



Playhouse News

The monthly newsletter for Jester's Playhouse

September, 1999

Happy Birthday, Jester's

Jester's Playhouse will be celebrating its third birthday this year. Three short years ago, we were putting the final paint job on the walls and staying up to four o'clock in the morning stocking the shelves. Things have gone by quickly.

Jester's started as a need. There was a need for quality games that forced people to use their brains, not their fingers. There was also a need for the people who played these games to have a place to play them. That is why Jester's Playhouse started. You can come in any day and find someone playing a game.

The hardest part about opening the store was the fact that it had never been done before. We did a lot of research, contacted a bunch of game stores and attended trade shows in-order to make the best gamestore

we could. Many people didn't understand what we were about, others predicted it wouldn't work. Well, we are still here and the games are still being played. Our many customers proved that you don't need computers to play games. All you need is some dice, paper, pencil and an imagination.

One of that hardest aspects of opening a new business is making up a name. This is what people are going to know you by for the rest of your business career. When we were picking names we wanted to avoid something that would scare people, like many game store's have done. Names like Pete's Pit of Doom was not what we were looking for. We wanted a place where everybody could have fun. Not just the people who have been playing games for years, but new gamers too. We wanted a name that would easily have its own mascot. While cleaning out a closet, I came across a jester's outfit that Joann had made for us to go to a Renaissance Faire. That's when it hit us that a Jester would be the perfect mascot. The joker or jester is found in all type of games. If you don't believe me just look at our Jester card collection in the Cape May Court House store. Now we

needed another name to go with it. An early name that we came up with was Jester's Cottage, but Jesters usually aren't found in cottages. One day, Joann came up with playhouse, and we new that was the name.

When we picked the name, we didn't realize the irony of it, until we got the first phone call confusing us with a theater. The playhouse aspect of our name was more in reference to a place where kids play. In reality, we are a theater. Every night a new drama or comedy unfolds. People adventure to the far reaches of the galaxy. They explore deep dungeons. They stop the evil plans of villains trying to take over the world. On top of this, they read more books then they ever read in their High School English classes and enjoy doing it.

We made a lot of friends in the past three years. Some we still see, others moved on. Hopefully, in some way their lives are different because of Jester's. In an area that is so spread out, Jester's has become the place where friends who live far away can get together and have fun. In the summer people who have not seen each other in a year renew friendships and catch up on their winter away from Jester's. Thanks to

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Marshal Eric's Corner



By ERIC AVEDISSIAN

Pinnacle Entertainment's new re-released edition of a rule book and game master's guide for Deadlands: The Weird West Role-playing game appears to be game creator Shane Lacey Henley's crowning achievement. The game, released in 1996, takes place in an alternate earth in 1877, where the dead have risen and the Civil War still rages on. A mysterious mineral called ghost rock enabled mad scientists to create fantastic inventions and creatures from man's darkest nightmares stalk the western frontier. The game has evolved over the years and the first and second printing of the main rulebooks, namely Deadlands Role-playing Game and The Quick and the Dead, served their purpose. Now, Pinnacle revamped the old rulebook and served up two new ones that are better, more detailed and aesthetically pleasing than their predecessors.

The Weird West Players Guide and Marshal's Handbook take both previous books and add new rules and background information, along with new art and a better design. The books are part of a new generation of Deadlands products. Apparently, Henley's game is doing well to redesign the basic rules and bring the game to a new generation of players. With the thoroughness and attractiveness of each volume, he may succeed. The Player's Guide contains the basic rules of the game, including an introductory section entitled the Tombstone Epitaph's Newcomers Guide to the Weird West, which briefs newbies on the happenings in the game's storyline. A hilarious foreword by Bruce Campbell (of Brisco County Junior fame) is a classic.

Of course the Player's Guide contains the basic game mechanics; generating characters, combat rules, a look at specific archetypes and spells. The book also contains a detailed, full-color map of the Weird West and dramatized artwork from the game. Hindrances and Edges scattered apart in The Quick and the Dead and the original rulebook are conveniently contained in this book. The book also includes a handy index for referencing various keywords contained in the vol-

ume. It concludes with a touching afterward by Henley on the game's origins and a newly designed character sheet.

The Marshal's Handbook is not for player types, but for those running the game. The Marshal is the game master, and this book contains all the secrets you need to know, like what's really going on in the West. The Marshal's Handbook has information and useful tips game masters can run their games more efficiently, and the lowdown on arcane powers, the abominations wandering the deserts and mountains, and an intimate tour of the western states. This book is a beefed up Quick and the Dead, with a rogue's gallery of famous gunmen and villains. It contains new artwork and an easier layout like the player's guide. The book concludes with a brand new adventure to tax your player's abilities.

Both hardback books are the answers to the prayers of players and Marshal's who have been playing the game for some time, and those who might want to give the Weird West a try.

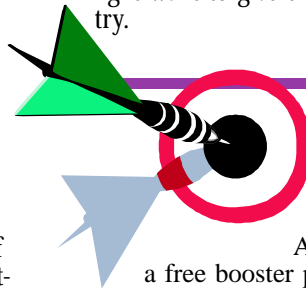
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our newsletter, these folks can keep up on what's going on when they aren't here.

Our Northfield store opened last year and added a whole new group to the mix of friends. Now people from Atlantic and Cape May counties participate in games. With the new store we have room to do bigger events more often. Now people who we might have saw once a month have become the Norms and Cliffs of our new store. Our leagues and tournaments span both stores now, and give us a lot more options to make them better.

It has certainly been fun. I think back to the days in October three years ago when the store was empty and quiet and I was working 14 hours a day. Then I look at the stores today, and can't believe it was ever quiet. October 16th will be our birthday party, and I would like to invite everybody to come down and have some fun!

Rich



Upcoming Events

\ Pokemon Tournaments:

Saturday October 2nd at Cape May Court House

Saturday September 18th and October 9th at Northfield

All Tournaments begin at 2PM. The entry fee is \$6 but includes

a free booster pack. There will be prizes for Overall Winner, the Best player under 10 and the Best Player 10-14. Prizes will vary based on attendance. You must have a 60 card deck and no Japanese language cards.

\ **Legend of the 5 Rings Tourney on Saturday September 18th at Cape May Court House at 2 PM:** A one on one swiss tournament. Entry fee is \$5.

\ **Legend of the 5 Rings Tourney on Saturday September 25th at Northfield at 2 PM:** A one on one swiss tournament. Entry fee is \$5.

\ **Brother Augustus IV Echo Force on Saturday September 25th at 2 PM at CMCH:** The marines strike back against the forces of the Imperial Guard. Can you help Captain Braddock find Brother Augustus.

\ **White Wolf Demo Day at Northfield on Saturday September 11th All Day:** Take part in demonstrations of Werewolf, Vampire and Aberrant.

\ **Jester's Playhouse Birthday Celebration, Saturday October 16th in Cape May Courthouse:** Come celebrate three years of fun and gaming. We will be doing game demonstrations in a tent next to the store, have tons of free stuff, and play games.

Upcoming Leagues

Arena League (the League for Magic the Gathering): The Arena League is held on Tuesdays and Saturdays at the Northfield Store. You can play all day and win cool prizes like Foil Forests and other special Foils. Entry fee is \$4.

Doomtown/Legend of the 5 Rings League: The shootouts occur on Thursdays in CMCH and Northfield starting August 26th. There is plenty of Ghost Rock out there to claim for your chunk of Gomorra.

The Winner's Circle

(well actually its a rectangle)

Here's some of the winner's from recent in store events.

Warhammer Summer League

Overall Winner

John Lesko

Best General

Dan Harris

Warhammer Fantasy Championship

Store Warhammer Champion

Trevor Hamann - High Elves

Best General

Frank Snyder - Vampire Counts

Best Painted

Gary Salva- Dogs of War

Best Sport

Eric Schellinger- Bretonians

Best Composition

Dan Harris - Bretonians



Mike Johnson

The deed is done! The tale is told!
The quest is done... but there's always a price to pay.

In the final leg of their journey, our heroes braved the forgotten tunnels deep beneath the fortress city of Denver to find the resting-place of the Grail. It should go without saying that a ghastly variety of abominations have shackled up here since Doc Hellstromme last strode these halls. Oh yeah, and Hellstromme left a few surprises of his own to harry the good guys progress.

However, heroes will be heroes and they all laughed in the face of these terrors! Well, ok maybe that is a *slight* exaggeration. This place was wall to wall cyborgs and I'm not talking about the Lee Majors variety (picture zombies with uzi's stickin' out of their heads).

Still, they got the job done. They found the Grail and had just one thing standing between them and legend (insert dramatic organ music here)... **DEMONA**. It seems the group's subterranean activities had not gone entirely unnoticed by Denver's less than friendly citizens, and Demona used a magical shortcut to make one more surprise appearance.

I have to admit I'm proud of my

posse. Outwitting an 1,100-year-old gargoyle is no easy task, but that's what they did.

The storyteller (I think he's calling himself Indiana these days) distracted her long enough for the posse' to high tale it out of there and even managed to save his own skin. (Them fate chips come in mighty handy.) Smyth, our hard-boiled shootist, covered the posse's backs as they made their way to the surface. Having stayed behind, he had a front row seat as Macbeth and his rebels blasted into the subterranean compound and engaged Demona and the army of Black Hats she had called in. Deciding to hedge everyone's bets, Smyth blew out the entire level with the last of the group's explosives, himself included, leaving the way clear for the rest of the group to return to a hero's welcome in Boise. Who lived and who died in this epic conclusion? Truth be told, I don't know, cause I ain't the Marshal no more!

That's right! You heard it here first. I'm turnin' in my badge to Mr. Bill Cloer and movin' on to Marshal the Deadlands: Weird West campaign (a Thursday night tradition at Jester's: Courthouse). Fear not gentle reader, for this column (is that what this is?) will continue in a slightly different form. I'm about to become a lowly player and will continue the tale from that perspective. Best to y'all, keep reading and look out for my classified for some fresh meat in the Deadlands group!

GenCon

by Rich Gain

GenCon '99 was truly amazing. Every major game company was there in full force. The displays were incredible. Wizards of the Coast shadowed everybody with their revised version of the old TSR castle. The new castle had an almost oriental look about it. The walls had to be 20' or higher. Inside was no less amazing. For the Five Rings booth, they built a replica Old West bar, where they were handing out various nonalcoholic beverages while you learned *Doomtown*. For Wizards other games they had tables set up to learn them all. The most impressive were the AD&D tables which were full of terrain on which to play the adventure.

FASA had a great booth with a full size elemental suit and section of Downtown Seattle to play *Shadowrun* on. Most of the companies had a similar concept for their RPG demos. Pinnacle had a table for each of their games. This included a Western town, a ruined Fort in the waste of *Hell on Earth*, and a block of Crescent City for *Brave New World*. Pinnacle also staged the death of a superhero. Patriot, the hero from *Brave New World* was bought before a firing line to be executed. As the call to fire was called, the guards turned their guns on the war-

den. You can believe what the government tells you, but I saw it myself, Patriot is ALIVE!

Avalon Hill had a large setup. They were premiering some of their new line. Many are the classic Avalon Hill favorites updated with new graphics. The new ones were mentioned many months back in this newsletter. Just for those who were not paying attention or just didn't get the newsletter back then here's a recap. First, Axis and Allies, Stratego and Risk are now part of the Avalon Hill line. For Axis & Allies, a new version which concentrates on the European front is coming out. Stratego is going to have a fantasy version and Risk is celebrating its 40th Birthday with a set that includes all metal pieces. The new stuff looks wonderful and has great presentation.

There were off course a lot of previews of the new stuff coming out. AEG was demoing their eyepatches off for the new cardgame based on the *7th Sea* world. It is a great game that really captures the feel of ship combat in the 17th century. If you want to catch a demo just ask, I got two demo decks. Atlas games premiered two new items: *Feng Shui* and *Lunch Money Buttonmen*. *Feng Shui* (no Jeff it is not a game about furniture rearrangement) is best described as roleplaying in the world of "Big Trouble in Little China." It blends

Kung Fu action with guns and sorcery. Check it out, you will not be sorry. The Lunch Money Buttonmen use images from Lunch Money (imagine that) and add the trip dice (a dice that forces your opponent to re-roll one of their dice).

Speaking of *Buttonmen*, they were everywhere. Legend of the 5 Rings had their own and there were a number of special edition ones floating around. We were able to get most of them for our resident Cheapass demo monkey, Steve. The big release from James Ernest is going to be *Brawl*. It is a real time fight game that plays similar to Falling! It has some great artwork and plays fast. Real FAST! Try 1 minute or less fast.

My personal favorite things about Gencon were getting to sit and talk to Gary Gyax, the Safehouse (a spy genre bar in Milwaukee) and playing a preview of D&D3. Yes, that's right, D&D3. There is too much to write in an article, but let me just say it is a great game with a lot of common sense changes and much easier for new players to get involved.

GenCon is a great show to attend. If you have the vacation time next year, go, you will not regret it. And when or if we meet up I'll take you to the Safehouse and have them give you the Newbie treatment.



Ask Zardoz!

Greetings! I am the Grey

Wanderer, greatest mage of Falmag (and perhaps all of Gal). I received a message from Kenaz, telling me that his master Zardoz has been missing for some time now. He is searching for his lost familiar, Kip. I came with all due haste (short lived races seem to value speed) and started searching. Although his personal wards prevent me from getting a "fix" on him, my friends aura does seem to radiate from Mordheim, city of the Damned. Although he is still alive, that is not a good place to be. I wish he was in a nice safe place like

downtown Baator! Ah, the confidence of youth. When I was young (Zardoz is still less than 500), things were very different. Why, I didn't even leave Tir Na Nog until I passed my first millennium! And an Ethyk familiar! In My day, we had toads and were happy to have those! And all these powers! Why I remember...

Sorry, I didn't mean to preach. While I am here Kenaz has asked me to help him out while Zardoz is gone. In return, he has promised me a night out in Sigil (as Kenaz is a Sensate, he knows how to have a good time!). So here are the questions. If you are hungry, I have some grapes. (The Editor would like to apologize for the Grey Wanderer's ramblings, he is getting old for one of the Sidhe)

Dear Zardoz,

My friend and I were playing Warhammer 40k the other day and we couldn't figure out how to calculate the Victory Points for a Chaplain with a Death Company Squad?

Mike from Mays Landing

Being a fan of Warhammer Fantasy, I never really played much Warhammer 40k. After consulting the Roolz Boyz and complaining that High Elves Wizards were not powerful enough, I asked them. According to the official rulings, the only Victory Points scored is for killing the Chaplain. I'll tell you, them Blood Angels are a strange bunch. I am sure my friend Axel would not have liked them.

Dear Zardo,

While I was constructing a killer army for Dwarves in Disk Wars, I came across the Loki Dreamweaver. Is he free, like his disk seems to indicate?

Ratboy, Beasley's Point

Well, ahem, Ratboy (an odd name)

This Disk Wars game, is it associated with the Blood Wars on Mechanus. After searching far and wide, I consulted the designers of the game, Fantasy Flight, and they told me that Loki has a cost of 11. I hope this answers your question, though I do not understand why you would want to play dwarves, when there are elves.

Dear Zardo,

I always thought that *Detect Magic* only showed the caster, what is (and isn't) magical. Someone told me that everyone can see it. Which is true?

Sam, Seal Beach

In *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*, the

gurus at TSR have said that it produces a visible glow for all to see. The real interpretation is up to each individual Master of the Dungeon. If you want to keep it secret, then just research your own spell. If you have any trouble with this, just let me know, and I will do it for you for the usual fee (one year and day servitude).

That is all for now. Using a crystal ball has always given me a migraine. Good Luck to Zardo, time is on your side.

If you have any questions for me send them to: **Ask Zardo**

**c/o Jester's Playhouse
219 S. Main St..
C.M.C.H. NJ 08210**

You can also E-Mail me at the **Ask Zardo page** at **www.jestersplayhouse.com**

Hey You!!!

Check out www.jestersplayhouse.com for Zardo's Survey of the Month.

Zardo's Question of the Month!

What was the color of the Jester's outfit that Joann made for the Renaissance Faire?

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ___ Zip _____

Send your answer to:

Zardo's Question of the Month
219 S. Main St.

C.M.C.H. NJ 08210

One winner will be chosen from the correct answers. The winner will receive a selection of Reaper miniatures. Good Luck!

Legend Chronicles

This Month: Karn the Silver Golem
by Brandon Bozzi

Who is Karn? Karn is an artifact built by none other than Urza. He was originally built to travel back in time and report on the original formation of the Phyrexians. Later his great strength and resistance to temporal flux came in handy rebuilding Tolaria, after it's destruction caused by the explosion of Urza's time machine. In the battle against Kerrick's Phyrexian Army, his size and strength again were a welcomed ally. Karn's final position was as guardian of the Legacy and it's bearer, Gerrard.

Is Karn man or machine? He is both. He is an artifact created by Urza, but was given the Xancha's heart granting him sentience (see Lynn Abbey's Planeswalker for info on Xancha). Karn went through much internal distress over the question of whether he was a "person," or just a machine to be discarded when he was of no more useful. With the help of Telferi and Johria, who befriended him soon after his creation, and Barrin, who served as a father

figure for him, Karn decided that he was a living being and a worthwhile one at that.

What is Karn like? Karn's most predominant qualities are loyalty, strength, and as of late pacifism. His loyalty manifests itself is Karn's willingness to sacrifice himself for his friends and his creator.

Strength was shown over and over again in his battle to fight back the Phyrexians. Both traits are shown over and over again in his pursuit to keep the Legacy safe.

Karn's pacifism, on the other hand, stems from an unfortunate incident. He was tricked into killing innocent townsfolk in attempting to protect Gerrard. From that time onward, he has sworn not take another's life. It was this vow that Volrath used against him. Volrath imprisoned Karn in a cell, in which he had no choice but to crush moggs under his enormous weight.

For more info on Karn pick up a booster pack from Tempest to Urza's Destiny, or read the novels of the Rath Cycle and Artifact Cycle.

All Night Gaming Halloween Eve, Saturday October 30th

Join us for a night of
Halloween fun and games!

Events planned:

- \ Call of Cthulhu RPG Demo
- \ Live Action World of Darkness
- \ Deadlands Zombie fest
- \ Mordheim Night of the Living Dead
- \ Halloween Theme Magic Tournament
- \ War of the Shadowlands for L5R CCG
- \ many other Ghoulish surprises!

Everything begins at 10PM. Entry fee is \$15. You get \$5 back at the door if you wear a costume. Bring a food item with a Halloween Theme. Please no real human body parts!

Waaaaaagh!: The Phantom Menace

By: Eric Lee

(Asst. Editor's Note: This article is from the perspective of the Imperium, the true story might be different.)

Welcome to Jester's Playhouse first of many Battle Reports. This month Rich and I decided to settle a long standing grudge match between the Orks of Waaagh Gogordz and the close combat monsters of the Imperium, Blood Angels.

In order to assure an absolutely fair match, we rolled a random mission in the book. Night Fight appeared much to Rich's liking. (Orks can't shoot regardless of day or night conditions.) The Blood Angels were at a slight disadvantage as the cowardly Orks decided to attack under the cover of night.

At the start of the battle, the orks were lined up more or less 24" away from the Blood Angel front line. After uttering a small prayer to Sanguinius and the Emperor, the Blood Angels hopped into their over-charged engines.

The first shooting phase was uneventful, with neither side inflicting much damage to the other. The orks moved forward screaming, "Fasta, fasta, fasta!" (Ork Truks have the Fast Vehicle trait which means they can move 24" and then Turbo Boosta for an additional D6 inches. Now that's Fast Attack!

The second round saw a lot of action. The ancient dreadnought Darius leveled his twin linked lascannon and blew the Truk boys vehicle out from underneath them. The Whirlwind hit its mark slaying a handful of ork shoota boys, but failed

to pin them due to the ork's mob check. The rest of the Blood Angel army moved into position.

Orks saw a more prolific round of firing, slaying Darius with a slew of twin linked rockets from his ork traks. Again, there were no close combats.

The third round started an utter bloodbath. Gogordz's truk boys were burnt to death by a flamer and spent the rest of the game running towards a mob to join. Squad Redeemer charged head long into the shoota boy mob, slaying several of the orks before their assault.

(Hint: The same psychology that prevents orks from fleeing can be used against them in the shooting phase. If you know there will be more than twelve orks left after your shooting phase, you know they can't run from your assault.) Squad Redeemer took no casualties in the orks counter attack making five 4+ saves.

Death Company fired into a close by mob slaying a few more orks. They then charged into the grot mob, slaughtering it almost to the last grot. However they failed to reach the ork retinue on their sweeping advance. Their gamble failed.

Waaagh Gogordz enacted bloody vengeance. The Storm Boyz assaulted Squad Redeemer, crushing all but the sergeant under the mighty fist of the knobz power klaw.

Death Company didn't fair well either. They were crushed under the claws of the killa kans and ork dreadnought. Chaplain Thorn fell to a wave of boyz that mobbed up.

The fourth and fifth rounds saw as much carnage. The sixth round saw the death of Warboss Gogordz, slain by the mighty Librarian Auriel. The ork dreadnought landed two mighty blows in retaliation but the Emperor smiled upon the librarian, saving him from certain death. When the dust settled, and the dead were accounted for, the orks came out on top.

Eric: What a bloodbath! Space Marine and Ork bodies littered the field. (More Ork than Space Marine.) This game was as it should be, down to the proverbial wire. I had some bad luck with an engine burning out in the last round, and I forgot to turn my razorback around which made the difference. It was a close battle throughout. If there is one piece of strategy to hand down, don't engage orks piecemeal. Throw everything you have at them. Nightfighting limited the effectiveness of my shooting phases. Otherwise, concentrate fire on one mob at a time, and ride away in your rhino if they get too close.

Rich: This fight was the way I like them, lots of death and destruction. I think it was the Blood Angels who were trying to sneak up on the Orks. Only the sneaky Blood Axe gits would do such an unorky thing. I have one word that my army needs "Battlewagon". With all the disabled rhinos laying around I am sure my meks could do something. It was a great fight and I look forward to killing some more Beakies in the future. The Blood Angels are one of the toughest armies to beat for Orks, because they have few weaknesses: they are shooty, they are good at hand-ter-hand, and they have got thick skin and tanks.

The Masters Shrine

Focus: Restoring the Doji Treasury
by Duncan Bachen

"All Players may search their Dynasty Decks for one gold-producing holding to put into play. The cost of the holding is reduced by three, but must be paid or the holding is discarded. These holdings enter play bowed."

Any event which allows you to get a useful card out of your dynasty deck is a good one. Gold producing holdings are always useful. "Restoring the Doji Treasury (RDT)" give both players the ability to pull a holding, but it is rare that you opponent will have the extra gold to pay the costs since events occur on your turn.

I find RDT useful in my Yoritomo's Alliance deck to help defer the cost of diamond mines. (Seven gold cost, bow to produce 5 gold.) Since Yoritomo is a gold hungry deck, this ensures that I

can get my best gold producing holdings out early in the game.

RDT is even better in a "supported holdings" deck. That is, holdings which work with other holdings to produce extra gold. Examples of this are *Pearl Divers*, *Pearl Beds*, and *Ports* for the Naga, *Traderoute*, *Market Place*, *Ports*, for the Crane, and *Silk Farm*, *Silk Works*, *Forest* for other players.

When RDT comes up, you can be assured of getting one of the other "parts" of your gold production. Depending on its timing, you can pick the most obvious card to create the most gold.

RDT is even better if it comes up early, allowing you to get the jump start on gold ensuring a swift victory.

Legend of the Five Rings & Doomtown

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO RULE AN EMPIRE?

L5R Day every Thursday at Jesters Playhouse, Northfield and CMCH.

Prove what it takes to rule an empire or the wild west town of Gamorra. There will be prizes for best overall and best clan / outfit. It's four dollars to enter and you start with ten ghost rock / koku to ante with your opponents. What are you waiting for?

Classifieds

Looking For Gamemasters
Jester's Playhouse in Northfield is looking for Game Master's to run new games. Most nights available. Contact Rick or Rich to see what we are looking for. Great incentives like 10% off all your gaming product if you satisfy our requirements.

Wanted: Dead or Alive
Looking for a few Dudes or Gals to take on the horrors of the Wierd West. Only those with enough 'Guts' need apply. Talk to Mike Johnson or Jeff or just show up Thursday Night at Jester's Playhouse CMCH.

AD&D Players
Looking to start an introductory AD&D Session at Jester's Northfield. If you are interested talk to Eric Lee (Blood Angels Boy). The session will be held Monday afternoons

during the Summer. All players need to own a Player's Handbook and dice.

7th Sea Game

Are you looking for adventure? Do you like salt air in your nostril? Does the clashing of swords excite you?

Looking for a few brave souls to sail the 7 Seas. A new 7th Sea Game is beginning in October at Jester's Northfield. Contact Rich. No Parrots please!

Wanted: Warhammer 40K Players
Looking for some 40K players in the Millville/Vineland area Contact Rich or Jeff at Jester's.

If you are looking for players for a game or looking for a group to join, just E-mail Rich at: news@jestersplayhouse.com Your add is free. Do not send any items to be sold. They will not be published.

You say you don't have time to get to the store to get your *Playhouse News* or you live too far away to pick it up, well then just fill out the form below and include \$5 to cover the postage, and have it delivered right to your door (actually it will be put in your mail box). Feel free to photocopy the form so you do not have to mar this lovely and highly collectable newsletter (or so we would like to think).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Planet: _____

E-mail: _____

For the GM.

by Jeff Trout & friends

Hello, Game Masters! Each month, before we begin, I will share some important information that every GM should know. I've chosen an excerpt from the forward of *The Dungeon Master Guide*, 2nd edition, page 2. If you haven't read this, I recommend reading the entire thing.

Take the time to have fun with the AD&D rules. Add, create, expand, and extrapolate. Don't just let the game sit there, and don't become a rules lawyer worrying about each piddly little detail. If you can't figure out the answer, MAKE IT UP! And whatever you do, don't fall into the trap of believing these rules are complete. They are not. You cannot sit back and let the rule book do everything for you. Take the time and effort to become not just a good DM, but a brilliant one.

At conventions, in letters, and over the phone, I'm often asked for the instant answer to a fine point of the game rules. More often than not, I come back with a question-what do you feel is right? And the people asking the questions discover that not only can they create an answer, but that their answer is as good as anyone else's. The rules are only guidelines.

*At the beginning of the first *Dungeon Master Guide*, Gary Gygax stressed that each of us, working from a common base, would make the AD&D game grow in a variety of different directions. That is more true today than ever. Don't be afraid of experimentation, but do be careful. As a *Dungeon Master*, you have great power, and "with great power comes great responsibility." Use it wisely.*

Now to follow that up, let me say that

these are only ideas and opinions. Do what you like if your players are having fun.

O.K. Now that that's out of the way, let's talk about your players. No wait, let's talk about your player characters. I've seen a lot of games. I've also seen a ton of ridiculous PC's. Who lets a first level character, that can attack 4 times a round for up to 70 points of damage, into their group? Why do you let every player in your group play hexslingers? Why does a barbarian from Icewind Dale have a katana & throwing stars? Now don't get me wrong, I think that the words 'fantasy' and 'realism' should never be used in the same sentence. However, a little logic and common sense make for a better game with a story that can suspend your player's disbelief, just enough to really get them into their role. What do you do if your player asks to play a Kender vampire assassin?

You SHOULD say NO! The most important factor in getting your characters to be exciting and fun is to remember your role. Live by your title. Let's dissect it.

GAME! MASTER!

You are the **master** of the **game**! That means you say what goes and what does not. You can allow your players to roleplay a dragon in your 1st level group. (Why you would however, is beyond me!) You can also prevent a Garou who has been transformed into a Brujah of 5th generation blood, that can enter the Dreaming in Pooka form from joining your recent campaign based on the Time of Thin Blood. You are the director. You write the scripts. John Woo would never let Steve Guttenburg star in his new action film. Vice-versa Stallone would be the worst

choice to star in, um, well, anything! If you have an adventure or campaign planned, don't let anyone play a character that will spoil it.

They SHOULD be challenged, scared, tested, etc.. They SHOULD have a hard time beating the bad guy! If Arigorn had gone out in the Fellowship of the Rings, found Sauron and slaughtered him with his +5 bow of evil slaying, it would have been a crappy book. If your players want to hack things down with overpowered characters give them a copy of DOOM and the cheat 'idspispopd'.

So you ask "How do I develop a character that my players want to play?"

I suggest working one on one with your players a few weeks before the campaign. (if you can) This lets you get to know what they like. A good GM will play off his players likes and dislikes to help the story along.

Start with the basics. Choose race, class, archetype, clan, etc. (For this article I mostly refer to AD&D rules.) Most players choose race & class at or around the same time. Try to guide them into something that works well in your storyline as well as each other. This will give your first few players all the freedom. However your last player may be upset that they can't play a mage as well. Try to pick your more stubborn or less experienced players first. They are usually more creative and most likely to try something else. If they won't, go to one of the earlier players and ask them to switch. Try to restrict alignments if necessary. Don't pair up PC's that would never be together unless they were going on Jerry Springer. Don't be afraid to bend rules if it lets your players have fun playing

what they want.

The next thing I do is develop background. Discuss their ideas with them. Suggest ideas with them and discourage them where you feel necessary. 1st level characters are not members of the Harpers. If Billy wants his thief to be the illegitimate son of Raistlin & a female blue dragon, your answer should be NO! Find out where they have lived or traveled. Use your knowledge of the lands to bring the PC's to life. Occasionally suggest something that may even play into your plot. Also try to encourage beliefs or situations that help connect the players. Try a favorite tavern or a common hatred towards goblins. Maybe two characters both enjoy boar hunting? Now they have a reason to become friends. Don't worry about inner party conflicts. They will inevitably find their own reason to quarrel. If you think you might have trouble with some players, I suggest 20

AEG

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— **Knights Of The Rose & Cross** \$18.95

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Throughout the history of Emerald Empire, few heroes have been granted the right to form their own clans. These are the stories of the Fox, the Mantis, the Centipede and more, including skills, schools, advantages and ancestors for each.

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Atlas Games

— **Seed Of The New Flesh**

\$16.95 Welcome to 2056. What, you thought the future was going to be jet packs, world peace and the cure for cancer? Guess again, pal. When the Architects of the New Flesh took over, they had different ideas. Ideas like con-

questions. There is a few role playing games that have a list of questions to ask your players to answer. Check out the new '7th Sea Players Guide' page 112 for a sample.

Now that they have a basic background, get them to write it down. This will accomplish two things. First it gets them to embellish on it. Thoughts and ideas are one thing but fleshed out on paper they are a story. Secondly it gives you and them a hard copy to refer to. They can review it occasionally for role playing purposes. You can use it for side adventures. What happens when the thieves guild decides to find Darel the Swift, for leaving to go adventuring in your group? Some of my favorite adventures were based on my backgrounds.

Don't stop now that you have a background. You still have equipment. Logic says they should choose things that fit their background. But one player will want a katana & wakishashi. **Why is it**

New Releases

Use this as a convenient checklist to order what you want ahead of time. If you prepay for any of the items below, receive 10% off.

formity, stability and equality at any price. Sure, there are cool personal fliers: The cops use 'em to keep the public in line. Curing cancer got put on the back burner 'cause the Buro was more interested in mind control technology. In the future there's no inequality, because no one's permitted to excel. There's no unemployment, because everyone has a mandatory job. There's no freedom, except the freedom to choose between brands. Seed of the New Flesh gives you everything you need to fight the good fight in 2056.

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This is the corebook for the Glorantha Role-Playing Game. Glorantha is a fantasy world that was created by Chaosium founder Greg Stafford. It is a place of myth and magic, where a multitude of gods carry on

always the oriental weapons? Can my elven ranger cleric have nunchaku? Your answer should be NO! Now if your player comes up with some fantastic story on how this could happen, then reward him! But his whole character should reflect this. He should spend a proficiency slot on the language. Maybe another on harvesting silk or raising bonsai. They will have no application to the game but they add so much to the personality.

Remember that you want to have fun. So do your players. Let them. If everyone is enjoying themselves that's all that really matters.

Next month we will be discussing,

The Adventure!

All you GM's out there, send me your advice, ideas, & opinions.

Happy Gaming!

an eon-old conflict. Now is the time of the Hero Wars, when old gods return, epic battles are fought and the future of the world will be irrevocably changed, forever. This is an all-new Glorantha RPG, with the setting you love and completely new rule!

— **Glorantha** \$19.95

The fantasy world of Glorantha is revealed in glorious detail. Learn all about the popular setting in this sourcebook.

— **Cuddly Cthulhu** \$19.95

This is the first stuffed toy from Chaosium's new line of Mythos Monsters. These disturbing, yet adorable star spawn come from the Stars in a variety of colors. But rest assured that they all have one whimsical purpose in mind: total world domination! Trust me folks, you don't want to be without one when R'lyeh rises. Make friends with them fast, you never know when the Stars will come, right! Disclaimer: Chaosium recommends not feeding your Cuddly Cthulhu after midnight. Keep this and all other Mythos Monsters away from small pets and salsa.

Cheap Ass Games

— **Escape From Elba** \$5.00

In 1814, Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled to the island of Elba. He had the run of the island, hundreds of French Troops and one Englishman whose job it was to keep him from leaving. Needless to say, he left. This is not that story. Today, Napoleon, (you being the real Napoleon, of course) and a bunch of people who are pretending to be you, find yourselves racing around an asylum which looks remarkably like Elba (at least, to you), trying to gather the tools you need to escape from this

place. Armed with your erasers, spears, bloomers, etc., you or whomever escapes pretending to be you, will return to France and become the Emperor of Europe. You think.

___ **Brawl!** Fast paced and incredibly fun, this game plays in less than a minute! Full-color, and illustrated by Anime artist Ryan Kinnaird, there are six character decks of thirty-five cards each.

Eden Studios

___ **All Flesh Must Be Eaten** \$28.00
The Dead walk among us. Enter the dark world of survival horror. You have watched Dawn of the Dead and played Resident Evil to death. A new challenge awaits you in this role-playing game that allows you to play in a world infested by the walking dead. The main rulebook includes rules for character creation, combat and everything else you need to play in this dark world.

FASA

___ **Man & Machine** \$15.00
___ **MechWarrior's Guide To Solaris VII** \$18.00

Five Rings Publishing

___ **Ambitions Debt Starter Dsply**
___ **Ambitions Debt Booster Display** In an exciting turn of events, Rokugan has become the battle ground for an epic duel to the death between Lord Moon and Hitomi. Three factions - Shadowlands Oni, Naga and Lion - have been updated, each one supported by a 60- card theme deck.

Flying Buffalo

Flying Buffalo is releasing four new Lost Worlds books based on the popular and hilarious comic book "Knights of the Dinner Table." Join Bob, Brian, Dave and Sara in these Character-to-Character combat books. The covers of these books are by the same artist who does the covers for the KODT comics.
___ **Knuckles** \$8.95
Thief with crossbow (Bob).
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Magic User with Fireball (Brian).
___ **El Ravager** \$8.95
Fighter with Hackmaster and + 12 magic sword (Dave).
___ **Thorina** \$8.95
Female Barbarian with double-bladed axe (Sara).

Guardians of Order

___ **Hot Rods & Gun Bunnies** \$15.95
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___ **Complete Book Of Yoma Volume 1** \$17.95 This is your one-stop resource for **Sailor Moon Monsters of the Week**. This book provides full background and magical power details, physical descriptions and game stats for every yoma, cardian and droid from the first two seasons of **Sailor Moon**. Entries for the yoma that were cut from the **North American English** translation are also included.
___ **Sailor Scout Character Diary** \$5.95
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___ **Sailor Moon Vs Queen Beryl** \$5.95
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___ **Sailor Mars Vs Jedite** \$5.95
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___ **Sailor Venus Vs Malachite** \$5.95
___ **Tuxedo Mask Vs Shadow Warriors** \$5.95

Last Unicorn Games

___ **Pirates, Renegades and Rogues** \$20.00
___ **Chronicles of the Imperium** \$35.00
___ **Chronicles of the Imperium Narrator Guide** \$6.00

___ **All Our Yesterdays** \$20.00
___ **Starfleet Academy Box Set** \$35.00
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Forsaking their passive heritage, the Cardassian Union has become one of the foremost military powers in the galaxy, allying itself with the Dominion in a bid for complete interstellar conquest. The Cardassian Union introduces players to a stern and militaristic people, including information on Cardassian history and politics, technology and philosophy, and the ongoing course of the Dominion War.

Palladium

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___ **Rifts: Free Quebec** \$20.95
___ **Rifts: Xiticix Invasion** \$16.95

Pinnacle Entertainment

___ **South Of The Border** \$20.00
___ **HOE: Monsters, Muties & Misfits:**
___ **Worms** \$9.95
___ **Canyon O' Doom** \$20.00
The native peoples call it the House of Stone and Light, while western pioneers refer to it as the Grand Canyon. Ripping across the surface of Arizona like an ancient wound, carved by the mighty Colorado River, the Grand Canyon stands as a monument to the power of nature, and fills most who see it with reverence and awe.

Precedence

___ **Wheel Of Time CCG Boosters**
___ **Wheel Of Time 2 Player Box** 19.99

Steve Jackson Games

___ **GURPS Space 3rd Edition** \$21.95
___ **GURPS In Nomine** \$24.95
___ **Tile Chess** \$14.95
Chess breaks free of the board! Tile Chess is a chess variant for up to 6 players, where the shape of the game changes with every move. The more players you conquer, the stronger you become. This very portable game can be played on any small table, even at the pub. So think outside the box!
___ **Superiors I: In Nomine** \$20.95
Seraphim and Malikum, aggressive or authoritarian... find out what it is like to serve some of the most powerful Archangels in Heaven: War, Stone, Judgement, and the Sword. These four powerful Archangels are detailed in Superiors 1, the first in a series which will examine the In Nomine Archangels and Demon Princes in depth. (144 pages)
___ **GURPS Swashbuckler** \$19.95
___ **GURPS Y2K** \$19.95
There are a lot of theories about what will happen when the programming shortcuts of the 60s, 70s, and 80s come back to haunt us on January 1, 2000. But even if those fears are never realized, the dawn of a new millennium is an uncertain time and the thoughts of the media and common man will turn to disaster - much of it man-made! In GURPS Y2K, ten of your favorite GURPS authors take a long look at these millennial fears, from computer crashes to global warning, from a nuclear apocalypse to the Biblical Apocalypse. Are you Y2K compliant?
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What if Imperial China had become an intercontinental power? Islam had supplanted the influence of Christianity? The Vikings had founded a world-spanning empire? England had suppressed the American Revolution? Monarchy hadn't gone out of fashion in Europe? Alternate Earths 2 present six more alternate histories from the authors of GURPS Alternate Earth's-including the low-down

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TSR

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___ **Metropolis Source Book** \$15.00
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___ **The Erciyas Fragments** \$14.95
A young Cappadocian receives a mysterious invitation to a fear-shrouded monastery. There he finds fragments of the original Book of Nod - in a language that has been dead for thousands of years.
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You've demanded it. Now it's here. Mokole details the wererocodilians of the World of Darkness, and reveals information never before seen about Dragon's children. Find out just how powerful their war-forms are, or delve into their racial memory to learn secrets of the Changing Breed.

Games Workshop

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___ **Ork Nobz in 'eavy armor (Sept)**
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Battlefleet Gothic

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Warhammer Fantasy

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___ **Orc Regiment (Oct)**

Mordheim

___ **Mordheim: City of the Damned (Oct)**