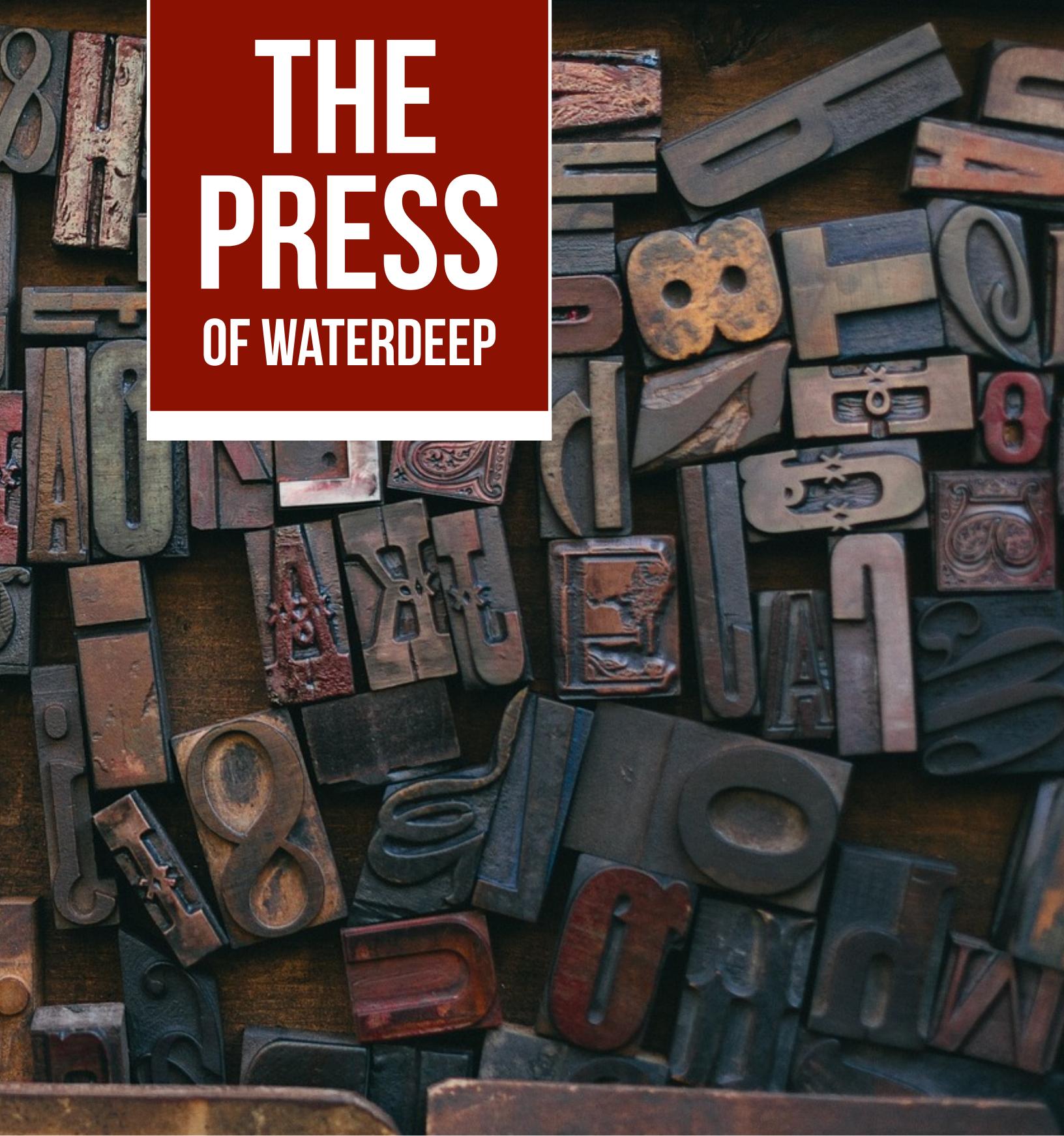


THE PRESS OF WATERDEEP



Newspaper handouts for
your adventures set in the
City of Splendors



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*Newspaper handouts
for your adventures set
in the City of Splendors*

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Cover Illustration

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Newspapers, broadsheets and scandal rags

By Volothamp Gedarm

Travelers and adventurers: Are you looking to learn about some of Waterdeep's most colorful and influential persons?

Sources not to be overlooked are the periodicals of the City of Splendors. These are its newspapers, broadsheets and scandal rags.

Now, the best way to discern the true character of the city is to get out and walk its streets, catching rumors and news as they first take flight. Yet, one can't be everywhere at all times. The news sheets are a good way to supplement your knowledge of current events in our wondrous seaside town.

For certain, this lot of hastily-assembled flimsy papers are in a contest with town criers as residents' preferred source. Their pressed pages

of black ink peddle misfortune in exchange for pocket change. Most cost a mere nib.

Accuse them of profiting off the misery of others, however, and they make lofty proclamations. Each describes themselves as publishers of truth, defenders of liberty, and as a watchdog on corruption.

Yet, there is another undeniable fact. I've watched reporters pester the powerful and hold a mirror up to their actions, investigate criminal cases the Watch has given up for hopeless, and put their own lives in jeopardy for that most prized commodity — a byline beneath a headline for a story that is streamed across the top of the next edition.

Reliable? Well, I think they often fictionalize the truth, distort the actions of the city's authorities in a brickerbrack game of



**Lady Erinska “Cassie” Dezlentyr,
editor of the Waterdeep Sentinel.**

partisanship, and sensationalize genuine events so they appeal to the most prurient interests.

Each sheet has its own causes and crusades, a parade of stories meant to inflame passion in one political objective or another. Sometimes, it seems the goal is no more high-minded than to be more outlandish and outrageous than a rival press. Other times, though, they have banked their integrity on a treble-verified fact, only to be forced to cough up their last copper to pay advocates to defend themselves in court against charges of libel filed by villains who have no difficulty lying through their teeth about the published account.

I confess, I prefer news sheets to town criers and heralds, whose only pronouncements are what the authorities tell them to say. And so, the royal mouthpieces are silent on information that reflects poorly on the ruling class. Broadsheets sometimes deal in rumors and half-truths, as often as not. But, as a reader, at least it is up to me to decide what news is plausible, and what is mere punditry.

Besides, who doesn’t love to read about such salacious gossip? When the bawdy banter of taverngoers sees print, it gives it a validity that is very difficult to dispute.

These broadsheets are such a recent phenomena, it is hard to categorize them. Some barely stay in business long enough to pay the downpayment for their press, as their printing machines are called. These mechanized behemoths are the cross between a tinker gnome’s paradisiacal dream and a hobgoblin legion’s siege weapon. Instead of boulders and flaming balls of pitch, they hurl information with no regard to what happens when they actually hit something. I leave it to you to decide which is more damaging.

Publishers come and go, as I said. But a few manage to secure financing enough from the treasures of Waukeen and Tymora to scoop up these unused presses. Of the established publishers I can say this: some achieve such wealth as they live like princes, others always seem to be just scraping by. The old adage that a printing press is “a means of printing money” isn’t as universal as the saying would make it seem.

Waterdeep has a handful of broadsheets that have gained footing enough to last a full turning of

the four seasons. They are as different from each other as the wards each calls home. They are:

Waterdeep Sentinel

This is Waterdeep's longest continuously published organ, though it has had several owners — and one name change — during that period. Presently, it is co-owned by an alliance of two noble families of Tethyrian extraction, the houses of Melshimber and Dezlenyr. It is also believed that the influential banking family of Cassalanter is a considerable investor (the Cassalanters and Dezlenyr also having ties through marriage).

Formerly the "Waterdeep News," the paper underwent a name change when Lady Erinnska "Cassie" Dezlenyr was appointed editor-in-chief two years ago. It made a conscious decision to support the government of Open Lord Laeral Silverhand in its editorials and opinion pieces, though it maintains that its reporting remains objectively neutral and independent. For my money, the Sentinel's support of Silverhand is neither overt nor slavish; it has challenged the open lord's governance on several occasions. That latter assertion, however, is scoffed at by opponents of the open lord, who would prefer to see the Sentinel uphold more traditional viewpoints.

The newspaper strives to cover all the activities of the Waterdeep government. It may well be the only paper that receives reports from the seats of government from the other members of the Lord's Alliance. Its cadre of reporters are as stately as the government officials they cover, respectable and erudite.

Few in the southern wards read it regularly (the most common complaint being "It's boring!"), and those that do are usually minor officials whose posts are located there. As for journalism, it is the gold standard in the Sword Coast and all the reporters in the city yearn to work there. If Waterdeep has a newspaper that appeals to the intellectual sensibilities of wizards and sages, the Sentinel is it.



**Afedra Willowind, editor of the
Guardian of Castle Ward.**

Guardian of Castle Ward

A relatively new broadsheet, it started up shortly after Silverhand was named open lord during the so-called "Tyranny of Dragons." The paper styles itself "an old gray lady" just like the Sentinel, but it's such an advocate for Silverhand's



Bovvington Garnet, tireless editor of the Waterdeep Watchman: The Illustrated Police and Sporting Newspaper.

government that even its most loyal readers recognize it is a mouthpiece for her policies.

Silverhand's nephew, Danilo Thann, is the publisher. He cares little for day-to-day operations, which he delegates to the tireless half-elf editor, Afedra Willowind. Because of the association with the open lord, its detractors say the Guardian has lots of subscribers, but few true readers. A popular parlor game is to scrutinize an issue's classifieds to see if hidden Harper messages can be spotted — both Thann and Silverhand have long associations with the Harpers.

The Guardian has one feature that all its competitors wished it had — a contributor whose personality shines through the pages of tiny type. "Bonnie Blue" is the pen name of Rebekkah Rooftyler, a former reporter for the Watchman and two other now-defunct newspapers. A veteran investigator, she re-invented herself in the pages of the Guardian, writing with spunk and sparkle and personifying the best parts of the

City of Splendors. Twice, already, Danilo Thann had Rooftyler fired for demanding for an increase in salary. But when he tried to ghostwrite the column in her absence, the ruse was discovered (Thann's prose being a faint imitation) and she was reinstated with an increased compensation. Single-copy sales dropped when issues didn't include the real "Bonnie Blue."

Waterdeep Watchman

Its full name is Waterdeep Watchman: The Illustrated Police and Sporting Newspaper. The lively — if not outright scandalous — Watchman has the highest circulation of the city (although no one in the North and Sea Wards ever claims to "read such rubbish," copies appear there just as regularly as they do elsewhere).

It provides sensationalized coverage of the city's crime news, all the better if the story is bawdy, grotesque or involves sex. It was the first



Avasandra Stillinger, avante garde editor of the Cliffwatch Galleria.

to use illustrations, a move that expanded its popularity.

It also covers such sports that appeal to its core readers in the Dock and Trade wards, fisticuffs and horse racing, mostly. But, the Watchman will report on anything that can be wagered upon.

A crusty male dwarf, Bovington Garnet, is owner and publisher. They say he bleeds ink. He's made a fortune, built an estate in the North Ward, and is shunned by all his neighbors (to whom he provides weekly delivery of the Watchman, whether they pay for it or not).

Many members of the Watch serve as sources to the paper under assumed names, protecting them from reprisals by watch captains who want to clamp down on the release of any information during an active investigation. Readers eagerly look forward to seeing what mischief "Officer Hidgenscore" has gotten himself into.

But Garnet also uses fictional names for sources to tweak his most hard-bitten opponents in the Watch. Readers have come to believe that the fictional "Watch Capt. Nichelle Dewdrop" is an amalgam of two bitter foes of the paper. It might serve to emasculate Watch Capt. Marzen Dewzberry, a halfling with a reputation for verbally abusing female subordinates who once threatened Garnet in a tavern over a story. It might also serve as a reference to Sargent Nikky Silverslip, a human officer with a penchant for shaking down businesses on her beat for protection, a ploy that fell flat when she attempted her scam on Garnet the day he opened the Watchman.

Cliffwatch Galleria

This North Ward publication is something of an outlier. For one thing, its publisher has found a way to publish in colored ink, a process that has produced splashy covers and increased its popularity.

The paper covers fashion, galas, entertainment and the activities of "celebrities," such that Waterdeep has. It has a light tone and employs more artists than writers, being heavily illustrated. Each issue has a "cover story" that serves as a lengthy exploration of a subject, mostly profiles of noteworthy performers and patrons of the arts. It has applied a journalistic eye upon a few important issues, but only those that are of particular interest to its North Ward clients. It

tries to reflect the city's high born in a positive light.

Avasandra Stillinger, a chestnut-haired female tiefling, is its avante garde editor. She is something of a character herself, attired in bawdy, loud or outrageous clothing who thinks she is the life of whatever party she is attending. She addresses nearly everyone as "Darling," somehow making that address come out as a three-syllable word. When she is sober, however, she is a prolific, colorful writer. She doesn't pull punches and her zingers are so deft that even the intended target is more amused by the publicity that they will overlook any attack on their character. It is something of a badge of honor to be zinged by Avasandra Stillinger, only the "best people" merit her attention, after all.

The publication's true owner is something of a mystery. Money flows through Avasandra's fingers so fast there must be deep pockets behind the publication. At various times the noble families of Hunabar, Majarra, Talmost and even the Wands are suggested as the Galleria's backers. Some believe the publication's preference for Calimshan influences on fashion are a clue, perhaps hinting at foreign investment. Others see the deft hand and interests of Lady Amcathra, who heads a family of vinters with a record of arts patronage in Amphail and Silverymoon.

The most outrageous theory is that the owner is a rich wizard with more money than sense who is actually having a good laugh by needling Waterdeep's nobility.

Dock Ward Dispatch

Started as a shipping news and advertising organ, the paper has beefed up its editorial staff and has earned a reputation as a voice of opposition to Silverhand's rule, especially on fiscal policy and importation taxes.

It still retains its core purpose, reporting on the coming and going of ships, placing ads by captains who need to fill the ranks of their crew with specialists, and covering the mundane activities in and among the warehouses in the Dock Ward.



Captain Cyrusk Palinedes is training his daughter Myra to take over as publisher of the Dock Ward Dispatch.

To entice more readers, it has started to focus on the exploits of adventurers, especially those who explore abroad and return to Waterdeep with fantastic stories.

The Dispatch is aggressive about increasing circulation, and the hostilities that are developing between its delivery crew and the rival Watchman's are escalating. Pranks and one upmanship are common. So far, none of the confrontations have been lethal, though there have been brawls.

Captain Cyrusk Palinedes, a male human, is part-owner and editor. He started to groom his daughter Myra to take over for him.

Ulbrinter house head Remi Haventree is a majority owner of the Dispatch, as it serves her shipping interests. All the other investors are minority stakeholders. Haventree leaves the editorializing to Palinedes, she has too many other concerns to take an active role in the publication. Even so, this has caused friction between her and her old Harper ally, Laeral Silverhand, who expects more fairness in print from a paper owned by friend.

Using the newspapers in your game

These single-sheet “covers” of various Waterdeep publications have use as props and adventure hooks based on the latest goings-on. In games that feature information gathering, making contact with reporters of various publications can provide NPCs who are sources of information. Conversely, the player characters themselves might be the subject of a story, if their accomplishments are noteworthy. Lastly, the intrigues of the various newspaper owners might come into play in a roleplaying session with strong political overtones.

Handouts and hooks

Sometimes it is just fun to have an issue of a broadsheet handy to give to players who might be wanting to take the pulse of the city they are living in.

This can be useful to a Dungeon Master. A newspaper story might serve as a background material to the current adventure. Suppose dignitaries have come to Waterdeep. The PCs might have to contend with the disruptions to city life that a state visit might create. “You can’t go through there, there’s a parade honoring the delegates using that street.”



They can certainly be used to inform decisions for PCs looking into taking up some downtime activities. If they own a tavern, the occasion of Shieldmeet will certainly be good for business. Maybe they are armorers and the drumbeat for war is the cause to elevate production. Maybe some noble has come to their shop to make an armload of purchases.

Certainly, a news sheet can serve as texture to the start of a roleplaying session. The game starts in a tavern. A current issue is there, along with a tray with drinks, some dark bread, cheese, dice and a deck of cards. The news is just a starting point. The gossip around the nearby tables might be the real story, some nugget the PCs can act on.

Just the fact there are broadsheets and publishers makes Waterdeep distinctive from many fantasy cities. The pace of life is faster here, recorded and marked by these various publications.



Reporters and staff

Reporters need information. They might come to the PCs looking for it. Conversely, the PCs will need information and advice. Reporters might have something they can share.

Beyond that, reporters can serve as obstacles in the course of an adventure. Maybe they outbid the PCs for information from a source (unlikely, but anything is possible). Or the reporters could just get in the way by hanging around or by spoiling a stakeout.

Reporters are people too. They could end up being a romantic interest for the PCs, a person to be rescued, maybe even a soul to be saved by a caring cleric. They might have interests and hobbies outside of reporting that prove useful. Like adventurers, they interact with patrons and persons of all social classes, but are never truly a part of any single strata of society.

Other staff members might prove useful. The boys and girls who deliver the newspapers and hawk single copies are the ones with their ears to the ground. They live in the streets. If something is

going down, they'll know of it before anyone else. There are also clerks who take classified advertising and subscriptions. They meet with the public daily. The pulse of the town is reflected in who and how they are doing business.

Owners

The owners and editors of the newspapers are movers and shakers in their community, or, they pretend to be. At any event, they rub shoulders with masked lords and nobility alike.

In a political game, the newspaper owners might play a role, and the PCs might tag along. Or maybe the newspaper owners need protection from criminals, rival owners, angry Watch captains — you name it. It's also possible the newspaper has started a campaign on a particular issue. It's the owner and editors who will be out front and center. Do they back a rival politician or an unpopular cause? The owners might risk imprisonment if their stance goes against the authorities. Will the PCs stand for justice or authority?

Have fun

The main thing is to have fun. These news pages can even be presented without comment. Let the players pick them up and examine a few. Who knows? The players might read between the lines and see something neither I, as the author, nor you, as the DM, ever imagined.

It might take the game in an entirely new direction, one that is entertaining for all.

NPCs: Reporters and other news gatherers

Use this chart, rolling a d20 for each column, to create NPCs who serve as reporters and other types of newsgathers the PCs might interact or ally with because of their sources and contacts.

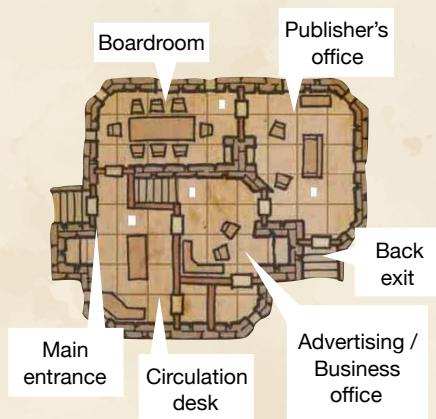
d20	Nickname	Race*	Publication	Beat: Contacts
1	Scooter	Gold dwarf	Waterdeep Sentinel	Cops: Watchman, criminals, jailers, Skullport, bandits
2	Scoop	Shield dwarf	Guardian of Castle Ward	Public affairs: Open Lord, Masked Lords and ward councils, government officials, bureaucrats, political organizations
3	Specs	Sun elf	Cliffwatch Galleria	Religion: Church officials, clerics, hospice workers, health issues
4	Jot	Moon elf	Dock Ward Dispatch	Shipping: Captains, sailors, stevedors, shipbuilders, customs officials, warehouse managers
5	Thirty	Wild elf	Waterdeep Watchman	Arts and Entertainment: Producers, musicians, actors, playwrites, creatives, bards
6	Deadline	Lightfoot halfling	Correspondent for Neverwinter	Business: Merchants, investors, shopkeepers, traders, banking, real estate, farming, growers
7	Scribbles	Strongheart halfling	Correspondent for Baldur's Gate	War correspondent: Guard officers, soldiers, sailors, griffon-riders, paladins, defense contractors
8	Tittle	Dragonborn	Herald for Open Lord	Arcane: magicians, magical orders, potion-makers, scroll scribes
9	Dash	Forest gnome	Castle Ward town crier	Foreign desk: diplomats, ship captains, foreign merchants, explorers, adventurers, linguists, overland trade, cartographers
10	Tearsheet	Rock gnome	Waterdeep Sentinel	Sporting: Athletics, jousting, fisticuffs, horse racing, other competitions
11	Sniffs	Half-elf	Guardian of Castle Ward	Education: Sages, universities, professors, innovators, theorists, libraries, appraisers
12	Nub	Half-orc	Cliffwatch Galleria	General assignment: Middlemen, brokers, tradesmen, guild leaders, peddlers
13	Squinty	Tiefling	Dock Ward Dispatch	Society: nobles, household staff, high-end merchants, architects, sculptors, fashionistas
14	Rewrite	Human Damaran	Waterdeep Watchman	Editor: Any three beats.
15	Mugs	Human Illuskan	Correspondent for Candlekeep	Parks and Recreation: City of the Dead, gaming, festivals, feasts
16	Inkstain	Human Tethyrian	Correspondent for Cormyr	Courts: judges, lawyers, officers of the court, librarians, prosecutors, bailiffs, bondsmen
17	Wood	Human Bedine	Correspondent for Silverymoon	Investigations: Any beat, but in greater depth.
18	Deadline	Human Chondathan	"Correspondent/Spy" for Thay	Media: Other publishing, novelists, writers, academics, commercial advertising
19	Em	Human Ffolk	Sea Ward town crier	Freelancer: Well-traveled and intrepid, knowledge of other locations throughout Sword Coast
20	Hammer	Human Calishite	North Ward town crier	Journeyman: Experienced reporter with knowledge of 5 beats

* For newsgatherer's real name, pull from racial section of Player's Handbook or other source.

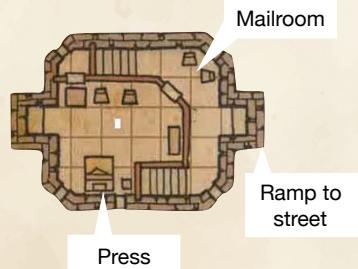
Correspondents reporting for other cities are either Waterdehavians acting on behalf of foreign publications or are ex-patriates who have settled in the city for a time.

Newspaper office layout

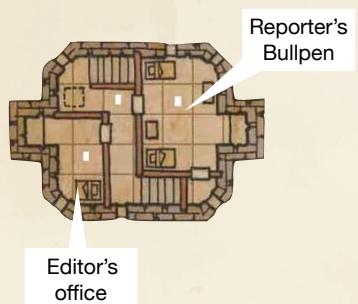
Main floor



Basement



Second floor Newsroom



Newspaper offices in Waterdeep



Waterdeep Sentinel

HARKEN AND HEAR, GOOD NEWS AND GRAVE, ALL THAT IS TRUE AND FIT FOR PRINT for 1 nib

Silverymoon Allies Cheered

Lady and Lord Charivar Greeted by Open Lord Silverhand Before Parade, Grand Ball

AT THE LORD'S PALACE — Waterdeep celebrated the arrival of Silverymoon's new delegation with a parade through the city streets and a ball at the Lord's Palace.

Open Lord Laeral Silverhand greeted Silverymoon's chief delegates, the Lady and Lord Charivar at the North Gate, then accompanied them for the parade. Silverhand sat with Lady Charivar in a light blue coach while Lord Charivar — astride a white steed — rode alongside attired in a military uniform.

"Our fondness for Silverymoon remains constant," Silverhand said during the welcoming ceremony at the gate. "All the members of the Lord's Alliance are cheered by the special relationship our two cities share with one another."

Silverymoon's chief delegates personify the objectives for the mission. One is tasked with securing favorable trading terms while the other hopes to alleviate any concerns about its military strength.

Lady Ninafer Charivar is a half-elf whose family had gained a fortune in running merchant caravans across the North.

Her human husband, Lord Conoger Charivar, is a captain in the famed Knights in Silver and has been a military adviser to Silverymoon's High Marshal Methrammer Aeasume.

Waterdeep went to considerable expense in staging the parade and ball.

"Clearly, the Masked Lords wish to demonstrate to the other members of the Lord's Alliance that the ties with Silverymoon are unbroken



Lady Ninafer Charivar of Silverymoon, left, is accompanied by Open Lord Laeral Silverhand in the coach while Lord Conoger Charivar, in martial regalia, rides beside on a white charger of the Knights in Silver.

despite that period under the previous Open Lord when things were, how shall I say it, somewhat strained," says the gold elf lord, Elorfindar Floshin, a longtime observer of North politics. "Good feelings aside, there are still the practical concerns. Surely many Masked Lords, even those favorably inclined, must wonder if Silverymoon will be a reliable partner."

Dissolution of Luruar and the fragmentation of the Silver Marches have left Silverymoon in a precarious position, Floshin said. "Plainly, Silverymoon needs investors," Floshin said, "and the North is very wild, so it needs more soldiers under arms. The Charivar delegation is here to make deals, and not just with our Open Lord."

Across the city, minstrels and bard celebrated the Silverymoon delegation, especially those musicians

who trained at the Gem of the North's famed academies of music and magic.

The halfling Tella Waddles, a songstress at the The Raging Lion in the city's North Ward, was gleeful as she sang lyrics she composed for the occasion.

"The Charivars favor the arts, so I hear," she said. "That's what Silverymoon means, a revival of epic storytelling and beautiful songs. We need more of it here in Waterdeep."

At the Palace, Silverhand made another speech emphasizing the values shared by the cities.

Absent in Silverhand's remarks was any reference to her familial connection. Silverymoon's ruler is a nephew — the half-elf son of her sister, the late High Lady of Luruar, Alustriel Silverhand.

Waterdeep Sentinel

HARKEN AND HEAR, GOOD NEWS AND GRAVE, ALL THAT IS TRUE AND FIT FOR PRINT for 1 nib

Watchful Order Convenes

Lady Master Szeltune
Faces Leadership
Challenge From North
Ward Book Collector

AT THE TOWER OF THE ORDER — Hurlblar Corthyn, book collector of the North Ward, addressed the Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors, imploring it to “weed the garden” and install new leadership.

It was an unprecedeted request from someone who was not yet a member of the order and may not even be a spellcaster.

But Corthyn's Highsun address — an hourglass in length — to the order's membership committee was the first step in what supporters say will culminate in a candidacy for leader when the full order convenes during the Feast of the Moon.

Lady Master of the Order Mhair Szeltune was not in attendance at the hearing. To date she has not responded to Corthyn or his criticisms, most of which have been published over the past two years as letters to the order's monthly publication, *The Summoner*.

Speaker of the Order Orlar Thammas conducted the hearing at the request of Corthyn's supporters — the most prominent being South Ward scroceress Nala Ophendaahl, a clerk at Aurora's Realm's Shop.

“The order has lost its way,” Ophendaahl said, speaking to reporters after the hearing. “The Lady Master has resisted attempts at internal reforms. Mystra knows, we've tried. Now we have Master Corthyn, who sees the same things we do and offers a path to make



Hurlblar Corthyn, a modest book collector of the North Ward, explains his qualifications for leadership into the Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors.

things right. I say, give him an opportunity. Things certainly can't get worse than they are.”

Speaker Thammas called the meeting to order. He did not address or interrupt Corthyn's petition. Nor did he show any visible reaction to Corthyn's direct criticisms of the conduct of his office.

The hearing had one outburst. Danillo Thann, nephew of Open Lord Laeral Silverhand, stood up in the balcony, pointed a finger at Corthyn, then exclaimed; “You are dangerous, sir!” Thann immediately exited.

After the hearing, Thammas did not make himself available for reporter questions. Sources within the Tower of the Order said Thammas met in conference with trusted advisers within the order for several hours, then responded to a summons to meet with the Lady Master for dinner.

Corthyn, smiling but exhibiting more shyness than he showed during the hearing, spoke afterward with supporters at Bhephel's Bottles and Exotic Wines.

Most of those in attendance were spellcasters who stay out of the public eye and are not known outside their immediate circle. The exception in this gathering was the presence of Savengriff the Wandering Harper, former apprentice to the late Khelban Blackstaff.

Corthyn thanked the assembled wizards for their support. “I am hopeful. I know we have an uphill battle. Will my membership application be accepted? The hearing is a good sign. It means the Lady Master will at least entertain a discussion.”

Someone asked if Szeltune's absense was noteworthy. “I have no doubt she heard every word I had to say,” Corthyn replied.

Feast at the Three Pearls Nightclub in Dock Ward. Specials Nightly. Dancers. Good Food.

Waterdeep Sentinel

HARKEN AND HEAR, GOOD NEWS AND GRAVE, ALL THAT IS TRUE AND FIT FOR PRINT for 1 nib

Coastal Patrol Launches

Lord's Alliance Appoints
Famed Baldur's Gate
Admiral to Command Fleet

AT HARBORWATCH TOWER — Admiral Willen Laurensia of Baldur's Gate accepted a commission by the Lord's Alliance to command a Coastal Patrol tasked with protecting shipping in the waters off the Sword Coast.

Laurensia was presented with a uniform sash and a braided bicorne hat to commemorate the occasion at Harborwatch Tower overlooking Naval Harbor.

"I gladly pledge myself to this task of securing the sea lanes for lawful shipping between the great cities of the Sword Coast," Laurensia said to assembled dignitaries and guests.

Ulder Ravengard, grand duke of Baldur's Gate, presented Laurensia with the decorations.

Laurentia has long been an advocate for greater naval cooperation between the Sword Coast cities of Neverwinter, Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate.

Although arming ships so they can do battle against great creatures of the deep was also part of Laurensia's plan — his main goal was to create a strike force that would defend merchant traffic, such as repulsing pirate vessels out of Luskan or match raiding frost giant ships such as the *Krigvind*.

Neverwinter delivered the first ship of the new fleet. The *Endurance*. A three-masted barquentine, it will serve as Laurentia's flagship. In fact, Neverwinter's Lord Dagult Neverember had been Open Lord of



Admiral Willen Laurensia of Baldur's Gate has been appointed by the Lord's Alliance to patrol the Sword Coast. His flagship will be the *Endurance*, a three-masted barquentine.

Waterdeep when Laurensia first proposed the idea for a Coastal Patrol. Neverember was in attendance for Laurentia's commissioning ceremony. With a vintage bottle of white wine, Neverember performed the launching ceremony that included smashing the bottle on the hull for good luck.

Neverember's successor as open lord, Lady Laeral Silverhand conducted the ceremony.

Waterdeep's first contribution to the fleet, an as-yet-unnamed barquentine, is expected to complete construction at the Waterdeep shipyard in another two years. In the meantime, Waterdeep has designated Harborwatch Tower as the Coastal Patrol's headquarters.

"We are not just pirate hunters," Laurensia said. "I anticipate the patrol will be given tasks of exploration and rescue. I intend to hire on adventurers for this work."

Feast at the Three Pearls Nightclub in Dock Ward. Specials Nightly. Dancers. Good Food.

Waterdeep Sentinel

HARKEN AND HEAR, GOOD NEWS AND GRAVE, ALL THAT IS TRUE AND FIT FOR PRINT for 1 nib

Tournaments And Statecraft

Open Lord Silverhand returns festival to the hands of the Temple of Lliira

AT FIELD OF TRIUMPH — The mount is new, a chestnut mare called Lovanna. The suit of plate has never been worn before today, custom-fitted pieces made by three of the top armorers in the city. Ribbon streamers of burgandy, gold and black are attached to the elbows.

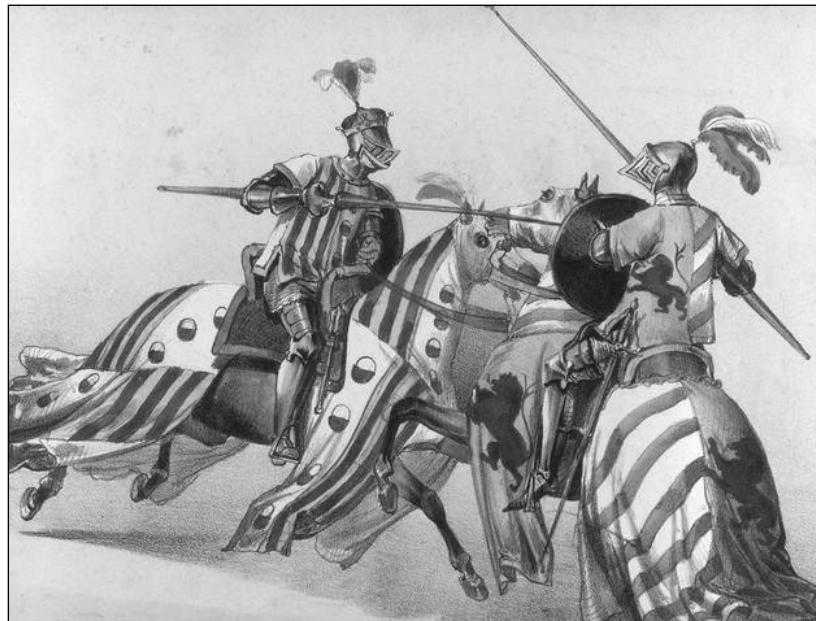
"The knees are old, though," said Lady Refina Glosswind, smiling at her jest, as she patted her horse before a practice run at the Field of Triumph. She is Shieldmeet's defending champion. "I also have some lower back pain that is my constant companion. Otherwise, I'm as fit as I was four years ago. I intend to enter the list for the joust."

Glosswind, a half-elf, stands next to younger, diminutive human woman wearing flowers in her hair and carrying a clipboard. Margorie Farrethspin is a priestess of Lliira, appointed by the Open Lord to organize Shieldmeet.

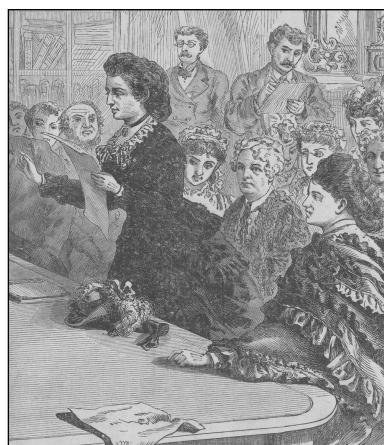
"I'm glad to hear it," Farrethspin said. "It wouldn't seem like Shieldmeet without the Ribbon Knight in the saddle. The crowds want to see Lady Refina on the field again. And so do I."

The quadrennial festival begins in a teday.

Officially, this will be Glosswind's fourth Shieldmeet as a competitor, though she did not qualify for the joust at her earliest festivals. She was in the skills contest in 1484 and had a spot (and early exit) from the general melee in 1480.



The joust returns to the Field of Triumph for Shieldmeet. Lady Refina Glosswind, left, known as the "Ribbon Knight" announced her intention to defend her championship of four years earlier.



Lliira priestess Margorie Farrethspin, shown conducting a meeting of the Shieldmeet organizing committee, is the event director.

"I wasn't the Ribbon Knight then," she said. "Just shredded to

ribbons was more like it."

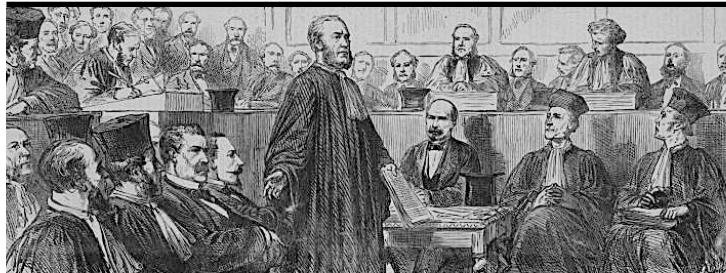
The festival returns to the capable hands of the Temple of Lliira, seen by many as a positive development. When Dagult Neverember was open lord, he had priests of Tyr conduct the festivities. Making no direct criticism of the Shieldmeets under the previous administration, Open Lord Laeral Silverhand nevertheless reinstated Lliira and said tradition calls for the goddess of joy to work her wonders on this special day.

Shieldmeet is also a test of Silverhand's rule in the early-going of her reign as open lord. She and her ministers will spend dawn to noon hearing petitioners from commoners and clients without status. Her conduct during those proceedings will be scrutinized.

Feast at the Three Pearls Nightclub in Dock Ward. Specials Nightly. Dancers. Good Food.

Infrastructure Vexes Council

Open Lord Silverhand sagely guides Masked Lords in Discussion



Eltorchul Academy grapples with hiring qualified faculty

Thesp Eltorchul, headmaster and owner of Eltorchul Academy, addresses its Board of Regents about concerns over recent faculty hires. The Board wants lecturers in the Art with more prestige. Eltorchul says his daughter Fea has been tasked with recruiting more qualified instructors. Eltorchul says providing teachers with a competitive salary as compared with the School of New Olann remains a challenge.

New drill sergeant promoted

The Waterdeep Guard has promoted a new sergeant in charge of drilling recruits. Cadamire Porlent has just returned from Baldur's Gate, where he was involved in a military exchange.

"The exchange was very helpful," Sgt. Porlent said. "I observed several training methods intended to increase unit cohesion within the Flaming Fist and to develop small, mission focused strike units. My report on these methods were submitted to my superiors, who selected some of these to be implemented on a trial basis with our new troops."

The new training method will require lengthening the time recruits will take part in the basic training. The usual five tenday course will now last six tenday.

Bonnie Blue



I'm so excited about the festival; Lightsinger plays will be real treat

Hail and well met, neighbors of and visitors to Waterdeep.

Like many of you, I'm assembling my finest outfit to wear during the upcoming festival. It's going to be a splendid affair.

Unlike you, I will be working. A reporter is always on the job. But fret not for me. I'll have a front-row seat for some of the biggest events: Lady Silverhand's hearing of the petitions, the noonday feast at the South Ward market, the joust at the Field of Triumph and the Noble's Ball in the North Ward. My fitting for my ball gown was ten tendays ago. I've been waitings

so long to wear it. I'll feel like a princess.

What I will miss is sure to be a delightful presentation. According to a priestess of Llira, she says that the Lightsinger Theater Company will be having popular presentations of one-act comedies in each of the wards throughout the day. These mini-troupes of players will be in full costume and will appear in undisclosed locations — anywhere they see a large crowd gathering — and provide entertainment. That will be a treat, so be on the lookout and be ready to receive the herald's announcements as to each performance.

Weighty matters of state — relations with other city-states along the Sword Coast, for instance, often occupy the Masked Lords of Waterdeep.

But upon Open Lord Laeral Silverhand's insistence, they took up another matter that could pave the way to improvements around the city.

"Frankly, my lords, I am tired of replacing the spoked wheels on my carriage because of all the potholes they hit when I am criss-crossing the city performing my public duties," Lady Silverhand said. "I find the cost prohibitive, I can't imagine the hardship this is placing on the hardworking citizens of Waterdeep. It is time to embark on a project to repave streets that are in need of repair."

The Masked Lords were quick to show their ascent. In council the members banged their staves on the floor or shouted "Here, here!" in agreement.

Yet, the motion was immediately met with opposition in some quarters.

"How shall we pay for this, my Open Lord?" came a repeated query. "Many of your tax policies are already quite unpopular."

"We shall find a way to pay for this my lords," Silverhand said.

"Good roads are the key to a strong defense of the city," another Masked Lord said.

"Moving troops and equipment swiftly can be crucial during an attack or a siege."

"You mean it allows nobles to swiftly leave the city for their country estates in an attack," corrected another.

"You might find that if merchants could see immediate improvements outside their places of business, something that would improve traffic and customers, they might be agreeable to a slight sales tax increase," another Masked Lord said.

"You're already killing business with taxes on imports from shipping," one Masked Lord shouted. "Now you're talking about taxing the same item again because it was purchased? Have you all gone mad?"

"I shall instruct our ministers to do a thorough accounting, perhaps find inefficiencies that can be corrected," Silverhand said. "Shall we seek money from savings first before we discuss other revenues? But I would be firm on this point, our streets must be repaired, improving on the paving if we can."

"What we need is damn fewer streets," one Masked Lord grumbled. That brought a round of laughter.

"You might not like to hear this my fellow lords," a Masked Lord said. "But the next item on the agenda is bridge repair."

That elicited a round of groans from all around the table.

Friend of the Uniformed Officer and Those Who Enforce Good Justice



WATERDEEP WATCHMAN

THE ILLUSTRATED POLICE AND SPORTING NEWSPAPER



THE PARTY NEVER ENDS

Watch officers investigating a disturbance in the Sea Ward reported hearing howling voices, wavering green lights and plasma dripping from the front door of the Phastal Street residence of Vronika Spoyen.

In the words of one officer: "It was unnerving."

Officers knocked vigorously, and when no one responded, used a ram to gain entry.

What they found was Spoyen at the center of what could only be described as raucous dinner party, except for the fact all the guests were ghosts. The officers said some of the ghosts were wearing attire they figured for being in style at least a generation ago. Others wore uniforms and gowns considered long out of fashion.

"One of the party-goers wore the badge of a Watch corporeal, and he commanded us to leave him and his friends alone, saying he outranked us and was off-duty, anyway," the report stated.

When the Watch captain tried to explain to the elderly resident that she was entertaining beings that were incorporeal and undead, she didn't seem phased by the revelation. "I'll be joining them soon enough as it is," she said. "Now leave us be, we ain't bothering nobody."

After exacting a promise from the ghosts to keep the noise to a tolerable level so as not disturb the neighbors, the Watch officers retreated, as the officers were not certain how to apprehend any of the rowdy celebrants. Attempts to issue citations failed, as the ghosts were unable to grasp the tickets handed to them.

The Watch is considering the idea of hiring adventurers to investigate the Catacomb of Yintros, which are said to lie somewhere beneath Heroes Garden, the park near the Spoyen residence. The emergence of these ghosts might indicate something sinister is happening in the catacombs.

Sage advice: Consult with Irbryth Authamaun on matters of history. North Ward, off Immar Street.

A silver piece always well spent

Apprentices wanted: Loyal Order of Street Laborers. Dock Ward, Pavilion of Paving Stones.

Jolt'n Josiah wants a title shot

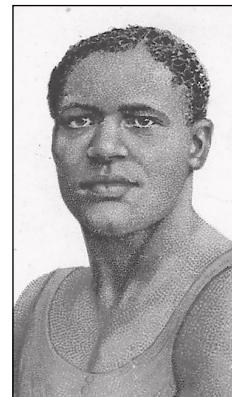
Boxer Jolt'n Josiah Thograsson hasn't lost in twelve straight matches.

"I want my shot," says Jolt'n Josiah, who'll be taking on all-comers in a boxing ring set up in the Court of the White Bull in the Trades Ward.

"If he wins this week, he deserves a crack at the champion," says promoter V.I. Whitney.

Dwarven champion Quystal Char disagrees. "I fight only contenders. Never heard of this fella."

Thograsson has won by knockout three of his last six bouts.



Jolt'n Josiah Thograsson



WATERDEEP WATCHMAN

THE ILLUSTRATED POLICE AND SPORTING NEWSPAPER

MONSTERS OF THE UNDERDARK AFFLICT NORTH WARD ESTATE

The night Watch in the North Ward, always alert to burglars looking to break into the neighborhood's villas and townhouses, had a change of pace call the other night.

Rosy Trillblane and Thargus Mustyman, the maid and butler for the estate of the dwarf lord Fargus Flintspark, exited the manor at a full run, telling officers the house had been overrun by "monsters of the Underdark!"

"Wriggling, fearsome things. They are advancing!" the butler shouted before fainting.

The maid was made of sterner stuff, who straightened her uniform, took on an air of authority, and declared: "I expect these trespassers to be evicted promptly. The lord will be hosting a ball in a tenday and it won't be proper to have such in attendance -- unless they present an invitation, of course!"

Steeling themselves to fight off drow, duergar or even mind flayers, the officers advanced grim-faced and determined. Our watchman are fearless even amid the most daunting prospects.

Yet, when they reached the cellar, they pulled up short. And mostly, it was because the intruders were short and mushroom-shaped.

"The officers encountered a band of intelligent mushrooms," the report stated. "They communicated in what appears to be a telepathic melding with Officer Hidgenscore, and he, in turn, translated on their behalf. They called themselves myconids and said that they meant no harm. We are fairly certain they are intelligent because Officer Hidgenscore used words we knew were not in his vocabulary, such as 'spiritual apotheosis' and 'group consciousness.'"

They myconids reported that they somehow got lost while they were moving about in the Underdark and somehow ended up in Flintspark cellar. Once



they got their bearings, they promised to be on their way, as they were lawful creatures that did not wish to trespass.

The maid, reportedly, agreed to act as escort so far as the estate's lowest basement. She said the myconids complimented her on her uniform.

Watch Capt. Nichelle Dewdrop sought the opinion of gnome Professor Ticerius Snoozlefume, an expert in Underdark exploration at New Olann College. The professor was less concerned about migratory myconids than he was that something else, something dangerous, was causing the myconids to move out of their ordinary habitat. In that neighborhood, a watch on deep cellars connected to underground passages is warranted, the professor advised.

Halfling barbarian was first pick as jockey

Famed wanderer Perinsa Falmarya will attempt a rare feat when horse racing resumes at the Field of Triumph.

The ghostwise halfling from Chondalwood will be entered as a jockey and will ride Passing Fancy.

A halfling in the saddle? For racing at the Triumph, that's not unusual at all, you might remark.

But it's highly unusual if you also happen to be the horse's owner. And that's the case here.

"Passing Fancy's too spirited to let anyone else ride her," Falmarya said. "And frankly, I don't trust you city-folk not to pull a fast one. Call me a barbarian, if you wish. But that's the way it's going to be!"

Passing Fancy is a three-year-old who is making her first appearance at the post. That alone is unusual. All the other horses in the field, including the favored brown-spotted Mud Caked have raced the course on numerous occasions.



WATERDEEP WATCHMAN

THE ILLUSTRATED POLICE AND SPORTING NEWSPAPER

WATCH CRACKS DOWN ON RASCALS WHO ROB MEAT PIE DELIVERY COURIERS

A new business has prompted a new type of crime in the South Ward.

Entrepreneur Lisella Rigottonelli has started a meat pie delivery service based in the South Ward. She takes orders in the morning via couriers set up in the Castle Ward, mostly, but also in the Trade Ward. She then prepares the pies in the morning for delivery during the noon repast.

In fact, many of the delivery persons used are those that deliver copies of the Watchman in the wee hours, then shift to pie delivery at noon.

"Ninety-nine percent of my customers are wonderful," Rigottonelli said. "Some give the delivery boys and girls tips. And once they've tried my pies, many become repeat customers, some ordering more than twice within a tuesday."

But that "one percent" is what irks Rigottonelli.

"Some folk think that just because they can arrange for a delivery of my pies at my location, they think it makes the delivery kids an easy mark for robbery. That's shameful, it is. Shameful!"



Indeed. Watch Capt. Nichelle Dewdrop explained that the robbers make the appointment for the delivery of the pies to a remote, seedy location in the Trade or South wards. The delivery courier arrives. And a whole gang of lawless youths descends down an accosts the delivery person. Not only do they make the delivery person hand over any coin they've made from other deliveries, they almost always take the pies, too! Three times the

gangs have decided to assault the delivery person. Some pie couriers have quit the business, afraid of getting beaten up again.

"I've had to stop making deliveries to some neighborhoods," Rigottonelli said. "I mean, it's not right. Taking hard-earned cash from them hard-working delivery kids. But to beat them up? What's the sense in that?"

This problem was presented to the masked lords. One masked lord was

overheard saying the problem wasn't lawlessness, it was Rigottonelli making deliveries without a courier's permit. When informed that the city of Waterdeep doesn't issue courier permits, the masked lord declared, "Well, they ought to."

Rigottonelli is not impressed. "A delivery permit won't stop the robberies. It'll take honest, hard working folk to stand up to these gangs. That's the problem. Maybe if the gangs have permits they won't feel like they have to rob anyone, whaddya say to that, Mister Masked Lord."

Capt. Dewdrop says that she has employed trackers. "We have hounds that like Rigottonelli's meat pies. They'll be able to track down any thieves, if we get the report soon enough. We may even accompany the couriers from time to time, get the drop on these gangs. We could use some help of adventurers, once we get a better sense of how these gangs operate and who they use to place the order initially. Don't worry, we like the Rigottonelli pies and we want to see justice done."

All News Passes Through the Deepwater

EDITORIAL: SILVERHAND'S TAX POLICIES ARE SINKING SHIPS!

We doff our hats and hang our heads low in reverence as we pass the berth where the *Merry Seawolf* often docked.

She won't be coming home ever again. She was sunk by pirates while making a run to the Moonshae Isles.

Not only did Waterdeep lose a fine two-master, but her captain, Breda "Typhoon" Ticonderoga, was lost in the fighting. She was fine captain, who bled seawater and had a eye for navigation.

Ask Harthwick Sloughcanvas, the owner of the *Merry Seawolf*, as to the cause of his ship's sinking, and he'll speak plainly:

"Dem taxes, what dunnit," Soughcanvas says.

Yes, once again, good readers. A good ship and good crew were lost because of these damn importation taxes as decreed on high by Lady Lacral Silverhand and her milktost Masked Lords.

"I has a choice," Sloughcanvas says. "Lose all me profit by hiring more marines or risk it all by paying dem high taxes. Damn me, I'm stuck between stormy seas and rocky shores."

We need sound policy. But these Masked Lords are failing us. Just as they failed the *Merry Seawolf*.

Capt. Cyrusk Palinedes,
editor

Dock Warden Dispatch



CHULT EXPEDITION: CROSSING THE GORGE OF DEATH!

Editor's Note: The *Dispatch* reprints reports by explorers from across Faerun. In this issue, we hear of a fantastic trek through the jungles of Chult! Molthos Iventus is the expedition leader. The notes were relayed by an anonymous, but reliable, former adventurer from Baldur's Gate.

The unceasing shrieking of monkeys wears on the nerves. If you can put that sound out of your mind, you will be mesmerized by the sight of cliff walls 200 feet high that are lined with row upon row of colorful coral. Every color of the rainbow is represented.

Imbeded in the coral are skeletons of marine creatures from long, long ago, including sharks the size of the largest dragons.

The Chultans call the river canyon the Ataaz Kahakla, the Gorge of Death. Finding a way to cross it was our expedition's primary objective.

There is an ancient stone bridge that we called the Monkey Bridge because monkeys hang and play all along the structure. The carvings on the bridge also resemble monkeys. What's unnerving is the shrieking and laughing of the monkeys that mock any who try to cross. To fall off the bridge means death! The monkey chatter gives the place its name, the Ataaz Muahah, the Laughing Gorge.

Molthos Iventus, expedition leader

STEVEDORES POST EXTRA WATCH ON WAVEMISTRESS' CARGO

Clever thieves have tried on consecutive nights to raid the riverfront warehouse where the Neverwinter-flagged *Wavemistress* has stored its cargo.

Stevedores and the dock warden have placed an extra guard on the place.

The *Wavemistress*' captain won't reveal the nature of the cargo, nor whether any of the attempts at thievery were successful.

Old dock hands say this feels like an old Zhentilim trick. Move security to a less desirable target then raid the real treasure while dock patrols are busy elsewhere. If you've expensive cargo, put out an extra watch!

DESERT DRUID CARES FOR THE FISHES

Llorkh is a druid from the Anauroch desert who is faithful to the god Elah.

"All of life is precious. Life in the desert taught me that," Llorkh said.

Llorkh has found a calling in Waterdeep. He can be found near the shore "conversing" with the fishes. Llorkh looks forward to his daily visits with an octopus he calls Stretch. "He is my friend," says Llorkh. "Soon we will go on adventures together."

All News Passes Through the Deepwater

**EDITORIAL:
SILVERHAND
ADMIRES HER SHOES
WHEN SHE SHOULD
LOOK TO THE SKY**

We won't deny that any lord or lady deserves a fine pair of footwear. We expect Waterdeep's nobility to be attired in the latest fashions.

And we can't deny that our Open Lord – Lady Laeral Silverhand – looks fetching in the pair of heeled boots she acquired during her shopping trip to Sulmest's Splendid Shoes and Boots.

The image of Lady Silverhand admiring her boots as she exited Sulmest's, however, is too powerful to ignore.

Your eyes, Lady Silverhand, should be directed skyward. Namely, in regard to the defense of this city.

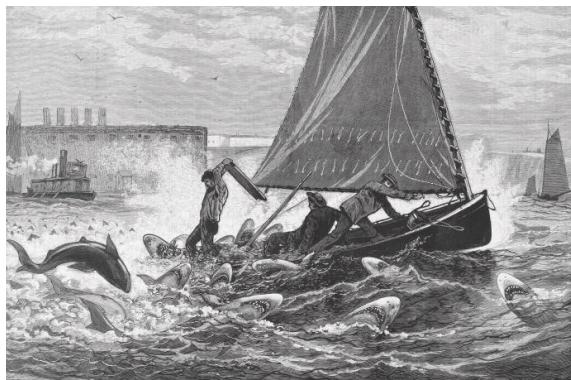
The sight of Netherese earthmotes raining destruction during the Sundering has not been forgotten.

So when cloud giants recently parked a cloud castle above our city and Lady Silverhand's only response is to dispatch heralds across the city asking citizens to keep calm, we have to wonder: Is there no plan of defense against an aerial attack?

I mean, we live in a world populated by dragons! Is it asking too much of our leaders to have a plan? We need more than heralds.

**Capt. Cyrusk Palinedes,
editor**

Dock Ward Dispatch



DEEPWATER HARBOR UNDER ATTACK BY SHARKS!

By Umberlee's tentacled caress, why has Deepwater Harbor been afflicted by schools of ravenous, rampaging sharks?

Small sailboats and fishing craft are equally affected – attacked as soon as they enter the harbor.

Beachgoers, a strange breed of water recreationalists of which Waterdeep has a few, obviously, are equally endangered. Masked lords have ordered that the sandy shore be closed until the shark attacks cease.

The Undrowned – priestesses and priests of the Queen of the Depths – are ineffective against this threat to men and women who make their living in salt water.

Or so they say. We trust they are not complicit in these attacks.

So far, Waterdeep's response against these shark attacks have not worked. Small watch ships were easily swamped. The guard has ocean-going vessels, but as yet, they have not been deployed.

But even privately owned merchant craft – two-masters with decks far above the waterline – have been nudged by schools of these toothy fish.

To look upon Deepwater Harbor and see so many fins cutting through the water is unnerving.

"Anytime you see schools of fish acting crazy, that means there's a predator chasin' them," one old timer on the docks said. "Umberlee help us if something really big's got them sharks riled up."

**QUEST TO FIND THE
TOMB OF DIDERIUS**

Editor's Note: The *Dispatch* reprints reports by explorers. In this issue, we read an account from Professor Larin Narcross.

The trek through the Serpent Hills is not for the easily discouraged. These badlands of mesas and rocky plateaus are difficult to traverse. One must be wary, else you stumble across a hunting party of hill giants tracking antelope through the tall grasses.

We found a Netheril shrine during our trek. Clearly, it has been used as a campsite by other travelers in the past. Were they aware that it was a site of archeological importance?

The Tomb of Diderius still eludes us, however.

**STRANGER WITH
FEATHERED CAP
ASSISTS OLD SALT**

Life is rough for old salt "Rigger" MathDarden. Don't feel pity, he gets by.

"I was doin' me panhanldlin' late down by the docks. But I stumbled upon a band of dark elves with white hair haulin' crates, led by a fella in a feathered tricorn hat."

"The leader said: 'You look like you could use a hot meal, old-timer,' then he handed me 10 silver pieceess from his pouch. 'Be on your way, good sir.' I've never received such a kindness."

The Watch reports that the Ulbrinter warehouse in that vicinity was robbed that night.

CLIFFWATCH GALLERIA



Crowns and Valor

Lightsinger Theater's season begins with the Baldur's Gate Touring Company's comedic production of Awnagur Hertrel's "Five Fallen Thrones." The Castle Ward Players will debut a new dramatic production by North Ward playwright Sebastian Bracelet. "One Shining Knight" is about the adventures of Lady Penelope of the Morning.

A Scandal in Silverymoon

A serial installment featuring everyone's favorite Waterdeep investigator, Samantha Manor, and her sidekick Jamelle Wavering.

High Heels

Fashionable footwear a balancing act at Sulmest's Splendid Shoes.



CLIFFWATCH GALLERIA

Beware the Serpent

Lightsinger Theater stage has opened its doors to Felicia Moon's troupe from Neverwinter. The company will perform the classic dark comedy, "Harl the Serpent" about the womanizing villain who is brought low.



A Grand Affair

The Zulpair House intends for its summer masked ball to ease relations and make amends for any perceived insults. What will their North Ward neighbors think of the lavish affair? Will the Old Blood be appeased by the gesture? All the details, inside.

Tell All Tales

The "Shadowdale Seven" is supposed to be an alagogical look at Wavesilver Villa's scandalous past. Melvar's Chapbooks and Folios provides an excerpt of this racy tale of corruption, intrigue and lust.



CLIFFWATCH

GALLERIA

Gwintella: Dazzling or Disruptive?

Waterdeep's own Gwintella Featherdare will perform as a featured soloist for an outdoor concert at the Field of Triumph. The adventuring bard famed for playing the ingenue in stage productions plans a "dazzling" concert for her WD audience, one enhanced by a assembly of bards presenting popular songs accompanied by sparkling spellsong effects. Before it debuts, some critics are already calling it "disruptive" and "common."

Fetching at Fetlock

New Olann's aspiring bards are playing popup concerts at the Palace paddocks. We rank the best we've heard this season.

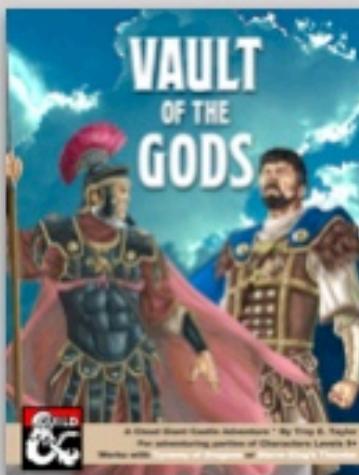
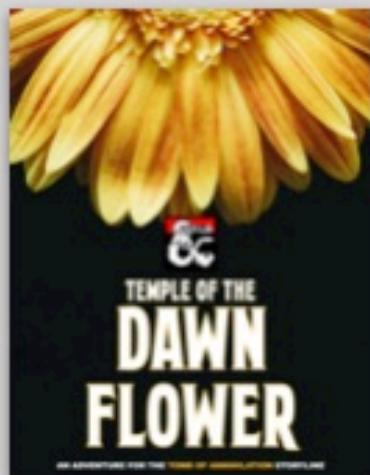
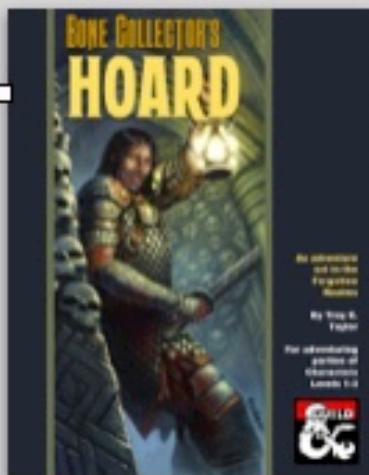
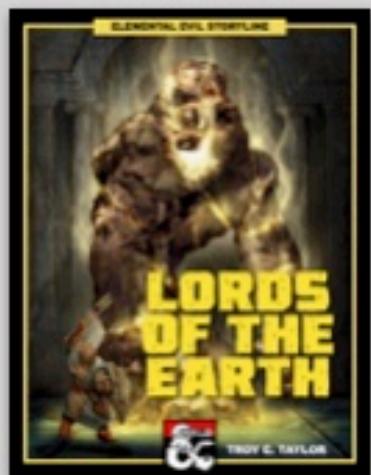
To Dye For

Hairstyles enhanced with streaks of color and sparkles are all the rage among WD's nobles.



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