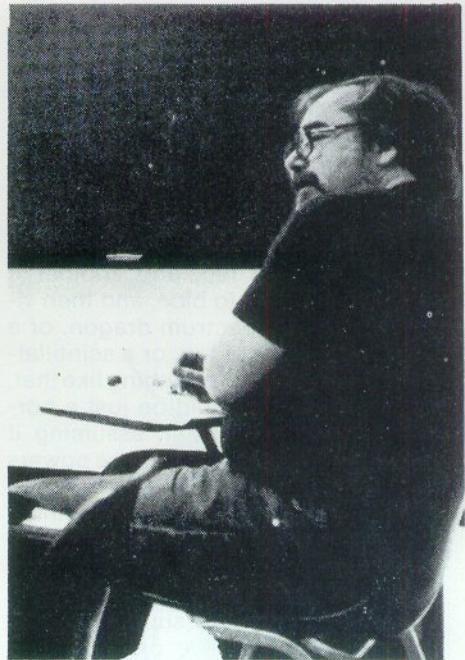
**EGG:** (chuckles) If I understand right: I'm not really too fond of the way *Dungeons & Dragons* games have kind of mutated and changed into very strange exercises. But who can say "nay" to someone who's having a good time with the game? One of the reasons that I was able to throw myself into the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®* project with such vigor, and put in so many hours and turn it out as quickly as I could, is that I felt that a game was needed that would have more control over its audience, and one that was not so open-ended and one that was going to have more uniformity of play, and yet retain the sense of wonder and imagination and creativity that the *Dungeons & Dragons* system, as a game form, had produced. So I have high hopes for *Advanced D&D™* games

in that respect. Unfortunately, it seems as if they're still being perverted, although not as badly.

I believe that the RPGA influence is going to help to raise the level of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* play by forcing a little more conformity. I don't mind creativity, I don't mind mutation, if it brings out better game play, and superior gaming in general. But from everything that I can see, all the changes that are made are usually foolish and meant to either baby players along or kill them off, one way or another. They're destructive, rather than creative.

Just think about some of the outstanding changes that were made in *Dungeons & Dragons* games, and *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* games too, for that matter, and look at what their effects are. Consider the "double damage on a natural 20", which of course seldom went to the monsters, but only went to the players, therefore making it yet easier for the players to kill monsters.

Critical hits? Again, players never took critical hits, only monsters, for some reason, would take critical hits. The weapons expertise idea, that a player's chosen weapon... he or she would do a lot better with it. And yet, monsters fighting with their natural abilities, fang and claw - who could be more expert than a tiger with its claws and teeth? -weren't getting any bonuses. The spell point system, which allowed magic-users to become veritable machine guns of spells without ever having to seriously consider what they were going



to take and just shoot everything down, made the magic-user the only character worth playing.

Some of the proposed classes, such as the barbarian I've heard of and the mighty knight, and one or two others that I've heard of, create super-powerful characters who just can... again, it was the only one worth being. Then you just go through and beat up on everything. The changes in the demi-human races create, again, super-powerful characters, so that everybody wants to be a dwarf, or an elf, or whatever it is, and nobody wants to be anything else, because it overbalances in favor. And generally these are done at the whim of a Dungeon Master, or from group pressure, to make a rather uninteresting campaign where everybody is one thing. These are usually the Monty Haul games.

On the other hand, you have the really silly monsters, or sure-death traps for the DM who seems to be rather sadistic and just wants to proceed to kill all of his players regularly, in capricious ways, without giving them any chance whatsoever. That's also guaranteed to spoil a game.

**RPGA:** So how should somebody - assuming that these major pitfalls are avoided and game balance is attempted, at least - how should someone introduce a new monster, a new magic item, and so forth, to be sure of game balance?



**EGG:** Compare it to what's there. There is a monster rating system; it's fairly easy, and it's given in the DMG. Just write up the points for the monster - and be fair - and then look at what it is, compared to the other monsters, and use it. For example, someone was talking about a dragon that changed hues, and as you were fighting it, one moment it would be red, and another it might turn to blue, and then violet... a spectrum dragon, or a rainbow dragon, or a scintillating dragon, something like that. Well, this would be just a horrendous monster, assuming it could use each of those powers (breath weapons) three times; or even if it could only use them once! Particularly if you got into some of those shades... obviously, you can't throw it against anything except super-powerful characters. The problem with characters is that... how many new monsters can you dream up, and how many new challenges can be dreamed up to handle a thirty-second level...

ANYTHING? The game is reasonably well-balanced, as it stands right now; so that if you add in a new character class, it should be within the general parameters of the other characters, and have some useful purpose.

Obviously, rangers have a useful purpose; they're basically an outdoor character, like a druid is, although both work well in a dungeon. A paladin is specifically aimed at fighting all the bad guys, and the undead. The cleric is there to both fight and heal. A magic-user is there to use some powerful spells to get the group through the tough times; the fighters are there to bear the brunt of all the action. The thieves are to act as, kind of, scouts, and second-story men, and deliver some nifty behind the back blows, and so forth. Illusionists are a type of magic-user, meant really to probably best combat the more stupid monsters, or humans. Bards are an interesting exercise for those people dedicated to a long-term project in an ongoing campaign.

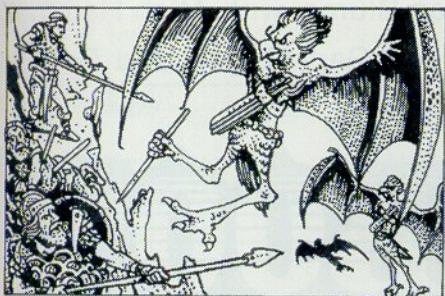
Monks are intriguing in that they offer all sorts of promise if you can get them up near the top. But if the DM plays it properly, it's going to be so hard to get a monk up to beyond tenth level that it might mean - DESPAIR.

So, and even so, the Grandfather of Assassins - or the Grand Master of Flowers in the monk class - or a 23rd level Bard - or a 20th level magician or wizard - is certainly tough, but it's very hard to get there, and by that time there's probably one or two other characters to contest that individual's supremacy within the game. And of course, anybody who properly DMs a campaign long enough to get somebody up to that level has certainly put in enough creative work to have challenges, and so forth, commensurate with the level of players.

**RPGA:** Skipping over to a wider field of gaming, the Gen Con® convention started "way back when". "Were you there at the conception, and the first ones?"

**EGG:** Well, what happened is that the





year before the Gen Con convention started, I invited a number of fellows up to my place in Lake Geneva for a gaming session, and as I recall, about a dozen showed up. We played Avalon Hill games, and some miniatures, and so forth. I still have pictures! One of the original fellows there who's still in gaming, actively, is Bill Hoyer. A lot of the others have either disappeared or dropped out, at least, from the active ranks, but Bill and I also belonged to a group called the IFW (International Federation of Wargamers), and I was one of its officers, and Bill was eventually president in a couple of years. I suggested to Bill Speer and Scott Duncan, who were president and vice-president - I don't know, maybe I was vice-president and Bill was secretary - but anyway, I said "We ought to have an IFW convention". And they said, "Hey, that sounds like a great idea! You're it!"

So I put the first Gen Con event together, and we held it in Horticultural Hall and had about a total attendance of about fifty or sixty hard-core gamers, who came from all over the country. We had a Canadian or two there; we had some people from out on the west coast, from the east coast, from Texas.... There just weren't too many of us that were aware of each other - then, at least. There were probably more out there, but it was hard to get to them. We did have a lot of walk-throughs, even the first year; the total different people there - I think there was something over 150 at the first Gen Con convention that was run at Horticultural Hall, here in beautiful Lake Geneva.

**RPGA:** It's sure grown since then. Do you like the way the Gen Con scene has gone? There are mammoth, incredible problems involved these days in handling the thousands of people who show up for the various games.

**EGG:** It's all right. We had incredible problems handling the fifty peo-

ple that were there the first year, so we just have more people to deal with. I ran the first one all by myself, virtually, with some people to help me set up. It was a one-day show, and I was there the day before and the day after, first setting up and then taking down and cleaning up. From a personal standpoint I don't like the large ones as well, because you can't possibly know all the people there, and a lot of the feeling of comraderie is gone... the closeness, the general tenor of things has changed considerably. On the other hand, it does give a chance for many, many more people to come and see what gaming is all about, get into things, take a look at the new projects that the companies have produced, and meet their friends.

I still see a lot of the old-timers there, and say "hi" to them. It gives a better exposure to the hobby; in that regard it's great. It allows more competitive gaming; you can have 500-man tournaments, 600-man tournaments... that is marvelous. So I think the big convention is a very good thing, and it's here to stay. That's why we also run the three small conventions every year, too. And these are more like the old-time Gen Con events - such as the Spring Revel we just had here - because there you recognize the people, and can sit down and talk with them. It's not a mob scene; things are a little chaotic - some of the games don't come off like they should have, or you go change and play in a different room, or play something different - but it's fun, and everybody has a good time, and that's what the small convention's all about.

**RPGA:** Doesn't TSR make piles of money off of every Gen Con convention, though?

**EGG:** Ho ho ho, BOY oh boy, do we LOSE piles of money at every Gen Con convention!

**RPGA:** Then why?

**EGG:** As a service to the hobby! We're still basically... this is a company run by people who like games. Most of the people here are gamers. We have some people who don't play games, we have professionals, and we're becoming very professional in the way we do business, and we're looking to be professional, too. But first of all it's a service. Secondly, it helps promote the hobby. So it's promotion, I guess, and we're doing it now; if

the game players didn't like it and never came, then we would drop it gladly, because it costs us a lot of money to put it on. But we do it now because it's expected of us, and we don't want to let anybody down. It is a good chance for publicity, as far as the news media are concerned, and it's good exposure for new, would-be game hobbyists.



**RPGA:** The Gen Con event is known as the longest continually running game convention around. Is it the biggest?

**EGG:** Well, it is absolutely the first of the *gaming* conventions started. There are older conventions, but they were for figure collectors, and things like that. We're the graddaddy of conventions. Sometimes Gen Con has been bigger than Origins, and at other times it hasn't been as big. I don't think *big* is necessarily the measure of how successful a convention is. Really, if people like it and come back, it's successful, if it's got twenty people there or twenty thousand people there. We certainly have a lot of events going, and a lot of dealers, and it's a good convention. (*Testily*) I don't think much more can be said on that subject.

**RPGA:** Feel like a short break?  
**EGG:** Yeah.

*Due to lack of space, the short break must become a long one. Watch for the conclusion of this interview next issue, when Gary talks about (among other things) his own favorite games, the D&D movie, and the future of the D&D phenomenon.*

# RPGA INTERVIEW with...

## E. GARY GYGAX

We present the conclusion of our April interview with E. Gary Gygax, President of TSR Hobbies, Inc. and inventor of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® fantasy role playing game. The interview series will continue in the next newsletter; if there's someone you'd like to hear from, let us know!

**RPGA:** In looking over what little I could find from the past on the origins of the *D&D* game and its development, I ran across a mention from you that some of your associates at TSR were somewhat concerned about getting so far away from wargaming, and going so heavily into role playing gaming. Are there any plans for the future of getting away from role playing, and getting back into wargames - to any extent?

**EGG:** I don't think that we want to do that directly. Role playing has a broader appeal than wargames; there's just no help for it. Wargames usually demand more specific knowledge at the onset than do role playing games. You can start role playing in a period you know virtually nothing about. Hopefully, the game itself will generate sufficient interest to make you want to learn. But I don't believe that wargames, historical simulations, and the like will ever have the level of popularity that role playing does. So, while we're interested in doing good battle games and conflict simulations, our company will never become primarily an historical game company.

**RPGA:** One seemingly notable lack of TSR's products is figures, figures used in virtually every role playing game and of course through the wargamers. Why TSR doesn't make figures is almost irrelevant; but are there plans to do so?

**EGG:** Well, right now we license two firms to make figures for us, of various sorts: Grenadier Models and Miniature Figurines, Ltd. We have no immediate plans to begin manufacturing figures on our own. It might be in the cards in the not too distant future, but again perhaps not. It is a difficult area to get into, because of a great amount of expertise required to make little figures.

**RPGA:** We have received a lot of requests and questions about what

has happened to T2 (*AD&D™ Dungeon Module T2: The Temple of Elemental Evil*). Is it soon to come?

**EGG:** It's about half finished, and I've done a complete revision of the old "Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth" (*AD&D Dungeon Module S5*), which were played at a Detroit WinterCon - oh, I don't know, three, four, five years ago, whenever it was - and I've finally gotten around to adding these, and putting a complete outdoor adventure on the front end to get to the Lost Caverns, and I'll finish those and then I'll get back into T2, and then do the plane modules I want to do. I want to do the elemental planes, para-elemental planes, demi-planes, and semi-planes, and demi-semi-planes, et cetera....

**RPGA:** Et cetera.... Well, as president of a multi-million dollar international corporation like TSR Hobbies, I'm sure you have very little free time; but is the Greyhawk campaign still running?

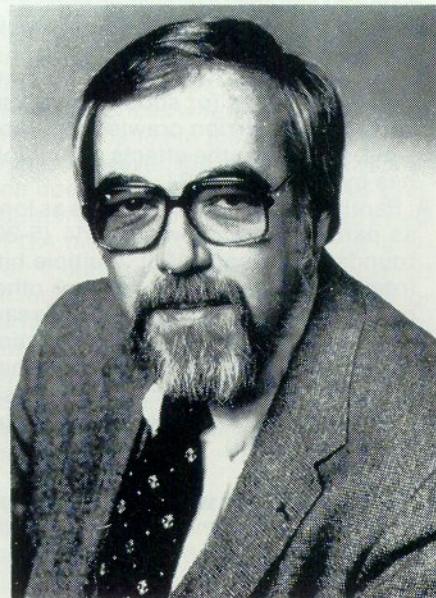
**EGG:** It runs sporadically, with basically what you'd call a group of new players - some of my younger children play, and some of their friends and associates. Occasionally we'll get some of the old-timers in there. As I got busier and busier, and the demands of work kept me from playing Greyhawk, I began to merge my profession with my avocation, and cheated a lot by creating the village of Hommlet and the temple of Elemental Evil to test some ideas I had about random dungeons, and outdoor terrain so forth. That got going with a number of the old original players, like Ernie and Brian and so forth, and now that that's pretty well quieted down, the old original Greyhawk is back in play again, now and again. One of these days I swear I'll extensively revise it, fill in a lot of the areas that I only have one-liner notes on, and maybe even attempt to publish it.

**RPGA:** Do you play any other games in your spare time?

**EGG:** You mean other than, like, the heroes and villains game that I play now, or Pit, such as at the convention (*Spring Revel*), or Rail Baron? Yeah, I play backgammon, and chess, and Shogi; I'm a game player, I'm sure. Whenever I have time, I try to slip in a game I play with my youngest son. We play the electronic game of Generals, occasionally, or Go-ban, or - yeah, whatever's going, I'll take a shot at.

**RPGA:** You have mentioned communication among gamers being helped by Gen Con events, and also clubs and things like that. What else is being done for communications and clubs and the hobby as a whole?

**EGG:** Well, that's why the RPGA network is so desirable. An interchange of ideas and a communications network is necessary amongst role playing game en-



thusiasts in order that they don't go off in tangents, or that they don't become isolated and lose touch and kind of lose interest in the whole hobby. It's active and growing, and we need communications, we need information: a free exchange of ideas, a training ground, maybe, or at least an education ground for Dungeon Masters and would-be Dungeon Masters, or game masters in general. And also perhaps some means of bringing the play of each type of role playing game into a more standard - I can't say *method*; to define the parameters of play a little bit more. So that if you go from group to group, whether it's locally or in other regions, that the games will resemble each other. The bigger the audience for a game, the greater the opportunity to excel and to enjoy the game.

For example, imagine trying to have a golf tournament if the rules for golf differed from state to state or golf course to golf course. In one, you could pick up the ball and throw it if you desired, in a given situation, rather than hitting it with a club. Or somewhere, the green wouldn't have to be closely manicured, or if the cup that you were shooting for could be a foot in diameter, or not much bigger than the golf ball, and so forth... it would be CHAOS. As it is, the rules for golf are pretty well set by the PGA structure, and you have interesting competitions and a large following, and lots of fun. I think the RPGA structure, in this case, will help to stabilize and bring a little more... a little higher quality of game play to our hobby. Hopefully it will also be a vehicle by which we can begin to reward players who really play well, and want to excel in tournaments, want to be rated, by giving them chances to go to various parts of our country, or overseas, perhaps, to play others. The UK branch of TSR has its own organization which is called - what are they called?

**RPGA:** The *D&D Players Association*, and more about that later in this issue.

**EGG:** Okay. So perhaps we can have an exchange. One year they'll be able to send somebody over here, or a team over here, or whatever it is, and the next year we can send a team over to the UK to play. There are lots of interesting possibilities with this thing. We'll also hopefully not



only spread the hobby and make it a little easier for enthusiasts to find more and better opponents or associates in a lot of games, but also to air their opinions and make the games better. If enough of the members feel that some game could be improved by some rules change, or addition or deletion or whatever it is, we'll certainly give that a lot of weight in what we do, because they're active, and the most informed segment of the hobby. So that's for certain.

**RPGA:** With a gamers' organization as important as the RPGA network, why not get an old-time gamer to run it?

**EGG:** What we wanted to do - and we did look at some old-time gamers, too - is to get someone who's interested and excited, and has lots of energy, who can get their ducks in a row, and who can create a synergism. Somebody who's going to approach it with a great amount of energy and creativity. And we also like to offer a chance to get involved for everybody. Y'know, it's not just the old-timers; it's a growing hobby.

**RPGA:** To jump ahead to the present and the future a bit: What have you done since the *D&D* game, Gary?

**EGG:** Rested on my laurels (*sighs*).

**RPGA:** We're all familiar with the many modules you've come out with, but do you have any plans for any more role playing games? Or any other major products of this type?

**EGG:** Well, after the *Dungeons & Dragons* game was done, Brian and I worked on a game called

Warriors of Mars, which is now out of print. I did Classic Warfare, Swords & Spells... What else? The *Boot Hill™* game, with Brian. Let's see, what else have I worked with? Not much else beside that, other than modules and the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* game.

**RPGA:** A monumental task in itself. Do you have plans for anything, or germs of ideas for the future?

**EGG:** Yeah, we have some pretty germy ideas here (smiles). Well, yeah, I'm working on a game with Brian right now. In fact, as I'm talking, I'm shuffling through cards, as you can see... and it is yet another game, which is different from any. It's a rather simple but fun card game.

I was thinking about the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* game, and how I should have done characteristics - and it's different from the way I handled it. If I ever do another role playing game - and I've thought about it - there will be a slightly different character generation, and a slightly different list of abilities, shall we say. A different but similar method of character generation, and so on. So, yeah, I've thought about it; I haven't opted for anything.

**RPGA:** We'll look forward, of course, to anything you produce in the future, but -

**EGG:** You'll have to look quite a way forward.

**RPGA:** There has been a rumor that a *D&D* movie is to come. It would seem a natural development. What's going on?

**EGG:** We have been dealing for almost two years, off and on, with the entertainment media industry, regarding some sort of a *D&D* production. Whether it would be a television movie or a feature film was first debated; whether an independent producer would do it or a major studio was then covered. We finally began serious negotiations something over a year ago with Twentieth Century Fox films, to do a major motion picture based on the *Dungeons & Dragons* game. After considerable negotiations, TSR has broken off further discussion because we felt that we wouldn't maintain sufficient control to assure a film which was true to the game. And we didn't want to end up with the rather disastrous type of movie that Tolkien's ring trilogy ended up with - something that was totally unsatisfactory for both those who had no idea what the Lord of the Rings was

all about, and to those who were aficionados of it. Spell that right!

**RPGA:** Well, thank you. To wrap up somewhat, what's ahead for TSR? Are there more *D&D* products coming out?

**EGG:** Let me speak just a little further, there....

**RPGA:** Oh... sure; sorry.

**EGG:** We have not *totally* dismissed the idea of doing a full-length feature film based on the *Dungeons & Dragons* game - with imagination, and creativity, and excitement, and adventure, and not some sort of a Hollywood epic which takes the name and then perverts everything else.

What's happening with the *Dungeons & Dragons* games? They are going to be expanded by the *D&D Companion Set*, which is a pickup of the three supplements to the original game - Greyhawk, Blackmoor, and Eldritch Wizardry - revised, expanded, edited, and improved, to be 99 and 44/100 per cent pure. With regard to *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* works, we have the *Fiend Folio™* book coming out fairly soon, and then - I hope next year - a third book of monsters. Perhaps there can be some editing and expansion of the game to include new spells, new magic items, for *Advanced D&D* games.

I mentioned earlier a new way to generate characters. I've even thought about that, but I don't want to go back and try to change that system, because it's not really necessary; it works very well as it is now. I'm not going to get involved in any more changes than are absolutely necessary to make the game more playable; I don't think there are many things to make it more playable. More detailed combat systems tend to drag the game out, rather than speed it up.

The fun of an adventure is the *adventure*; it's not the book-keeping, or hits, parries, and so forth, or getting more realism into a *fantasy* game (*sighs*). I'm not sure what else is in the cards with respect to *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* games; I think that'll come as it comes. We're certainly going to have lots more modules and playing aids for both systems.

**RPGA:** Well, we'll all be looking forward to them.

**EGG:** Well, I hope so... (chuckles) Buy them now! Now's your chance to take advance orders. Send your contributions to....

## NOTES FROM OVERSEAS

The RPGA Network is not just a big club in the United States; we have many members at various places around the world. At this time, there is one major organization affiliated with RPGA-USA; the D&D Players' Association, whose headquarters is in the United Kingdom. Members of the PA have full reciprocal privileges when visiting the USA; they can pick up our latest newsletter and attend all RPGA-only events, such as meetings and tournaments at conventions. As an RPGA member in good standing, you are entitled to all the benefits of PA membership when you visit the UK.

If you wish to become an International Member (holding full members' rights in BOTH organizations), you may do so by sending a check or money order for \$10.00 to RPGA HQ. We'll transfer the funds, and you will thereafter receive a PA membership card, button, and newsletter. [The price fluctuates with the value of the dollar vs. the British pound, so you might be billed for a slight extra amount, or receive a small refund.]

You may contact the D&D Players' Association at:

TSR UK, Ltd.  
The Mill, Rathmore Road  
Cambridge, CB1 4AD  
United Kingdom  
Attention: D&D PA

Some members in Australia have asked where to get D&D and AD&D supplies for their games at reasonable prices. If they have to buy by mail from this country, their costs can run up to \$30 for a DM Guide alone! So we looked into the matter, and found that TSR games and accessories may be purchased through:

JEDKO  
18 Fonceca St.  
Mordialloc, Victoria  
3195 Australia

Note that this company has no connection with TSR or the RPGA network; the information is provided for the convenience of our members.

## NAME THAT NEWSLETTER!

Many readers of newsletter #1 found the "hidden contest" formed by the words at the top of the pages very quickly, and sent in their suggestions. Apologies for lack of clarity in the phrasing, but we only had 16 words to play with; the contest really is to find a name for the newsletter, and the answer is NOT "RPGA News".

We've received lots of good suggestions so far, but not one really grabs me. You see, we need a name that reflects our many interests: not just D&D or

## SPELLING BEE

Ever since the creation of the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game (see the Gygax interview for details on that momentous occasion), players have been confused. The original set was written for folks who already played a lot of games, and it hasn't been until recently (the appearance of the D&D BASIC SET, Box 1) that a good, understandable version could be found. Even the AD&D system has inconsistencies, although it is the most detailed, completely usable system we've found. This is quite understandable; though written by one author, there were many editors, and the job of cross-referencing and double-checking would have taken a few years to result in a perfect job.

But the AD&D system works. I use it in my campaign with no variants, although I have created many subsystems to handle other details not covered in the books. It has served me well for over six years now, and my players have not complained about using a "by-the-book" mode. In fact, it gives them stability; they can be sure that I won't bring in non-standard monsters, spells, or other nasty surprises. It does force me to keep coming up with thought-provoking combinations of existing spells, items, traps, creatures, and so forth; but the harder I work, the more fun we all have.

I have been fortunate to have observed AD&D games in most parts of the country, clarifying some misunderstood points as I went and answering many questions about game details and rules. One thing has stood out, above all; there are as many ideas for using magic spells as there are players. Some spells are thought to be almost useless; many are misused and misunderstood. I think it's time to clear some things up, and share some of the ideas I've heard for using various spells.

In this column, I propose to examine each spell, one by one. If you have questions about the use of spells in AD&D games, and/or comments on the interesting applications and combinations of spells, please write to "SPELLING BEE", care of this newsletter.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

AD&D games, but the science fantasy of GAMMA WORLD games, the intrigue of TOP SECRET games, and the historical excitement of FIGHT IN THE SKIES (soon to be DAWN PATROL) games.

Therefore, the contest has been extended until December 31, 1981. The winner will receive one of the new RPGA modules and a two-year membership extension. So start thinking; we need a good name quickly. As usual, send your suggestions to "RPGA News", at the RPGA HQ address.