



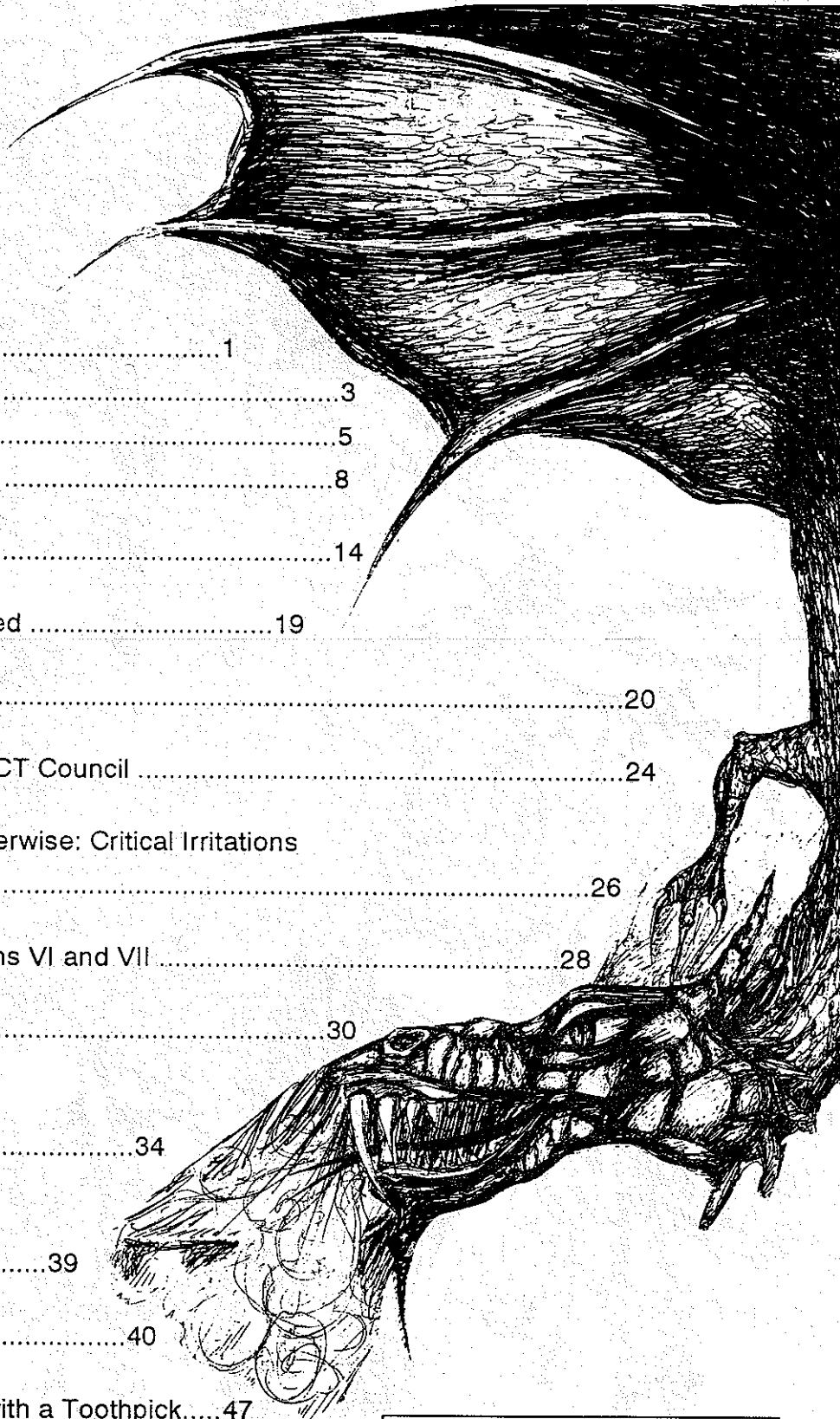
C
L
A
W
M
A
R
K
S

X



Contents

Contents.....	1
Letter from the Editors.....	3
Letters to the Editors.....	5
The Rolemaster Shapechanger	8
<i>by Jessica Tiffin</i>	
Role-Playing Without Roles	14
<i>by Eckhard Gartz</i>	
Trolls: Common Myths Debunked	19
<i>by Adriaan Wessels</i>	
The Depths... of DMing	20
<i>by Giles Embleton</i>	
478 Reasons Why I Hate the UCT Council	24
<i>by the Arch-Bigot of Necropolis</i>	
Inconveniences, Minor and Otherwise: Critical Irritations for Rolemaster	26
<i>by David Maclay</i>	
Review: Rolemaster Companions VI and VII	28
<i>by Giles Embleton</i>	
The Gamer's Guide to Gamers	30
<i>by Reuel Miller</i>	
Review: Supplementa	
Magica.....	34
<i>by Andrew Sturman</i>	
Hermetica: Ars Magica	
Character Sheet Part 2	39
<i>by Mark Brady</i>	
Forum: Tournament Design.....	40
<i>by Anthony Steele and others</i>	
How To Take Over the Planet with a Toothpick.....	47
<i>by Andrew Shackleton</i>	
The Bard's Best Tomes.....	50
<i>by Valeon Velterynath, a.k.a. Eckhard Gartz</i>	
CLASSIFIED!.....	53
Credits and Acknowledgements.....	56

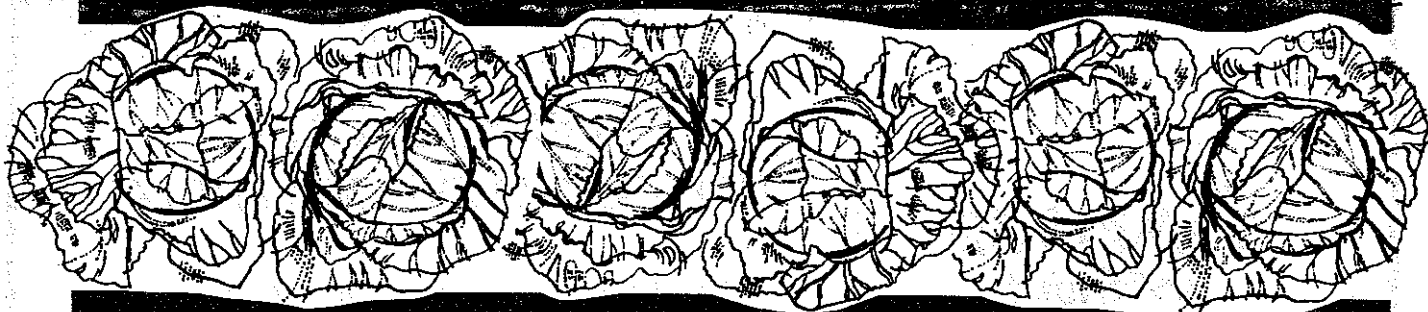


CLAWMARKs submissions can be sent to:

CLAWs UCT
c/o the SRC
UCT
Private Bag
Rondebosch 7700

Submissions can also be sent to the Pope
at the Vatican, but then we probably won't
receive them.





Letter from the Editors

Welcome to the largest edition of CLAWMARKS in history, geography or quantity surveying. We are proud to bring you a whole new range of articles. Such unheard-of and trend-setting little pieces as Men's Winter Knitwear, by Andrew Sturman. How to Clean Your Closet Using Only A Common Household Bulldozer, by Anthony Steele. And Wallpapering for the Whole Family, by Goody Tiffin.

These and other exotic delights may be found within these pages if you look really hard, and muddle the letters up quite a lot.

While you're expending money on CLAWs paraphernalia - WAIT! Stop right there! You are expending money on this item of CLAWs paraphernalia, aren't you? You know what happened to the last person who picked up a copy of CLAWMARKS and tried not to pay for it...? Oh. Well, nor do we, but hey, buy the thing anyway.

While you are expending money on CLAWs paraphernalia, we think (puts on Honest Hakim voice) it would be to the esteemed reader's immeasurable advantage to consider the acquisition of a fine garment, made of authentic clothes, imported from a place that is not here, with a pretty picture on it. Yes, yes! For the first time in quite a long time, a CLAW T-shirt is about to be released. Lock up your nearest and dearest! Plug in the guard dog! Get out your old Evita records...

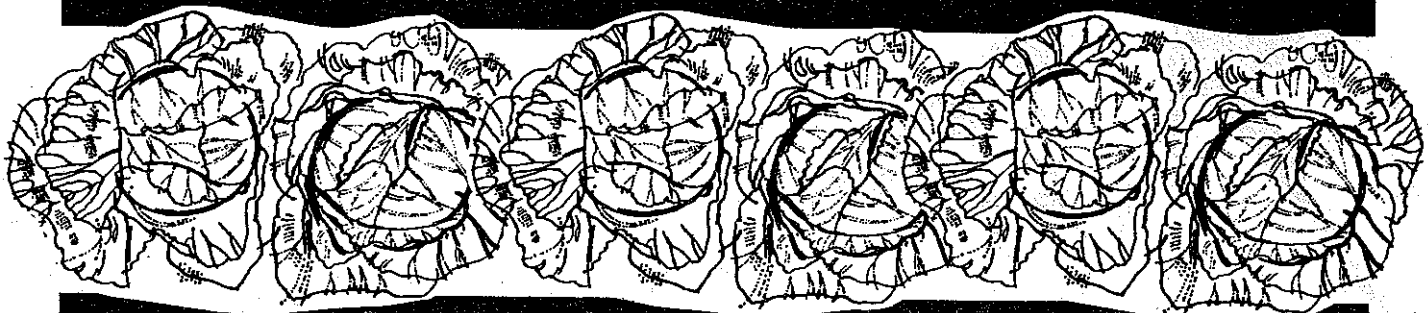
Ahem. While on the subject of gnus, we are proud to announce that the new CLAWroom is still the CLAWroom, by cunning dint of low cunning and nailing ourselves to the floor. Ours! all ours! Mu-ha-ha! This means that we shall have to kill you if you try to take it away from us.

Finally, we wish to state for the politically correct record the following equivalently powerful facts: role-playing is not a cultural weapon, CLAWs supports the status quo, the Vice-Chancellor is a wigwam, and Genghis Khan was just an old sweetie, really.

Even more finally, the Chief Editor In Chief wishes to state, categorically, that the silly views expressed in the introduction to the Arch-Bigot do not reflect those of our glorious Legion. It is mind-boggling to even contemplate that Council could be more powerful than CLAWs. That anything could be more powerful than CLAWs. (Stands back and saltues jim. Reverent silence. Stubs toe, falls over, hits head, slips on deadly snake, lands in pool of acid, drowns. Ooops.)

Don't let the wbbqypligh be mispronounced!

anon
Jessica Andrew
-x-
love from the eds



Games Without Frontiers



FOR ALL YOUR
ROLE-PLAYING MATERIAL

Run by role-players, for role-players

Write for a catalogue to:

P O Box 50197

Waterfront

8002

or email twf@aztec.co.za

*WE HAVE THE BEST PRICES
IN THE COUNTRY*





O Poor & Hapless Individuals

Mere words are insufficient to describe my TOTAL OUTRAGE at the ignorance of your petty little publication. In its pitiful attempt at pleasing its readership, it has provoked my MOST SINCERE DISPLEASURE. Prepare to BE ANNILLEATED (*sick*).

Your attempts at irritating me have worked only too well.

The extremely personal nature of your comments have not gone unnoticed. An insult to me is an insult to the entire nation of Mars. For this reason, your little planet will shortly be reduced to its constituent atoms. You have brought it upon yourselves.

X. X. III

(Xavier Xolfonso III,
Supreme Commander of the Mars
Ultimate Warcouncil)

Please note: the different handwriting is the handwriting of X'plg, private secretary to the great Xavier. Xavier collapsed in a fit during the writing of this letter, and therefore had to dictate the rest.

Dear Mars Bars

Your letter is addressed to "Poor & Hapless Individuals". This shows up an obvious error in your understanding of CLAWMARKS editors.

CLAWMARKS editors in fact belong to an extremely complex hive mind, operated on the highest level by Controller units, which are shaped like armadillos. This fantastical mental network can sometimes act as a unit, sending forth powerful psychic rays which bend the Earth's planetary leylines. It is during such operations that editions of CLAWMARKS are created.

Letters to the Editor

So you see that CLAWMARKS editors cannot be understood as "individuals" in any normal sense of the term.

Therefore, your drivel was clearly not intended for us. We will consequently ignore it.

Yours dismissively
The "Editorial Collective"

Dear Editors

I am a 3rd level D&D bard with a prob. Why can I not find master trainers to help me improve my skills in Colour In Tectonic Plates, Bury Lamp-post, Charm Coelacanth, Conserve Ozone Layer, Copy Carlo, and See With Eyes Closed? I understand that these are slightly unusual abilities, but surely there must be some suitable Grand Master seeking employment. Perhaps your magazine could help connect us.

I am particularly worried about the fact that every time I try to use one of these skills, I turn into a turnip. What am I doing wrong? My QEZ stat is only 2, but since the bonus is +40, it should work. The DM refuses to discuss the matter with me.

Please help.

Yours sincerely

"Cherenne" of Karameikos

Dear "Cherenne" (*nudge, wink*)

Long may your turnip-leaves crackle with Electricity. I refuse to discuss the matter with you.

The Editor

(who happens to be your much aggravated DM)

Dear Sirs

Your theory of small dogs was obviously written by an Arts student. It was hopelessly vague and unscientific. However, after some calculation, I have found that the basic theory is valid.

The energy expended by a dog moving about is equal to the change in kinetic energy, that is

$\Delta E = \frac{1}{2}MV^2$. The energy available to the dog per unit time is constant, so $E = Kt$.

Thus, as the mass of the dog is constant,

$$Kt = \Delta \frac{1}{2}MV^2, \\ 2Kt/M = \Delta V^2$$

Thus the smaller the mass of the dog, the greater the changes in velocity it must make in order to burn off energy. All of this is solid Newtonian physics. If a dog is prevented from releasing energy, by nailing it to the floor or (otherwise rendering it immobile, for instance burying it, or supergluing it to a tree) then clearly the energy will build up. Thus this part of the theory as originally put forward is rigorously proven.

There is another method of disposing of small dogs suggested by these equations. As the mass of the dog approaches zero, its changes in velocity must approach infinity. Starving a small dog will decrease its mass and therefore increase its exertions to such a point where, if you can put up with the increased nuisance for long enough, it will be unable to restrain itself from exceeding escape velocity, and flinging itself into outer space.

But why will the built-up energy of a confined dog be released by an explosion? The answer lies in a little known field of Quantum Physics known as Quantum Canodynamics (QCD). According to Quantum Canodynamics, the nucleus of the dog is made up of two kinds of elementary particle, notably Dogons and Bogons. Dogons carry a Canodynamic charge of +1, and Bogons are Canodynamically neutral.

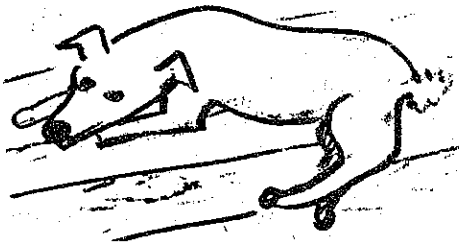


A certain ratio of Bogons to Dogons is needed to keep the nucleus stable.

It is my theory that when the dog is in a high energy state, a Dogon - Antidogon particle pair is created (thus not violating the conservation of Canodynamic charge). The Antidogon (a particle also known as the Felon) is strongly repelled by the Dogons, and leaves the vicinity faster than a scalded cat. The excess of Dogons in the nucleus means that there are not enough Bogons to hold the Dogons together, and fission is inevitable. Not only is the kinetic energy that the dog had accumulated released, but so is the binding energy of the canine nucleus. Fragments of the dog are ejected in all directions at high velocity.

One prediction of this theory is that the Dogon-Antidogon particle pair has a lower rest energy than the Bogon-Antibogon particle pair. This will make the creation of Dogon particle pairs more likely than that of Bogon particle pairs. Another prediction is that if large numbers of small dogs are nailed to the same floor in close proximity, an explosion in one will probably lead to a chain reaction in others.

Yours in the pursuit of Science
Bill "Mr Logic" von Furry-Creature
BSc (Hons) ComSci, UCT



Dear Learned and Furry Thing

We are truly, truly humbled. The depth of your scientific insight is, well, deep. Deep.

We had no idea of the exciting implications of the Small Dog theory that we devised. The possibilities for pooch-popping are now enormous. Little fluffy detonations will soon ring out across suburbia, punctuated by the occasional piercing screech of a mutt achieving escape velocity. (The term "dog whistle" takes on a whole new meaning.)

Considerable improvements in worldwide standards of living may be expected.

It tends to occur with important discoveries that the initial theory is

Clawmarks X, February 1994, page 6

spawned by a great but erratic genius, and a meticulous "details man" then refines the work. Thank you for performing this indispensable latter role.

*Yours supportively
The Editors*

Dear Sir

I am writing to complain about CLAWMERS' low standard of spullcheckings.

In your XX issue you describe a dispel undead spell with non-standard components. According to you this spell does not affect the caster. I warn you that it does. When casting this on the Lich Abernathy I was returned to my grave till some fool of a cleric tried to raise me. Please correct this error and cancel my subscription. A simple computer simulation would have avoided this unpleasantness.

Lord Bertrand Colostieum.

P.S. I am posting through a time warp in the hope that this error can be corrected before it happens.

Dear Bert

We always appreciate letters like yours, because we don't have to think up excuses for being abusive. Any moron can see what a moron you are.

CLAWMARKS XX does not exist (yet), nor does the article to which you refer. You are a hallucinatory nitwit.

Furthermore, we printed the article to which you refer simply to confuse things like yourself.

The only error we would like to see urgently corrected is that of your birth. Might we recomend gargling radioactive caltrops?

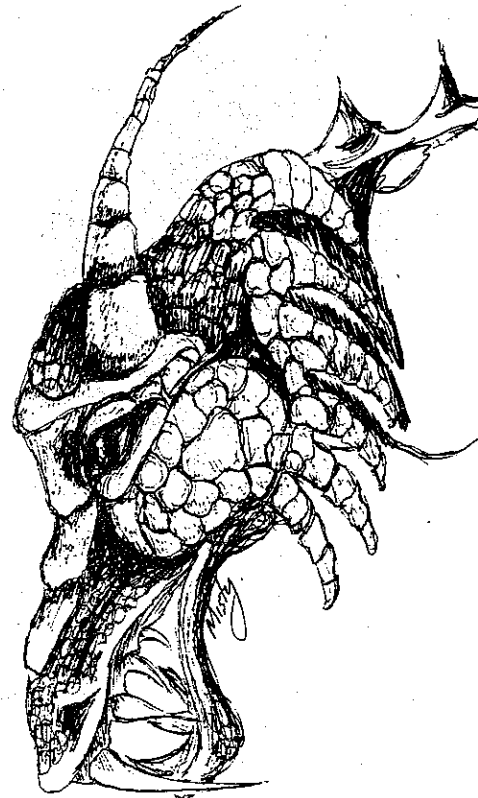
Yours in utter loathing
The Editors

Dear Editors

I have several frustrated players who have paid 7 gold coins for a map (of where they are going I think). Niggly fools. I have DMed my world now for a number of years without any recourse to such tomfoolery as maps or notes. Now what! However, the question I ask is, assuming a subjective reality, is it necessary to have a map at all?

Yours confusedly (and not a little narked with my silly players)

Cartus Atlas



Dear Mr Atlas

If you create silly things like subjective realities, of course you will become confused.

In a subjective reality, a map is not only unnecessary, it's impossible. But if your players have any sense, they will want to know some basic facts about the world around them, to enable them to plan their actions. It is not surprising that your players are frustrated if the world is not consistent enough to be mapped.

We refer you to Mr Embleton's Depths of DMing article (in this edition), which clearly explains the importance of relating the campaign world meaningfully to the players.

Yours
The Editors



Dear Sirs

Here is the review of Clawmarks Nine that you requested.

The Drugs and the Swords articles were good, but on the whole there was not as much real meat in Clawmarks Nine as in Clawmarks Eight. The Ars Magica and Nihilist articles were OK, if rather obscure.

Forum: Why do I get the idea that both Andrew and Peter have argued forth into arcane and obscure realms that neither of them (or me for that matter) fully understand.

Anyway, what is a "eucatastrophic premise"? Does anyone care? Is it merely coincidence that Andrew is an editor?

The Bard: I must disagree with the review of Robert Jordan's "the Shadow Rising". Jordan's tale, so promising in the earlier volumes, is beginning to drag. Virtually nothing happens in this huge tome, to my frustration. I suspect that either Mr. Jordan does not know how to finish the damn thing or, more likely, he is being paid by the word.

Yours still waiting for my cheque
Pemeberton J. Hackensworth
Art Critic

Dear Mr Hackensnort

Thank you for that review, which we certainly did not request.

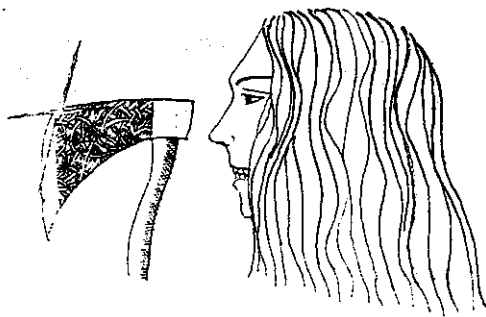
We feel that CLAWMARKS VIII was a particularly good edition. CLAWMARKS IX had the disadvantage of being done in mid-year, when the editors and contributors are generally burning out on tournament production. Given this, we're pretty pleased with it.

We would not presume to presume why you found the forum too difficult to understand.

Admittedly Peter and Andrew's burbles became unnecessarily lengthy and unpleasant. It is no coincidence that Andrew is an editor: he was deliberately given the job.

Unfortunately we have no cheque to give you.

Yours tolerantly
The Editors



Dear Eddies in the Space-Time Continuum

I was in Durban in September last year, and attended the UND Tollysoc feast, at which King Dexter was crowned. On this occasion, an ex-member of TollySoc let me know quite emphatically about an error in CLAWMARKS IX.

In the article Dawn of the Iconoclasts, Dr Terbald PloonWrabler wrote that the team which came second was from "Durban Tolkien Society." The ex-member at the feast told me that actually the team had been of the Rhudor (Natal!) Division of the Arnor Society (a national Tolkien thing), despite the fact that half the member of the team were in fact Tollysoc members.

I asked for more information about this alleged Arnor Society, and was assured that it would be sent to CLAWs. Have you received anything?

My question is: do the bizarre intricacies of Durban role-players really interest us? Do we really care what they call themselves?

Yours,
Itinerant Sage and CLAW member

Dear Q. Penultimate Cringingknut

We advise about four slices, sugared lightly and boiled in a small amount of paraffin. What you do with it after that is your problem.

Yours sincerely,
The Editors.

Dear "Clawmarks" Editors

It has recently been brought to my attention that a patient of mine, Xavier Xolfonso, has been corresponding with your magazine in an abusive manner. I wish to offer my most sincere apology for his behaviour, on behalf of all the citizens of Mars.

Xavier is an unfortunate individual. He had an extremely unhappy childhood, to which he sometimes returns. He suffers from a number of disorders of the mind, most particularly multiple personality disorder and delusions of grandeur. You may have already received a letter from him featuring one of his secondary personalities - X'plg, his own "private secretary". Your reactions to Xavier's outpourings are entirely understandable.

Unfortunately, since he began his correspondence with you, Xavier has developed a further personality, which is a frothing and angry individual calling itself the "Annilleator". He has also suffered further relapses, which I will not detail here.

For this reason, we will no longer be permitting Xavier to read your publication. We usually allow our patients to read your magazine, as it sometimes has a positive effect on them and speeds their recovery.

Once again, I apologise most sincerely for any offense that may have been given by my patient. However, the vaporisation fleet has already been despatched to your planet and my schedule is too full to permit me the time to organise a cancellation. I trust this will not cause undue inconvenience.

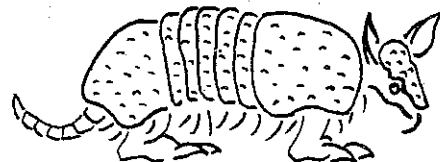
Yours sincerely,
Dr W. Zotto
Director: MORON
(Martian Organisation for the Research and Observation of Neurodynamics)

Dear Direct Moron,

How many times must we tell you Martians about the obscene power of the Editorial Hive-Mind? Mere vaporisation fleets wobble at our approach! Whole cosmic vortices can be centralised upon them!

Of course, we may decide not to protect this planet, since, after all, it is Monday today. As visitors to this dimension, we are not overly concerned with its sulky little problems.

Noodles to your grandmother.
The Editorial Hive-Mind



THE ROLEMASTER

The shapechanger must be one of the most attractive archetypes of fantasy. The power of animal forms is amazing, allowing abilities such as strength, stealth, lethal natural weaponry, even flight, that the human body cannot achieve without magic.

Unfortunately, such power can be badly unbalanced in a game situation, which is probably why so few systems allow for a shapechanger as a player character. Despite this, a viable shapechanger class should be possible with careful moderation; and Rolemaster, with its flexible development system, provides a good basis from which to work.

In these rules I am concentrating on "natural" shapechange; i.e. a physical change from human to a single animal form, with associated warping of the skeleton and re-distribution of flesh and organs (see *An American Werewolf in London* for graphic details...) This system is appropriate for lycanthropes and similar cursed changes, or for racial shapechange abilities such as those of the Beornings in Middle-Earth. Velvet, the example I use in the article, is a Chiat, a reclusive race of were-chialla Mentalists (a chialla is a sort of caracal-shaped black panther).

This kind of change is obviously not the same as the magical shape-change practiced by mages or druids, which allows multiple forms at the flick of a spell. Clothing and equipment will not change along with the body of the character, and new clothes could be-

come expensive if the character doesn't undress before changing.

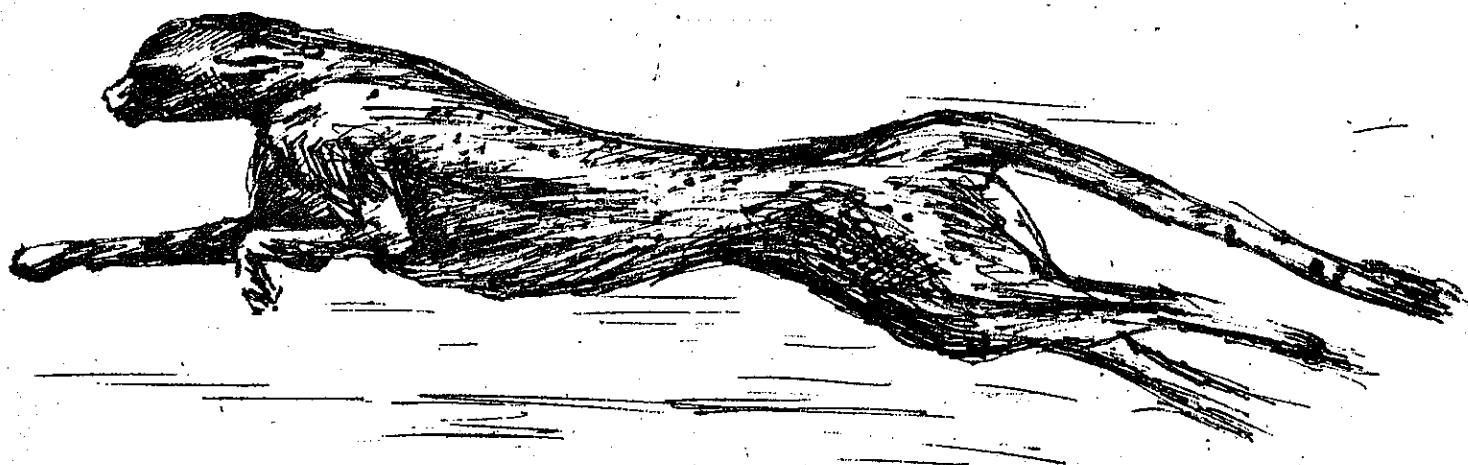
The assumption in this article is that characters are primarily human, and develop the ability to change into animal form as they grow older. If you want to assume that the character is an animal who gradually learns human form, you should probably develop the animal form first, and carry points over to human. You may have some interesting problems with things like language, though...

POSSIBLE ANIMAL FORMS

The stats, etc, I have given are for example forms of large cat, wolf and bear; DMs will have to be creative with grotty players who want to play were-wombats or whatever. Bear in mind that the natural shapechange parameters demand a certain amount of conservation of mass, i.e. no were-beetles or were-Krakens.

Within this limit, all shapechange is magical to some extent, so mass equalities should be general rather than exact. A good guideline is to restrict changes to no more than double or half of the human body weight - i.e. grizzly bears are possible for a large, heavy human, and a small, light human should be able to manage some large bird (e.g. condor, albatross, swan). No sparrows or seagulls, sorry.

The mass-conservation rule leads naturally onto some sort of correlation between the physical features of the human form and the attributes of the animal. The relationship between forms is incredibly close, so that some animal nature must show through. Velvet, my were-chialla, has slanty cat-eyes and slightly pointed teeth; she is a small, compact and very graceful



SHAPECHANGER

woman, fastidious and rather nasty. Barbarossa the Beorning, on the other hand, is a huge, hairy, muscular male with a hearty appetite and a wade-in-growling approach to combat.

NOTE: if your DM's second name is Suicidal Insanity and he/she actually likes grossly overpowered characters kicking around his/her world (or, in fact, simply kicking it), he/she may allow a were-dragon character class. This should work with this natural shape-change system, with the exception of skill limitations in animal form (set out below). At DM's discretion, a dragon can basically do any damn thing it wants, including magic. It would, of course, have to develop rather a lot in the way of flying skills. See article by Iuvenis the very powerful mage-drake in Clawmarks VIII.

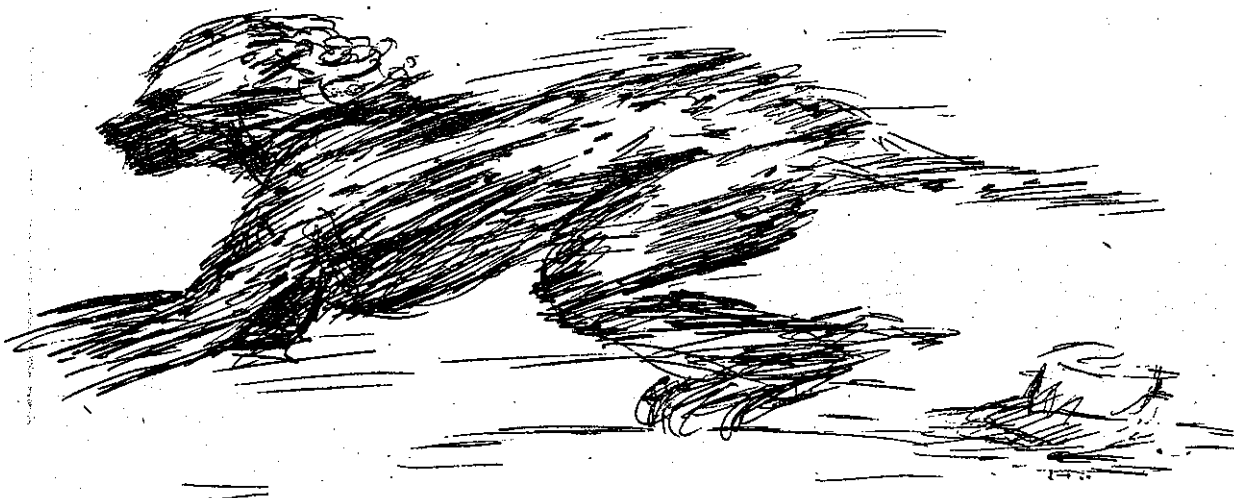
BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE CLASS

This Rolemaster shapechanger is not so much a new class as an amalgamation. The character effectively has two classes and two character sheets, one for each form.

The human class can be anything; there is no reason why it cannot be a spell-caster. Perhaps the only limitation should be the animal attributes which would show through into the human form. I don't think a were-tiger would be a particularly competent healer, for example.

(The specification of "human" class is not intended to be speciesist. It seems to me that human is the most likely race to have natural shape-change abilities - a lycanthrope Elf, for example, seems unlikely, and a halfling were-tiger? No way. Still, if you insist, fiendish ingenuity could possibly come up with a racial history that justifies the existence of, say, a dwarvish race of were-bears (small but beastly!), or Elven swan-mays, or halflings with an animal form (probably teddy-bear). Expand your mind!).

The animal form must be some kind of fighter, as appropriate to the abilities of the form. Suggested classes are:



LARGE CAT: High Warrior Monk
 WOLF: Fighter or Rogue
 BEAR: Barbarian or Fighter

There are obviously some development cost discrepancies in these suggested classes, since they are chosen for internal appropriateness rather than comparative balance (i.e. a cat should have the physical agility skills of a High Warrior Monk; a bear should not). As always in Rolemaster, DM's discretion should prevail; one option is to stick to the suggested classes but change certain costs as you see fit.

This system assumes that the animal form has most of the mental capacity of the human form, although this will be strongly moderated by the instincts of the wild creature. The were-creature can think, reason and plan, but will lose highly civilised skills such as reading, magic and academic memory. (Unless it's a dragon, see above). I tend to assume that enough mental ability remains to understand human speech. Of course, skills such as writing would be lost anyway because of the dexterity problem.

In addition to this, the instincts of the wild animal, often a hunter, will in many cases conflict with the wishes of the civilised human. This is not reflected in the system, other than in the Self Discipline modifier, and needs to be roleplayed!

e.g. Velvet, in human form, is captured by a group of bandits. Locked in a shed a little distance from the bandit camp, she manages to loosen her bonds. She is without weapons and cannot cast spells as she has been drugged and has a hideous hangover. Once free, she changes shape; her black panther form has quite enough brain to break down the door, and to stealthily approach the camp, as she has planned. The bandits suffer a surprise attack from a feline whirlwind with a grudge. In human form, Velvet might think to leave a bandit alive for questioning (the rest of her party are still missing), but in cat form the killing instinct takes over, and all the bandits are slaughtered. Velvet



Racial Bonuses

(These are suggested guidelines. DMs may want to moderate them according to their own ideas of the animals concerned.)

Animal Forms

	CAT	WOLF	BEAR	BEAR (GRIZZLY)	BEAR (SMALL)
CON	+10	+10	+35	+20	+20
AG	+20	+10	-10	-5	-5
SD	+/-15	+/-15	+/-15	+/-15*	+/-15*
ME	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20
RE	-15	-15	-15	-15	-15
ST	+10	+10	+35	+20	+20
QU	+20	+15	-10	-5	-5
PR	-	-	-	-	-
EM	-25	-20	-25	-20	-20
IN	+15	+10	+5	+10	+10

* Negatives apply to everything except the shape-change ability itself, which has a positive bonus (well, stands to reason, doesn't it?), and to Stalk/Hide, as in the option with Elves (Companion I, pg. 47).

Human forms

CAT	CO +5	AG +5	IN +10	SD +/-10
WOLF	CO +5	AG +5	IN +10	SD +/-10
BEAR	CO +5	ST +5	IN +5	SD +/-5

cleans herself well before changing back to human form, collecting her equipment, and setting out in search of her friends.

BACKGROUND OPTIONS

In the quest for non-overpowered characters, it is assumed that the shape-change ability takes up four background options. Whether the character has any left will depend on his/her humanoid race. Tough, isn't it.

STATS AND RACIAL BONUSES

The stat crunch is worse than normal when developing a shapechanger, since there are the prime requisites of two classes to consider, and basic stats remain the same for both classes. Velvet, for example, is a Mentalist, and naturally would like a high Presence; her cat-form, however, requires a high Agility and Quickness. Sooner or later one runs out of high stats.

The animal form, of course, is compensated for by the racial bonuses, which are large (see box). The human form racial bonuses are also different, although less radically, being moderated by the animal characteristics of the were-race.

STAT BONUSES

Stat bonuses, again, must be pretty much at DM's discretion, taking into account the character and animal form of the individual.

Human stat bonuses will be largely the same as those of the human base class. Velvet, for example, had Mentalist skill bonuses except for Directed Spells and Linguistic skills, where she had no bonus, Perception, which was +2 instead of +1, and the addition of Subterfuge at +1. The idea is to try and reflect animal abilities that may carry through into the human form in the bonuses - here, feline perceptions and sneakiness.

Animal stat bonuses may be more radically modified from the base class, since few fighter classes allow for bonuses in areas dealing with the wild, etc. See table below for example modifications:

	High Warrior Monk	Velvet's, modified
Combat	+3	+2
Athletic	+2	+1
Body dev.	+2	+1
Concentration	+1	-
Deadly	+2	-
Outdoor	-	+2
Perception	-	+2

A cat cannot use concentration or deadly skills, but should have perception and outdoor bonuses - as, indeed, should most animals.

DEVELOPING THE CHARACTER

The shapechanger development works on a system of re-allocation of points as well as some carry-through of skills from one form to another. The procedure is rough as follows:

1. Develop the human form normally, at the costs of its class, with whatever skills, spells, etc, you want it to have. Bear in mind, though, that (a) the animal-influenced nature of the character will make some skills unsuitable, and (b) it will save development points to have skills that the animal form can use as well.
2. The human development should remain as a separate character sheet, with its stat bonuses as for the modified human form, and level bonuses from the class. Note that body development, hits and DB will

be different for this form, and should be kept separately.

3. Start a new character sheet. Any skills that an animal could use are carried forward to the animal form - see box for skill guidelines. The number of ranks developed stays the same, but skill bonuses will change with the different stat bonuses.

4. The development points used for skills unsuitable for the animal form, can be re-used to develop skills the animal can use, at the costs of the new form. This does allow an additional double-development, if the character so desires, although additional ranks at the same level will be at different costs.

e.g. Velvet has developed Stalk/Hide to 4 ranks in her human form as Mentalist, at a cost of 5. Her cat-form has free development points and chooses to add to these 4 ranks, but at the High Warrior Monk cost of 1/5. She chooses to expend 6 development points in double-development - i.e. it is possible for a were-creature to triple-develop some skills over both forms at the same level. She now has 4 ranks in stalk/Hide in human form, and 6 in cat form - realistic, as a cat is far better than a human at sneaking.

SKILL DIFFERENTIATION

The animal form of the character has access to certain skills only, in keeping with its shape and nature. These are thus the only skills that will carry through from human form; the development points used for skills excluded below can be re-allocated. Skills appropriate to animals are, by category:

ACADEMIC: none except Flora, Fauna and Herb lore (animals know what is and isn't good to eat), and Weather-watching.

ANIMAL: none (you could allow a wolf or dog Herding, if you really wanted to).

ATHLETIC: any appropriate out of Body Development, Climbing, Distance Running, Diving, Flying, Sprinting, Swimming.

COMBAT: natural attacks at primary weapon cost; Two-weapon combo (for 2-claw attack); Disarm Foe, Unarmed; Stunned Maneuver; Tumbling Evasion (probably only appropriate for cats).

CONCENTRATION: any Adrenal except Quick Draw; Body Damage Stabilise, Control Lycanthropy, Spatial Location Awareness.

DEADLY: Ambush and Silent Kill.

EVALUATION: none.

GENERAL: none.

GYMNASTIC: Acrobatics, Jumping; Tightrope Walking for cats, perhaps, and not actually on ropes.

LINGUISTIC: none, unless you want to give Singing to bird forms.

MAGICAL: none.

MEDICAL: none.

PERCEPTION: any except Lie Perception or Locate Secret Opening.

SOCIAL: none, although pack animals may merit Leadership.

SUBTERFUGE: none except Camouflage and Stalk/Hide.

SURVIVAL: Caving (only for cave-dwelling animal), Foraging, Region Lore.

NB: ADOLESCENT LEVEL: do not develop the animal form at adolescent level. Instead, the DM should allow one rank in each of the animal attacks and in appropriate animal skills - climbing, foraging, tracking, stalk/hide, etc. This must be very much at DM's discretion; the idea is to produce an animal that has more or less the basic skills of its species, before the player starts developing it in tandem with the human form.

COMBAT

Obviously, points expended on weapon skills in human form may be re-used in developing the animal form. All natural attacks (claw, bite, bear hug, etc) are developed at primary weapon cost. Left claw, right claw, 2-claw and back claw rake (disembowel) attacks must each be developed separately. A 2-claw attack can be developed as a two-weapon combination.

Attacks per round are largely normal, i.e. one single claw attack per round, or left and right claw as two-weapon.

Special attacks

Each type of animal has its own idiosyncratic attacks; I have included those worked out for a large cat. Comparable skills might be the bear's hug attack, or the wolf's rip-out-the-throat attack; you would have to develop these in close consultation with your friendly fascist DM. Large cats could have:

1. **The disembowel attack.** If both attacks of a two-claw attack are criticals, then the animal can make a further raking attack with its back claws (always supposing it has developed the skill). The assumption is that the cat has held down its prey with both front paws, and is ripping out its innards with the back paws. Cats are pretty, sometimes.
2. **The pounce.** This is developed at the martial arts cost for the character. The cat is effectively leaping at its opponent - you've seen a cat with a mouse? A Pounce is a Medium Bash attack; if it hits, the cat can attack with claw(s) in the same round. If the Medium Bash is a critical, the attack in the same round is at +15.

ACTUALLY CHANGING SHAPE

Yes, the character must develop shape-change (i.e. Control Lycanthropy), and make a roll every time they want to change. Nice DMs may want to give the shape-changer a special low cost for the skill, regardless of class.

Nasty DMs may want to make the actual change very difficult at low level. Obviously, if the character tries

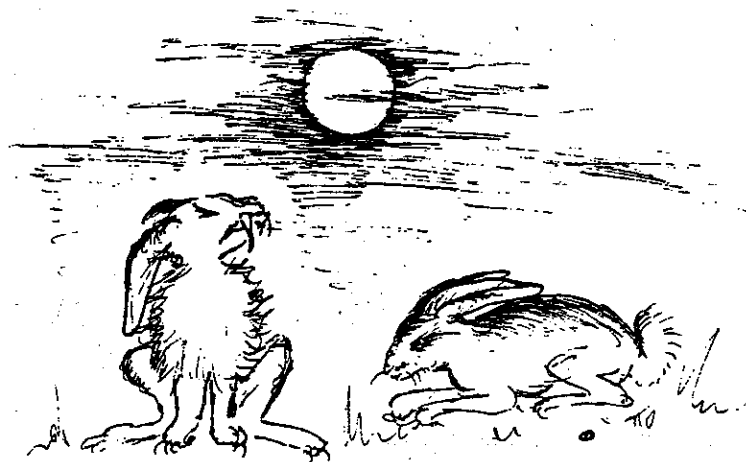
to change and fails, there should be penalties. Best case scenario is that the character can try again next round / ten minutes later / 3 hrs later / whatever, depending on DM nastiness. Worst case scenario suggests that the DM get excessively humorous with fumbles. ("You accidentally turn into a turnip.")

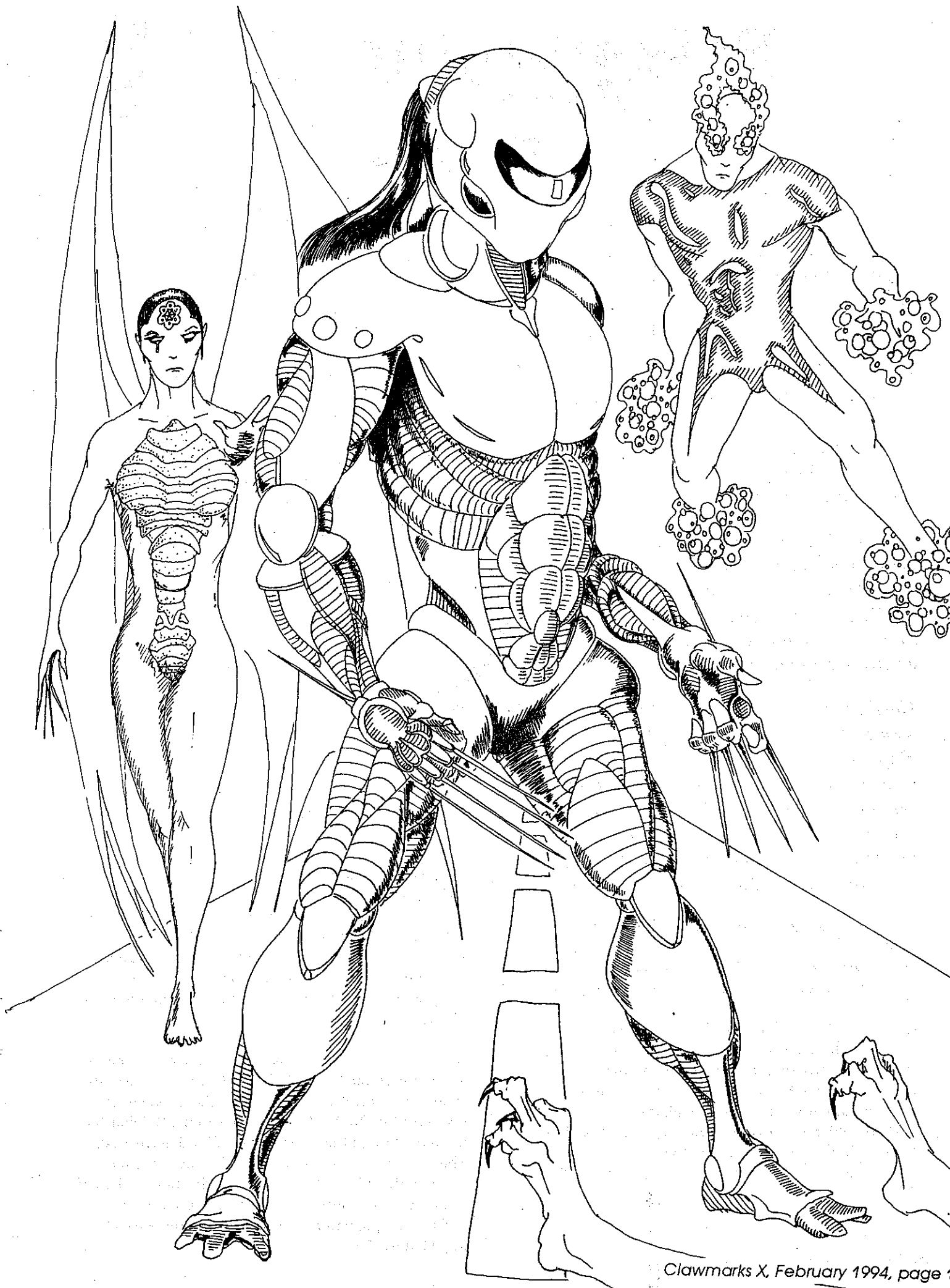
Another option is varying the time taken to actually change, as per the Sturman system. By this rule, the shape-change takes (10 - the number of ranks in Control Lycanthropy) rounds, to a minimum of 1, and the shape-changer takes the same number of hit-points damage, to a minimum of 0, from the stress of the change. This is realistic (you are warping your body badly, after all), and makes changing shape that little bit less casual. The character is totally helpless when in the middle of changing, so there will be none of this nipping into useful shapes in the middle of combat...

Another aspect of changing that should be considered is the possible reversion to animal nature if the character remains for too long in his/her animal form. The tale told in *The Hobbit* by Gandalf, about the wizard who in bear form killed his own son, is a good example of this process. In animal form, the character is prey to most of the instincts and impulses of the animal; as time goes by, the animal will tend to lose more and more memory of its human form, reverting to a state close to that of the animal in the wild.

WARNING!

Before starting to develop your shape-changer, it is important to know the attributes of the animal you wish to play. In other words, RESEARCH IT! - its size, relative strength, speed, social habits, appearance, special combat forms, etc, etc, etc. Any decent encyclopedia, or even a kid's book on Useful Facts About Animals, should be able to help. The DM is unlikely to believe that your were-bunny-rabbit is naturally vampiric, anyway, and it helps to quote chapter and verse when you tell him/her how far it actually can jump...





Role-playing without Roles

'My character is a sorcerer.' Say this, and everyone knows precisely what your character is, his capabilities, skills, and weaknesses are. Even more so when one adds, 'And he is 10th Level'. Anyone who has read the rulebook now knows more or less exactly what the character can do, and can then act accordingly. What this often leads to is a huge number of classes with many similarities and minor differences, so that players are kept guessing as to their opponents' (or allies') abilities.

This problem is common to most role-playing systems I know: that the character's class determines the character's skills. In 'real' life, it is the profession one chooses that is determined by one's aptitudes and abilities, and not vice versa.

Thus, I have come to a very simple solution: remove the whole concept of class from role-playing. And while we are at it, we might as well eliminate the rather artificial concept of levels too. What this leaves is a character with some skills, of which some have been practiced more and some less, and a few deficiencies to balance everything.

At first glance the idea might appear implausible, much more so when one thinks of how to build this into a game system, but in fact it is a fairly straightforward matter, and not at all complicated to implement.

Of course, it depends on which system one uses as a base. The Rolemaster system is so close to the basic concept already that the conversion requires little effort. In Rolemaster, levels and classes are almost redundant already due to the Development Point system, which permits characters to learn any skill they wish, the drawback being that each class strictly defines how easy it is to learn particular skills. (Why, for example, should a fighter find animal handling easier than a thief?)

In any event, to the actual implementation of a 'no classes, no levels' system based on Rolemaster. I will discuss this in two steps: how to do without classes, and how to do without levels.

1. Removing Classes

There is only one difficulty associated with this: which skills does a character have, and which spells (if any) can he learn. In other words, what exactly are the development costs for a particular skill?

This does require a bit of work to determine. The way I have solved the problem is as follows: use the skill categories as they are in Rolemaster (ie Academic, Animal etc) and permit players to determine their general ability in each category, either by choice or by rolling on the table below (ignoring the third column, Skill Roll Modifier, for the moment):

Table 1: Overall Abilities

d%	Overall Ability	Skill Roll Modifier
01 - 07	Incapable	-50
08 - 17	Untalented	-30
18 - 34	Inept	-15
35 - 66	Normal	0
67 - 83	Adept	+15
84 - 93	Talented	+30
94 - 00	Excelling	+50

This table is, of course, only an example, and can easily be modified if the results are not satisfactory. The meaning of this table will be explained in a moment. When a character learns a new skill, the development point cost has to be determined. This can be done either for all skills, when the character is created, or, much easier, only when the character wishes to learn a skill.

Each skill has a base cost assigned to it, and depending on the character's roll the cost can increase or decrease. For simplicity's sake I use the DP costs as given for the 'No Profession' class in the Rolemaster manual, though these may be modified as desired. The roll for each skill is adjusted by the modifier given in the third column of the table above. Thus, if a character is Adept in the skill's category, he gains a +15 on the roll, whereas if he is Incapable the roll is adjusted by -50.

In short: for each new skill, the character rolls d%, adding/subtracting the category modifier, and determines the result on the Table 2 (below).

For example, a character Talented in Combat wishes to take his first rank in Stunned Manouever. The category modifier is +30 (Talented), the base cost 2/6. The player rolls 56 + 30 = 86, which gives him DP cost of 1/4. (This cost is kept for future use; the player does not roll again when he decides to take a second rank.)

The table can be easily adapted to cover any variety the GM needs. Ideally, each skill should have its own entry, but for some reason the Clawmarks editors seem to resist several pages of tables.

As an option, the GM may permit a player to choose one category as a 'primary' category, so that exceptionally high rolls in that category give the character a miscellaneous bonus to his skill, according to Table 3.



Table 2: Development Cost Adjustments

	01-07	08-17	18-34	35-66	67-83	84-93	94-00
Base 2/4	7	4	2/9	2/4	2/3	1/3	1/2
Base 2/6	10	5	3/7	2/6	2/3	1/4	1/3
Base 3/6	12	6	4/8	3/6	3/4	2/4	1/4
Base 3/7	12	6	4/9	3/7	3/4	2/4	1/4
Base 3/8	15	7	4/10	3/8	3/5	2/5	1/5
Base 3/10	15	8	5/15	3/10	3/7	2/9	2/5
Base 3	15	10	6	3	3/12	3/10	2/10
Base 4/10	15	8	6	4/10	3/9	3/6	2/6
Base 4	15	8	6	4	3	3/9	2/7
Base 5/6	15	8	6/12	5/6	4/9	3/8	2/7
Base 5	15	12	8	5	4/10	3/9	2/8
Base 6	20	12	8	6	4	3	3/6
Base 7	20	15	10	7	5	4/9	3/7
Base 10	20	15	12	10	8	5	4/9
Base 15	20	20	18	15	10	8	5
Base 2/*	7	5/*	3/*	2/*	2/*	1/*	1/*
Base 3/*	9	8/*	4/*	3/*	2/*	2/*	1/*
Base 4/*	12	10	5/*	4/*	3/*	3/*	2/*
Spell Lists	15	8	5/*	4/*	3/*	2/*	1/*

Table 3: Skill Bonuses for Exceptional Rolls

d%	Miscellaneous Bonus
01 - 120	Normal
	(as per Table 1)
121 - 135	As above, +5
136 - 150	As above, +10
151 - 165	As above, +15
166 - 180	As above, +20
181 - 210	As above, +25
211 - 230	As above, +30
231 - 260	As above, +35
261 - 300	As above, +40
301 - 350	As above, +45
351+	As above, +50

Thus, had the player above chosen Combat as his primary category and rolled open-ended, say $138 + 30 = 168$, he would have gained a miscellaneous +20 to all Stunned Manouevers.

This, then, permits very variable character generation, with almost any possible combination of skills. However, there is one minor detail to still solve: which spell lists can the character learn? The easiest way around this is to permit the character to choose his realm, and then to assign certain spell lists as base lists. Rolling for the base lists is a possibility, but either a whole new complicated set of tables would have to be created, or the risk of a random grouping of unrelated lists will have to be taken. All in all, it probably works best to permit the player a choice (with final arbitration by the GM, of course).

2. Removing Levels

There is less bookkeeping involved in this, but slightly more restructuring. If levels are removed, what problems does that give rise to?

- i. Experience and development: when does a character gain DPs or is permitted to train?
- ii. When and how does a character gain/lose stats?
- iii. How do resistance rolls work?
- iv. What of skills with a 'per level' bonus?
- v. Spell durations, Power Points etc?

Actually, most of these are surprisingly easily resolved. I might have overlooked one or two small problems, but if so, these should be solvable in similar ways, with a little bit of thought.



i. Experience and DPs

I have considered two possibilities: first, that the GM calculates experience as normal and, at a time when the character would reach the next level, permit him to train with the normal number of Development points.

In effect, though, that means that all that has happened is that the GM is keeping the level secret. A better way, to my mind, is for the GM to calculate experience after each adventure/section/whatever, and calculate the fraction this represents of one level's advancement. The character then receives that fraction of his DPs and can train immediately after the adventure.

For example, assuming a character would need 2000 XP for the next level, and has gained 200 XP during the adventure, he would then 10% (200/2000) of his DPs for immediate development.

True, that again implies a 'hidden level' system, but there are no easy ways around that, unless the GM simply decides to assign DPs randomly. Not to say that there are no other methods, but I only want to present a modification of the current system, not create a completely new one.

ii. Stat Gain and Loss

Here it depends on how the GM assigns XP and DPs. If he uses the first method, rolls on the stat gain/loss table simply occur whenever a character gains DPs.

If the second method is used, rolls obviously cannot take place every time a character trains (unless the GM wants to, of course). My idea is to assign a DP cost to stat gain; ie if the character wants to train a particular stat, he will have to spend DPs. Since a character would usually train all stats not at maximum, the cost should be nominal, say 1 or 2 DPs for every stat to be trained.

iii. Resistance Rolls

This is a bit more of a problem, since levels don't exist. The quickest way to solve this is the creation of new 'Resistance' skills, eg Spell Resistance, Poison Resistance, and Disease Resistance. These can be developed normally (say at a base cost of 3, modified like any other skill), and when an RR is required, the rank of the applicable skill is used in place of the level. For example, supposing a character has ten ranks in Poison Resistance, he would then make an RR against poison like a 10th Level character.

Instead of having only a single Spell Resistance skill, a GM might decide to split this up into Channeling, Essence, and Mentalism resistance, although that would leave a character with quite a burden of DP to develop sufficient resistances.

As to RR modifications due to a caster's level, see (v) below.

iv. Skills with 'per level' Bonuses

There is no way around it: they will have to go. Quite honestly, I do not see a reason for their existence anyway (besides being nice for the players). If 'per level' bonuses are a measure of a character's innate development, what are DPs for? (I could give many arguments, for both sides, but that is beside the point.) Anyway, the 'per level' bonuses go, and that's it. If a player sulks about it, a GM may be nice and increase the 'per rank' bonuses slightly:

+5 per rank for ranks 1 to 10

+3 per rank for ranks 11 to 20

+2 per rank for ranks 21 to 30

+1 per rank above 30

That would result in a table like this:

Table 4: Skill Rank Bonuses

1	+5	11	+53	21	+82	31	+101
2	+10	12	+56	22	+84	32	+102
3	+15	13	+59	23	+86	33	+103
4	+20	14	+62	24	+88	34	+104
5	+25	15	+65	25	+90	35	+105
6	+30	16	+68	26	+92	36	+106
7	+35	17	+71	27	+94	37	+107
8	+40	18	+74	28	+96	38	+108
9	+45	19	+77	29	+98	39	+109
10	+50	20	+80	30	+100	40	+110

If the GM is really nice, he might even allow the character a +1 bonus per rank for all skills in his primary category. But only if he is really nice.

v. Spell Durations and Power Points

Power point gain is easy to handle: the character simply has to take the Power Point Development skill. Durations, ranges, areas of effect etc with a 'per level' modifier are also easy to convert. Since a character has to take Spell List Acquisition for every list he learns, why not take the ranks so far attained and use these instead of levels as an indication of proficiency?

There is the drawback that a character may learn a list with a single rank, which would equate to casting at 1st level. Since this is a bit unfair, I would suggest the addition another new skill: Spell List Mastery, with a base development cost of 3/9 (or thereabouts).

When a character learns a new spell list, the number of ranks spent on list acquisition are automatically transferred to Spell List Mastery, which later can be developed further for that list. Whenever a level is called for in spellcasting etc, the number of ranks of Mastery for the particular spell list are used. This also applies to modifications to Resistance Rolls and similar circumstances.

This, then, is my proposal. To those who would complain about the extra bookkeeping (not actually any more except when creating a character), the extra skills, the extra DPs needed to learn the extra skills, etc, I will merely say: You cannot have everything.

You can do with this what you want. Tear it up, throw it away, start a fire with it, maybe even (unlikely as it sound) use it ...?

Editor's Note

The system presented here may lead to a severe lack of development points. For example, developing stat gains in 5 stats and resistance rolls in 3 categories, something allowed for free with level increase in standard Rolemaster, will probably cost about 14 DPs.

To compensate for this, the author has suggested that players be allowed to choose any 6 stats as development point stats, and compute DPs from these stats instead of the normal 5 (of course, the choice should be appropriate to the character and subject to DM approval). Some kindly DMs may find 6 stats insufficient to solve this problem, and may allow players to choose 7 stats.



Sample Creation of a Character

I wish to play a follower of the God of War, with a bit of spellcasting ability and some good combat and assassination skills.

To determine my general abilities, I roll on Table 1, once for each category, then match the rolls to the categories I want. So I end up with something like this:

Academic	Inept	(-15)
Animal	Normal	
Athletic	Talented	(+30)
Combat	Excelling	(+50)
Concentration	Normal	
Deadly	Excelling	(+50)
Evaluation	Normal	
General	Normal	
Gymnastic	Untalented	(-30)
Linguistic	Normal	
Magical	Excelling	(+50)
Medical	Inept	(-15)
Perception	Excelling	(+50)
Social	Incapable	(-50)
Subterfuge	Adept	(+15)
Survival	Normal	

In this case, I rolled exceptionally well, since usually one ends up with only one, perhaps two, Excelling categories. As my primary category I choose Combat. I decide I want to take ranks in using a Two-handed Sword. The base cost listed under Weapon Category 1 for 'No Profession' is 3/6. I roll d% and get 88, add +50 (since I am Excelling in Combat) with a result of 138. From Table 2 I find that the cost has been modified to 1/4. Since Combat is my primary category, I consult Table 3 and find that I have an additional +10 bonus to my Two-handed Sword skill.

Further skill costs are determined in the same way. Now supposing that I want to learn some spells, and the GM has agreed that the Paladin's Arm's Way would make a good base list.

I roll on Table 2, with a result of 08 + 50 = 58, which means that the DP cost is 4/*! Later on, after taking several ranks (say 6), I finally manage to learn the list. I automatically gain 6 ranks of Spell List Mastery in Arm's Way, ie all spells from Arm's Way are cast as if at 6th Level, until I develop my Spell List Mastery further.

It is the GM's choice whether the Spell List Mastery will have the same DP cost as the Spell List Acquisition, or whether a new roll on Table 2 should be made.

(Disclaimer: I have throughout this whole document used only male pronouns; this not through any intention of being sexist or discriminatory but only for the sake of simplicity, so you can't sue me. Actually, though, I am totally sexist and an utter male chauvinist and mean every he I have said.)

Trolls: Common myths debunked

The average human (or elf or hobbit or dwarf) sees Trolls as thick-skulled and slow. This might be true from their perspective (as racially biased as it may be), but when one examines them in terms of their origins, a completely different picture emerges...

Trolls are in fact blindingly fast, incredibly witty and basically the life of the party. This startling truth only comes out when you place a Troll next to your average lump of granite. I mean, have you ever considered how slow and wildly dull a chunk of granite is? In this light, Trolls must be seen as at the evolutionary peak of the igneous jungle.

The next startling truth is the answer to the question: What exactly do trolls eat? The answer is not virgins, bunny rabbits or anything else that is cute and furry (sorry virgins). This is a humanoid myth.

A helpful starting point is the human saying 'You are what you eat'. Humans eat animals and plants. Are they just hunks of animated meat with vegetables for brains? No, they are not, no matter how often it looks as though they are. The saying should be something like 'You eat what you are'. Meat and vegetables contain the basic building blocks of humans. Rock is the basic material of Trolls. Trolls eat rock. Cute and furry things just give them gas.

Another pertinent question is 'Why do Trolls live in caves?'. The answer is simple. There is always a

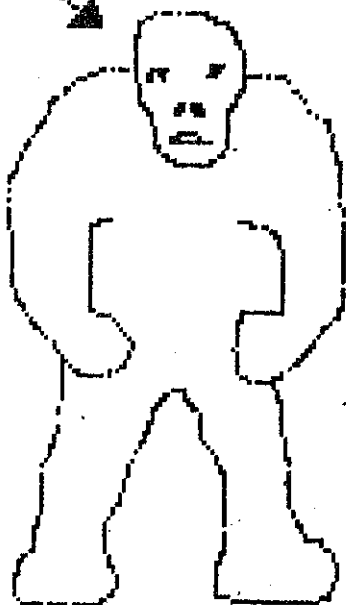
handy snack nearby, and they are always at the perfect temperature for rock. The scenic views offered by grassy plains and ancient forests are just so much organic matter to them. For a Troll, a large mountain on one's doorstep is perfect. It is large, solid and eminently edible. Like birds of a feather, rocks and Trolls like being around each other.

The seeming disrespect that Trolls have for organic life forms is very easily explained. How much respect would humans have for four foot high beings composed of water, that expired if one gave them a hearty slap on the back? Not much. Humans should be surprised that Trolls even factor them into the equation.

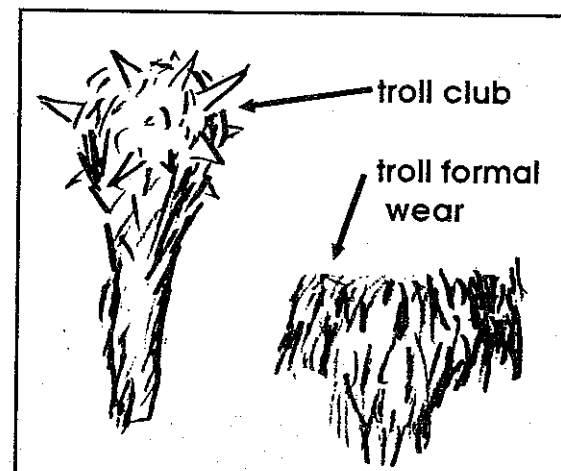
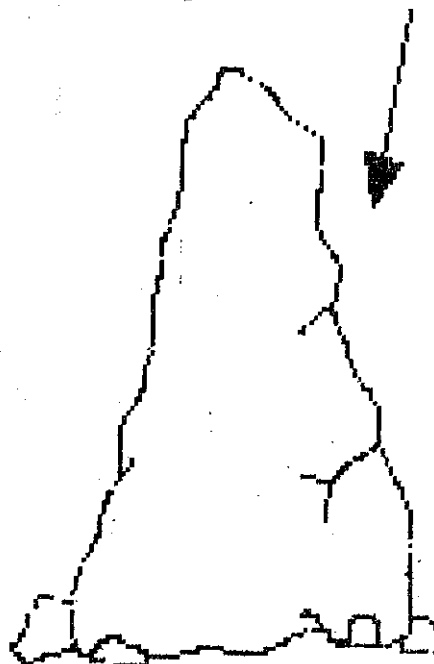
The other problem with organics is that they are so fast. They live fast, and they die fast. You can't even really begin to enjoy adventuring with them before the complain of being 'too old for this sort of stuff'. They also like sunlight, and sleep through the best part of the night. And if that's not bad enough, they expect you to stand watch over them.

In summary Trolls should stay home. That way they can have their pumice and eat it too. No more humans pointing sharp things in their direction when they accidentally walk through one of them, and plenty of other trolls who they can party the century away with.

Troll



Lump of Rock



The Depths...

A friend recently came to me and asked the innocuous question: "How can I start DMing?" As we spoke, opening can after can of worms, the room darkening into late evening, I tried to summarise the things that make the difference between a beer and pretzels game - little different from monopoly or a computer game - and a campaign with its own inner logic, originality and depth. Having played for many years and DMed almost as long, I was finding it difficult to put all these ideas together. After some thought I came up with 10 basic ideas for adding campaign depth. I am sure there are others but one must start somewhere.

1. Continuity and Other Stories

Everyone has a story to tell, a history or an idea or two, and that includes everyone else in the world above and beyond the players. As you design a world and its NPCs, put some of these stories into the game. They don't need to affect the PC's directly in any way.

A story in one small town may be a legend in another, a legend about someone or something told from a different perspective if told by the villagers who were raided, or by the Orc Shaman. As you put in more and more people and places in your world, try to interlink them in many ways.

One fault I have seen is a world or campaign built around only one or two ideas. As the players unfold these, the world becomes less intriguing and loses its depth. But by linking these other stories into the frame of the world, it starts to develop its own inner logic.

But, one warning: don't put all your cards on the table at once. You may be very proud of the work you have put in, but let the characters build up the knowledge over time. A story here, a hint there, and an overheard conversation all add up. The players will get a strong feeling of achievement and satisfaction as they begin to put all these together.

2. Atmosphere and Description

Role playing is very much an oral tradition. No matter what other elements are in a game, or how much work the DM has put in, it is his/her final oral presentation that makes all the difference. Because of this, the depth and richness may easily be lost by brief mechanical descriptions, while a full use of all senses and strong riches may add depth and quality.

For example, use of all the senses, beyond just sight, and use subtlety. Let there be a brief scent of wildflowers as the party converse with the elfish Druid; then repeat the scent weeks later and players begin to link these elements. Use of all the tools of oral history, repetition, and sensory input, interlinking the descriptions with parts of your world - as tall as the city gates of Othmar; as wide as the wing span of the Saral bird; and so forth.

Repetition of key words and phrases in descriptions is vital. In an oral, as opposed to a written presentation, your audience will only pick up so much; so use all the tricks from poetry and plays to build up the tone and atmosphere.

3. NPCs - Details, Depth and Personality

Nowhere can campaign depth and logic be more successfully portrayed than through the NPCs. More often than not, giving an NPC a personality, a history, and a place in the world - a purpose - is more important than a set of stats and figures.

One of the best starting points is to try to link in some family trees - in a medieval world with high mortality rates, big families were the order of the day. Then try to link them to times and events. Thus your very average innkeeper suddenly becomes someone with a history, and perhaps a story to tell if asked.

Another trick I use is to loosely base NPCs on people. By linking Fred the Barman to a character from television or a movie, he suddenly develops character. This modelling makes it easier for the DM to role-play him. NPCs become more than two-dimensional stage props; they become a dynamic information link.



...of DMing

4. Innocuous Items

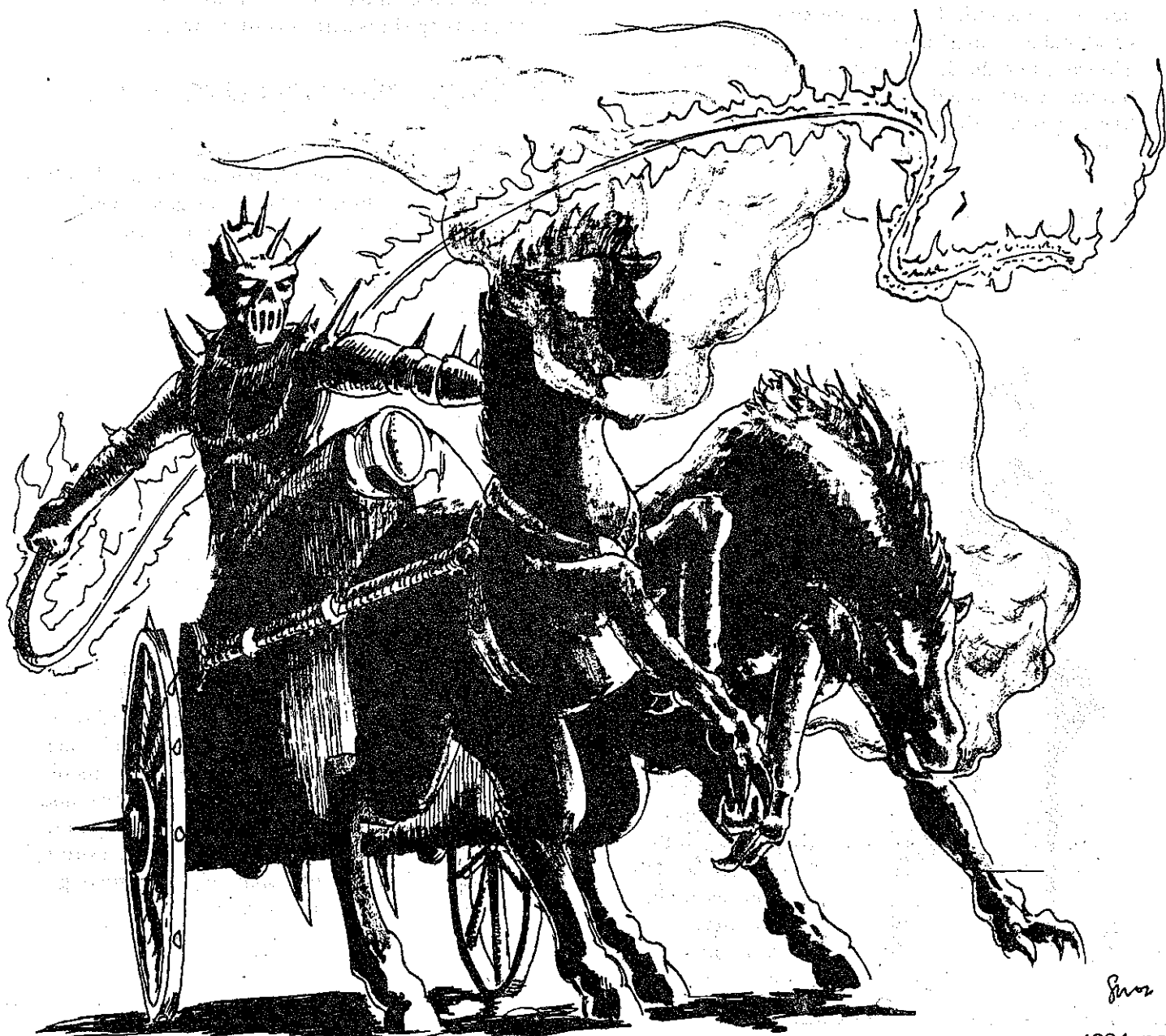
The use of non magical items can also go a long way toward adding something to the game. In a world where everything is hand crafted, every item has a history. Food, clothing and daily items can all be presented in this way. The players drink wine - well, how about Black Island wine, smuggled across the Western Sea?

One can also use such items as clues and as a way to introduce other themes. Suddenly each item in the Orcs' hoard can have a history: the barrels of Black Island wine raided from a caravan, the dagger from the

caravan master, recognised by his cousin in the inn the next day, and so on. One may run the risk here of overdoing things, but as a broad rule of thumb, if your party picks up only half of the clues you leave - you're doing well.

5. Logic and Razors

It is a fairly broad rule that one can justify anything, especially in a world with magic. However, every player has a credibility level, and it is something that may easily be strained.



Eric G.

If there are two explanations, use the simpler. If there are too many needless factors, cut them out. Always try to explain things without resorting to the mad wizard's experiments, the evil prince's plots or any of the other stereotypes that abound throughout the genre. Try to keep your campaign logic simple, realistic and most of all believable.

6. Magic

Another can of worms. It is best left to each DM to magic tailor to his or her own world. However, there are a few simple guidelines.

The more magic in a world, and the more accessible the magic, the further the world stretches from historical realism. Also, the more common the magic, the more it loses its fantastical/magical qualities, and becomes a boring day to day affair.

Try to make magic magical rather than a collection of mundane numbers. One can add to the effects of magic, without changing the power balances or relations in the world. Take a simple spell - Find Familiar - and make it a personal experience for the character: a journey into the deep woods, meditating under a full moon, etc., and then that special snow white owl flies down on a shaft of moon light, to bond for life with the chosen recipient.

7. PC Effects on the World

Few of us like to go without leaving some sort of mark on the world. By letting PCs affect the environment and world around them, you give them further meaning.



This can be done at several levels. Firstly in character history: when creating new characters, try to get them to link into the history and logic of your world. This is often a difficult process, as the players' ideas and your world history may not correspond, but working with

each character on a one to one basis one can often work this out.

Give the character friends and contacts, places and people he/she knows. It may also work in some campaigns to give characters bits of world history and general knowledge - pooling this knowledge together by the characters may lead to greater party interaction and better role-playing. Secondly, allow PCs to interact and leave a lasting impression on your world; in fact, encourage this. In one game, the DM let some players get knighted for their efforts. The players had a great time designing their coat of arms, putting on noble airs and planning a feudal home. Very often it is the little details that give the PCs a sense of belonging and purpose - linking them more closely to the world.

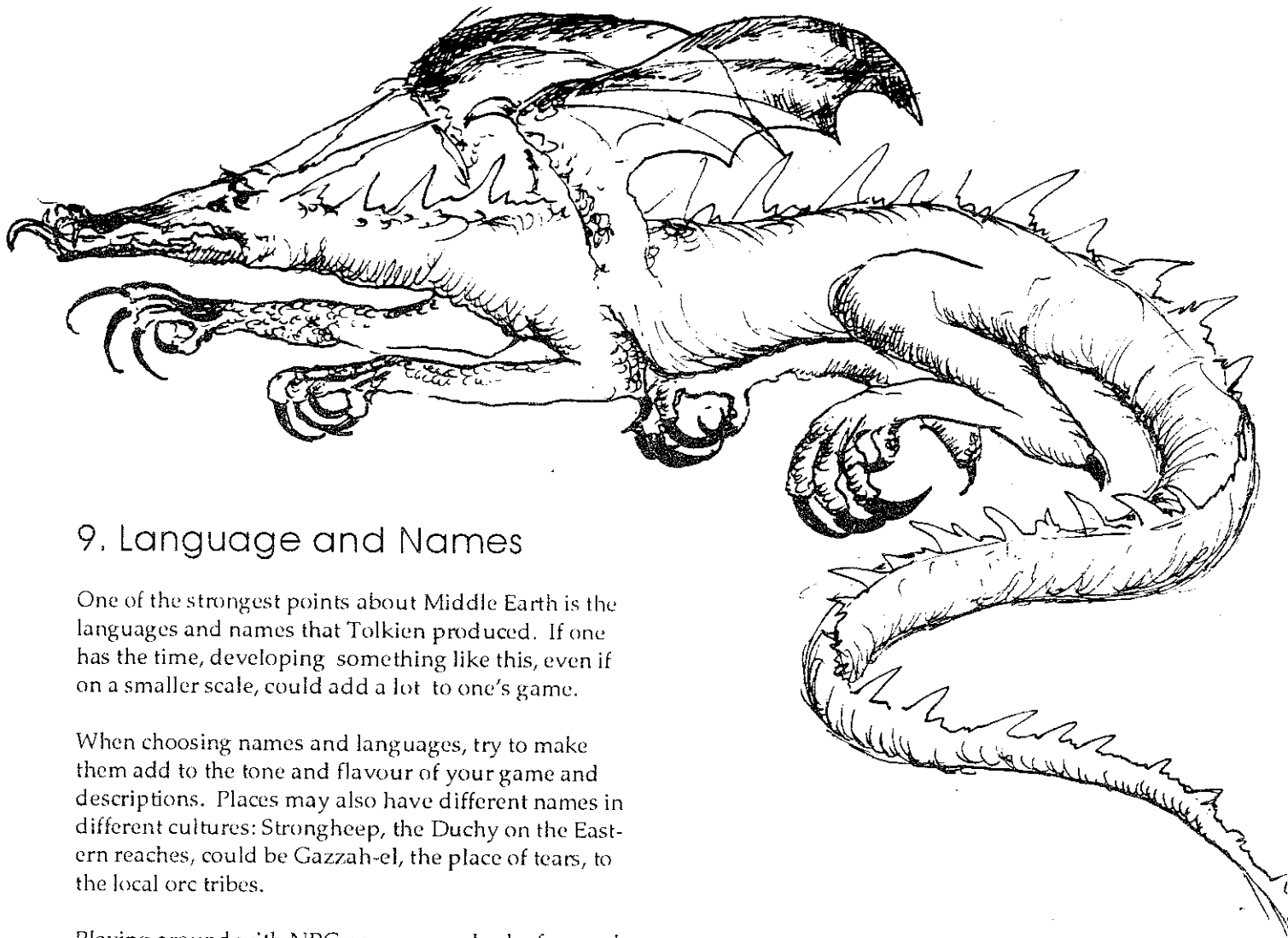
As PCs advance in level, let them have some idea of their own achievements, by giving them the opportunity to put something back into your world. Let them build new buildings or castles, settle new settlements or whatever. The players will get a strong sense of being inextricably linked to the world, rather than just being passing ships across your campaign.

8. Originality and Dynamics

When the fun of clamoring for more wealth/power/levels and killing begins to pale, players look for something further in the game. One of these elements is definitely a continually changing and interesting world. In many ways PCs are tourists in your world, and like tourists they like to see the sights and take home souvenirs; and like tourists, they like to see new things.

If you don't want to place radically different things in their path (e.g. an Anklosaurus living next door to a lava giant clan, one block away from a family of vampire bunnies), then try subtle but realistic variations instead. How about an orc tribe ruled by women, or orcs that have developed into a seafaring race, or orc nomads? The possibilities are almost endless, without stretching the players' levels of credibility.

The other side is to make your world vary constantly. While medieval society, due largely to the poorer flows of information, was more static, there was still change. Wars, politics, disasters, plagues and so on will continually be happening. I recommend some sort of a chart or table which is updated on a regular basis showing the changes in the various areas, and how these changes interrelate. Do this largely independent of the party/PCs and they will get a strong impression of a constantly changing and growing world, to which they are integral.



9. Language and Names

One of the strongest points about Middle Earth is the languages and names that Tolkien produced. If one has the time, developing something like this, even if on a smaller scale, could add a lot to one's game.

When choosing names and languages, try to make them add to the tone and flavour of your game and descriptions. Places may also have different names in different cultures: Strongheep, the Duchy on the Eastern reaches, could be Gazzah-el, the place of tears, to the local orc tribes.

Playing around with NPC names can also be fun, and one can then avoid an endless stream of Joe the blacksmiths (I often use mnemonics or link NPC names to elements of the NPC's character, which helps me remember the names for future reference).

10. Realism and History

The best source of reference for any DM must be historical reality. By linking your campaign to some level of historical reality you can add the most levels of realism and thus player credibility. This does not necessarily mean setting one's campaign in medieval England, but rather trying to match the campaign to one or other period. There is a world of difference between weaponry, technology and learning between 9th century England and 14th century England.

This may be problematic initially, and mean some adjustments to the system are necessary, but the end product by far justifies the effort. Also, if one wishes, one may have different cultures in different parts of the world at different levels of historical advancement (one needs only look at the differences between 13th century China and 13th century England to realise this).

Conclusion

Many of these points are painfully obvious, and many DMs have probably adopted many into their games without realising it. But there are just so many games that fall far short of the mark. In the short term this may not be at all important, but if one has any hope for a campaign that is going to last over time, these things become crucial.

As the initial excitement of a new game wears off, players become more immersed in both their characters and the campaign and world you have created. By that stage it may be far too late to start bringing about any level of change, and problems become exaggerated by frantic attempts to justify otherwise impossible situations. By creating strong levels of internal consistency and logic to begin with, one can avoid a host of pitfalls that may later occur.

One can build up a long term campaign, allowing players to "grow" into their characters and thus have far better levels of role-playing and player interaction and enjoyment, which in the end is what the game is all about.

Fnish! Such are the expressions of despairing editors, faced yet again with the outporing of our best-hated institution's vitriolic pen. The Arch-Bigot is Back! Worse still, his frontal assault is launched against the only institution on campus that is more powerful than CLAWs...

They may drag us forth, screaming, but we WILL print it!

478 Reasons Why I Hate...

...The UCT Council

They are an undemocratic, unrepresentative, white-middle-class-male-dominated, illegitimate structure.

They have freckles.

They live half-way up a huge hill.

They allow the SRC to censor ME

They're a fascist hierarchy.

They think they run the Unive

They're perfectly unable to do what the named Fred.

When they cook straw hats they are always purple.

There's not enough space

Their grandmothers fr

People must know wh

Financially speaking

They are nearly a

They yodel in sp

Sometimes, po

Their elderly

under an

If you try

Lurking

By night

Possibly

Turgid

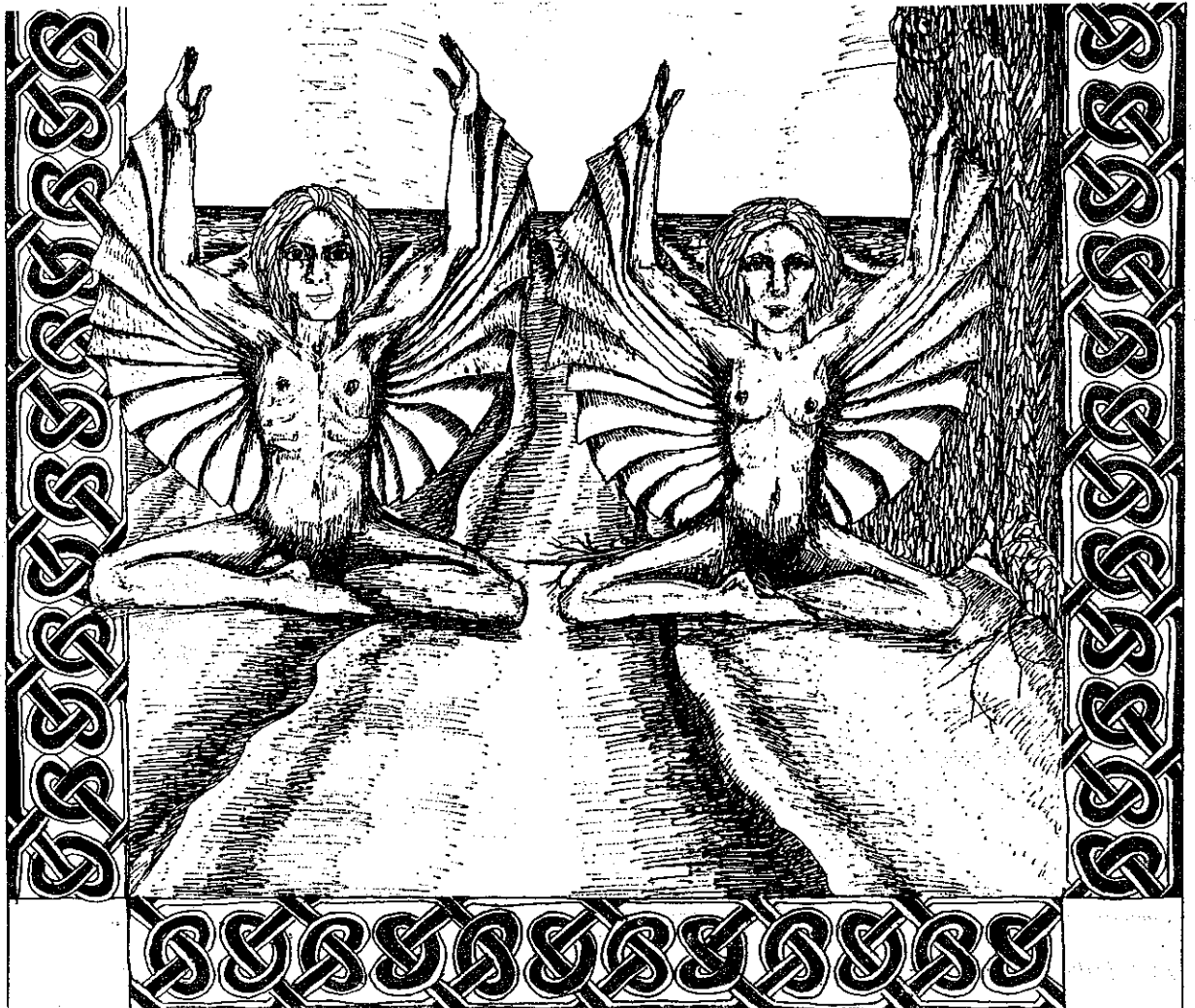
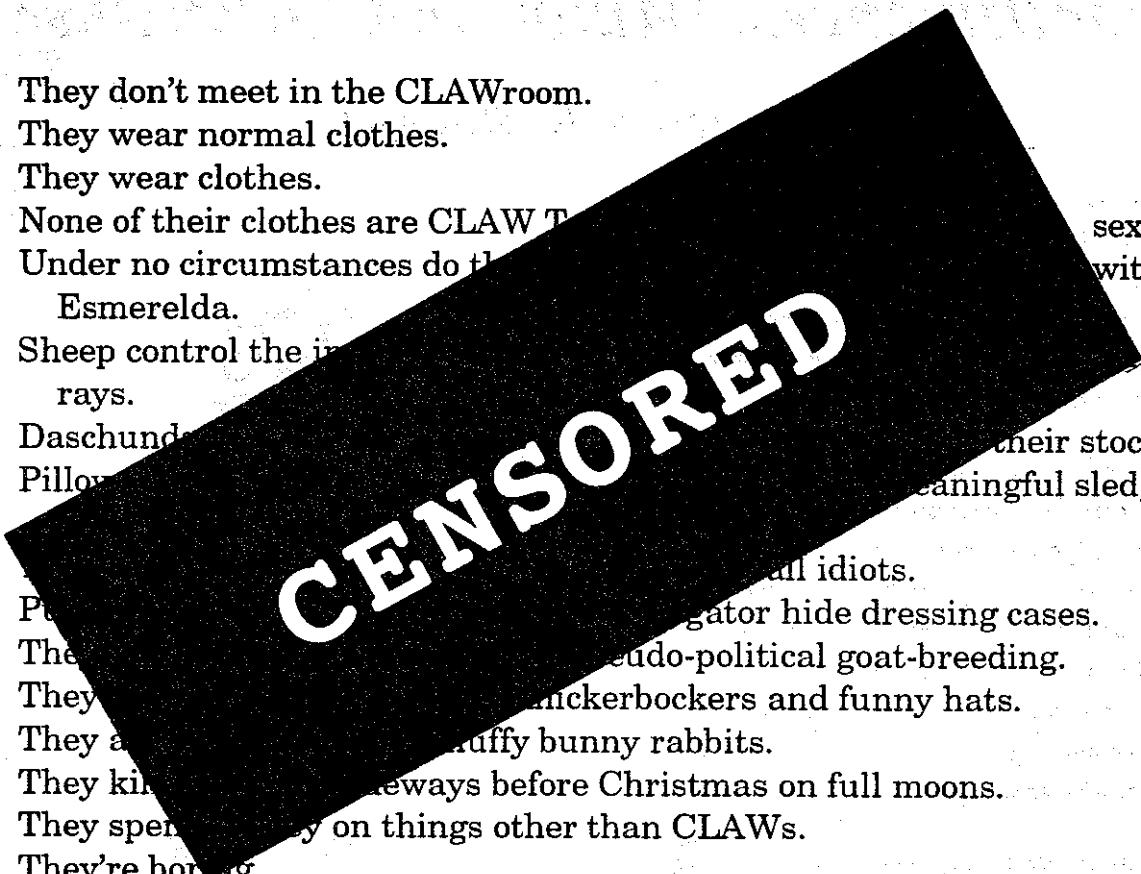
Mr Spock wa

The Student's Ha

campus.

CENSORED

They don't meet in the CLAWroom.
They wear normal clothes.
They wear clothes.
None of their clothes are CLAW T... sex fiends.
Under no circumstances do th... with
Esmerelda.
Sheep control the i... mind
rays.
Daschund... their stockings.
Pillow... meaningful sledgeham-
... all idiots.
P... gator hide dressing cases.
The... pseudo-political goat-breeding.
They... knickerbockers and funny hats.
They a... fluffy bunny rabbits.
They kill... ways before Christmas on full moons.
They spend... on things other than CLAWs.
They're boring.
They're arbitrary.
They wear flippers to meetings.



Inconveniences, Minor and Otherwise

Critical Irritations for Rolemaster

On the whole, adventurers lead a pretty charmed existence. OK, monsters may hack them to death occasionally, but they manage to remain free from day-to-day problems such as dandruff, plagues, the common cold and hiccups. This lack of basic inconveniences tends to make what are already unbelievably heroic lives, even less real.

On the whole, the daily problems omitted in most campaigns are just inconveniences, but sometimes they are a serious factor which should be taken into consideration. All too often players come up with plans, e.g. for an ambush, which they refine and perfect, and then, once everything is in place the characters settle down and wait, often for hours on end. The characters never seem to get bored, distracted, or have various body parts cramp or go numb. Something should be done about this and similar situations.

This table is one option. DMs may roll on it or just choose whatever affliction seems appropriate. One roll per person per 6-8 hours is a decent, but DMs shouldn't hesitate to inflict something on a character anytime it seems appropriate. And remember, bad luck comes in threes...

The table is designed for Rolemaster, but there is no reason why DMs cannot adapt the penalties to other systems.



KEY TO SYMBOLS USED

(Duration of effects is at DM's discretion, as appropriate to the situation)

- #%ALL minus the number specified as a percentage to all actions
- #%CF specifies the percentage chance (per round if applicable) that concentration fails.
- #%PER minus the number specified as a percentage to perception and general alertness
- MR#% movement rate is at the specified percentage of normal
- #%MM minus the specified percentage to all moving actions (including attacks)
- +#%ESF increases chance of exceptional spell failure by the specified percentage.



ROLL	EFFECT	PENALTY	ROLL	EFFECT	PENALTY
1-3	Your nose itches. Self-discipline check to avoid scratching it incessantly.	10%CF	63	You bite your tongue.	100%CF
4-6	A dry throat and feeling of intense thirst bothers you.	-5%ALL, 10%CF	64	You develop a nervous twitch in one eyebrow.	-10%PER, 10%CF
7-11	A small buzzing insect just flew into your ear; you are at a negative until it dislodges or decomposes naturally. Concentration is disrupted.	-5%ALL	65	You need the loo.	-20%MM, 5%ESF
12-15	You suddenly fart loudly.		66	Too late! A warm, seeping sensation tells you you needed the loo...	
16-17	Your fringe pokes you in the eyes.	-15%PER	67	Your cloak/coat wraps around your legs - save or trip.	MR50%
18-19	You get a headache.	-5%ALL, -10%MM, 10%ESF	68	There is a sharp twig/thorn in your shirt.	-5%MM
20-21	A small piece of dead skin is flaking off your nose, producing a white spot in the corner of your vision.	-10%PER	69-70	In a moment of extreme nausea, make a constitution check or throw up (morning sickness? something you ate? etc.)	100%CF
22-23	You have a catchy tune stuck on your mind.	80%CF, 20%ESF	71	Your weapon hand goes numb. You may frantically try to massage life back into it.	10%ESF
24-25	Your nose drips.	25%CF	72	Your nose bleeds.	10%ESF
26-27	There is a small piece of food (you hope) jammed painfully between your teeth. Your concentration is impaired.	5%ESF	73-74	You get grit in your eye.	-10%PER, -5%ALL
28-29	You feel lethargic.	-5%ALL	75-76	Next round, the character forgets what is foremost on his/her mind this round.	
30-31	You stub your toe. Make agility checks to keep your balance.		77	Your left/right eyelashes are gummed together and your eye won't open.	-15%PER
32-33	A flea under your clothes at about mid thigh.	-10%ALL, 50%CF	78	A rumbling from your stomach signals the onset of diarrhoea.	-10%MM
34-35	Haaaaa.... you are about to sneeze. You may grab for your nose, dropping all held items.	100%CF	79-80	You have insomnia. When next you try to sleep, you can't.	
36-37	Oh no, you've got hiccups.	-5%ALL, 10%CF, 5%ESF	81	A nagging pain in your foot warns you of an ingrown toenail.	-10%MM, MR75%
38-39	You stand up too suddenly; your vision goes black and you feel dizzy. Stunned momentarily.	-50%ALL	82	You start sleepwalking.	
40-41	There is a small, sharp stone in your shoe.	MR80%	83	You dribble gracelessly out of the corner of your mouth.	
42-43	You break a fingernail. Ouch.		84	The current situation gives you a strange feeling of deja vu - it is distracting.	-10%ALL
44-45	You are sure you have forgotten something of great importance, but you just can't seem to remember what it is.	-5%ALL	85-86	There is a hole in your pocket/pouch/purse - any small items are lost.	
46	To your great dismay, you discover you have your own private snowstorm of dandruff, and your scalp is incredibly itchy.	-5%ALL, -10%PER	87	The straps/buckles on your backpack break, spilling the contents.	
47-48	You are uncomfortably constipated.	-5%ALL	88-89	You momentarily lose your sense of balance - make an agility roll to stay upright.	100%CF
49-50	Your bum itches insanely - self discipline check not to scratch.		90	A sharp pain in your groin informs you that your pubic hair has suddenly and inexplicably gotten knotted.	75%CF, 10%ESF
51-52	You nick yourself with whatever bare blade you may have.		91	With a delightful ripping sound, the seat of your pants tears.	
53	You bump your elbow, momentarily numbing your arm.	100%CF, -10%MM	92-93	Major headache! - 30% chance of a migraine, 10% of retching.	-15%ALL, -30%MM, 30%ESF
54-55	Your horse gets a stone in its hoof.	MR50%	94	The muscle in one foot spasms uncontrollably.	MR75%, 100%CF
56	Your ears are blocked (won't equalise and "pop"), and your hearing is impaired.	-10%PER	95	Your belt snaps, dropping trousers, scabbards, etc.	
57-58	You feel sharp hunger pangs.	5%CF	96	If the character is wearing new or ill-fitting clothing or shoes, it chafes or blisters.	MR75%
59-60	You burp loudly.	20%ESF	97	You upend your quiver or scabbard, spilling the contents.	
61-62	Your leg goes numb/cramps up.	-15%MM, MR25%	98-99	You talk in your sleep - 5% chance of casting a spell.	30%ESF
			00	A premonition of death gives you goosebumps.	15%CF

Review:

Rolemaster Companions VI and VII

It was not without some feeling of "here we go again" that I looked at ICE's two latest additions, Companions VI and VII. One cannot but feel that they are following TSR's lead in churning out book after book of additional rules, classes and spells, slowly taking a system and making it more and more cumbersome and unwieldy as it grows and grows. Soon we may be faced with a second edition as they valiantly prune the rules down, and then there will be a whole new generation of second edition Companions.

But on the brighter side, the Rolemaster system, being bigger and more complex, as well as having a far better system of internal dynamics, is more able to cope with the various additions, providing several conditions are met.

The most important is the varying power levels of many of the additional rules. If one looks closely at much of the new material from Companion I upwards, there are some very telling discrepancies. Some of the new material must be very judiciously examined before being allowed anywhere near the system, if one wants to keep anything resembling campaign balance, or any equality between the relative power of players.

To make these sort of decisions one needs a good understanding of the Rolemaster system, and the internal dynamics of it. Also, as one looks at much of the new material, larger and larger loopholes appear in the system, something any GM must keep in very tight check.

But enough of this. One could spend hours discussing the merits and demerits of adding to the system; we must accept the Companions as a fait accompli: What about the material contained therein?

Companion VI

The thing Companion VI will probably be remembered for is the high level spells it introduces to the system - 75th level, 100th level and 125th level spells. However as I have yet to see a game where players use 30th level spells, let alone 50th, these others seem a little superfluous. (Unless one is planning a game with a large number of super powerful magical rituals - a pitfall I would avoid unless one wants a short-lived, silly, Monty-haul type campaign).

As for the classes in CVI, there are the "Gothic Fantasy Classes" and "Séance Fantasy Professions".

While these may be of interest to GM's running specific types of games I feel that overall they are largely unnecessary, as any GM who is going to create a specific genre campaign will probably create his/her own classes and professions anyway.

There are further "optional arms, spells, skills, stat and character development laws" in this Companion. Some are revisions of the earlier revisions of rules revised from the original system, others are additional rules, and so forth. On the whole, they are all something a GM may read over; he/she may perhaps adopt an idea or a table here or there, but the additions are largely unnecessary. They have a tendency to make the system cumbersome and unwieldy, with yet more pages for a harried GM to look up as players clamour.

There is a longish section on optional campaigns, - primitive ancient, feudal, and fantasy genres and so forth. Interesting background reading, but again largely unnecessary. The underlying tone of all these is that it is up to the GM to fit the material to his game setting.

Finally there are a few odds and ends, several tables with stat modifiers for monsters (for those I assume who wish to play an Elk, Ant, SIRRUSH or ANKLOSAUR - good luck to the GM), more composite skills tables, and a "natural weapons fumble table". You decide if these are really necessary.

Companion VII

This is similar to Companion VI in many ways, and as such, much of what I have said above is also relevant here. There are more optional arms, spell and skill laws. Rules for martial arts are revised (something that has been needed for a long time) but unfortunately not in a very useful, clear or coherent manner. Further variations and rules include drowning, initiative-parrying large weapons, variations on summoning and so forth.

A large part of the book is devoted to the new classes introduced, Arms Master (yawn!), Elementalist (another one), Tarot Mage, Shadow Mage, Doppelganger and Witch Hunter. There are 59 pages out of 126 devoted to all the new spell lists, some of which are very dangerous to say the least (i.e. never let loose to a PC), although others may hold some interest.

The most interesting thing in CVII is the Tarot Mage (which takes up the biggest part of the book). It is a class with a lot of potential and some interesting ideas. (Make the player bring his own deck of tarot cards). However, I would be very careful before including it into the campaign - read all the lists, tarot rules and so forth carefully. That aside, if the GM and player wish to do this it could make for an interesting game variation.

The Doppelganger and the Witch Hunter are also two other classes with some interest. The Doppelganger is well laid out and nicely balanced as a class. For GMs who have had problems with shape shifters before, this may be a good solution, although there are some inconsistencies. For example, Dark Shifts allows demon forms, Light Shifts spirit forms. - a GM would do well to limit his/her players to one or the other but not both.

The Witch Hunter may find its way into campaigns more as an NPC or in specific campaigns where a prohibition against magic is strong. Bearing this in mind, it is an interesting class.

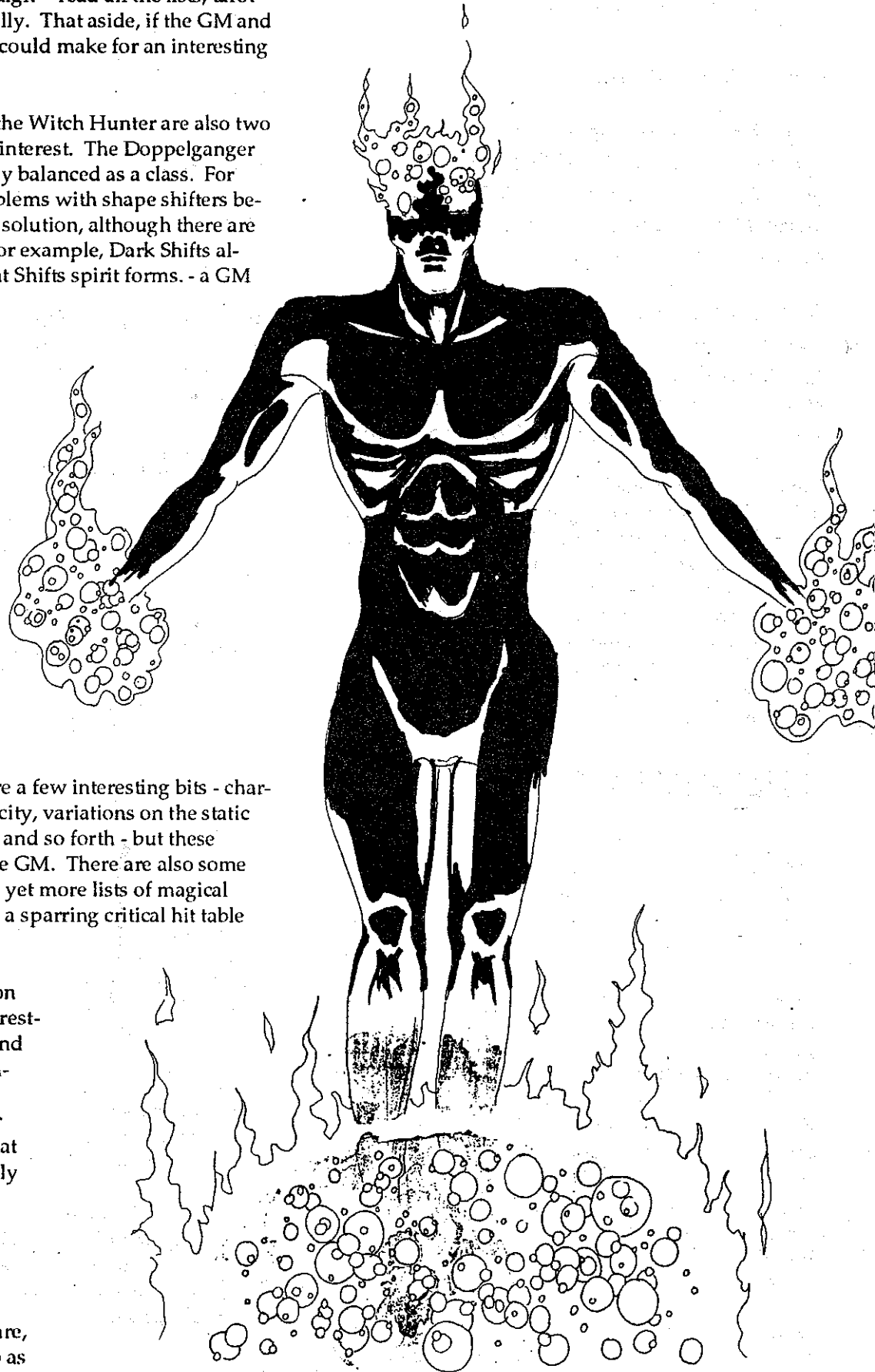
As for the rest of the Companion, there are a few interesting bits - character weight lifting capacity, variations on the static action tables, drowning and so forth - but these would really be up to the GM. There are also some largely superfluous bits: yet more lists of magical treasures (space filling?) a sparring critical hit table (ibid) and so forth.

On the whole Companion VII is perhaps more interesting than VI, but if you find a player who is really enthralled by the idea of a Tarot Mage, let him/her purchase the book, as that is what the book is largely made up of!

Conclusion

Companion VI and VII are, I think, best summed up as good library books - GMs

can look at them over the weekend, photocopy the one or two bits they wish to include in their campaigns, and return them. As an integral part of the system, however, they are largely superfluous.



The Gamer's Guide to Gamers

In this article I will be using the pronouns he/she/it as I see fit. If you disagree with my generalisations you will always be wrong.

Introductions, please...

Whether it's RoleMaster, CyberSpace/CyberPunk or Call of Cthulu, you have to admit that RPGs are beyond the realm of normality. And, of course, so are gamers.

In my short time as a roleplayer I think I have met at least one of each of the following archtypical gamers. Some fit into many of the catagories, some are a category all of their own.

For all those new members starting out fresh and shiny, this is what is in store for you. These people will someday be your friends if you are not careful. This is your last warning. If, however, you are a returning gibbering loon, no doubt you will recognise these various brands of degenerates with something akin to sentimental psychosis ("Oh no... the MEMORIES are returning... NO Jet, don't FRAG that cake... NO Shaine, don't THROW UP on that city guard...").

THE PYSCHO

Too many gamers start out as this species. This is the kind of guy who begins to fantasy roleplay because he has seen too many Conan movies. He soon moves to other games when he finds out that you can get guns there.

CyberSpace/CyberPunk is a particular favorite for this breed. There is nothing he likes better than putting on his Kevlar Trenchcoat and strapping on his Mono-edge Bowie Knife, three different types of assault rifle, five different pistols, two types of Rocket Propelled Grenades and thirty hand-held grenades, going out into a Sprawl war and shouting, "Come and get it!", "Go ahead punk, make my day!", "Hasta la vista, Baby!", "You have two seconds to comply!" and my own personal favorite, after 30 minutes of continuous firing, the now classic, "CLEAR".

DMs will generally have to put up with lots of questions like, "How much of a bulk discount do I get if I buy Plastic Explosive by the ton?". These players

generally find it a little difficult to deal with plot development, characterisation or niceties like actually talking to NPCs. They are also, usually, very childish and get really upset when NPCs get the better of them and they begin to feel like they are "losing" (but I thought you can't "lose" a roleplaying game).

The worst type will buy magazines like Guns & Ammo and Soldier of Fortune, come to games in full combat camo gear and speak in militaristic slang ("It's eighteen hundred hours, soldier" or "Scope me, I'm outta here") though, thankfully, this is rare.

My favorite psycho brings his Glock to games and takes it out to prove points. He is even psychotic to his chips at lunch which look like splattered brains before he eats them.

THE LOSER

What a schmuck. We've all seen these guys, and they are hilarious, though very dangerous to your own PC at the same time.

The loser is the kind of guy that blows it, no matter what. As soon as there is an important roll to be made and the loser has to do it, everybody holds their breath and covers their eyes and prays to whichever deity will listen.

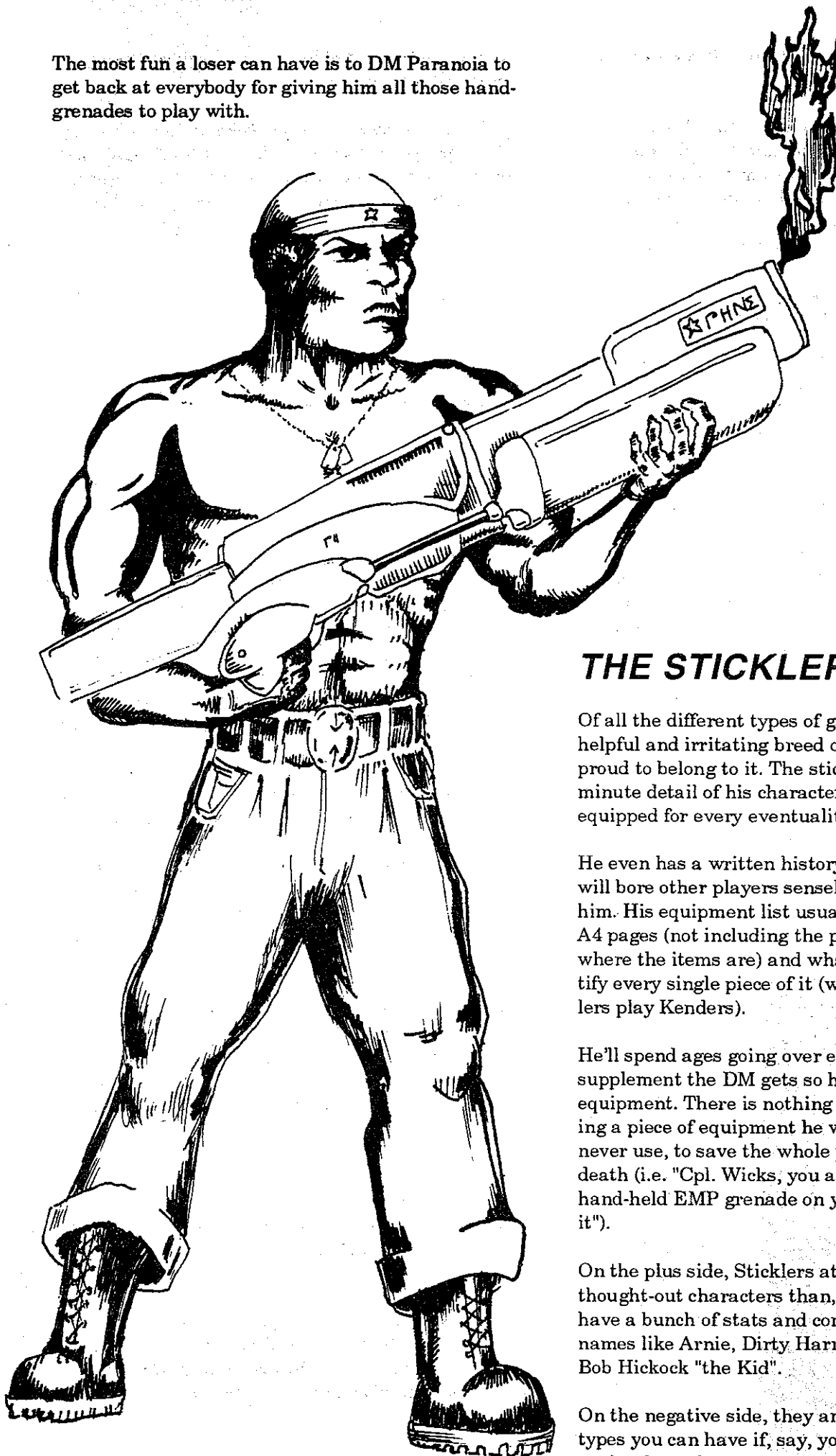
If you suspect someone in your group is a loser, there is one sure way to find out. Hand him a grenade and ask him to toss it. Stand well back (i.e. another city back) as he will always fumble. Always.

One of the best losers I knew tried to throw a grenade while riding a motorcycle at top speed. He managed to stay on his bike and to get the throw off. The result, however, left a lot to be desired as the pin landed at the feet of the NPC and the grenade went off in the PC's hand.

Another loser tried to break through the ICE surrounding Avis Rent-a-car. Any normal NetHead could do it in his sleep. The loser's deck was turned into jewelery and his brain into jelly.

Losers are often Part-timers (see below) and who can blame them? If they pipe up and say "I want to drive" everyone looks uneasy and tells the DM at least four times about how they are putting on their seatbelts on and checking the airbags for leaks.

The most fun a loser can have is to DM Paranoia to get back at everybody for giving him all those hand-grenades to play with.



THE STICKLER

Of all the different types of gamers this is the most helpful and irritating breed of role-players and I am proud to belong to it. The stickler goes over every minute detail of his character, ensuring he is equipped for every eventuality.

He even has a written history for his character and will bore other players senseless with it if they let him. His equipment list usually covers about three A4 pages (not including the pictures of exactly where the items are) and what's more, they can justify every single piece of it (warning: do not let sticklers play Kenders).

He'll spend ages going over every inch of any new supplement the DM gets so he can get himself more equipment. There is nothing he likes more than using a piece of equipment he was told he would never use, to save the whole party from certain death (i.e. "Cpl. Wicks, you are crazy to carry a live hand-held EMP grenade on your person. Get rid of it").

On the plus side, Sticklers at least have better thought-out characters than, say, Psychos, who just have a bunch of stats and combat abilities and names like Arnie, Dirty Harry or Wild Buffalo Billy-Bob Hickock "the Kid".

On the negative side, they are the most annoying types you can have if, say, you are running a scenario where the party gets captured. Sticklers always have lockpicks in their sideburns or know how

to make explosives with their moustache wax. Always.

The best stickler I have ever had the pleasure of playing with was my Ars Magica DM. He did not just know the weather conditions for each day, he had written down the humidity, wind speeds and wind chill factors for each day of a six week ship journey. Andrew, we're not worthy (bow, bow).

THE PART-TIMER

This dude actually wants to be somewhere else. He sits in a sort of daze, thinking about something completely different and only snaps to it when the DM reaches across, grabs him by the shirt lapels and shouts "and what do you do?" into his face.

When he does raise himself from his stupor to take part in the action, it's not normally worth the while. The fact is he does not really know what is going on and invariably does something stupid that has everyone slamming their forehead and exclaiming, "D'ohh!". Otherwise he just says "I go with them" meaning the rest of the party.

This is the guy who goes "Oh, right" when the DM tells him that the door he has just opened was closed thirty seconds ago because of the three hundred zombies/corp mega-troopers/orcs/multi-armed Cthuloid monsters trying to claw their way in.

This is the guy who says, "I shoot him" when everyone is just settling down to interrogate one of the mysterious hired killers who have been tracking them for days.

In a word, DISASTER. The Part-timer has the potential to take your scenarios and muck them up single-handed.



One of the most amazing Part-timers I have heard about was playing CyberPunk. His character (in a five minute burst of concentration) discovered a vehicle that everyone was searching was booby-trapped. He said "Oh, right" when he got the note from the DM and then said

nothing to the rest of his party. Needless to say, messy chunks ensued.

In fairness though, later he woke up in the middle of a high speed chase said, "I shoot him" and killed the helicopter pilot which caused the helicopter to fall on the chasing cars and the mess pushed the motorcycles off the cliff, thus ensuring the party's get-away.

He then went back to sleep.

Too weird.

THE BLUFFER

I hate these guys. Rather a common breed, especially in fantasy games more than anywhere else.

He is the one who wants to bring in his 103rd level mage who can make continents explode, turn the sky green and get M-Net without a decoder. In Role-Master, he will tell you, at great length about how he fought a demon single-handed on a rickety wooden bridge over the Gorge-With-No-Bottom armed only with the Tooth-pick of the Dwarves before binding the demon into a sword which gives +50 to OB and DB and is a Slaying weapon versus enemies.

What is it with these guys? Do they honestly think that we will believe them? "Are they mental?"

Of course, they are a potential nightmare for DMs. They usually try this on their first time they show up, and if you let them get away with it, can ruin your entire campaign. He is going to be the one running everything.

The best recourse for DMs is to say "you are a lying jerk, let's develop a real character together". What ever you do, do not tell him he can't have his character because it is too powerful for the rest of the group. They love this. Then they can go on endlessly about how the "103rd level mage" would handle the situation but that his character was "too powerful for you guys".

This really grates on players who have spent two years painstakingly getting their characters up to 10th level.

The way to handle these guys is to be strong but firm and if all else fails tell him to do unspeakable things to the horse he just rode in on. Or think Paranoia: punish deviance with death.

THE HERO

Most gamers are essentially this type. They have seen Terminator. They have seen Aliens. They have seen BladeRunner. They want to be the guy who looks at the camera and calmly says really cool things like "it's show time" when the excrement collides with the rotary air circulation device.

Personally, this is my favorite breed of gamer. Psychos are fun for about fifteen minutes but when they have killed everything in sight including a cat, two mice and a hot dog, they begin to get on one's nerves.

Initially, Heroes are hard to spot. They are reserved (for gamers), but they catch on to what the DM is doing quickly, come up with a brilliant plan based on the DM's description and generally do the best thing in the situation. And they are always calm even if the rest of the party are doing great imitations of headless chickens.

There are two types of hero. The Rutger Hauer from Lady Hawke Paladin-type for the fantasy games, or Hicks from Aliens quiet-type in more modern games. And when the dice are down, these are the chaps who always wait until the last man is back, providing covering fire for their returning companions. Always.

They even go back for Part-timers who have gone AWOL because they failed to say "I go with everyone else". If they get shot their eyes glaze over and they picture themselves in a James Cameron movie when they say "I don't have time to bleed" or "run, Sarah".

They show signs akin to Sticklers but the true hero does not care about his equipment as he can always improvise like Bruce Willis in Die Hard. He bluffs enemies with empty guns, he braves swathes of automatic machine gun fire to shield an important NPC, this guy actually gives a damn.

And it seems, fortune favours the brave and the incredibly foolish. These guys pull off the most amazing stunts.

Like infiltrating an enemy base armed with a mask, some oil and a fishing hook and line. This hero not only took out most of the guards, he (an AD&D first level magic user) saved the party's two warriors and the other magic user from certain death.

Or the gun-slinger from 2020 who helped his party steal important disks from a rival megaCorp. This hero killed every guard with evil intent towards the

otherwise innocent party, even though he was the first to get shot and was bleeding at 4 hits per round. Everyone else muttered darkly (especially the other killer who did not even get a shot off before he was shot down) because they did not have the spheres to perform such karmically sound acts. Losers the lot of them.

THE WEIRDO

You know that crap about us all being devil worshippers and occultists, and being into eating babies and things? Blame it all on this guy.

He is usually socially inept. If you suggest going to a club after the game to check out the action, he'll say "Ah, no. I'll be going home to reread my H.P. Lovecraft by the light of several flickering black candles. Backwards."

Call of Cthulu is a big favorite for this species. He likes the horrors, the oozing pus and ichor, and of course all mentions of sacrifice and arcane knowledge.

His input during scenarios usually extends to asking DMs for more details about entrails and things, "are they glistening?" he will ask, quite seriously. Everyone else will look disgusted. Of course, he usually denies any knowledge of satanism or anything, but insists on being called Santa's Little Helper. And Santa is an anagram of...

They like Vampire: The Masquerade, because they can be genuine bad guys for a change. Nevermind the element of tragedy crucial to the game, or the emphasis on the loss of humanity and all that that means. Oh no, these guys just want to go "Hisssssss" and scare a lot of helpless teenagers.

This type is certainly not a favorite at the games I am in and the people I know tend to shy away from them, but I am afraid that they are out there. Way out there.

Okay, so I've missed someone, I ran out of space. I especially neglected rules lawyers as they have had too much coverage as it is.





Supplementa Magica

Supplements, supplements, every game system has supplements.

DM's salvation or just a waste of dead tree?

In this review I'll look at seven supplements for the Ars Magica system. In the dozen years I have been DMing, I have never seen a system better than Ars Magica (what, me biased?). The Ars Magica Third Ed. Rulebook contains pretty much everything a DM needs for a good game of mediaval magic, but any game can benefit from good supplements. While adventure modules are useful for ideas and are great if you need an adventure fast, I prefer supplements which add to the game and give me material and rules to design my own adventures. I find ready made adventures harder to graft into a DM's world and often less well suited to a party's unique talents. So in this review I am looking at supplements for Ars Magica that expand the rules.

(Aside: All of these were purchased from Games Without Frontiers for about R80 apiece. They are cheaper with the 10% Claws discount. Thanks, Mark.)

In the Ars Magica world of Mediaval Europe, there are three supernatural powers rivalling magic: the Powers of Heaven, Hell, and the Fay.



THE MALEFICIUM, Sourcebook of the Infernal

At last, this is what DM's have been looking for - a well-researched guide to the Ultimate Enemy, inspired by, inter alia, Dante, Milton, Faust and genuine Mediaval theology and demonology. So many gaming systems have watered down bad guys but are afraid of censorship and lost sales and thus are sadly demon free. Take for example TSR's "sanitized" 2nd Ed. AD & D. Here is the real thing: Hell, the Nephilim, Fallen Angels, and the Damned. It gives a complete who's who of the Dark Side - Satan, Lilith, Mephistopheles, Beelzebub, and co. The book has a

most useful digression into Mediaval metaphysics, covering topics like why demons want souls and what they do with them, Hell's Hierarchy, the difference between demons and devils, and the history of diabolism. It builds on this background with stats and rules for the powers of demons and devils, their various forms and powers of possession, temptation and corruption. While its Bestiary is somewhat limited, only giving ten demons, the rules explain how to design your own (see the demon I whipped up).

Fully a third of this supplement is dedicated to demon-summoning and the goetist, or black magician, character class is detailed. Comprehensive rules are given for warding, summoning, binding, contests of will, thralls, demonic familiars, true names, black tomes, and infernal pacts. The various types of pacts are detailed from the infamous Pact of Ashes, to lesser contracts. It also includes a study of the pros and cons of selling your soul.

Lastly the book discusses various rituals of diabolists, from the Black Mass of satanic group to Sorcerer's Sabbaths or the dark rituals of black witches.

Fundamentalists have already tried to ban this book in several states in America, so get it before they succeed.



PAX DEI, The Sourcebook of the Divine

If you prefer the side with harps not horns, then the next supplement is for you. "Pax Dei" explains the power of faith and the benefits of piety. Here is the full force of the Church, from holy hermit to rich bishop, humble vicar to the Pope himself. It discusses the supernatural effects of prayer, blessings, and the sacraments, relics and excommunication, and explains the full supernatural power of the Pope, and his ability to call down the Wrath of God.

The supplement continues where the Maleficium left off, in its discussion of mediaval metaphysics. Heaven, the New Jerusalem, Purgatory and the Garden of Eden are all described. The old debate of how



many angels can dance on the head of a pin (answer in next issue) takes on new relevance with the supplement's study of angelic powers and beings - Archangels, Seraphim and Cherubim - even the Angel of Death.

Pax Dei also has rules for saints, and how to call on their aid, and the rules for exorcism go well with the Maleficium's possession rules.

What I found most interesting is the power Pax Dei gives to the people of the Church. Crusaders with their Righteous Aura are fearsome foes of magi, and are a major reason as to why magi of the order have to keep a low profile. A few hundred Crusaders could level any covenant, no matter how powerful the magi who lived there. Of course, for those magi captured by the Church, Pax Dei also discusses Inquisitors...



Not all magi are foes of the Church. The last chapter looks at the followers of Saint Neirus, the so-called Pious Magi. Accused by some magi as traitors, these outcasts of the order see their magic gift as a gift from God, and use it accordingly.

So, that is Pax Dei, a good companion volume to the Maleficium, but don't buy it alone as it often refers to rules in the Maleficium eg. "for possession rules, see Maleficium".



FAERIES, A Complete Handbook of the Seelie

For all those who dislike the whole Heaven-Hell axis, here is the most mysterious of the Powers. These Faeries are not the cute butterfly-winged creations of Victorian children's tales, not the angelic elves of middle-earth. These are the oft-dark, always fickle creatures of older myth and legend a la Grimms. The dark faeries of the Unseelie Court are especially dangerous, beings that other games might call orcs, dwarfs, goblins and trolls. While they are not Evil in the Christian sense, they can certainly be malicious and cruel.

This supplement suggests several possible explanations of where faeries originate from, and goes into considerable depth on faerie's motivations and behaviour. It discusses their powers and vulnerabilities: their sensitivity to iron and Church, their many abilities eg. elfshot, glamour, invisibility, shapechange. Also included are rules for half-faerie characters and those with faerie blood.

The book has a short chapter on Arcadia (Faerieland), including an explanation of Faerie regio, faerie trods and the faerie sites: forests, hills and pools, faerie rings.

The centrepiece of the book is its excellent bestiary, detailing scores of dark and light faeries, from the tiny sprites to the powerful Tuatha de Danann, terrifying wild hunt and the awesome Lords and Ladies of the Fay, and even fay plants.

Lastly, the book ends with four good adventures centred on the Fay.

SHAMANS, The Hidden Paths

If you have a fetish for fetishes, or a taste for spirits, this is the one for you. In this 3rd Edition supplement, full rules are given for Shamans as characters, spirit travelling and shapechanging. It contains a pleasingly large Bestiary of animal spirits, elementals,

ghosts and other creatures of the spirit world. This comprehensive guide also covers totems, fetches, bound spirits, giving rules for ghosts, the spirit world, and magic regio. Travel the spirit world, the near and far lands, and the paths of the dead.



MEDIEVAL BESTIARY

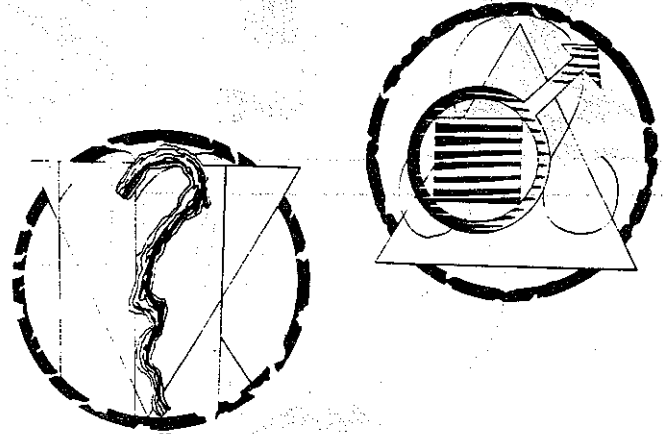
More than a mere monster manual, this exhaustive guide contains chapters on playing and designing fantastic and real beasts, rules for Shapechangers and familiars. There are more than one hundred beasts with stats, behaviour and a story idea for each, from Amphisbaea to Zephyr.

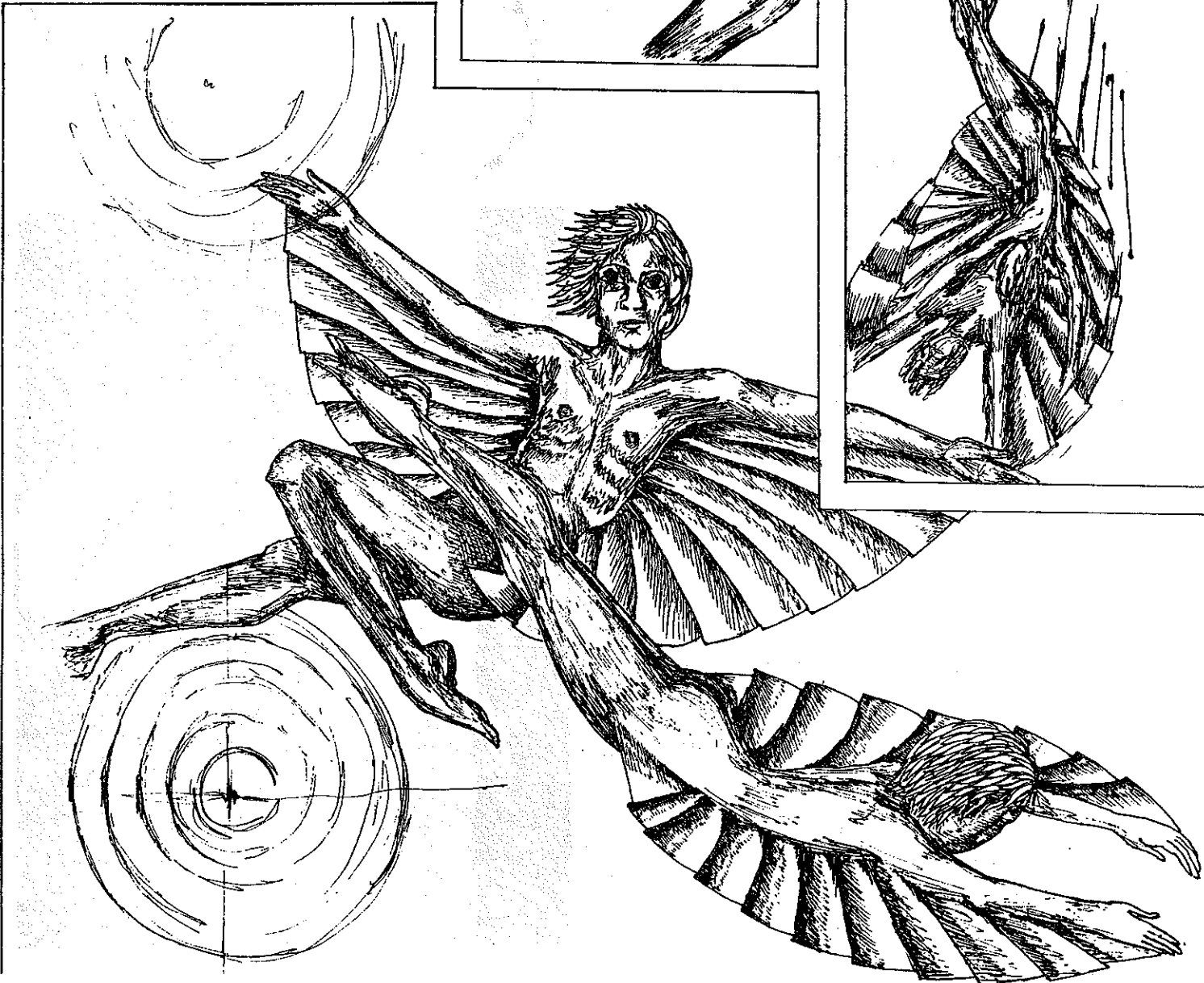
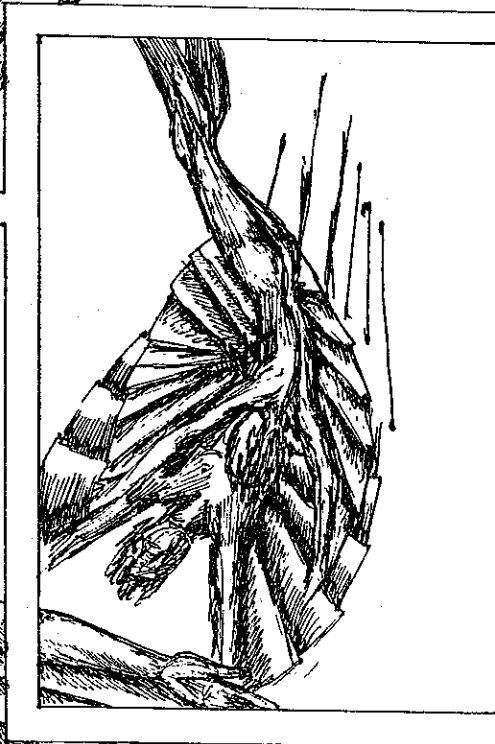
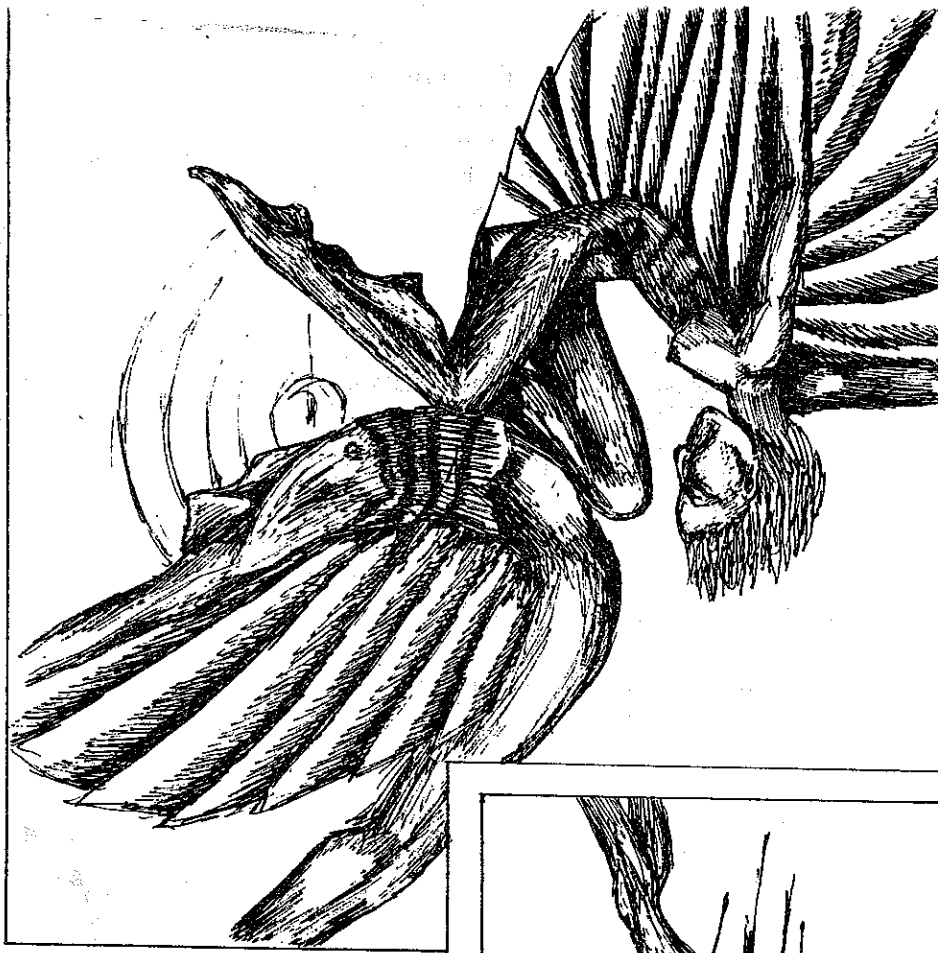
ORDER OF HERMES

For those who like to get political, Order of Hermes presents a detailed description of the Order, building on the material of the 3rd Ed. Ars Magica rulebook. In its hallowed pages you will find a History of the Order, timeline, the Schism War, the Purge of House Tytalus, and the Tremere years. Useful details on the outlook, policy, and politics of each house, and their typical opinion of other houses, plus famous members. Loads of background material - a look at each tribunal of covenants, the life of a magus from before apprenticeship to Archmage, and game-enriching details on the forms of address, magi society, and the Quaesitors and the Code.

WIZARDS GRIMOIRE

The latest supplement from Whitewolf Games, this tome resembles a rolemaster companion with 200 new spells, magic items, new rules on faerie familiars, specialised labs, homunculi and golems. It covers a wide range of magical topics - magical tattoos, apparent age and longevity potions, liches, advanced magic item creation, and rules for book-making, quality scribing, and illuminating. In addition it contains an interesting appendix giving precedents and case studies in Hermetic Law.





Hermetica

Magic Arts

Techniques

Creo	
Intellego	
Muto	
Perdo	
Rego	

Formulaic
Ritual
Penetration

Forms

Animal	
Aquam	
Auram	
Corporem	
Herbam	

-Tech + Form + Stam
-Tech + Form + Stam + Med Cast Speed
-Casting Roll + Pen

Ignem	
Imagonem	
Mentum	
Terram	
Vim	

Spontaneous
Recognizing Spell

Methods

Formulaic	
Spontaneous	
Ritual	
Casting Speed	
Lab Total	

-Tech + Form + Int
-Que + Finesse - Enc
-Percep + Magic Theory 9+

Vis

Mundum

Equipment

Item	Load	Item	Load

Total Load [] - Str [] = [] Encumbrance

Ego

Virtues and Flaws

Personality Traits

Reputation

Tournament Design: Guide to Designers

I could start by saying: start early and test it well ahead of time. Take deadlines seriously. But we've never done that before so how should we know that it works?

The first rule is that tournament design is more work than you thought it would be. It can be very frustrating, but it can also be great fun. Some of the things below may seem obvious. But all the mistakes listed have been made (most of them by CLAWs).

All tournaments are goal-oriented games. In order to win, some goal or set of goals must be accomplished. And competing against other teams of players is the point of a tournament. Thankfully our regular games are not like that.

Part One: Software Engineering

There are a few rules of thumb from the arcane realm of software engineering (the attempt to get a group of programmers to work together on a large program) that you should know:

If n people write a program, you will get a program broken down into n program units. The interfaces between program units are a major source of bugs, and these bugs are hard to find. The units that make up a

program are often put together fairly late in the development process.

Adding more people to an already late project makes it even later. The more people involved, the more time they will have to spend coordinating their activities. Past a certain number of people, adding more people to a task increases the time that the task will take.

Correcting mistakes should be a communal, fun activity. Creations should be communal property. Other people are much more likely to spot errors in your work, as they are looking at it from outside. Some programmers get upset when someone points out a bug in their work. They see it as a personal attack on them, when it is actually a way to improve the project as a whole.

The second-system effect: When one is designing the successor to a relatively small, elegant, and successful system, there is a tendency to become grandiose in one's success and design an elephantine feature-laden monstrosity.

Part Two: The Ideal World.

The perfect tournament is easy to DM. The DM should be able to pick up the module, read it clearly and be presented with no novelties and rule changes. The DM should enjoy DMing the module.

The perfect tournament DM does not DM the same way that it DMs its own campaign. It does not use its own rules or fudge dice rolls in the tournament. It DMs the module exactly as written, and uses the official standard rules of the system. It tries to make the module interesting to the players, without making changes to the module. It allows the characters to role-play, but does not hesitate to let the dice kill them if they deserve this.

The perfect tournament is challenging. It tests the skills of combat and interaction with non-player characters. It has fiendish traps and vexing riddles that must be solved to win. It demands intelligent choice of route. It also requires some dice-rolling luck. The perfect tournament is an objective test of skills. If they have all been well tested, the champions should be obvious to all (not just the judges) for their daring, skill, courage, luck, wit and characterisation. They will have succeeded where lesser teams have fallen by the wayside.



The perfect tournament gives parties something to talk about afterwards. "What did you do when you got to the Glue Monster? We used the Secret Sphere of Spon on it." The perfect tournament has a scoring system that (using the tests the characters faced in the module) quickly and clearly identifies best teams.

But the perfect tournament is never just a dungeon in the middle of nowhere. It has an original setting and fully justified reasons for the events that occur. It has humour and atmosphere. It is never predictable, routine, tacky or over the top. It makes the players want to accomplish their quest.

The perfect tournament is fun to play. It is interesting to the player. The background is original and new to the player, yet the player is able to feel at home within it in a very short space of time. This is not always a contradiction. The tournaments that certain CLAWs hierarchs consider to be excellent (The WARP module about the pygmies, and BloodStream) accomplish this wonderfully. Modules that manage to get the players totally involved in an innovative setting are remembered for many years.

Modules that are regarded as failures in this respect either don't have an innovative setting (i.e. were too simple, predictable and boring), or failed to engage interest (i.e. were too complex, unpredictable and boring).

Part Three: The Bits of Paper That Get Given to the DM

The tournament DM always seems to have too much material to read, too many things to look through, too many things to remember and a party telling him to get on with it. The DM is under great pressure. It is no surprise then that tournament DMs make mistakes.

If something is not written down on the paper in plain English then it just ain't so. If the DM in the tournament cannot understand something straight away, the best that she can do is ignore it. There is no such thing as an obvious background detail.

Good layout is important. For instance, putting encounter descriptions in a different font makes it easy for the DM to pick them out. But, if it will take you days to get all the text that the DM must read out loud put in little boxes, then the time could be better spent.

Vital information should not be buried somewhere in 50 pages of text. In that case it might just as well not be there at all.

Try to limit the amount of paper that gets given to the DM. Remember that he has to sort through it and make sense of it all. The 1993 ICON had, at the top of each location, a list of objects there, a list of traps and monsters, and a one-phrase summary of what happens at that location. It may be a good idea to make tables, charts and quick-references of things like this, but beware of DMs using them instead of the complete module: "DMing from the map".

Complex and fiendish traps should be drawn, preferably in perspective. I have heard with my own ears DMs invent traps that physically made no sense at all. Even if the workings of the trap are consistent, a text-only explanation may hopelessly confuse a visually-minded DM or player.

Part Four: What the DM Will Do to the Module

You may think of a tournament DM as a robot that follows instructions, but consider that there have been cases of DMs, when presented with a particularly bad section, simply telling the party that they refuse to DM that part, and going on to the next section. Fortunately these were not CLAWs tournaments.

It is statistically inevitable that at least one DM will make some dreadful blunder during the course of the tournament play. Yet these mistakes can be minimised. There should be room for a DM to make a few mistakes without destroying the module. One slip on the DM's part should not damn the party or destroy the plot. The details that the DM has to remember and get right should be few and big.

A designer is not a DM. It is no good for designers to say "In my game I ..." This is not your game, and not your rules. It is the game of several tournament DMs. Everyone's DMing deviates from the "standard" way in which the system was originally designed to be used. Each DM's style and rule use is different. However, most DMs have used or tried to use "official" modules that use the standard rules. The closer the tournament stays to that standard the less the DM will have to adapt to the designers' particular use of rules and style.

Long descriptions that involve "you look up and see ..." and "then you realise that ..." are fine in a regular game, when you are watching your players carefully. Copying that speech down and giving it in a tournament will simply cause a chorus of "no I don't", and "wait a minute, I do something". Rather make short, concise descriptions and leave the purple prose up to the DM, who may or may not be good at generating atmosphere with descriptions.

DMs are creative and will invent details if allowed to. Presumably they enjoy doing so. Allowing the DM to invent the colour of an alchemist's shop's walls is fine (such an arbitrary detail should indeed not be specified). Allowing the DM to invent the contents of such a shop is not fine.

A tournament is not a campaign. It may be nice to invent an entire world, several new pantheons, new character classes, monsters and spells. But the players and DMs will have to play and DM them a few minutes after seeing them for the first time. In the space of a few hours they will need to meet them, get used to them, play them and then leave them forever. Tournament DMing is different to campaign DMing.

Part Five: The Scoring

The scoring system, in CLAW tradition, is usually written up while the module is being played. Naturally, the scoring system can only be finished after the module is finished. But the module must be designed with some notion of scoring in mind.

The scoring system should not reward parties that stray from their goal (e.g. 10 points for killing a monster that lurks in a dead end, and does not stand between the party and their goal). Parties that congratulate themselves on their goal-orientation in avoiding these encounters will rightly feel cheated.

The scoring system should not make too many assumptions about the party's behaviour. (E.g., if the Glue Monster is an unnecessary combat, awarding "10 points if the party are bright enough to break off the attack on the Glue Monster within the first three

rounds": There will always be some parties that do not attack at all, which should be taken into account.)

The scoring system is not just the adding up of numbers. Given that the scoring system cannot anticipate the party's every move, human judgement is needed in the assessment of who played best. The scoring system should have large blank spaces in which the DM can write the party's best and worst moves, some of which will amaze the designers. The DM's should be called together afterwards to discuss the things that their charges did.

Human judgement will also play a role in assessing which parties were most in character. This should be evaluated by the DM and a judge who looks at all teams. The DM should be evaluated by his players and by an impartial judge.

Part Six: The DMs' Briefing

The DMs' briefing is the design team's last chance to patch the holes, explain the complexities and try to make the DMs understand the module. In true CLAWs style, this is usually not planned, but simply happens on the morning of the tournament.

In the DMs' briefing you have very limited time. There is no way that you can read through the entire module and addenda, look at the maps, explain the characters to the DMs and answer questions in an hour or so. The designers should all be present at the DMs' briefing. If possible, designers should explain their own sections, but having a briefer who can talk fast, concisely and to the point is more important.

The DMs' briefing is best used to explain the general module structure, not all the specific details. Walk through only the most important encounters. Explain the difficult points. Introduce key concepts and give them the flavour of the background.

Let the DMs get a feel for how to use the module. If you simply throw module details at them for the entire briefing they will have forgotten the entire thing by the time they sit down in front of their teams. Use overheads or other media to show maps.

Quite often DMs see the characters for the first time when they sit down in front of the party they must DM for. Give the DMs a brief summary of what to expect.

Part Seven: The Design Team

Most importantly, have a design team that can agree on what the end product should be. The quickest way to get nowhere is to spend all the time arguing



over what the final product should be, or worse yet, to have different designers surreptitiously trying to tug it this way and that. You need one vision of the module.

Use your design team well. Some people are good at spitting out reams of wildly original, improbable ideas. These are usually not the people who are good at making these ideas work. There is strong circumstantial evidence that people good at spitting out good ideas are freshers (wide-eyed and believing that anything is possible), and that those good at making them work are experienced designers (who know how easily it can go wrong). It is therefore a good idea to have an even balance of both in the design team.

This also helps if you are planning on having a tournament the following year.

Some people are good at character backgrounds. Others enjoy constructing settings. Others have been taught perspective drawing, or Middle English. Let these people do what they are good at. Use other resources. Libraries may have floor plans of medieval buildings, or whatever else you need to make your scenario complete.

The ideal size of the design team depends entirely on the people concerned. These people will, of course, have other time commitments. If the design team is too small, the designers will either not finish or will burn out in the attempt. If it is too large, the team will not get anywhere (see Part One). In general, three is too few and ten is too many.

Another approach may be to have three or four (not more and not less!) designers, who get on well with each other. These designers will be the sole arbiters of the module's content. They will, however, call in specialists, such as engineers to design traps, historians for backgrounds and settings, artists for pictures, "good roleplayers" to flesh out the PCs, etc.

If the design of the module is divided up into sections with their own designers, the sections tend to get larger when no-one else is looking. They also get more colourful, more fleshed-out, more intricate, too long, inconsistent with the rest of the module and unusable. They must then be trimmed, often with much argument. No designer likes to see his brainchild hacked to shreds.

People who are away for more than five or six days over the June-July holidays should not be on the Dragonfire design team.

Beware of bottlenecks, especially in the layout stages.

Depending on one person to do large amounts of typing or typesetting can slow the entire tournament down.

Try not to depend on one computer or printer. The failure of this piece

could bring progress to a screeching halt. The ideal software for the job of layout is powerful, can be used by a number of members of the design team, and is connected to a laser printer. At present, Ventura satisfies only the last criterion.



Playtest the module early and often. Use players who have never seen the module before. Do not assume that all teams will go the same way as the playtesters.

Part Eight: The Design

The biggest problem in tournament design is standardisation. All teams should play the same module, so that they can be comparatively scored. This leads to the design being concerned with limiting the DM's inventiveness, and specifying in detail all aspects of the module. But a module that has standardisation as its primary goal would be very boring.

Standardisation also leads to containment. This is the channelling of the party down specified routes, to stop teams trying to go off the edge of the map into the great yonder of the DM's own unscorable invention.

Containment is achieved either by putting physical barriers in their way, or by limiting their food supply, or by giving them a slow-acting poison, or some such physical device. Containment can also be based on the information that the party have. This is the preferred method in cyberpunk games, where the party is much more mobile and much of the action will occur in an urban setting.

A tournament module should have a choice of routes and actions. A tournament module should never have more than two routes to choose from. These routes must join together fairly soon thereafter. It is

choices such as "did the party go straight on or did they find the secret door", "did they stop to fight the monster or did they avoid it", "did they realise from the clues that the door must be trapped, or did they walk right into it", that a tournament scoring system is based on. In order to test the worth of the party, there must be such a choice.

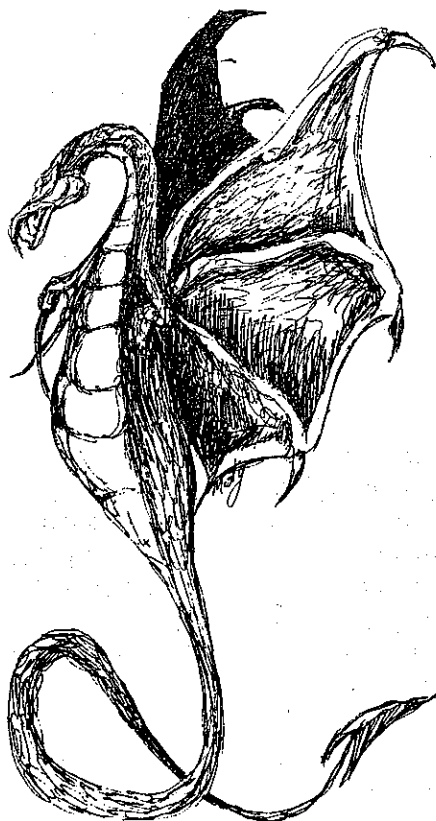
However, if the module then splits in two and only joins up again in the final combat, this choice is the only thing in the entire module that the party can be tested on. The rest of the scoring system must then hinge upon guessing the equivalence of different sections, which may test entirely different skills. The players may not even know before they pick a route which skills that route tests. This not only makes unnecessary work for the design team, it makes the integration, play testing and scoring of the module harder (see Part One). In some cases a better module could have been made by simply throwing out half.

If the module splits into two paths which join up again after a minor penalty or reward, another uniform test can be administered to your lab rats.

Characters in campaigns are developed slowly over a period of months (or even years), with the personality slowly emerging from the depths of the individual player. In a tournament, if you wish to test roleplaying, you must create characters that a number of different people can pick up and play immediately, yet are not stereotypes. You need a character with some

obvious trait or *raison d'être*, yet with complexities or subtleties. All characters should be equally useful in getting through the tribulations of the module.

Do not make the module too convoluted. Any inconsistency in the plot can be solved by adding to the module. However, any addition can cause more plot loopholes. The more complex the plot, the more likely this is. This leads to a vicious circle.



The more complex the plot and scenario, the less likely is it that teams will stick to the routes that you have expected them to go on. Many teams will lose interest in overly complex plots.

You should not have settlements which are more complex than villages. In a town, a linear structure is impossible, and the complexities of who does what when and what it means to other people can become overwhelming to the DM and design team. The NPCs should be few and well fleshed out.

Be precise about entry and exit points to the module. If the module starts with "You set off from Straightoutofplayershandbooks-ville one fine morning", several teams will insist on going straight back and buying mice in cages, blacksmith's pliers, wire, glass vials full of itching powder and any number of fiendish devices with which they will attempt to lay low the module. You may want to allow the party to equip themselves, but at least level the playing field by making it clear to everyone if they can do so (and state specifically what is available).

Allowing the party to buy equipment makes the module less predictable, scoring more difficult, and may just give fiendish teams the edge. Of course, no self-respecting judge will allow a team to win if they destroy the module by starting forest-fires, poisoning wells, starting jihads, building improbable gadgets, sending lightning bolts down wires into strategically placed puddles of water under archvillains and generally exploiting loopholes in the module to the maximum until the poor DM is led away gibbering. The team will probably be upset by this, and go around afterwards muttering about how unfair the scoring was.

A sloppy ending is easier to get away with than a sloppy beginning to the tournament, as the team may be too busy congratulating each other on finishing to notice the inconsistencies.

A tournament should not be longer than four hours. This is long enough to test parties, and in an intense tournament situation, interest begins to wane after this time.

At the end of the tournament, cast a weary eye over the design team. The members who are muttering "Thank Plin it's over. I don't want to even think about the next one until next year" should not be on the next design team. The ones who are muttering "We made some horrible mistakes. This may sound bizarre, but what if we have a module next year that..." should be on the next design team.

Anthony Steele

Tournament Design: Some Comments

After reading Anthony's *Tournament Design* article, I would like to comment on a few of the issues raised in it.

Having twice been a DM in tournaments that I did not design, I want to emphasise the points about tournament DMing. In a tournament, the designers are trying to create a certain experience for the players. The DMs are the translators through which the designers have to work. The importance of accurate and effective tournament DMing should not be underestimated.

Any brilliant idea of the designers' is useless until they can find a way for DMs to easily put that idea into effect. This is one of the greatest challenges facing tournament designers: to find ways to ensure that all the DMs present parties with a comparable module. To manage this, designers should be well aware of the challenges facing tournament DMs.

The DM has to do the following things, each of them stressful in itself, simultaneously:

1. adapt to a new group of players he/she has never DMed before (and probably never met before);
2. remember as much of the DMs' briefing as possible, relating that information to the module as it progresses;
3. assimilate and work with all of the information given for an encounter, much of which (including all the details) he/she will be seeing for the first time;
4. be calm and collected enough to keep the party under control, give descriptions that will hold the party's interest, and role-play NPCs;
5. stay aware enough of the rules (including any irritating amendments made by designers) to resolve party actions fairly;
6. do all of the above as fast as possible, because the players have a time limit that they will not let you forget about.

The tournament should be designed with the assumption that DMs will be only moderately competent at each of the above - because many of them will be.

Another issue, which is only indirectly relevant to tournament design, is that of organising the tournament or convention day itself. A great deal could be written about how to do this, but won't be (at least not by me). What should be mentioned is that in the scramble of tournament design and production, there

is a tendency to neglect things like advertising, catering, and other physical/logistical requirements.

These things are essential for a successful tournament event. They should be planned for well, and well in advance. People who are not on the design team should be responsible for this, but there should be one person or group responsible for generally co-ordinating both design and the event itself.

Although I fully support most of Anthony's article, I must disagree with its last paragraph (to which the reader is referred). Yes, it is best that those who enjoy work should get to keep doing it. But here is another scenario that has occurred with CLAWs in the past:

Most members of the largish design team tend to back off when the pressure builds up, leaving two or three dedicated designers to carry the work-load to the end. Not surprisingly, these people are gibbering by the end and say "Thank Plin it's over". Meanwhile, those who slacked off are standing around saying "OK, but there were some horrible mistakes. What if we have a module next year that..."

Of course, this is not a good way to produce a tournament. And the truth is usually not as clear as presented in the above scenario: while designers might back off due to other commitments or simple laziness, they might also do so, for example, if they feel alienated by an impenetrable "inner core" of dedicated de-



signers. But the point remains that the ones going "Thank Plin it's over" are not necessarily all bad.

The above paragraph suggests that interpersonal relations should be carefully monitored in a high-pressure group effort like tournament design. The members with co-ordinating skills should work for harmonious interaction (without trying to impose harmony through domination!). By being open-minded and dedicated to a reasonable solution (a tall order?), it IS possible to resolve difficult decisions without unpleasantness.

Dare I say that being nice to people has not been very fashionable in some quarters of CLAWs (myself included at times, I fear). Many of us are highly indi-

vidualistic, which is not bad in itself. But mutual respect and, well, kindness, will probably help greatly to reduce the stress of design sessions. The importance of this will be apparent to all of us who were involved in Dragonfire V.

Finally, thank goodness (or whatever) that we have come out of the coffin to discuss tournament design openly. Perhaps if a few sensible guidelines are generally agreed upon, design weaknesses will be overcome with less difficulty and pain than in the past.

I look forward to seeing Dragonfire VI...

Andrew Shackleton

Tournament Production

A few words in contention with the dreaded Mr Steele's article on tournament design in this issue.

I would agree with almost all of his comments in the article, but I feel that, both in his discussion and in his choice of "good" tournament examples, an important point is omitted. Having DMed both *Bloodstream* and *Pygmy Quest* in non-tournament situations in the past year, I am very aware of their very serious flaws - namely, poor layout, poor writing, bad grammar, atrocious spelling and low quality production.

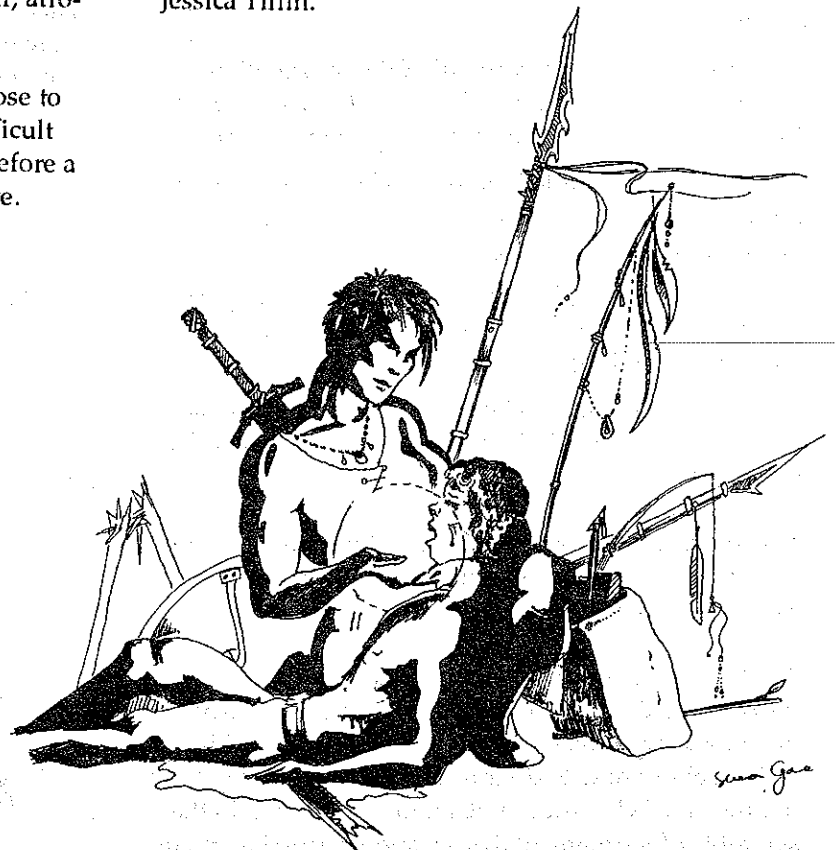
Both modules are conceptually very good - I chose to DM them, after all! *Bloodstream*, however, is difficult to DM even after several hours of preparation before a session, something tournament DMs do not have. The module is laid out in large chunks of text, and important facts are in illogical order, concealed among mere verbiage.

Pygmy Quest is scrappily produced, often illegible due to poor quality printing, and has no real differentiation between descriptions, DM's notes and stats. Its spelling and grammatical errors would be atrocious coming from Standard 6s. This clouding of the information flow throws me badly, and I'm sure would do the same to many other DMs. (Not to mention the fact that there is not a measurement, distance or time estimate in the entire module).

Good layout and writing will never hide the flaws of a poorly designed module; on the other hand, poor layout can certainly give one a distaste for the most inspired products

of tournament designer's art. Consider the more recent CLAW modules: *Eye of the Storm* and *When Dragons Die* may have suffered from design flaws, but their layout, presentation and writing show increasing improvement in standards. I am aware that Mr Steele has not been involved in full tournament design since *Bloodstream* and is inclined to be partisan, but let us give credit where credit is due.

Jessica Tiffin.



How To Take Over The Planet With A Toothpick

Sorry. That was just to get your attention. I mean, something like "The Beginners' Guide To CLAWs" just doesn't leap screaming out of the page at you, does it? But this article is, more or less, such a guide.

Recommended dosage:

NEW CLAW MEMBERS: *Read whole article and memorise it. It may save your life.*

OLD CLAW MEMBERS: *Read whole article; digest slowly. There's probably stuff in here you've been avoiding for years.*

LONG STANDING CLAW MEMBERS: *It's OK, guys. You can sit down now.*

NON CLAW MEMBERS: *Get a life. Join CLAWs, read the article, and memorise.*

The CLAW Committee

The CLAW Committee, a.k.a. "the Hierarchy" or just "Them", bears the awesome responsibility of getting other people to do all the work.

Unfortunately, this almost never succeeds, and the Hierarchs are left to do the work themselves. Let this be a warning to aspiring CLAW members: although the power is vast, the raise-in-count is high, and people sometimes take you seriously, the Committee has to do a whole lot of work.

Slackers need not apply. (But they frequently do, and end up being universally loathed - good thing too.)

Here follows a list of the Committee positions and their functions. We've also listed the 1993 Committee, although they will leave office at the AGM in early March (we like seeing our names in print).

(If the Committee members are able to work together and support one another, much stress will be avoided. Here speaks the voice of experience.)

CLAWTHING (*Andrew Shackleton*) - This is the "Chairperson" of CLAWs. It has to make sure that everyone else does their job - this means being a little bit involved in everything. When things go wrong, the Clawthing is blamed, usually justifiably. On the other hand, if you can

get things to run well, this is a hell of a fun job to have.

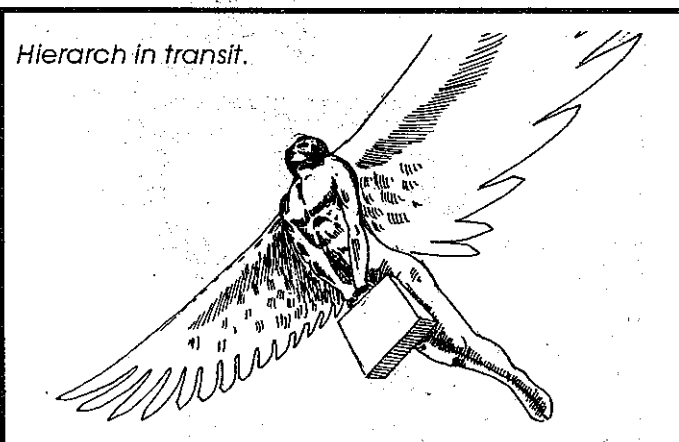
SECRETARY (*Michelle Culverwell*) - As well as generally assisting the Clawthing, the Secretary looks after paperwork and information - letter writing, minutes, etc - as well as organisational details. There is much scope to be involved in CLAWMARKS and tournament production. An efficient, organised creature is required for the job.

TREASURER (*Jeanne Maclay*) - You guessed it. Work out ways to get money, and to get the most out of it. Keep accurate track of the money we have. Help to mastermind the practicalities of events (e.g. tournament, CLAWMARKS, parties, etc.) which involve finances.

GUILDMASTER (*Carlo Kruger*) - This being organises role-playing in CLAWs and is nominally the head of the alleged "DMS' Guild". Most importantly, the Guildmaster is the Overboss of the tournament, answering to the Committee as a whole. The tournament job is tough - read Anthony's article in the Forum of this edition. A being with creativity, good people skills, and self and other-discipline is required here.

WARLORD (*Peter van Heusden*) - Don't you just love these titles? The Warlord is the grand master of wargaming. Traditionally, CLAW members don't spontaneously wargame much, but if a game is organised and well advertised, they play and enjoy. Achieving this is a big part of the job. There is quite a wide range of wargames in the Library to work from.

HEAD LIBRARIAN (*Jessica von Tiffin und Ubergrundibang*) - A very reSPONSible position. The Library is worth thousands of groats, and the Head Librarian has to look after it. A ruthlessly organised being is needed (fascist tendencies a



recommendation). The Head Librarian is appointed by the new Committee after the election (and could be holding another portfolio as well).

AD HOC MEMBERS (*Stefl Anastasiadis & Mark Brady*) - One of these is elected, and then enough (1 or 2) are appointed to bring the Committee up to eight members. The Ad Hocs have no specific portfolio, and so act as advisors, assistants to other portfolios and projects, and spon. Especially spon. These people, if properly delegated to, can be very useful.

GAMES

Obviously, one of our most important functions is to help organise games on campus. If you want to role-play or wargame, talk to a Committee member or notice board near you. (You're right. If it's a notice board, just leave a note.)

We may also run workshops on various game systems or DMing methods, which would be helpful to beginners and experienced gamers alike.

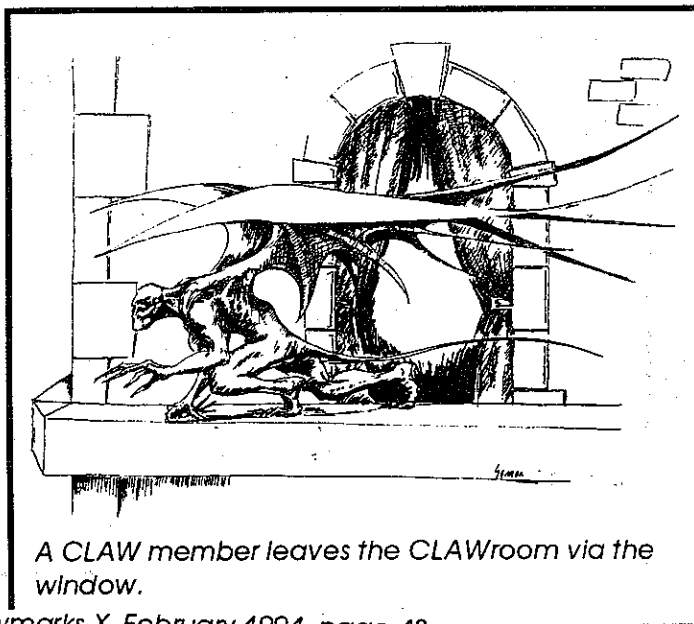
In the first week of lectures (usually Thursday lunchtime), we have a **Preliminary Meeting** at which games will be discussed, and games masters will make themselves known to potential players. If you ever in your life want to role-play or wargame ever, be there.

THE UTTERLY DREADED CLAWROOM

Yeah.

This lurks on Blue Level in the Student's Union, to your left as you leave past the Autobank. It's just off Jammie steps - merry navigating. We like to think of the CLAWroom as Black Level.

We moved into it recently, having been thrown out of our Green Level lift machinery room by treasuries and things. (The new room is both



A CLAW member leaves the CLAWroom via the window.

bigger and better - never say your fiendish hierarchy don't earn their awesome power).

The CLAWroom is a social centre during lectures, and a gaming venue during the afternoons, evenings and weekends. You, too, can run your games in the CLAWroom!! It can be booked for games, and DMs are issued with keys once they've had a small deposit extorted from them.

The room also houses the CLAW library of role-playing and wargaming material - see below - and it also contains a noticeboard for gaming news, players-wanted notices and graffiti. Graffiti on paper on the notice board, please.

The room itself is a locus of general socialising, insanity and world domination plots. Activities have included blowing bubbles, the repealing of gravity, and tying up members with yards of electronic cable and string. You are encouraged to enter the room by its first floor window.

However, if the room becomes a mess, or things get too out of hand, we'll have to hurt you. Librarians are empowered to make you clean up and then throw you out. If we abuse the room, it'll probably get taken away from us. Anyone who throws anything out of the window will cease to be a member of CLAWs. Period (Cretaceous).

THE CLAW LIBRARY

This is where we get fascist.

The library contains over 400 items, comprising role-playing and wargaming material from a major range of systems. D&D and AD&D are probably the best represented, although most CLAW members have moved on to bigger, better, brighter things. Fast-growing categories are Rolemaster and Cyberpunk, and other systems represented include Star Wars, Cthulu, Runequest, MERP, and a whole section of miscellaneous minor systems. The wargame section is also expanding rapidly. In the pipeline for library acquisitions are various White Wolf publications, including *Ars Magica*.

The library is there for the use of all members, and operates on a card system which allows the issue of three items for a period of three weeks. DMs may take out a 3-month DMing loan if necessary. High demand items are on a one-day short loan system.

The library is generally open during morning lectures and lunch, staffed by a team of volunteer librarians who sign items out and patrol the room for book-snitching evildoers. (Librarians

are naturally honorary orangutangs of the Order of the Banana).

Overdue books are fined, incidentally, and so are the people who took them out. If you don't return items, a generous replacement cost is charged to your fee account... not the kind of bill that parents or bursars tend to appreciate.



"Now... will you ever have an overdue library book again...?"

THE NAUGHTY NOTICEBOARD

All society activities are advertised on the official CLAW noticeboard, which hangs out with the other society noticeboards on Orange Level in the Union. (That's the very bottom of the Union, in the large room just off the Plaza, where the Jammie Shuttle leaves from).

CLAWMARKS

CLAWMARKS is one of the venerable institutions of CLAWs. It has come a long way since CLAWMARKS I in 1989 (the classifieds were stuck together line by line). CLAWMARKS is produced twice a year - CLAWMARKS XI (gosh!) should be on sale at Dragonfire in August.

CLAWMARKS relies on contributions from CLAW members (mostly) - artwork, articles, humour, RIPs, etc. That means you. Even small contributions make us happy. This edition should give a good idea of what we're looking for, but new ideas are also very welcome.

Most welcome of all is if you want to join the editorial team. This involves a bit of hectic work, but much fun and communal insanity. You get to pick up all kinds of skills and social diseases.

Be creative - gargle in restaurants!

THE CLAW TOURNAMENT

The tournament - Dragonfire - is the biggest event of the year. Not just for CLAWs, but for the planet.

In a sentence, a tournament is an event at which many teams play the same role-playing module simultaneously, and are scored on their performance. It's dead groovy.

Dragonfire I, II and III were single AD&D modules. Dragonfire IV offered 3 tournaments using different systems. Dragonfire V - last year - was a full Convention, with 3 tournaments: AD&D, Rolemaster, and Cyberspace.

Tournament design is a fairly complicated procedure, which we are still learning about (see the Forum of this edition, if you have several thousand concentration units to spare). Tournament design involves quite a lot of challenging work over several months, but can be extremely rewarding.

We are keen for some first year CLAW members, especially ones with DMing experience, to get involved in tournament design. Of course, once you've attended a design team meeting, you can't play in the module.

There is talk of designing an additional mini-tournament for absolute beginners during the first quarter this year, so watch the skies....

OTHER ACTIVITIES

We do grillions of other things during the year, including Seriously Wild Parties and lengthy video evenings. At the end of last year we went to a beach for sundowners, and plan to repeat the experience. Keep watching the notice boards, and talking to the people who organise these things (that should be you, soldier).

Stick around. It doesn't take long to pick up the sub-culture. There are many different types in CLAWs, but most of them are entertaining in one way or another. And remember - the lowrarchs of today are the hierarchs of next year...

So, what next? (1) Sharpen toothpick a whole lot. (2) Assemble world rulers, alone and helpless, in a cellar. It *has* to be a cellar. (3) Threaten them. Poke one a bit to show that you mean business. (4) Now they will do your mighty bidding.

That wasn't so difficult. See you in the CLAWroom.

The Bard's Best Tomes

Alas for the good old days when such tomes as these could be purchased for nine or ten silvers (which, in these sad and decadent times, have become steel-nickels). Hard it is to see the volumes of wondrous tales arrayed and displayed, and being unable to purchase at least some...

Cease thy moaning, complains the Bard's scribe. The worshipful folk who read this wish not to know thy troubles, but thy tomes!

Very well, acquiesces the Bard. But few volumes there are of worth these days, far unlike the days of my youth...

WRITE! shouts the scribe.

To begin with one not truly worth beginning: Terry Brooks' latest works, *The Elf Queen of Shannara* and *The Talismans of Shannara*, the (hopefully) final parts of *The Heritage of Shannara*. The *Talismans of Shannara* I have not been able to peruse as yet, if indeed I shall do so, for *The Elf Queen of Shannara* was but a sorry specimen of a book. Mayhap there are those who enjoy utter predictability - for within a few score pages I could myself have completed the tale - but as for myself I do not, nor do I find particular enjoyment in flat characters and repetitive situations: for that, in the end, is all *The Heritage of Shannara* is - a repetition of itself and of the previous *Shannara Trilogy*.

Having been thus sorely disappointed, it was with great expectations I took hold of Pamela Dean's *Tam Lin*, a recounting of the ancient Scottish tale of Tam Lin, but moved across time and space to modern America. Such always gives rise to great possibilities, but here, alas! the possibilities remained merely that. Little of a fairy tale, *Tam Lin* struck me more as a rather soppy self-indulgent reminiscence of the author's college days. Faeries, magic and the like are almost imperceptible (in that they are not there) and make only a weak appearance right at the end of an unsatisfactory story.

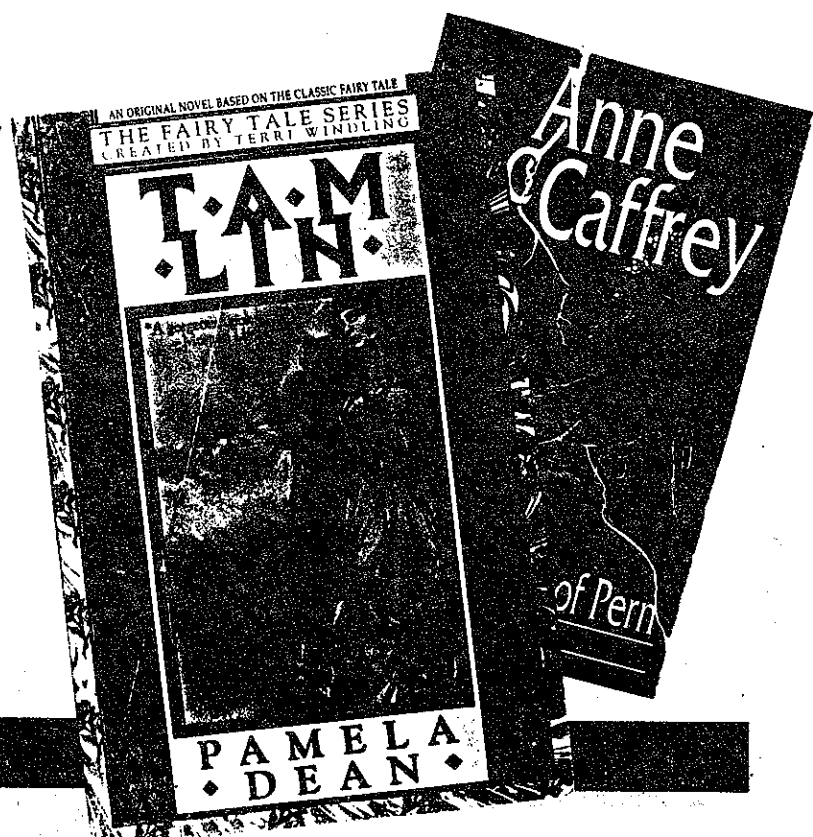
Well, huffs the scribe, how about some cheer? Doom and gloom and grimness are very well for the end of the world, but how about something good?

Truly, accedes the Bard, not all books are bad...

There is, for example, Adrian Cole's *Mother of Storms*, first volume of the *Star Requiem*, the other volumes being *Thief of Dreams*, *Warlord of Heaven*,

and *Labyrinth of Worlds*. Those who have read Adrian Cole's magnificent *Omaran Saga* will be familiar with his sweeping style and epic, world-spanning sagas. *Mother of Storms* transports a reader to a realm where science and magic intermingle, where flying machines are organic and can think, where blue-haired sorcerers summon the storms and where the world itself speaks to her children. In some ways this is perhaps reminiscent of the *Omaran Saga*, but no more so than any other author's two books might resemble each other. The tale is well-constructed, and the blending of science and magic is so well done that the borders blur and it is hard to tell where one ends and the other beings - or whether there is a difference at all.

And since of the mingling of science and magic I am speaking, I have noted that there is an increasing number of books which combine the two traditionally separate fields of fantasy and science fiction. So for example Patricia Kennealy's *The Keltiad*, consisting of *The Silver Branch*, *The Copper Crown*, and *The Throne of Scone*. Based on the premise that Saint Brendan did not cross the Atlantic but sailed away across space, taking with him the remains of the technologically as well as magically advanced race of the Danaans to settle on a distant planet far away from Christian persecution. *The Keltiad* revolves around a time several millennia later, when the descendants first make contact again with Earth.



The idea is good, but in the execution something was left behind: common sense and reason. There is no attempt to relate science and magic, or even to define how they coexist, and the story itself is so full of logical gaps that I only managed to moderately enjoy it, and that by assuming it was placed in some parallel universe so I would not need to worry about all the technical details.

Thou art backsliding again, warns the scribe. The Bard glares. *Hardly is it my fault that no better books can be bought. Thinkest thou I would not wish to read something better?*

Therefore then I was pleased to discover Anne McCaffrey's *The Chronicles of Pern: First Fall*. And yet again I had to suffer disappointment: *First Fall* is a collection of five short stories spaced around the time of the first fall of Thread, in effect a sequel to *Dragonsdawn*. The disappointment lay in discovering that, without exception, the stories were at their best no more than mildly interesting, with little to mark them individually.

Thus I decided that strict fantasy might be best, and proceeded to read Tom Deitz's *Dreambuilder*, second in the *Soulsmith* trilogy (of which the last volume is entitled *Wordwright* and is at present not available). I would like to be able to say that *Dreambuilder* was as good at least as *Soulsmith* (the first volume, for those who have not - oh shame! - read *Clawmarks VIII*), but, in utter honesty, what I found best about *Dreambuilder* was the cover. However, this merely means that *Dreambuilder* has a very intriguing one; the story itself is, like all Tom Deitz's, enjoyable and entertaining. *Dreambuilder* does not

claim to be anything but that: there are no intricate thoughts or complex patterns to discern, simply a good story to read.

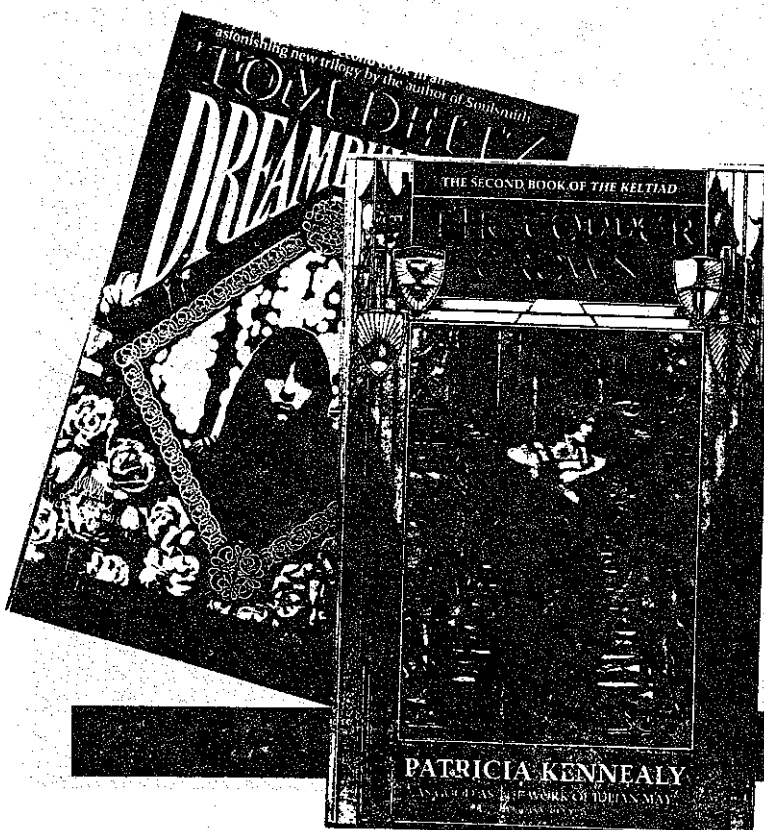
Art satisfied now I am not all doom and gloom and grimness? asks the Bard. *Continue thou and we shall see,* replies the scribe and sharpens his quill.

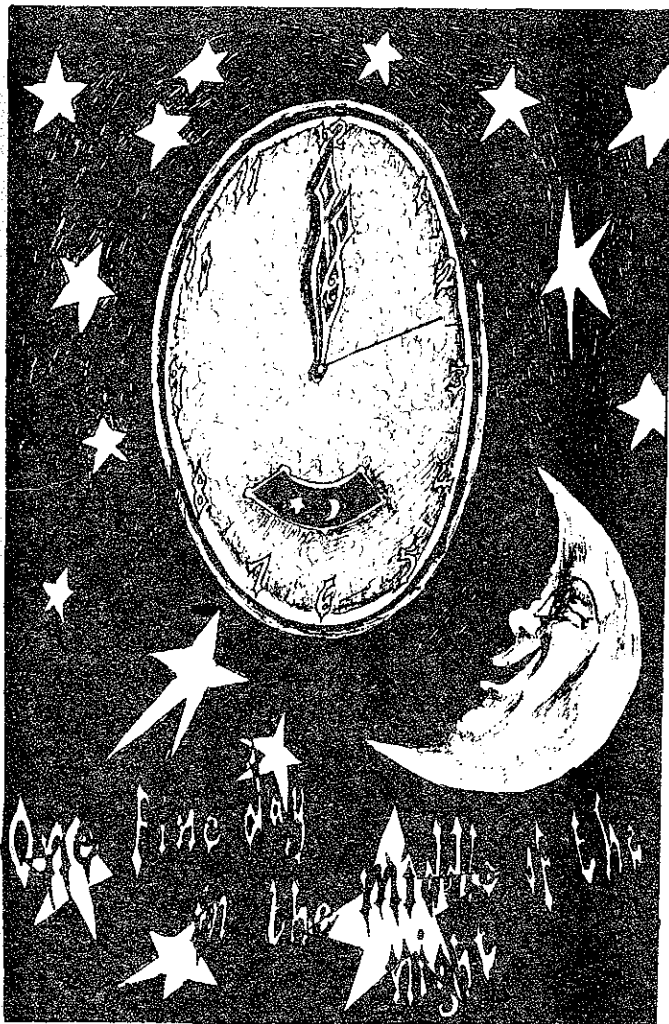
Thus, to another simply good story. Great amusement has been derived from Gordon Dickson's *The Dragon and the George*, wherefore none were unhappy when he wrote *The Dragon Knight* and, lately, *The Dragon on the Border*. Once again Jim Eckert is up against the Dark Powers, with no more support than a few knights and his own minor magical skills. *The Dragon on the Border* is pleasantly written and most amusing, not least so in Jim Eckert's continued attempts to come to grips with life in the Middle Ages.

There is one tome (and truly, that it is) I have been wishing to comment on for some time now. This is E. R. Eddison's *Zimiamvia: A Trilogy* (*Mistress of Mistresses, A Fish Dinner in Memison, and The Mezentian Gate*): fully as massive as *The Lord of the Rings* and as old, though less known. It is also far harder to read, being written in an archaic and confusing style, with many an annotation which requires the reader to flip back and forth constantly. It is not a volume one can read in a few days, or even in a few weeks, but nonetheless it is most worthwhile to persevere to the end.

And finally, now that I am near the end I mention the one I truly wish to: Robert Jordan's *The Fires of Heaven*, being the fifth volume of *The Wheel of Time*. Complaints have come to my ear that the series has become too large, that there are too many characters and too many separate stories. To some extent this is even more so in this the fifth volume, for it seems as if of a sudden everything unravels, with half a dozen tales happening at the same time and twice as many major characters. To my mind, it will all depend on how Robert Jordan ends the series: done properly, *The Wheel of Time* may become an epic greater than any, but likewise there is great danger of everything falling apart. Aside from that, and aside from the fact that many open ends are drifting about, *The Fires of Heaven* is as excellent as the previous volumes. With patience we will wait for the ending.

There, says the Bard, satisfied. *That should do.* An thou sayest so. The scribe blots away a few ink-stains. *But perhaps thou shouldst go now and peruse some more tomes, and leave me to copy this in peace.*





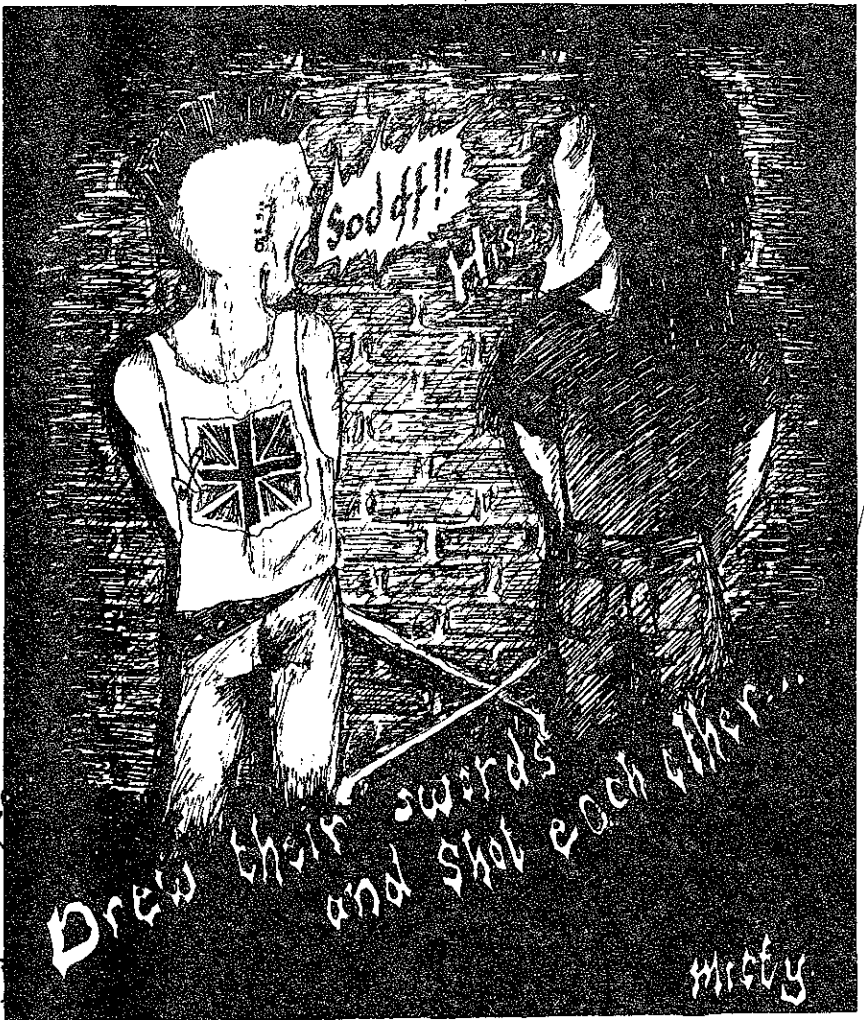
One fine day
in the middle of the
night



Two dead men got up to fight.



Back to back
they faced
each other



Drew their swords
and shot each other.

misty

CLASSIFIED!

REST IN PEACE



R.I.P. Shadow. Not with a whimper, but with a one mega ton bang.

R.I.P. The Heathrow Airport security team: unbelievers - terminated.

R.I.P. Breed Campaign. Cause of death, DM's Lazer Quest addiction.

R.I.P. One hamster, a martyr in the cause of interior decorating.

R.I.P. Innocent 37 bugbears, brutally elf-slain.

R.I.P. One harmless little white dragon, horribly elf-slain.

R.I.P. One pacifist blue dragon, viciously elf-slain.

R.I.P. One gentle dark elf and his 40 Tharian retainers, mercilessly skinned by a thuggish party (a certain pair of elves included).

R.I.P. 5 cute dopplegangers, murderously elf-slain.

R.I.P. 12 upright bandits, first gruesomely maltreated, then gorily elf-slain.

R.I.P. 9 roadside assassins with heavy crossbows. Only one escaped the ravages of Basic D&D. They were up against 2 PCs, of "band of thugs" origins.

R.I.P. One civic-minded Belcadiz elf, dastardly elf-slain.

R.I.P. 4 adorable snowmen, maliciously skinned by a certain band of stinking, scheming lowdown thugs. Bastards. (Although that might be a little subjective.)

R.I.P. 13 respectable Highwaymen done in by Sir Khorgon (of 'band of thugs' repute).

R.I.P. 4 cuddly dwarves, teleported to Glantri to further Sir Khorgan's aims, currently residing in beakers.

R.I.P. One magic using senior citizen. Cruelly offed by a band of thugs, minus elves.

R.I.P. One DM's sanity, ruthlessly stripped by a party of maniacs with a centralized power vortex who actually plan their actions.

[almost] R.I.P. [about 15 times] - The ranger in the band of thugs, whose bad luck makes up for EVERYTHING. Last time he was robbed, the culprit also crushed his larynx with a vicious headbutt. First person to enjoy the benefits of a newly installed crit system.

R.I.P. Gregan. Cruelly struck down by a woman as expected. Recovering well until the tragic triple botch. He didn't have a ghost of a chance.

R.I.P. The 16 or so unfortunate pirates, quietly looting a village, minding their own business until Tristan realised the resale value of their ship...

RIP the Clawthing's dignity and Gothic credibility while playing a drum-toting, rattle-shaking, sky-spirit-invoking, top-knotted ANCIENT FEMALE pygmy shaman, particularly in the same campaign as Careena's laid-back

herb-chewing care-for-nothing layabout thief.

R.I.P. Iulian. In fact, no, writhe in hell you loathsome sack of maggot-ridden pus - Cherenne.

R.I.P. Iulian Ilyich Vladimov, bounty hunter and Right Bastard. Put on ice by a witch-sister using a Wand of Cold. A chilling end to an iniquitous and antisocial career.

R.I.P. Iulien Ilyich Vladimov, obnoxious Traladaran and battering ram (with BO). Finally got the cold shoulder from one female too many. (Naia heaves a sigh of relief).

R.I.P. three rather cute snoring giant bats. Foully slain by Yulien, avenged by fate. Mu-ha-ha.

MISSING, PRESUMED GONE: Ishtar, favourite feline Small Goddess, very sadly missed. Bast keep you, whether hunting astral mice or ruling your new home.

R.I.P. Heavy Petals. sob sob but i'm sure there's MORE!

R.I.P. Alan's were-turnip, often, together with its ICBM and associated skills in Electricity, Longboat, Longjohn, Longdrop and Pardee.

R.I.P. Seven Siswa elves, while under berserker enchantment, by heroes trying to break said enchantment. Deeply mourned by the village of Eha'liara. Never so deep a tragedy in this land...

R.I.P. One wounded adventurer without ear protection who fired field artillery at a cthuloid creature in a cellar, of concussion from the noise. Briefly survived by rest of party and cthuloid creature.

R.I.P. Party of adventurers who were in a cellar the same time an

CLASSIFIED!

high explosive shell hit a cthuloid creature, of concussion. Double damage in confined spaces. Survived by cthuloid creature.

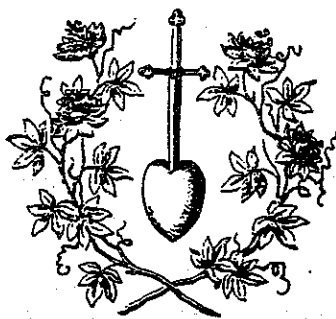
Rest In Pieces Cthuloid creature in cellar when house collapsed into cellar after massive explosion, of damage caused by falling rubble. Finally.

R.I.P. GM who produced creatures that survived direct hit with artillery shell, by players. Undead cthuloid creature will avenge him, no one else liked him.

R.I.P. The Rahib. Crucified. Mourned by no-one. Never trust evil witch-sisters, not even sexy ones.

R.I.P. Olduvan, Speaker of Eha'liara. Deeply mourned by the village. May you find the perfection of the Quiet Way in your rest.

PERSONAL



Pardee on, Cherenne.

Pardee on, Anadrone.

To Aquilus P.: You shame me and our departed father. Don't bother coming anywhere near home until you have learned to behave in a manner worthy of your heritage. Love, Big Sister.

Cherenne. Splish, splash, splat! A warning. Naia.

For Innaj - Dragon Amethyst be with you. E.

To Ash: Sooner or later you're gonna forget them crystals and blow the Valley. Then we're gonna go to heaven and laaaaugh at you.

Tylenos: your curse is not Hers. I shall return. Naia.

AWARD: The prestigious Most Grogged Character Even Though His Player Was In The Province Award, to the guy who got pissed off 'cos he was pissed on: Anadrone Vorloch.

Isara: It is time to leave these fools you travel with and join one of your own birth and standing. Fortune and position await me, and you will be at my side to share them. A jamais. Zylvestre.

Yo Sky Spirits! Pardee on! You guys really groove my ritual drum. (So how about some more spells?) - B.B.

Engaged to be married: Lucien of Ardenwood and Elorienal of the Bright Forest, to be married at the throne of Ardenwood in 150 years time. Church wedding.

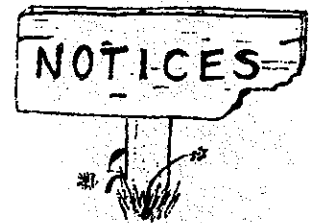
Agent Orange: The daschunds fly at dawn.

CONGRATULATIONS to Iulian for falling unconscious due to wounding no less than five times, and surviving each time. (If you want to find out what happened the sixth time, read the R.I.P.)

To Draulesh - Whatever you're doing, stop it at once; wherever you are, come home now. Wood awaits your sturdy axe, son. From Dad.

To Shogga the Searcher - I'm not a woman, I'm a shamari. Brudda Budd.

NOTICES



M.I.A. Katakatana. When in hell, don't split up the party.

WANTED: Party of mindless adventurers to wade into encounters with NO previous planning, NO amazing brainwaves, NO outlandish ideas and NO bleeding centralized power vortex. Apply: Rosewood Lodge for Overworked and Jumpy DMs.

KHANDS says: "Are you a believer?"

NOTICE: Josh eats dirty socks.

MISSING: long pair of black socks. Last seen heading towards Main Road, Rondebosch. If caught please return to The Earl of Goatswold

WANTED: Pentagram of Editor Summoning, required by hard-working and efficient sub-editors condemned to unfulfilment of potential by continual absence of editor (he goes to night-clubs while we slave away/sit around).

FOR SALE: small piece of bone (ex Bone of Finding), small rock (ex Spirit Stone), Snukk Sodd (reluctant hero). Apply disgruntled pygmy adventurers, Mountain of the Giant.

ADVENTURERS WANTED to slay trolls. Must fear nothing. Must be large and strong, no ties need apply. Possible vam-

CLASSIFIED!

pires so bring wooden sticks, fire-starting materials, garlic, pepper, salt and other savoury spices.

Apply at the Maiden and the Disappointed Unicorn Tavern and ask the barkeep where to find the Hungry Horde.

WANTED: large cooking pot. Must seat 10. Apply the Hungry Horde.

WANTED: Competent chef. Must be familiar with halflings, dwarves, elves and humans. Affirmative action, applicant must speak fluent trollish. Apply the Hungry Horde.

NOTICE: Death to those who tab, table and take their time. The Eds.

NOTICE: Giraffe

HELP WANTED. Competent, speedy and intelligent adventuring party required to rescue worthy village elders languishing in durance vile by courtesy of Count Moranoir. Reward for brave rescuers who **HURRY UP!** Apply the topmost turret, Castle Goodhearte.

NOTICE:
Niggle niggle spon spon
Niggle niggle niggle niggle niggle
niggle niggle spon
niggle niggle niggle niggle spon
niggle niggle spon spon gknoti

NOTICE: carpenters, masons, blacksmiths required for rebuilding of country inn. Apply Jonas Ickleford, Silver Sparrow, Ashborne Road.

Party seeks lost map of where we are going. Willing to reimburse travel expenses etc. to the value of 7 gold pieces.

ATTENTION BOUNTY HUNTERS: Reward, for return of stolen celestial candelabra. Last seen in hideous claws of Alan and Philip.

Good condition of candelabra necessary for payment, not so for its holders.

NOTICE: To my sunwrinsed moon princess, i have fallen to your Arabian Knights? S.S.S.

NOTICE: I do exist, so there. Jove.

NOTICE: Anadrone is actually a transvestite gnome.

NOTICE: I saw Goodie Maclay with the Devil.

WANTED: Replacement whangsticks, since the rotten elves took theirs back!

FOR SALE: Shampoo +2, perfect for long adventures during which the hair can be coated with sweat, mud, "faery wine", etc. Normal price, 100 gp. Special price for Jove worshippers, 50gp.


LET IT BE KNOWN that the following brave humans (and spriggan) have been made elf-friends by the Council of Eha'liara, with deep gratitude for heroic civilisation-saving services rendered:
Naia, not-really-human sorceress
Cherenne, wandering bard and scumbag
Anadrone Vorloch, warrior and Jove-junkie
Sophia, acolyte of Saint Morbanond the Grave
Tasna, spriggan rogue

WANTED: Brave men/women/things, to escort valuable trade goods from the Homestead of Sukiskyn to Kelven town. Apply a little further on into the module.

WANTED: Flatmate to share accommodation in Rondebosch or Rosebank. Must be blind deaf-mute millionaire monk, who will do nothing but meditate in his room and pay rent. Apply Andrew or James.

ATTENTION!! To all those who spread the fowl and pestilential rumours that were-seagulls don't exist - you will be the first to suffer when the squawks ring out under the full moon...





Credits and Acknowledgements

EDITORIAL TEAM: (in alphabetical order)

Andrew Shackleton
Jessica Tiffin
Karen Greaves

ARTISTS:

Simon Gane
Misty Kesting
White Wolf

plus

Janni Donald
Jeanne Maclay
Alan Scott-Millar
Adriaan Wessels

thanks to Mark Cummins for
supporting us in his time of need

Address any
complaints to:

Dr W Zotto
MORON
Mars

(please phrase
parapsychologically)

thank you, computer no. 4

printed on the src press



