



New Setting for the Adventure

Gary Gygax

So many things inspire ideas regarding D&D and/or AD&D that despite my previous misgivings about taking on a column which would require not less than eight articles per year, I find it difficult not to write three times that number.

In case some readers wonder why such an output isn't desirable, allow me a few paragraphs to explain the relationship between TSR Periodicals and TSR Hobbies, as well as between the Publisher of *The Dragon* (myself) and the Editor (Tim Kask).

TSR Periodicals is a subsidiary of TSR Hobbies, and as such the only ties it has with the parent firm are those of overall direction from the chief executive of TSR (who passes along the policy set forth by the corporation's board of directors) and financial responsibility. The directives must be followed, and Periodicals must handle its finances properly. That is about all there is to it.

Similarly, the Publisher of *The Dragon* has no direct input or concern with the day-to-day operations of the magazine. Policy matters, finances, and direction are the principal concerns of the Publisher. The Editor is responsible for form, content, circulation, and so forth. The reason I am Publisher is because I am also the chief executive of TSR Hobbies at this time, so the titles are actually synonymous. Barring a change in the corporate structure of TSR, whoever is the next President of the firm will also become the new Publisher of *The Dragon*.

The Publisher does not tell the Editor what the specific content of a magazine should be — although the general thrust or aim of the publication is within the Publisher's realm. When a new issue of the magazine comes in from the printer, I am at least as unaware of its contents as the other employees of TSR Hobbies. I am not even certain which, if any, articles written by me will appear in any given issue, in most cases.

Because the Publisher should not interfere with the role of the Editor, I make an effort to avoid doing so. With rare exceptions, whatever I submit to *The Dragon* is given to Tim as material from a contributor. As Editor, he can run a piece when and where he chooses, with whatever alteration he sees fit — at least in theory.

The roles of Publisher and Editor cannot be entirely ignored, of course. Therefore, my submissions tend to receive a bit more attention. If I supply *The Dragon* with three or four articles during a month, it could put undue unspoken pressure upon the Editor to use them all. Returning to what was said at the beginning of this column, I make an effort to

keep my output to a reasonable level in the number of articles and their length.

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Now, on to important matters — your D&D or AD&D campaign!

It is always inspiring for me to read *The Dragon*, and TD26 was especially so. Leaving praise (or complaint) about an issue in general to the general readership, I'll say that Kevin Hendryx is doing a fine job of authorship! His "Mugger" piece, while a very funny satire, is also a social commentary on our cities. It is worth reading for its humor.

"Mugger" has another use as well. The DM who has been running a campaign for an extended period must read it for pure inspiration. The DMG has a special section devoted to keeping the campaign fresh by using such games as *Gamma World* and *Boot Hill* as special scenarios to maintain challenge in the game. Special settings for the campaign can be in the Ancient period, with its sheer masses of men and unfamiliar beasts (such as camels and elephants) plus some possible differences in the working of magic (if it works at all); the early gunpowder era; Napoleonic times; WWI, WWII; or the imagined future.

"Mugger" points out that there is also a battleground out on the dark metropolitan streets. If the criminals are combined with the police, the challenge to the safety of a group of hapless adventurers thrown into such a setting would be interesting indeed — especially when the danger of speeding traffic, high-voltage wires, machinery, and the rest of modern technology we take for granted is considered.

With these thoughts in mind, I have prepared a special scenario which will put the adventurers through a short "routine" adventure in a "World of Greyhawk" city. This will lead them to a cellar and a tunnel which in turn brings them to a sewer and up to a subway tunnel. The power which brings the party to this place will probably cause a blackout in the city, so for a time the players will be uncertain where they are. If it all works as well as I think it will, the report of the game will be submitted for publication in a future issue.

In the city setting, magic will work, although cleric spells above third level will not. Of course, firearms also work. The perils of the place — police, street gangs, muggers, criminals of other sorts, citizens with karate training or able to box, those with guard dogs, etc. — will be numerous and different. Weapons aren't difficult to rate according to damage. Electricity will be interesting — low-tension AC giving but 1d6 damage (4d6 if the party is well grounded), low-tension DC doing 1d6 each segment until the victim is freed, and high-tension DC doing 1d20 in the same manner. Cars will inflict 1d4 damage for each 10 mph of speed. Small trucks will get a d6, large ones a d8, and trains a d10 for each 10 mph.

Each special character (guard, policeman, street tough, mugger, etc.) will be given a level roughly corresponding to those of AD&D characters, although the type of dice used will be non-standard. If the adventurers survive and manage to return to their own place in the multiverse, they will have little in the way of treasure — at least in all probability.

Gunpowder and explosives will not function on the World of Greyhawk. Lighters and flashlights must be garnered. Perhaps things such as aluminum arrows, metal bottles (canteens) and plastic containers might prove useful. There will be a jewelry store or two, and an art gallery, but trying to loot them will certainly bring police and possibly a SWAT team.

What should prove the real fun of this whole scenario is discovering the perils of the modern world as DM and seeing how the players handle them in their roles as fantasy world adventurers. If you have DMed or played settings of this type, by all means tell me about the experience, so I can pass it along to the other readers!

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As a caution, I must point out that the Schick-Moldvay series "Giants In The Earth" tends to rate the figures too high, making them more like gods than "heroes." Cugel is okay (although his wisdom rating is too high for my taste), but Kane is *too* powerful! A 30th-level Fighter/20-level Magic User/14th-level assassin? Come on, fellows! Would you believe a 20th-level Fighter/16th-level Magic User/12th-

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Sorcerer's Scroll

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level Assassin? Still a bit high, but it is at least a bit more reasonable for use in a game. As he stands, Kane could pretty well blow away nearly anyone or anything in a normal campaign. More on this subject as new figures appear.

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Many of you are aware that we are readying a number of new modules — some of which might be on sale when this sees print — including a couple that I have done, Lawrence Schick's *White Plume Mountain*, a number from Len Lakofka, (finally) *The Queen of the Demonweb Pits*, the Origins '79 tournament dungeon (as well as the one used at Origins II, *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*), and some others too.

What you might not be aware of is that we are also doing work on modules for such games as *Boot Hill* and *Gamma World*.

As I've mentioned before, when I get an opportunity, I always play in Jim Ward's excellent *Metamorphosis Alpha* campaign, where Ernie Gygax, Skip Williams, Tom Wham, and I — just to mention a few of the regulars — have managed to establish a power group called "The Vigilists."

The core characters began with some good mutations and proceeded to acquire a fair selection of tech items, a command ring, and then some D&D characters, as described in a past article.

Well, Jim was in the area recently, and we gathered to play one evening. The sneak slipped in the GW module he is working on, so unbeknownst to us, we play-tested a portion of it for him. The play was different from MA, but a lot of fun and highly hazardous too. We lost a green bracelet, a laser pistol and several energy cells, 5 sets of duralloy swords and shields, and one member of the party. Luckily, we chanced to find the right place and do the right thing, so we ended up with a small army of 100 "cargobots," small robots with treads for locomotion, tentacles for manipulation and attack, and a reasonable armor class and hit point total.

With that sort of backing, perhaps we'll no longer be fearful of risking the D&D characters and go for an all-out attempt to clear a whole level for the Vigilist cause. MA and/or GW are fun, alone or with a D&D/AD&D Campaign!

ORIGINS report

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hobby, meeting the people that keep fantasy alive is really worthwhile. Some of my fellow gamers think that others get rich by putting out board games, rules, and miniature figures. Actually, no one has done much more than earn a hard-fought living from the hobby yet. Most of the "pros" have to pay for their bread and butter with some other line of work, and enjoy gaming only as a paying hobby.

Although classes and symposia are part of every convention, ORIGINS and other gaming conventions have a series of "cracker-barrel" discussions or "roasts" where the public can get back at the designers who have offended them in some way. One of the most interesting sessions at ORIGINS was with Simulations Publications Inc. (SPI), of board-game fame. The eminence of SPI was on stage. A hush came over the audience.

Jim Dunnigan is a games theoretics wizard, and wanted everyone to admit it. Just because his team makes a teeny mistake every once in a while doesn't mean it isn't the best. So, during the SPI talk session, James tried to roast the ears of assembled notables by announcing that from here on his organization would regularly put out errata sheets on other publisher's games. (Watch out, Gygax!)

Everyone was so flabbergasted that they were completely at a loss for words. Everyone, that is, save a feisty Greek who had the never to tell the Irishman that he should clean up his own act first. Then it was Jim who was at a loss for words.

Well, folks, that was the bad news. SPI's rumor mill is now grinding out the good news — the next advance in game theory that SPI will forge should totally eliminate the hexagon board. The logistic masterpiece that will glide forth from Dunnigan's R&D crucible is to be based on the

Armed Forces Procurement Regulations (ASPR), and vastly simplify them. To be called Zero Defects, its rule folder will invite all other publishers to publish errata if they can find any.

Zero Defects will also take the Department of Defense to task for requiring a three-foot shelf of books to play a game that can be reduced to a single sheet of paper. Final release of the game will have to await DOD security declassification.

After SPI had aired its dirty linen, Al Nofi had turned his in, and Dave Isby had dropped his last profound comment, there only remained to pack up and leave. As the crashing of felled display tables ceased and the parking lot emptied, a lone, holdout table stood solidly amid the debris.

The greatest of the master chaotic rulemakers was still laboring to balance his accounts. Lou Zocchi helped start all this, and all who think of him wish him well. He is the first and the last (Rumor: Lou's new fantasy combat rules for chimeras vs. pegasi, flying dragons, and hippogriffs will be announced soon and will add new aerial dimensions to fantasy adventures.)

Jam Sessions: Throughout the day and on into the night, the host of gamers enjoyed trading Eastern Front calamities and dungeon adventure tales. The blarney rivaled "war stories" from Saigon's non-combatants. But it was all good fun, and everyone enjoyed himself. Each had finally found others who understood their tales. After all, how can you talk about your hobby with someone who doesn't even know the difference between an orc and a groll?

Several clubs and players arrived in groups to see the latest developments in their hobby. The club that deserves finest mention, however, was represented by only one individual.

This club, from a remote village in faraway Florida, knew it could not attend as a group. The whole club of 12-16 year-old boys pooled their money and elected a single representative to go to ORIGINS. This alert fellow scouted the booths, sneaked into the classes without paying, and talked to everyone he could buttonhole to discover the most interesting game at the convention. After observing the spectrum of offerings, he came to a significant conclusion: "D&D," he said, "is where it's all at."

Even chaos can bring observant viewers to the right conclusion.

Did you Know? . . . ?

Of course we all know that July 15 is St. Swithin's Day, September 22 is the Autumnal equinox, and Guy Fawkes Day is celebrated enthusiastically on November 5. But, did you know that the Chinese Dragon Boat Festival occurs on June 10? Or that the Battle of Agincourt and the Battle of Balaklava (the Charge of the Light Brigade) were both fought on the same date, October 26?

You'll find these dates, traditional holidays, and future convention dates, along with some other more esoteric and little-known anniversaries in the upcoming TSR Periodicals Fantasy Calendar. This calendar will feature 13 full-page, full color pieces of art by several different fantasy artists, many of whom have done covers for *The Dragon* in the past.

Sound interesting? Check out next month's issue of *The Dragon* for more details on how to order.

BACK ISSUE AVAILABILITY

Some back issues of TD are still available. Only those listed below are in stock. Back issue price is \$2.10, postage and handling are included.

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