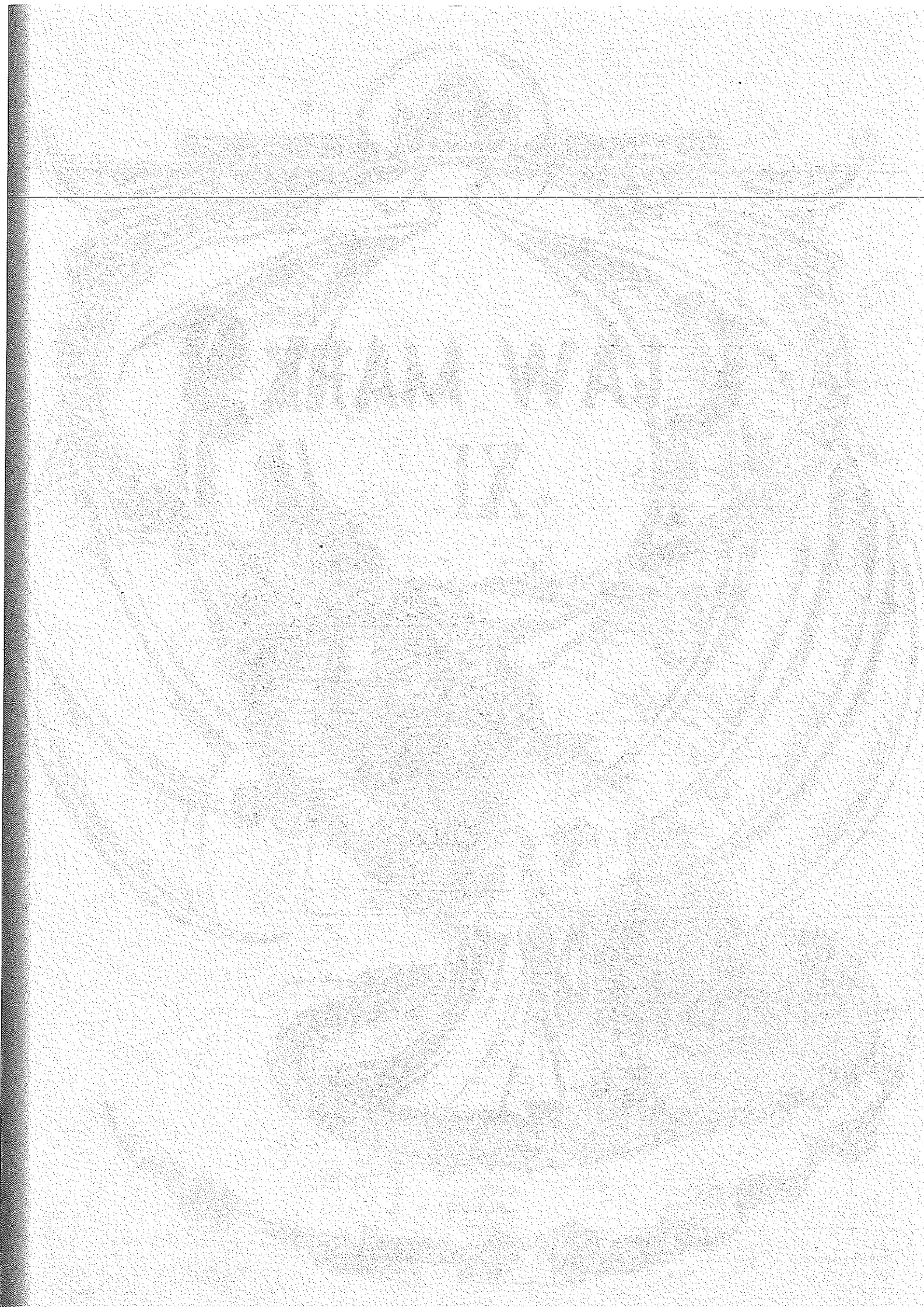


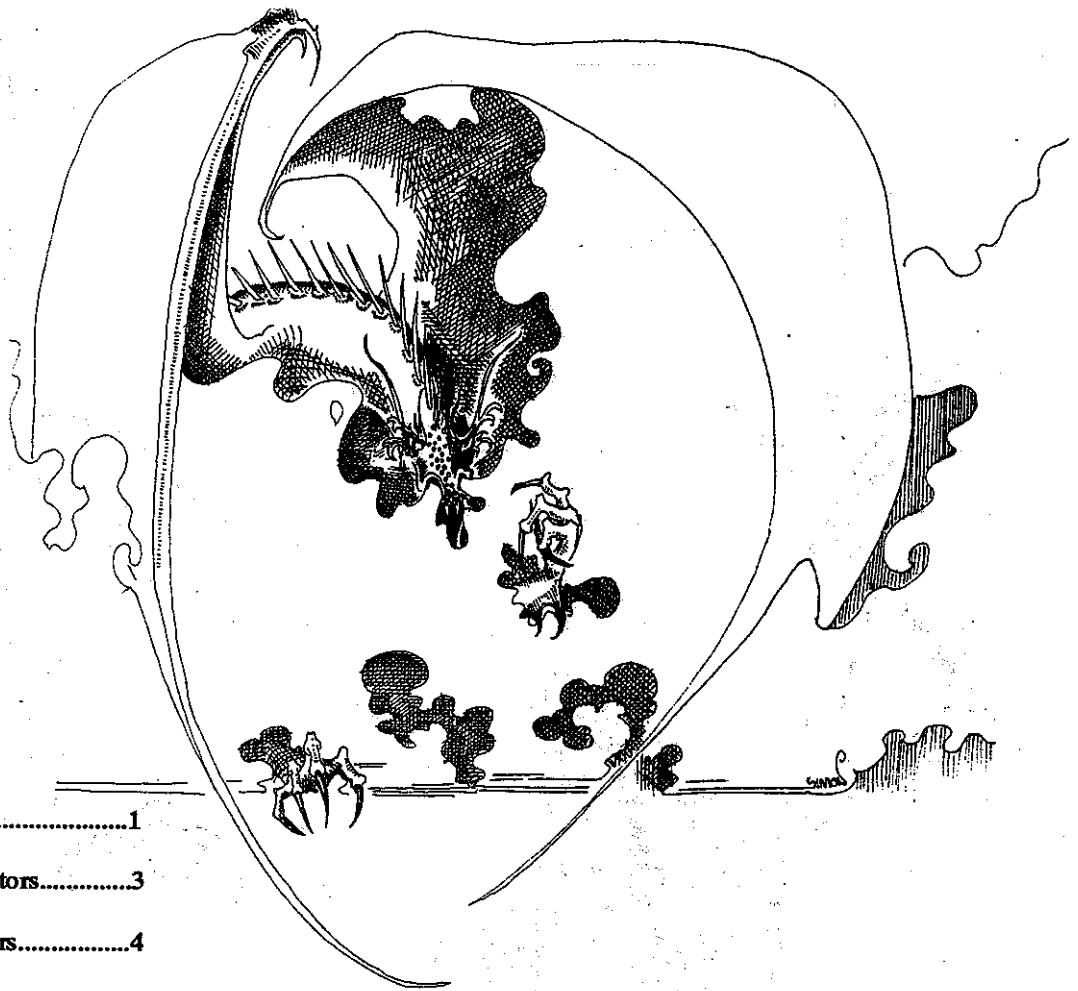


CLAW MARKS

XI







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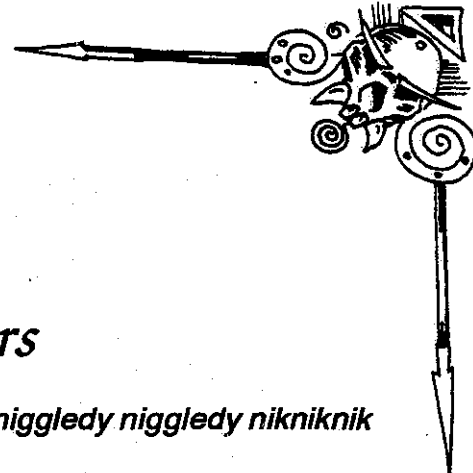
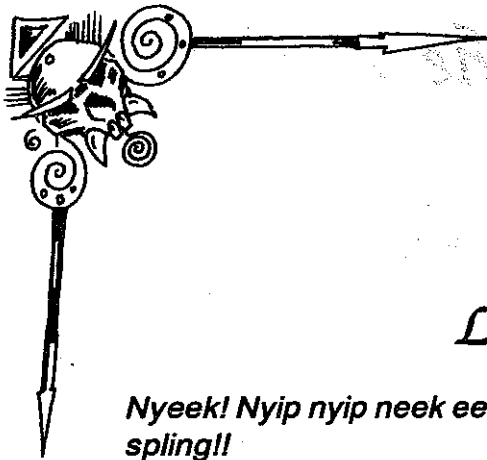
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Letter from the Editors

Nyeek! Nyip nyip neek eek weee! Giggle giggle wibble ning niggledy niggledy ninkniknik sping!!

"Lit: Heard for many centuries by hapless spacefarers who accidentally wandered too near to the event horizons of uncharted black holes, but only recently confirmed to be the characteristic call of a little-known subspecies of undead, the *Clawheirarchium*, subclass *Clawmarkius Editorimus*, heard at the scene of a kill."

-from the "Annotated and Abridged Compendium of Extragalactic Civilizations", 2083 edition.

Yes! It is indeed true - the editors of this cursed work of literature actually did manage to bring it out in time for the tournament! It gave a good fight though, it tried to defy us from every angle! It kicked! It bit! It poisoned the Green Level photocopier, which spluttered and choked and eventually died with its legs in the air on the last day of editing. It even enlisted the help of the SRC computers, which calmly deposited the files of hard-won articles in a quiet hypercorner in the 23rd dimension.

But we were too good for it. We are Clawmarks Editors, are we not? No mere journal will ever get the better of us! It was stomped upon! It was squished! It was thoroughly vanquished! And it was finally delivered to your grubby paws for R3. And we even managed to force it to display the first ever Clawmarks CENTERFOLD!

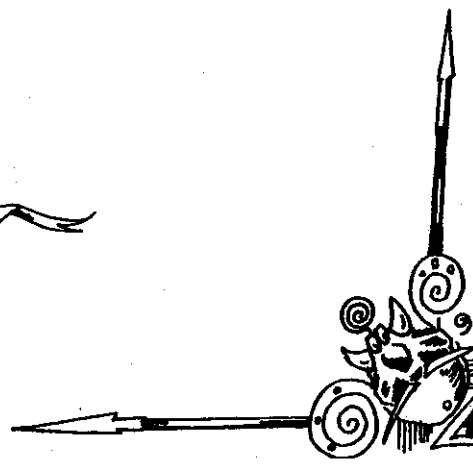
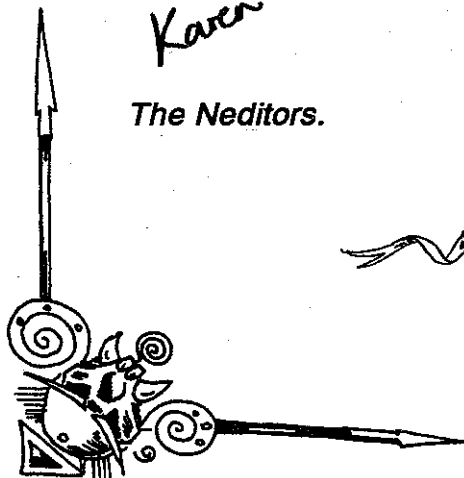
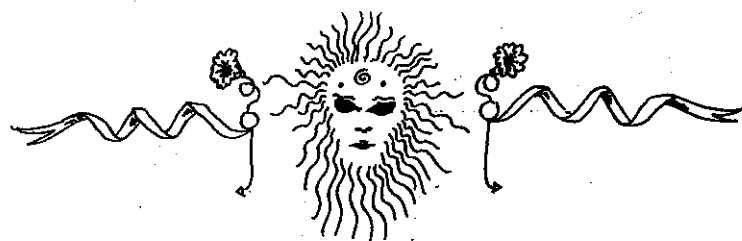
As we settle down tiredly and untangle our tentacles, smugly surveying our conquest, we cannot but congratulate ourselves on what fine editors we are. We are quite new to the Editor-thang, having only recently eaten the old ones (thereby ridding the ranks of their Arts and Psychology totalitarianism, and replacing it with a shiny new version from the Astronomy Department. Long live the New Order!) and we are most impressed with ourselves at what a jolly fine Clawmarks this has turned out to be! We hope you like it as much as we do (in fact, you'd better).

May your black body radiation curve always peak in the infra-red.

Liza

Karen

The Neditors.





Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

A panicked thought for CLAWs in the good ol' new SA: Role-playing is a cultural activity. (Note, for example, that CLAWs is a cultural society at UCT, not a sports code.) There is a ministry responsible for Arts & Culture, the minister of which is one Ben Ngubane. Of course, his deputy is ...

Winne Mandela, which makes her Deputy Minister of Role-Playing!

DO SOMETHING!!!

Concerned

Dear Concerned

If you are silly enough to believe that politicians actually exist, then you have a right to be concerned. How can there be any ministry responsible for role-playing. Nothing is reSPONSible for CLAWs. We suggest that you forget about these silly realities and ask forgiveness from the great god of Niggle!

Yours from reality

The Editors

Dear Editors

Have you noticed how many CLAW members are studying or have studied Psychology and/or Computer Science? Is this simply because psycho is a popular arts/socsci course and comsci is a popular sciences course, or do we notice a noticeable interest in cognitive science and models of human reality? Huh?

**Pascal C. McWierdbitt, MSc, QED &
Carl Sigmund Kopfengruber, PhD**

Dear Sci-cho

*Of course we have noticed. We notice everything. However the reason is obvious to us. If you can not understand it then that's your fault, perhaps you should try studying Astronomy instead. This is also particularly popular amongst CLAW members, especially the super intellegent Editorial type CLAW members. Who cares if we can't sp*ll, at least we know where the stars are.*

Yours in the Aberration of Starlight

The Editors

Dear Edi

I need your

I cannot seem to finish

Please

Yours

Bartholomew Nurg

mew Nurg

to start our sentences.

help you either.

get together and merge.

better half.

itors

Dear Editors

I have absolutely nothing to say to you; I just wanted to see my name in print.

Yours victoriously

Jacques Mensingbubble de L'arquyist von und zum Giraffe-Tally-Tally-Yukenwurst Ho Chi Bedpansly of Quayntlands-On-The-Aerodrome, Esq.

Dear Bubbling Aerodrome of the Tally Tally Ho Chi Giraffe Jacques Von de zum und Bedpan Quayntlandsly L'arquyist Yuk Yuk enworst Yuk.

We hope you like stereo.

The Editors of Clawmarks and great beings of amazing intellect, astounding power, creatures of fantastic wos-saname, brilliant other stuff, general burbling spon, I hope this makes the word longer gumpf, and longer names than yours.

Dear Editors

I feel strange! I am not normal anymore!

Yours forever, mmmmaaaddlllyyy

I Forget (French pronunciation please)



*Dear whoever (your name slipped my mind)
You were once normal!!!??? We offer our finest condolences, we hope it never happens again. If it does be sure to turn your socks inside out, and strain meths through them. Ask Giles "I only did it once" Kipps for the recipe.
Yours in sanity
Editors*

Dear Editors
I am in need of desparate help. You see I started to play in a game and the male character I rolled up is beginning to have sexual fantasies about another male character in the same game. I can't control him anymore, I've tried to stop him from his thoughts but I can't because I am role playing a **PROTESTANT!**

What makes it even worse is that the other male character is role-played by this ugly GUY! I need help!?!
Very Worried

*Dear Worry-wart.
Don't worry! We have the answer. Follow these simple steps:*

- 1. Roll up a new, female character.*
 - 2. Change your religion.*
 - 3. Change games to get a better looking player.*
 - 4. Write us another letter when you have new problems.*
- From you favourite problem solving Editors*
-

Dear Editors
What is the age we out-grow the hobby of role playing?
Very Old

*Dear Ancestor
Were you never told that you shouldn't play an immortal?
Yours Forever
The Editors*

Dear Editors
I wished to reply earlier but I have been busy these last few years. I find myself writing to praise your 1894 Centenary Clawmarks Edition. I really enjoyed your piece about role playing without shoes and the exceptional article called "The Amiloration of Cultural Origin in the Seventeenth Century due to Pre-Darwinism and Role Playing"
**From your 1994 replier
Very Late**

*Dear Overdue
What is this, is there an Immortals reunion this Centuary or something. Anyway Clawmarks 1894 doesn't exist. You purchased a fake! Our magazine is so brillant, people were copying it before it was ever released.
We hope you have returned all your library books.
Yours again
The Real Editors*



To the Editorial team of Clawmarks
Get her to stop parking her car in my parking space?
Thank You
Prof. Tempas Fuget (Head of the Time Estimation Dynamics Department, Social Science Faculty)

*Dear Stop watch
Why don't you estimate what time she will be there then you don't have to worry, or find a new parking bay.
Yours at 2.44pm
The Editors*

Dear Editors
I want:
ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ
In Need

*Dear Needy
When you find some come and visit me.
Needy Neditors*

Dear Editors
In the past I have felt alienated by previous years CLAW members, but beginning at the start of 1994 I have become more confident about being around CLAW members (I am a CLAW member). These days I actually look into the CLAW room door-way as I walk past.
**From
Hope-to-come-in-soon.
PS. Should I grow my hair ?**

*Dear Soon to be...
There iss nothings to be afraid off. We iss vvverry nicccee. We likess our fresssh meatttt. Looking forwardsss to sssseeing you. Bet you'd look nicccee in chain.
Yourssss
The Editorss*

Dear Eds

I have a problem with my players. Every time that I put them in any non-threatening situation, ie. a nice field of flowers, a warm cozy roadside inn, a beautiful forest etc, the silly fools begin to wreck the scenery (stamping on flowers), and then getting bored of this (normally about 30 seconds) they turn on each other. This normally then ends with at least one or two dead, several permanently disfigured and the rest on one or two hit points. The next carefully prepared encounter becomes a rout as the players have no hits, magic and are carrying the dead and the dying. Not only this, but it means that the average level of the party remains very low.

What should I do ?

Yours Confusedly

DM (ie God, Hey You, etc)

Dear God

Don't be silly even nasty Sorceresses like pretty flowers. You are misinterpreting your party. Perhaps they are very fond of each other, and use these free moments to give other players more experience, near death experiences, practise in dodging broadswords. It also gives the healer in the party an opportunity to feel needed (provided that the healer is still alive). And I wouldn't call an eighth level Sorceress a low level, who cares about the rest of the party anyway!

Yours in flower stompingness

Ara (oops), The Editors!

Dear Editors

My friends and I really appreciated Ethel Mayham in your last years edition of spenthouse. We would really like to see more of her wonderful fixtures. We would also like to suggest that you publish pictures of younger women (60-65 years old).[We're all into young, nubile women].

Your devoted readers

Hank Harbecklinger and the men at
Flaccid Park Retirement Home for Aged Plumbers

Dear Hanky

Wrong Editors, wrong centerfold, wrong reality entirely. (Sorry, about changing the quote.) We do however hope that you will enjoy our lovely magazine, with our first ever pull out centerfold! Every CLAW members' hero - SCHIZO!

The Editors

Dear Editor

I am a time traveller so to speak, I have travelled to the Alpha and Omega of our universe, and I have some revelations to make concerning the future of CLAWMARKS. In the beginning CLAWMARKS was good. And the articles were full and interesting manna from above. But starting in 1995 there will be a period of 8 years during which CLAWMARKS will leave a lot to be desired. I feel lost in a desert for 46 days, that is how much I suffer, with the knowledge of CLAWMARKS'S impending doom. But, there is some consolation, a saving of face if you like, CLAWMARKS 1994 will sell millions in the future (what's left of it). It will become a pillar of salt, a model for things to come.(And they will).

I really need the John, but don't worry, I will be back.

Yours SINcerely

JISHUS CREST

PS. I hope this gets past your censor board



Dear SINner

We are glad that you have realised the greatness of this specific edition. We do hope however that you will use the vast knowledge imparted to you through this issue to re-evaluate your fears. We understand that you must be suffering paranoid delusions that CLAWMARKS could never get any better, but believe me Editors are amazing creatures, we will find a way of becoming better and better, even if your small mind could not conceive of this. Perhaps you should speak to one of the many psychology students in CLAWs, they may be able to rid you of your belief that you are a time traveller or something important.

You should remember never to get lost in your dessert for more than 42 days. After that the mould starts to attack. Perhaps this is what has happened to your mind, it has been attack by the fungus fiends. Help is on its way! In the mean time try an arrow through the head.

Yours in Mildew

The Editors



Dear Editor

The keys to the media room does not seem to be working tonight and I would rather work in the darkness created by fake human lighting than by the light created by hydrogen fusion.

- One who aborrs the sight of light.

Dear Aboration of light

Did you try again the next night.

- Editors.

Kubanistan

Through The Eyes Of Capote Harrison



Capote Harrison, freelance journalist, adventurer, dil-litente, womaniser and Jack Daniels con-isseur, embarked on a voyage to the island of Kubanistan, in an attempt to reveal the truth about El Presi-dante.

Castaway to the memory of history is the small island of Kubanistan. The only pleasant part of the arduous voyage to the island was the aeroplane trip to Havana, Cuba. I attempted to acquire a plane ticket for the destination of Deposito in Kubanistan; but after seeing suspicious black liquid running down the side of the left engine mount of the Kubani-Air De Havilland Twin Otter I promptly decided against such a means of transport.

A Week Later...

On the southern coast of Cuba I met Gabriel who owned a small motorized sloop. He was a gun runner, except that when I was on board the cargo hold was filled with Cuban rum, Chinese tuna and a few chickens which epitomized the idea that all birds were against humans. Some of the chickens had acquired the taste for rum, which was leaking out of one of the barrels. They clearly showed their liking for rum by pecking open the barrel and swamping the inner sleeping quarters floor with rum. Gabriel could not persuade the chickens to move out of the sleeping quarters and began worrying about the marketing value of premari-nated fowl.

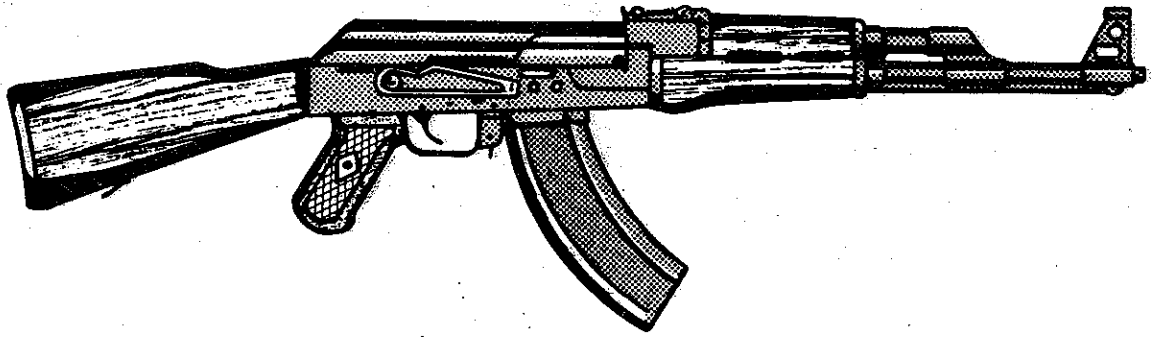
A journey that should have taken six hours by a slow boat managed to take Gabriel two days. The engine was in constant need of repairs and Gabriel continually argued with his Guatemalian first mate cum mechanic over the procedures for fixing the motor as well as the hopelessness of being rescued. After two hours of hearing them argue I began an intensive search for the

life raft, but Gabriel told me he had had to sell it to create space for more cargo and the funds were used to buy guns. I never saw any guns on Gabriel's boat and decided that he had either hidden them very well or had sold them for engine parts.

On disembarking from his boat in the small harbour of the capital Deposito I inquired to the whereabouts of his guns. He just laughed and replied that he was a better smuggler than that. The harbour was made up of one slip way and a single long rotten wooden pier with soldiers permeating every non-utilised space. As I put my foot onto the pier I could feel an atmosphere of fear, paranoia and suspicion. An old Caribbean man, his face scared with many stories, came out to meet me on the pier. He told me that he was the highest ranking civilian official in Deposito, except for the paranoid army officers who lurked around the only bar, near the end of the slipway. The man was the post master and customs official (as well as 16th cousin to El Presi-dante) and introduced himself as Melquiades.

His advice about not staying at the Hotel El Deposito became invaluable in keeping my sanity and sanitary state intact on this unreal isle. The large number of soldiers in the town was suprising, all fingering assault rifles and glaring at me suspiciously while manning road blocks even though on my count there were only seven cars in Deposito. He checked my passport with a quick glance and offered me residence at his home for a dollar a night.

After settling in at his quaint home, Melquiades and I went wondering around Deposito, which bore the scars of the recent Coup de tat. I asked about the whereabouts of all the police and he told me in a hushed tone and with observant eyes that they had all been shot during and after the Coup. I showed Melquiades my letter from the Kubani government approving my interview with El Presidente. He gave a yawn and told me it was a form letter sent out to attract foriegn journalists and I was only the second reporter to arrive in seven months. He then told me that I would have to contact El Presidente's press secretary to arrange an interview, but it would ultimately rely on El Presidente's whims and moods as to whether I would be granted an inter-view.



Deposito has an old Spanish Fort, which doubled as a prison during the colonial days. There was a distinct lack of children in the town, even though any person would imagine tiny urchins playing in the open sewer streets. On some of the walls blood had become encrusted into the white wash and told of now unspoken shootings and killings. My memories of Deposito were of a harsh town living under a regime of fear which perpetuated nothing but paranoia and suspicion. The dearth of smiling faces also hid the silent idyllic natural beauty of the land which had fallen into a decrepid state since the coup.

The sadness and fearful silence made me conciously resolute to get my interview and leave as soon as possible. That night my luck was good for Melquiades took me to the bar which was inhabited almost on a permanent basis by the same drunken slouching dirty army officers and postal workers. We met Colonel Jose Arcadio who was the chief of the army, and illegitimate half brother of El Presidente. His Jack Daniels breath could have peeled paint and he exuded a drunken friendliness which hid his personal torment.

He told us of his experiences during the coup, of the mindless killings of countless civilians, looting useless places like the souvenir shops of, El Presidente banning and ordering the court martial of the army marching band (I heard later they had been set free). The night wore on and Colonel Jose Arcadio and Melquiades became more lucid as Jack Daniels tangoed on their tongues. I felt that my time was near to ask for an interview with El Presidente.

Colonel Jose Arcadio's cigar teetered lazily on the edge of the ashtray and then fell onto the floor igniting a pool of brandy which every customer had to wade through to get to the bar.

Standing outside we watched it burn with drinks in our hands. The only smoke I could smell was Colonel Jose Arcadio's arsonist cigar, which he had remembered to rescue on his way out. He made some Kubani signal with his fingers and a jeep arrived. He promptly

climbed in and turned to us asking if we were coming. Melquiades motioned to me as he climbed in and told me on the way to where-ever that we were driving to get more Jack Daniels at El Presidente's fortified bunker. All I remember at that moment was the largest bourbon grin encroach upon my face.

As we left the lights of Deposito behind and headed into the darkness, two more jeeps, filled with faceless soldiers, joined our own. Melquiades pointed into the depth of the black night, attempting to show me invisible topographical features. The speed of the drive was fast, dictated by Colonel Jose Arcadio's lust for more bourbon. He rambled on about something which was lost into the drone of the jeep's engine while Melquiades had slid into a solemn silence.

We arrived at the base and Melquiades regained his urgency for life when Colonel Jose Arcadio said in a smiling tone that he had radioed ahead for the bourbon to be ready and that El Presidente would be joining us for a couple of drinks. I was pleased with the situation, for luck was definitely on my side. We parked outside the only concrete bunker on the base and were met by Aureliano, an aloof serious sober looking Peninsular, who asked me who I was. Colonel Jose Arcadio introduced me as Al Capone Harrison Ford. Aureliano is El Presidente's youngest brother and also the Press Secretary. He is also rumoured to wield all the real power when El Presidente is inebriated.

He led us into the austere grey concrete bunker. The interior was illuminated by a myriad of candles which exposed 16th century spanish colonial chairs, bookshelves with numerous dusty hard bound editions and a large table in the middle covered with four dignified Waterford crystal whisky glasses. In one of the single seaters sat the El Presidente.

We all sat down with Aureliano standing behind El Presidente's chair. He looked at me with his dark deep set piercing eyes and said "So you are the journalist Capote." My shock was expressed through my curt reply "Yes." His hand propped his head up and, as the

evidence of empty Jack Daniels bottles testified, his speech began to slur. Colonel Jose Arcadio and Melquiades were silent, although my suspicion was that the Colonel had fallen asleep after downing his bourbon. El Presidente's presence was intense, just like his glaring stare, he continued "so ask your precious questions." I took a swig from my glass and without an err asked, "So what were your feelings during the coup de tat?" I ventured with a tentative smile to appear receptive to his ferocious glance and reply. He put his finger tips together and spread his fingers. After a second of thought he replied in a deep slow Nostradamian voice of prophecy "Sometimes when you stare into the abyss, the abyss stares back at you." He picked up his glass again, downed its contents and raised it for Aureliano to refill. I continued immediately, for otherwise his non-visible silken thread of continuity would have been broken. " Are the ... err ... rumours true, that .. err .. a counter coup is imminent?" As quickly as he had downed the bourbon of his last glass his fiery eyes became explosive with a rage never before experienced by myself and in retrospect by him. He gesticulated crazily like a mad chimp on acid, shouting "My country is mine, for me and my people. I save this land from the shower of evil stars that are and will always be plotting against my person. So I tell you this now, never forget it, I tell you this land is as sacred as his land was to Moses and the other people. No rumour will ever live up to the wall of the Spanish Deposito fort."

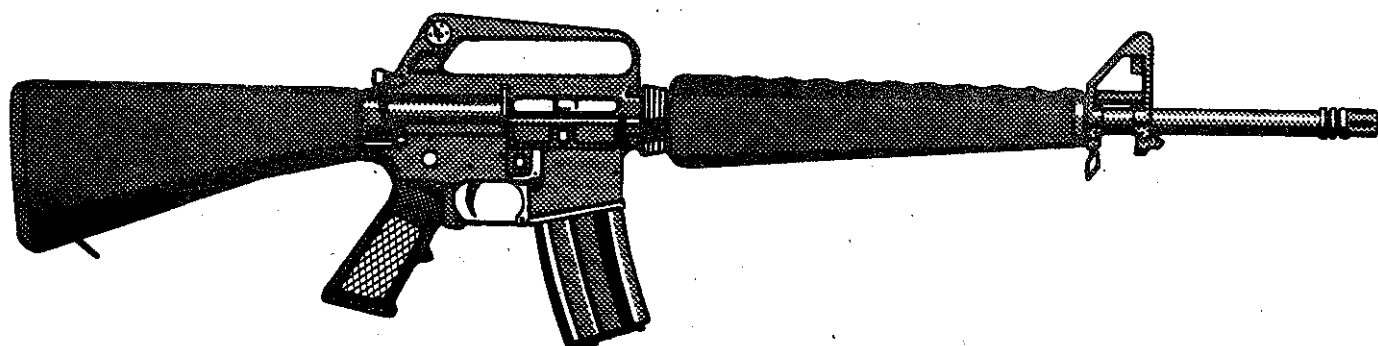
The silence crashed into the room as quickly as it had been smashed. I looked down into my glass, scared to peer into his eyes and recieve retribution. I felt a soft tap on my shoulder, it was Aureliano. I glanced at El Presidente, and saw he had passed out and his head lay against the side of his chair, snoring.



Aureliano told Melquiades and myself to leave and as we exited the bunker the first rays of dawn stroked our faces. A jeep drove us back to Deposito where I collected my baggage, said farewell to Melquiades and moved towards the pier. My mind was lost in what had happened no longer than an hour ago, in some strange way I had become content with my interview and only wished to leave the island now. I arrived at the pier with the sight of Gabriel loading the last of several crates. He saw me and I moved over to his boat, silently he took my bags. No words passed between us the entire voyage, it was as if I had wronged his code. The hungover chickens still resided in the inner cabin.

Some distance out of Deposito harbour Gabriel pointed to grey specks on the horizon. My binoculars revealed they were landing craft straining against the waves. As they became larger in my binoculars, soft thudding noises enveloped the air around my ears. I peered back towards Deposito and thin black trails of smoke scratched, wounded and scarred open the sky.

By Capote Harrison - Freelance journalist.



The Gamer's Guide to

Cooking

A practical, do-it-yourself approach for Rolemaster players.

Whether on the road, lying in dark and dastardly ambush alongside it, or merely at home tending to that week-long ritual sacrifice, you can't avoid it. Those among us who still languish in mortal bodies have to spend a considerable fraction of our precious existences in attending to the unavoidable process of nutrition.

This is not too much of a problem in simple systems such as D&D, when it's more or less assumed that someone can cook. It's when you hit the complexities of Rolemaster that the problems happen - if you don't have the skill, you can't do it.

There are various ways out of this. One is the Herbalist background option, which gives you +50 on both Cooking and Foraging - useful for achieving something to put into the pot as well as the knowhow to render it edible. The other route is similar skills. Never forget that Cookery is one eighth similar to Alchemy; that boring Alchemist character takes on a whole new dimension at mealtimes. Other similarities may occur according to your DM. There is both a

convenience and a warning in the possibility that Cookery could be half similar to Poisoning...

Resolving Cookery rolls

The actual effects of a Cookery skill have been but hazy in the past - but no longer! Here, exclusive to CLAWMARKS readers, we present for the first time the Cookery Manoeuvre Table, fresh from the fevered brains of yours truly. Now you, too, can produce worthwhile meals (or not) with a flick of the dice.

Please note the necessary modifiers for various types of cookery. The table assumes a campfire base, modified if a kitchen is being used and for the complexity of the dish attempted.

In kitchen: +20

(this does not apply to attempts made by someone with no skill at all, not even similar).

Types of dishes chosen

General hash, including scrambled eggs +25

Basic roast, grill or boil +20

Stew, soup or vegetable broth +10

Bread -20

Pastry -30

Cakes -50

Souffle -80 (on a campfire? Not!)

Cooking Tips

(the rest of the hand can be used as an ashtray)

by Etrigynne D'Arcain, Warlock of Dunador

Why divert time and effort into the acquisition of mundane skills such as foraging, cooking and hunting? Travelling with a group of companions through the wilds of Dunador in the distant past, I formulated a few recipes that should help my fellow wielders of magic, and possibly those among the non-spell-users that can read, see to the business of party nutrition with minimal effort.

Remember, too, that in a group where no-one else has Poison Lore or Detection, the cook is king...

Stoo Surprise

1. While travelling, do not hesitate to bring down any small birds, reptiles or other animals that you encounter. They can be stored in a leather sack while you ride, and will be ready



for the pot when you arrive at your destination for the night.

2. First, you need to have set your cauldron on the cookfire, and allow the water to reach almost to boiling point. Then, mince your animals, skinning and dismembering them first if necessary, (remember, Skinning skill is only used if you want the skin in one presentable piece afterwards) and dump that in the pot.

3. While the meat is cooking, allow other party members to forage for edible foodstuffs around your camp - or, if they prove reticent, begin throwing in mosses, mushrooms,

grasses and other plants picked at random from around the campsite until they learn their place in the cooking process.

4. When all the ingredients are added, allow the mix to assume a grey, gruelly consistency, which will indicate that the stoo is cooked. A quick Poison roll will indicate whether the brew is likely to be lethal if touched, and generous use of Flavour and Spice cantrips will cover up the more gross culinary flaws.

5. The stoo is now ready for party consumption, and, if they eat it and live, it's ready for you too.

COOKERY SKILL RESOLUTION TABLE

Result of roll	Effect	Stews and soups	Vegetables	Grills and roasts
less than -50	Complete disaster. Inedible, unappetising mess bears no resemblance whatsoever to the original ingredients. Anyone stupid enough to actually eat "meal" is violently ill (-20 to all actions for 2 hours). Lose your job.	Glue	Deliver icky green vegetable crits (see CLAWMARKS IV)	Unidentifiable leather entities in bizarre shapes.
-50 to 0	Disaster. Meal is faintly recognisable but thoroughly undesirable. Can be eaten at a pinch, but has no flavour or nutritional value whatsoever. Hang your head in shame.	Grey mush.	Disintegrated and colourless.	Consistency of rubber.
01 to 05	Oops! Meal dropped. Solid food can be eaten, but tastes disgusting and puts grit in your teeth. Bad move.	Put the fire out. Irrecoverable.	Fallen to bits and liberally coated with grit.	Covered in grit, ash, mud, strange flora, etc.
06 to 15	Food is burned. About half of food can be salvaged. It tastes burnt. Nobody likes you.	Stuck to bottom of pot	Stuck to bottom of pot	Covered in unappetising layer of charcoal
16 to 20	Crunchy! Food is raw. Probably nutritious, but an unpleasant experience.	Pale, watery and pink.	Crunchy and hard; will result in stomach ache if eaten.	Raw except for outer layer, ooze blood when bitten into.
21 to 75	Reasonable facsimile of meal, but bland, unappetising, flavourless, uniform greyish colour.	Anaemic, tasteless.	Watery and flavourless.	Tough and flavourless
75 to 90	Meal is edible and reasonably appetising, but lacks vital element of seasoning. Almost there.	Too salty.	Not enough salt.	Slightly overcooked and tough.
91 to 110	Meal is perfectly acceptable, appetizing, nutritious, well-cooked and totally uninspired.	Thick and filling, but unexciting.	Good, but unexciting.	Tender, but unexciting.
110 to 140	Meal enjoyable, perfectly cooked and seasoned. People want second helpings. Who said you couldn't cook?	Thick and full of flavour.	Imaginatively prepared, flavourful.	Tender and juicy.
141 to 175	Memorable meal, practically haut cuisine. People want to marry you. Aroma attracts strangers. +20 to next cooking attempt.	Exotic, spicy, interesting.	Unbelievable.	Amazing flavour.
over 175	Superlative meal has all diners euphoric and at +10 to all actions for next 3 hours. Addiction factor 5. You attract disciples. +40 to next cookery attempt.	The gods probably eat it. Wow!	Have not been so much cooked, as translated to a higher plane of being.	To die for.

Meaty Loaf

1. An all-purpose campsite treat, the Meaty Loaf requires little more in the way of ingredients than a few kilogrammes of meat and some fibrous, grassy plants. (Although the torso and scalp of a fat, overpaid, over-rated musician can be used in an emergency).

2. The ingredients are placed in a leather sack, and you then use Flesh Disruption spells or a good, solid mace to reduce them to a workable consistency.

3. When you have finished, add a pot or so of honey for flavour and to hold the sodden mess together, and then cut out and shape individual cakelets (great fun for the kids).

4. These can be fried on a hot rock in the fire (if you are using riverside rocks, remember to stand well back).

5. Flavour, test and serve as above, and eat while warm.

Meaty Loaf sometimes keeps quite well, and it always seems to increase your companions' appetites if they know that tonight's leftovers are in tomorrow's Stoo Surprise.

'Shroom Doom Dip

After a few weeks of the dishes mentioned above, you should probably introduce this one to calm the party down.

Ingredients:

Fleshy edible mushrooms, three or four per serving
Lots of juicy fruits (raid an orchard, or use potatoes)
A litre of grain alcohol or rot-gut
A cask of wine (raid an inn, or use more grain alcohol)
Leather sack (usually not the same one as used above)
A medium sized cauldron and lots of bowls
Half a pound of sugar, honey or flavoured water

1. Skin and slice the fruit, and put the pieces in the sack. Beat them with a blunt object until they are pulped.

2. Pour them into the cauldron and add the wine and grain alcohol until the mixture reaches a thick, porridgey consistency.

3. Stir with the thighbone of an unbaptised child (strictly for effect, that), while adding the sugar and a vial of Grapeleaf Nectar (consult your local herbalist).

4. Serve in individual bowls, garnished with ground Gort leaves (remember that herbalist). The mushrooms are used to scoop up the dip to eat.

If this doesn't calm down the party, try adding a sub-lethal dose of nightshade or some other poison to their next meal, which will at least restore their acceptance of the established culinary pecking order.



More cooking tips

by Rillen Laerleth, Lay Healer of Fangom

Bunny-Hugger's Stew

1. Take one rabbit, deer, squirrel, or other small, cute fluffy animal recently exterminated by the homicidally-minded party.

2. Try desperately to revive this with all the healing, herbs and magic at your disposal. Remember, party needs in being patched up must take second place here.

3. If you succeed in reviving the corpse, immediately adopt it as a pet or familiar, placing its needs (food, healing, rescue) well above those of the party.

If you fail, weep over the corpse for a while, blaming the party continually as an aside, and then insist on burying it with all due ceremony, even if fleeing from dragons, Bal-rogs, etc, or on the point of starvation.

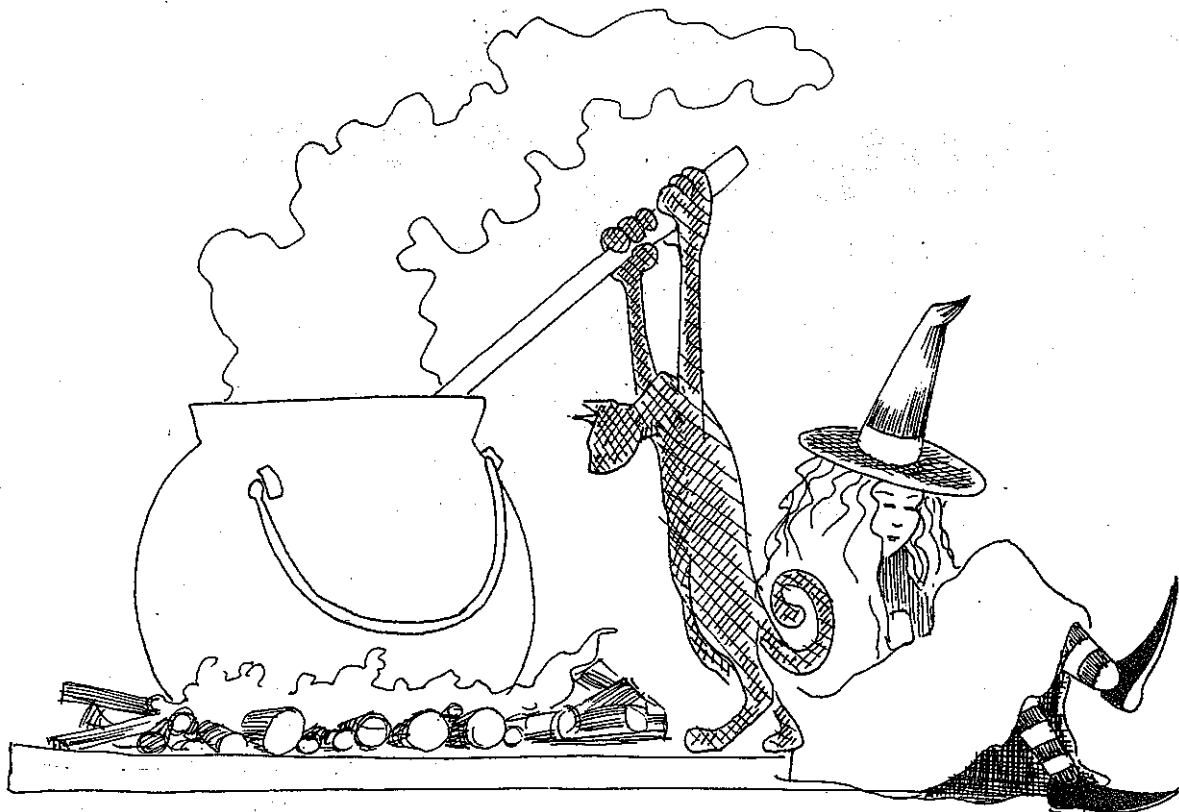
4. Once you have recovered from your traumatic emotional experience, serve the party your usual special of nuts, fruit, bread, cheese and herb tea. This has the added advantage of not requiring cooking.

Gummi-berry juice

Ingredients: one major earth-node, one major arcane ritual plus participants, large cauldron, water, sugar.

1. The earth-node should be one of those marked by a circle of berry-bushes, and you should plan your ritual to coincide with the fruiting season.

2. Set up your cauldron on the edge of the earth-node (outside the ring of bushes); heat water and sugar over a good fire. (Make sure you have plenty of firewood handy - it's



not the kind of recipe you can leave to simmer). If possible, the cauldron should be *Rillen's Magic Cauldron* (see box), which gives bonuses to brewing and can also high-tail it out of the scene as fast as you can if the ritual goes wrong.

3. Ensure that your ritual participants have good abilities, enough positive modifiers, etc. Fudge the dice so they open-end high (we recommend caramel). Station yourself by your cauldron and leave them to get on with it.

4. When the ritual is in full swing, you will notice the berries on the earth-node bushes starting to incandesce. Wait until they are flaming with arcane energies (the effect is quite pretty), and then pick as many ripe berries as you can before they stop flaming. Place these in the cauldron and bring to the boil, stirring continually. (Not too hard, the mixture tends to be explosive).

5. If you have the Coven base list Brewing Ways or the Witch Potion Magic, you may want to cast a few spells at this point. (Be very careful).

6. By the time the ritual has finished, your mixture should be a deep mulberry colour, slightly thinner in consistency than honey, and glowing in the dark. Remove from fire, bottle, and then tend to whatever casualties of the ritual need your attention.

7. Serving suggestions: Gummi-berry juice should only be taken in cases of extreme need, e.g. facing a Balrog without power points.

Process after drinking:

1. Save against a Level 10 poison. (You definitely want to make this one). Failure results in a critical rolled on the Acid critical table, and taken internally.

2. Save versus Essence. (You want to fail this one.) Success results in no effect; you may want to try again. (Or not). Failure results in a random Essence critical, but you are also restored to full power points.

Incidentally, gummi-berry juice has an addiction factor of 10.

Happy brewing!

Rillen's Magic Cauldron

A medium-sized iron cauldron standing on three legs, with a lid. Close examination reveals Elven runes carved around the rim. The cauldron is imbued with powerful Essence/Chanelling magic.

Usage gives +40 to cooking or brewing. The cauldron is also imbued with the Brewing Ways list (Coven base), levels 1-10, and any of these spells can be applied to the contents once per day.

The cauldron is animate, and can run (not very fast) on its three stumpy legs. It is loyal to its owner, and will follow her/him across vast distances if separated. It has a shy and timid disposition, and will attempt to hide behind its owner or simply run away in times of danger. It has been known to snap its lid if cornered or if unauthorised individuals attempt to appropriate its contents. It is kind to animals.

Ars Magica Character Class: Winged Demon

Winged Demon (Mask of the Winged Fiend) - physical tending, minor Depravati.

Infernal Might: 25

Stats:

Size:	+1
Intelligence	0
Perception	+2(hunting)
Strength	+5(brutal),
Stamina	+5(massive)
Presence	-2(ugly)
Communication	-2(gruff)
Dexterity	+2(agile in flight)
Quickness	+2(sudden leap)

Personality Traits:

Cruel +3, Vengeful +2, Bloodthirsty +3

Reputation(among diabolists):

Useful servant (diabolists and greater demons) 5

Confidence: 3

Combat Totals:

	1st strike	Attack	Damage
Fork	+15 (but see fork notes)	+10	+19
Brawl	+8	+9	as brawl skill 5

specialized in immobilize. If it can immobilize, it will carry its prey aloft, being able to lift up to size 0, or load 25.

Body Levels:

OK/0/-1/(-1)/-3/(-3)/-5/Destroyed (extra body levels when siz +1)

Defense:

Dodge +5, Parry +10, Soak +10(immune to heat and flame) Fatigue: n/a

Psychomachia:

None

Possession:

None

Maleficia:

Spiritual Form Powers:

Rush of Dark Wings, ReVi 15, 3 points
Can travel at 20 leagues / round

Extinguishing Wind, CrAu 10, 1 point
Cold wind extinguishes torches & candles

Stench of Twenty Corpses, CrAu 10, 1 point
horrible stench

Physical Form Powers:

Flight of the Nightwing, ReCo 20, 2 points
Can fly by night, at a league a minute, and carry up to size 0, or load 25, at a mile per minute max. Must be cast each night to fly.

Eyes of Fire, InIg 20, no cost
can see infrared at night, eyes glow red.

Wreaths of Foul Smoke, CrAu 15, no cost, automatic when summoned
sulphurous smoke when summoned.

Shatter the Barrier, PeTe(He) 20, 2 points
shatters a barrier of stone, wood or metal of up to a foot thick.
Makes a hole large enough for it to step through.

Fork Maleficia:

Thunderclap - when ground is struck with fork haft - 1 point
Red-Hot - fork grows red-hot +10 damage - 1 point
Agony - victim struck with points must make a con roll of 9+ to function beyond screaming - no cost
Also note that the fork cannot take a victim below Incap - no further damage will be done. The victim will remain conscious, even if impaled on end. If someone is done 2+ body levels damage by the fork, They are impaled, and can be lifted. The fork can be thrown 30'. It contains 3 pawns aesfotedia.

Physical Form:

This warrior demon is a bat-winged, bull-horned beast, with the torso of a great ape, scaled hind legs of a lizard, and long prehensile tail of a rat. With its talons, fangs, glowing red eyes and two-pronged pitchfork, it is the classical image of a demon. This is no accident, as it is one of the most commonly summoned. It is 8' tall with a 20' wingspan.

Its apparent forms are those of a bat, black cat, dancing monkey, stone gargoyle or imp. Its imp form looks identical to its larger core form, except being size -2, 1'tall, with a 3'wingspan. In imp form, its stats change, str and sta dropping to 0, while dex and qik rise to +5. Stone Gargoyle form is the preferred form while dormant, with it reverting to core form when disturbed.

Skills:

Fly 5, Brawl 5, Climb 5, Fork Attack 5, Parry 5, Dodge 5, Intimidate 5

Notes:

One of the most common of warrior masks, the winged fiends, called Malconda, are often summoned to earth. In imp or black cat form, they make excellent familiars for black witches and diabolists. They are also used to transport diabolists, and make impressive messengers, being as fast as astasians. Their favourite form of attack is to fling victims from high places, hoping the death will be judged suicide.

Their horns are worth 5 pawns Auram vis, with the fork worth an additional 3 aesfotedia. But as it costs an extra 3 pawns of vis to summon them with their fork as well, the fiends often are without it.



An Infernal Glossary for the Uncorrupted

Aesfotedia - infemal vis - useful in summonings

Astasians - the messengers and spies of Hell - often in fly or bat form

Depravati - the demons of Hell, as opposed to the terreni - demons of Earth

Diabolist - a demon-summoner/worshipper - see goetist

Goetist - a black magician or summoner, but not necessarily a worshipper

Infernal Might - a measure of the demon's power, less than 30 are minor demons

Mask - a standard "type" of lesser demon, as opposed to unique greater demons

Maleficia - demonic powers or spell-like abilities, costing might points

Possession - not all demons can possess people

Psychomachia - the powers of corruption, attacks on a person's personality

Physical Form(s) - the forms available to a demon when it materializes

Spiritual Form - the form when it is incorporeal (to those who can see it)

If you're a young Mafia gangster out on your first date, I bet it's real embarrassing if someone tries to kill you.

Dad always thought laughter was the best medicine, which I guess is why several of us died of tuberculosis.

Sometimes the beauty of the world is so overwhelming, I just want to throw back my head and gargle. Just gargle and gargle, and I don't care who hears me, because I'm beautiful."

I wish scientists would come up with a way to make dogs a lot bigger, but with a smaller head. That way, they'd still be good as watchdogs, but they wouldn't eat as much.

An Impromptu Tour

I bet a fun thing would be to go way back in time to where there was going to be an eclipse and tell the cave men, "If I have come to destroy you, may the sun be blotted out from the sky." Just then the eclipse would start, and they'd probably try to kill you or something, but then you could explain about the rotation of the moon and all, and everyone would have a good laugh.

Instead of having "answers" on a math test, they should just call them "impressions" and if you got a different "impression" so what, can't we all be comrades?

Maybe in order to understand mankind, we have to look at the word itself: "Mankind". Basically, it's made up of two separate words - "mank" and "ind". What do these words mean? It's a mystery, and that's why mankind is too.

If God dwells inside us, like some people say, I sure hope He liked pot-jiekos, because that's what He's getting!

Here's a good joke to do during earthquakes: straddle a big crack in the ground, and if it opened wider, go "Whoa! Whoa!" and flail your arms around, like you're going to fall in.

Some folks say it was a miracle. Saint Francis suddenly appeared and knocked the next ball clean over the boundary. But I think it was just a lucky hit.

When I heard that trees grow a new "ring" for each year they live, I thought, We humans are kind of like that: we grow a new layer of skin each year, and after many years we are thick and unwieldy from all our skin layers.

Martha says the interesting thing about fly fishing is that it's two lives connected by a thin strand. Come on, Martha. Grow up.

As we were driving, we saw a sign that said "Watch for rocks." Martha said it should read "Watch for pretty rocks." I told her she should write in her suggestion to the municipality, but she said it was just a joke - just to get out of writing a simple letter! And I thought I was lazy!

When you go in for a job interview, I think a good thing to ask is if they ever press charges.

If you were a poor Indian with no weapons, and a bunch of conquistadors came up to you and asked where the gold was, I don't think it would be a good idea to say, "I swallowed it. So sue me."

It takes a big man to cry, but it takes a bigger man to laugh at that man.

Of Reuel's Mind

If you ever fall off the Empire State Building, just go real limp, because maybe you'll look like a dummy and people will try to catch you because, hey, free dummy.

As I bit into the nectarine, it had a crisp juiciness about it that was very pleasurable - until I realised it wasn't a nectarine at all, but A HUMAN HEAD!!

In weightlifting, I don't think sudden, uncontrolled urination should automatically disqualify you.

I think someone should have had the decency to tell me the luncheon was free. To make someone run out with potato salad in his hand, pretending he's throwing up, is not what I call hospitality.

If a kid asks where rain comes from, tell him is "god is crying." And if he asks why God is crying, tell him "probably because of something you did."

Anytime I see some-
thing screech across a
room and latch onto
someones neck, and the
guy screams and tries to
get it off, I have to
laugh, because what is
that thing.

Even though he was an
enemy of mine, I had to
admit that what he had
accomplished was a
brilliant piece of strat-
egy. First, he punched
me, then he kicked me,
then he punched me
again.

If you ever go temporar-
ily insane, don't shoot
somebody, like a lot of
people do. Instead, try
to get some weeding
done, because you'd re-
ally be suprised.

Whenever I see an old
lady slip and fall on a
wet pavement, my first
instinct is to laugh. But
then I think, what if I
was an ant, and she fell
on me. Then it wouldn't
seem quite so funny.

If I lived in the Wild
West days, instead of
carrying a six-gun in my
holster, I'd carry a sol-
dering iron. That way if
some smart-aleck cow-
boy said something
like, "Hey look. He's
carrying a soldering
iron!" and started laugh-
ing, and everybody else
started laughing, I could
just say, "That's right,
it's a soldering iron. The
soldering iron of jus-
tice." Then everyone
would get real quiet and
ashamed, because they
made fun of the solder-
ing iron of justice, and I
could probably hit them
for a free drink.

It's not good to let any
kid near a container that
has a skull and cross-
bones on it, because
there might be a skele-
ton costume inside and
the kid could put it on
and really scare you.

We tend to scoff at the
beliefs of the ancients.
But we can't scoff at
them personally, to
their faces, and this is
what annoys me.

I scrambled to the top of
the precipice where
Nick was waiting. "That
was fun," I said. "You
bet it was," said Nick.
"Let's climb higher."
"No," I said. "I think we
should be heading back
now." "We have time,"
Nick insisted. I said we
didn't, and Nick said we
did. We argued back
and forth like that for
about 20 minutes, then
finally decided to head
back. I didn't say it was
an interesting story.

When I was a kid my
favourite relative was
Uncle Caveman. After
school we'd all go play
in his cave, and every
once in a while he
would eat one of us. It
wasn't until later that I
found out that Uncle
Caveman was a bear.

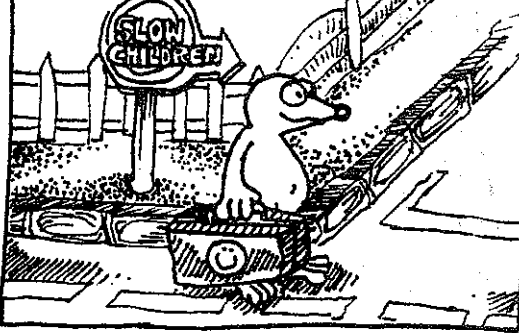
If you're a horse, and
someone gets on you,
and falls off, and then
gets right back on you, I
think you should buck
him off right away.

SCHIZO

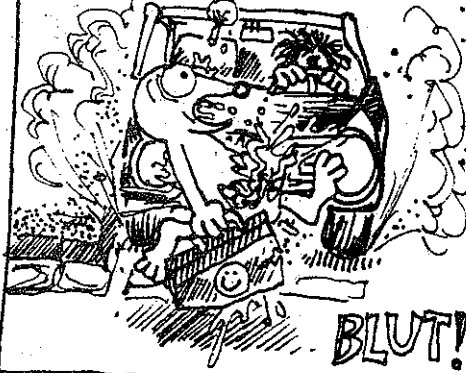
BY IVAN

"ANOTHER HUMAN INTEREST STORY!"

A PEACEFUL LITTLE TOWN SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA...



RRROOOAAAARRR

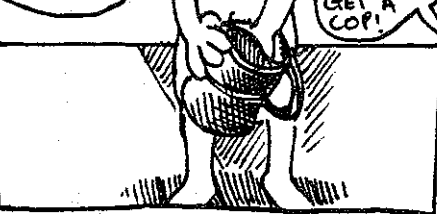


OH MY GOD!!! YOU'VE KILLED HIM! HE'S DEAD... WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO... HUH? HUH?

MMMM...



FIRST STEP - DISPOSE OF THE BODY!
STEP TWO - ELIMINATE THE WITNESSES! STEP THREE - GO TO CHURCH TO CLEANSE THE SLIME FROM MY PUTRID SOUL!



HUH? YOU ARE CRAZY MISTER... CRAZY! I'M GONNA GET A COP!

YES, I'VE KILLED HIM! HE'S DEAD! NOW JOIN THE CLUB YOU BASTARD MOTHER FUCKER!



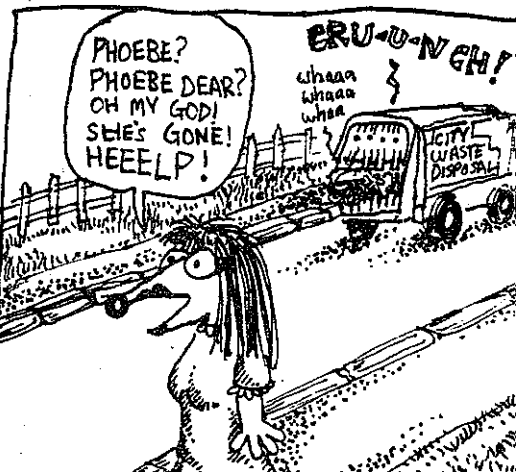
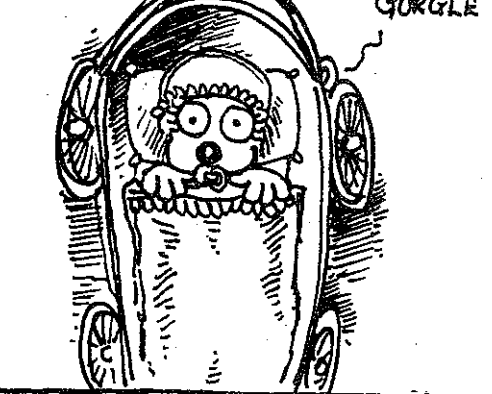
OH, NOOO!



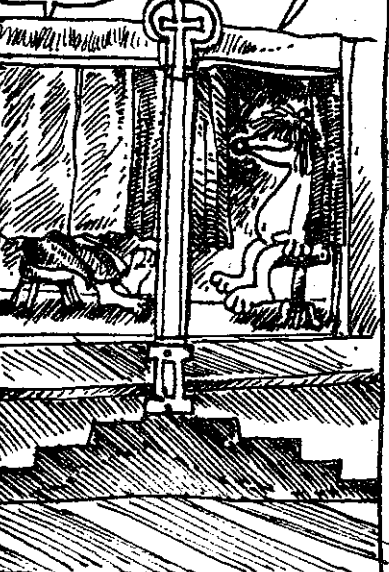
WOOHOOO HRRRGH!



LATER.... A FOOLISHLY UNATTENDED PRAM...



AT THE CONFESSORIAL... FORGIVE ME FATHER, FOR I HAVE SINNED... IT HAS BEEN A YEAR SINCE MY LAST CONFESION. (CONTINUE MY SON)



AH-I'LL CUT THE CRAP! I'VE JUST KILLED THREE PEOPLE IN COLD BLOOD!



TO BE FORGIVEN YOU MUST CONFESS YOUR CRIMES TO THE POLICE!



UHP- SURELY YOU JEST, MY SON... THIS IS A TERRIBLE SIN!



GOOD JOKE FATHER... NOW ABSOLVE ME!



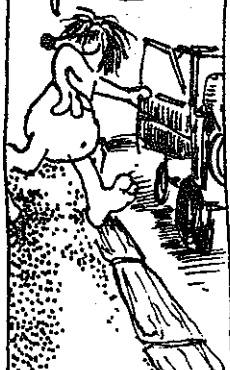
YEAH? SO WHAT? I DONT HAVE ALL DAY TO CHAT, FATHER, SO ABSOLVE ME NOW!

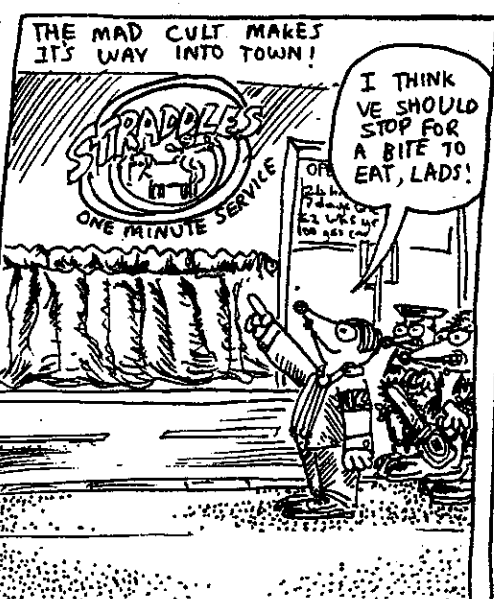
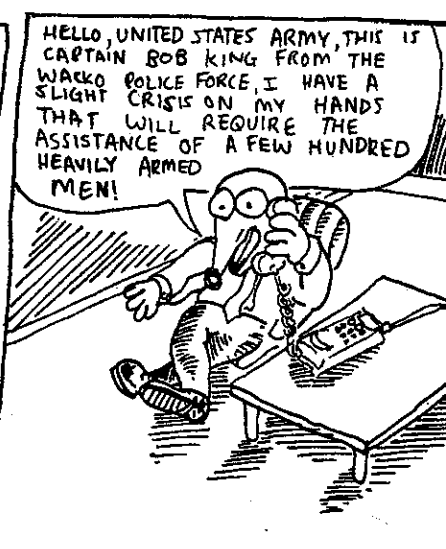
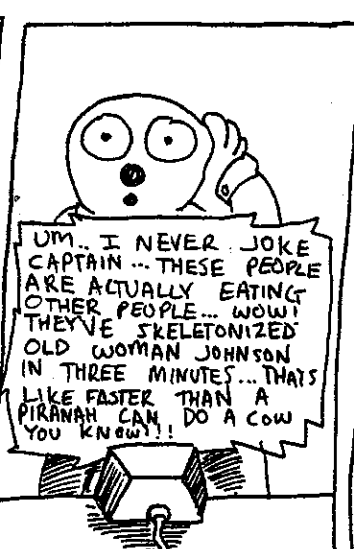
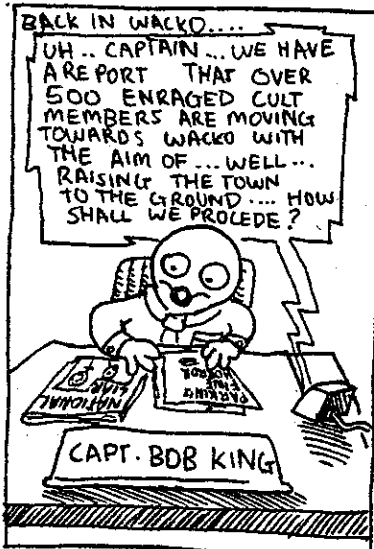
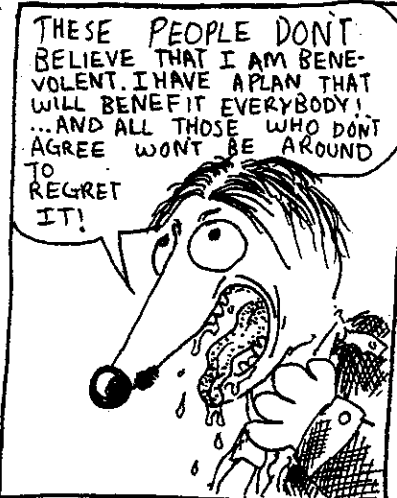
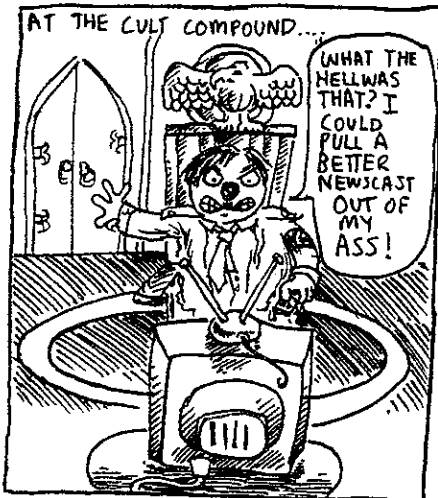
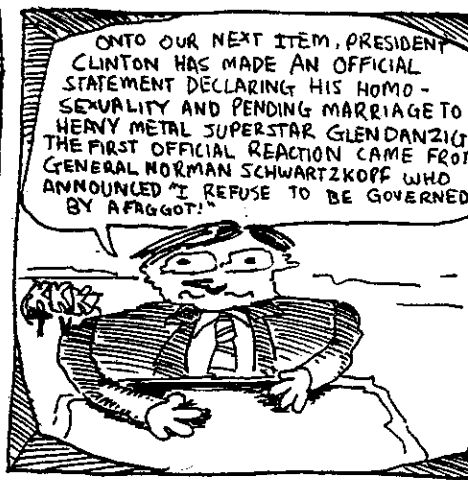


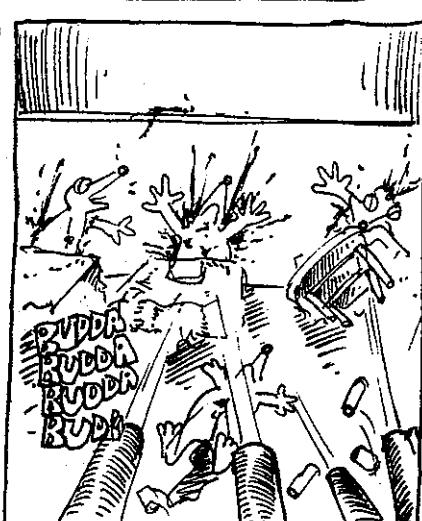
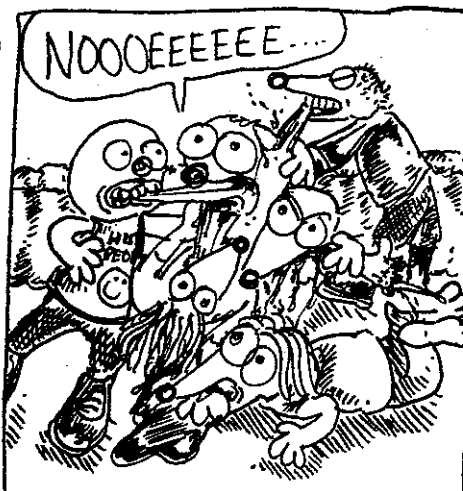
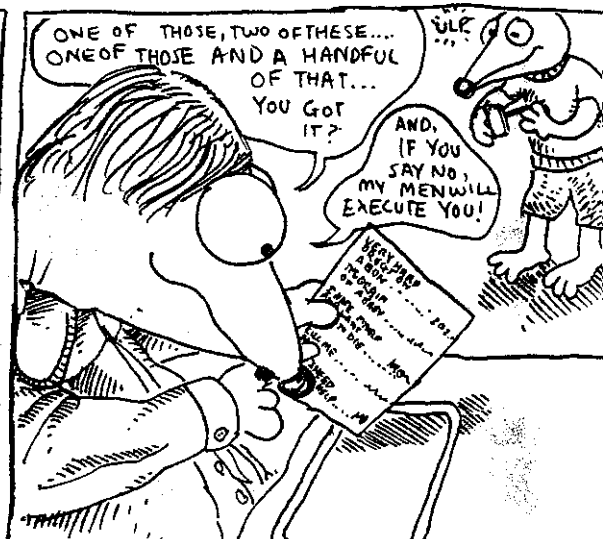
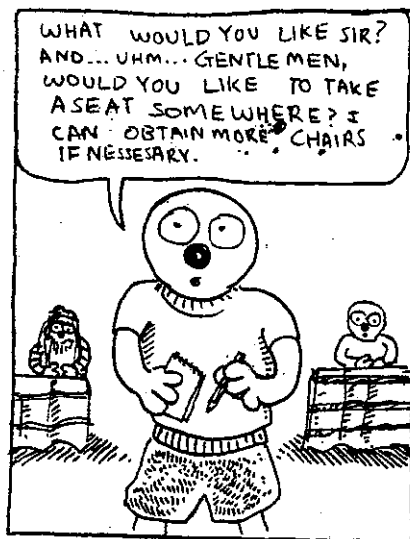
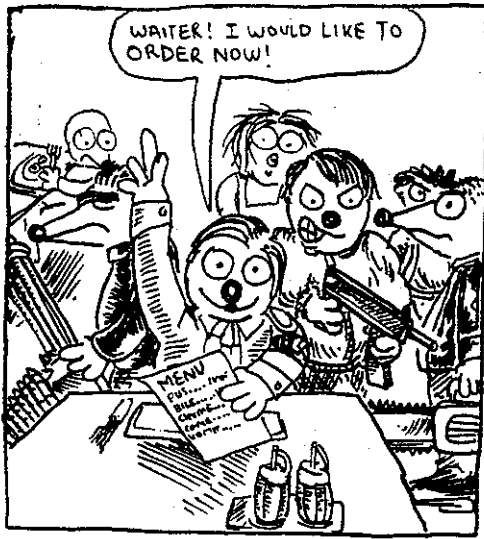
I AM SORRY MY SON, I CANNOT ABSOLVE IF YOU WILL NOT RECENT...

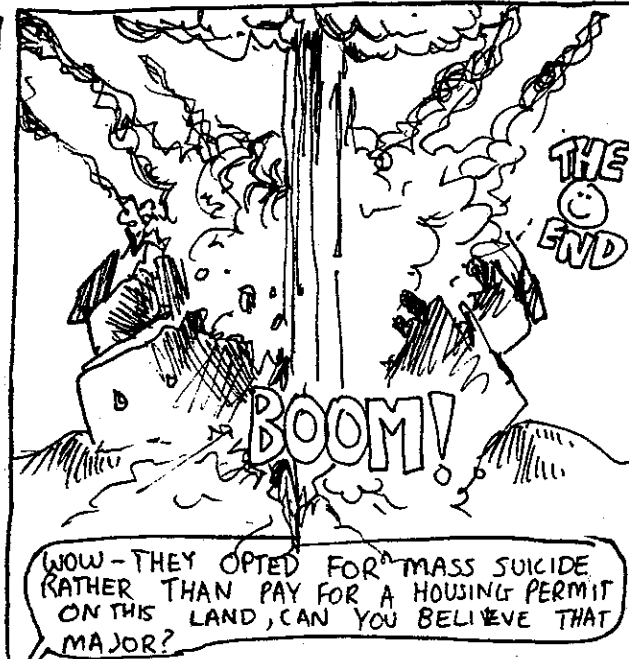
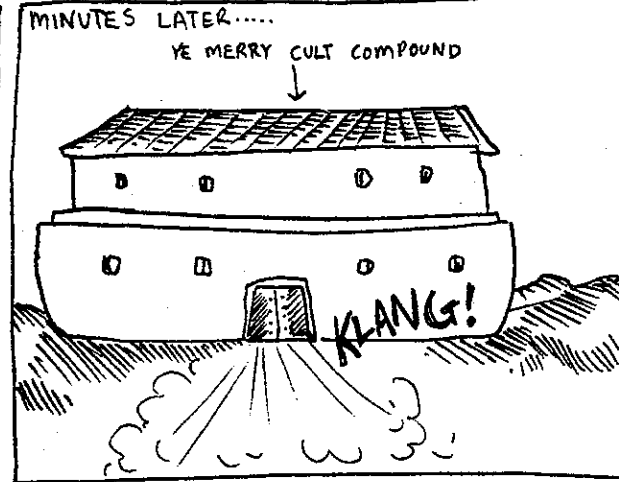
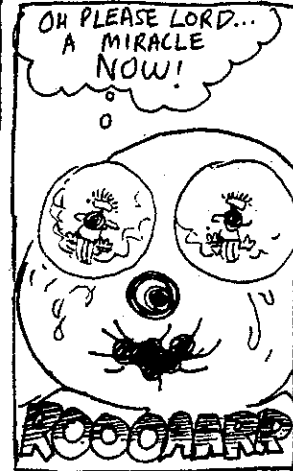
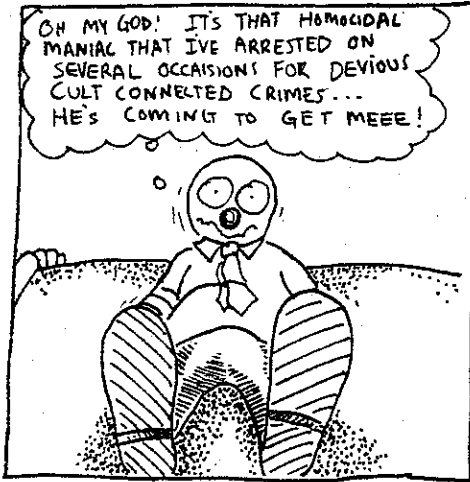
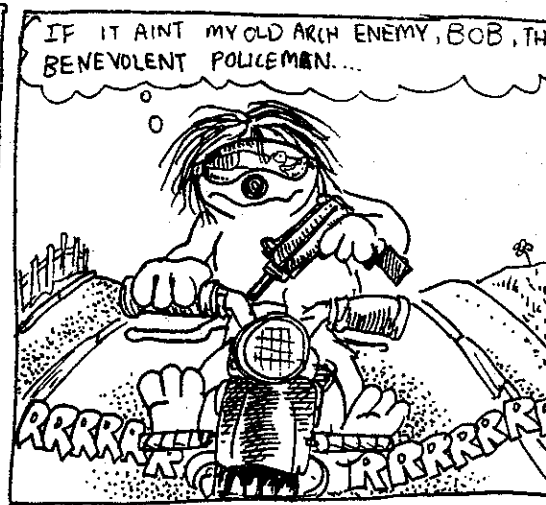
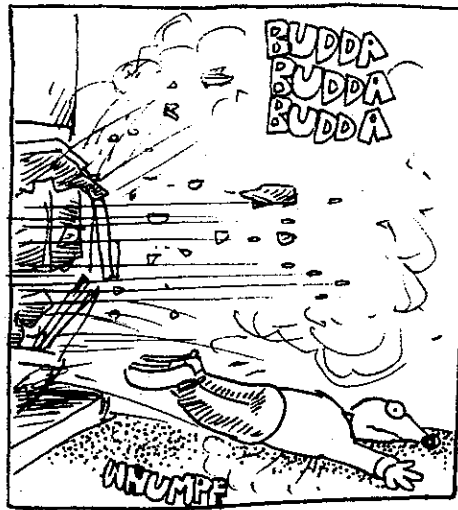


ABSOLVE THAT, YOU OLD FART!









Sounds from the other side

"Who needs a woman when you've got a punchbag?"

- Marcus

"He could be sallyformed, I mean polymorphed."

- Dylan

"Why's it like all hard and not easy to bite?"

- Careena

"I don't think she's got the personality not to shave her armpits."

- Alan Miller

"Wrong continent, wrong century, wrong reality entirely!"

- Jessica

"I have this intense social image, and most of it is made up of my hair."

- Jaqlyn

"I've got a date with that lecturer sometime - his house, my rifle."

- Marcus

"Does anybody want more than two cups of sugar in their tea?"

- Phillip

"As happy as if they had a life expectancy."

- Alan Miller

"I don't read Silmaril, it's got literature in it!"

- Giles Klpps

"We get on like an orphanage on fire."

- Dylan

"I'm mopping the mucus off my eyeball."

- Jaqlyn

"It's like trying to eat off a plate when somebody else is eating off it."

- Antony on the subject of spading the same girl as someone else.

"I can drive, I just don't know how."

- Michelle



"It's leading to catnip-related violence ... just say no to catnip!"

- Dylan

"I generally don't think when I'm looking at a computer screen anyway."

- Karen

"I can dig this non-perfection stuff."

- Dylan

"I'm filtering raw sewage! I'm filtering raw sewage!"

- Careena

"The perfect woman hasn't been created yet, so I may as well take the perfect bits of all the women I know"

- Giles Klpps

"What's happening, my friends are turning into killers and maniacs around me ... I'm falling behind!"

- Phillip

"It's not half as effective as what Robert can do with his tongue."

- Careena

"I will leap on him and thrust him up like a chicken!"

- Phillip

"I should hire myself out as a personal escort and massage specialist."

- Marcus

"I think we'll go and find a giraffe and consummate our relationship."

- Alan Miller

- "I'm sure he sleeps with them."

- "He does not - he's got an alsatian."

- Marcus and Peta

"There is no god but caffeine, and tea and coffee are his prophets."

- Phillip

"We'll do a very thorough mercy killing in the morning."

- Marcus

"I'm cheap, very cheap."

- Careena

"You write that down you diel!"

- Anon (I didn't.)

The Horror, The Horror

"You descend into the cellar, and the empty mouldy smell of stale air hits you like a wave. Dark shadows fill the room, flickering and dancing in the broken tourcehlight. A thick mantle of dust covers everything, and the silence hangs oppressively, broken only by the spluttering of your tourcehes as they slowly burn down. There is nothing to stir the air, and it is cold; cold, dark and empty."

"You walk into the room, and it is 10' by 10', and oh yes, it's empty."

To the DM/GM, horror is an artform all of its own, specific to the genre that it stems from, but within the gambit of the genre are a host of avenues open to a creative DM. Horror at one level or another enters every campaign, but few DM's really look at what can be achieved with the use of horror as a medium.

Before we look at the methodology by which one can achieve a strange sense of horror, let us look at some of the elements that make up horror, and divide "B"-grade pulp from something more refined and perhaps even more horrific.

What is it that makes horror horror? I think that there are several key elements, but the most important is the unknown. If you know it, even if you know it to be beyond your power and ability to defeat, then it is still less horrific. The more you reveal - the more the players know - the less the horror. The second element, which may appear contradictory, is expectation. The build-up. What

would a horror movie be without the music, building the suspense; a suspense of the unknown. In many ways it is this distinction that separates good horror from poor horror. If we know that the little girl will run around the corner and meet the crazed axe murderer, then the suspense is lessened. If we suspect she will then the suspense is heightened. If we know that there is something out there, the suspense becomes even better. Thus the DM must always try to find the subtle line between the suspense element - "it's out there, it's big mean nasty and coming to get you" - and the unknown - "what is it?"

The third element is the reality link. One of the things that makes Steven King's writing so good is that he uses the commonplace, the everyday, and twists it. So the car becomes horrific, more so because we climb into a car every day, we see cars, we live with cars. The more removed the horror becomes from reality, the more we can dismiss it. In a fantasy campaign this is more difficult to achieve, because the players are already removed from reality, but it may be done so in many ways.

A child as a symbol of innocence is almost universal, and so the link to the horror remains intact. On the other hand the horror of some devised creature that is the result of a mad wizard's crazed experiments becomes far less anchored for the players and thus loses a lot.

The best element is the childhood fears. Here the DM enters the world between the player and the character. The imagery and symbolism that the DM uses must be a reflection upon the primal fears of both. According to Elizabeth Cobler-Ross, there are only two fears we are born with - a fear of the dark and a fear of falling. The others, claustrophobia and all other phobias, are learned behavioural responses. The DM must try to tap into the lingering fears that will be such that the player can empathise with his/her character. Thus if we are to take the fear of the dark, then link it to a fear that the character has, we are coming slowly to bridge this gap. Fear/horror thus must come home to the character on a personal level. This is often a hit and miss affair for the DM, but as you get to know your players, so it grows.

The final element is Occham's Razor (taken out of context here I admit). One can easily go too far with horror, and one can then descend from horror into the realms of garrulous violence and even sick humour. One can have all the elements that make up good horror, an inverted symbol (the "nice" child), the unknown (why is it staring at empty space? What does it see?), the suspense (the brief flash to the axe in the corner). But one can go too far. Repeatedly pushing the image, shoving the blood, guts and gore, going over the top. In a tournament once I wrote a passage describing a laboratory/dissection chamber. Taken as in-



dividual elements they were not overtly horrific. However, when linked to the bleak world and the rest of the tournament, the harried playtesters felt that the passage had finally taken that one step too far, and they were left reviled and sickened.

Now the next application is how to take these elements and impose them into the game. The unknown must come across by means of your descriptions, as must the suspense element. Use all five senses. You cannot play music, but you can use repetition, cadence and long pauses. Build up the suspense and hold it there for as long as you can. Do not let dice, pets, sweets, coke, telephones or anything else tear it away from you. Good players will help with this, while poor players will continually interrupt and undermimic it. All I can advise is stomp on the poor players and cherish the good ones.

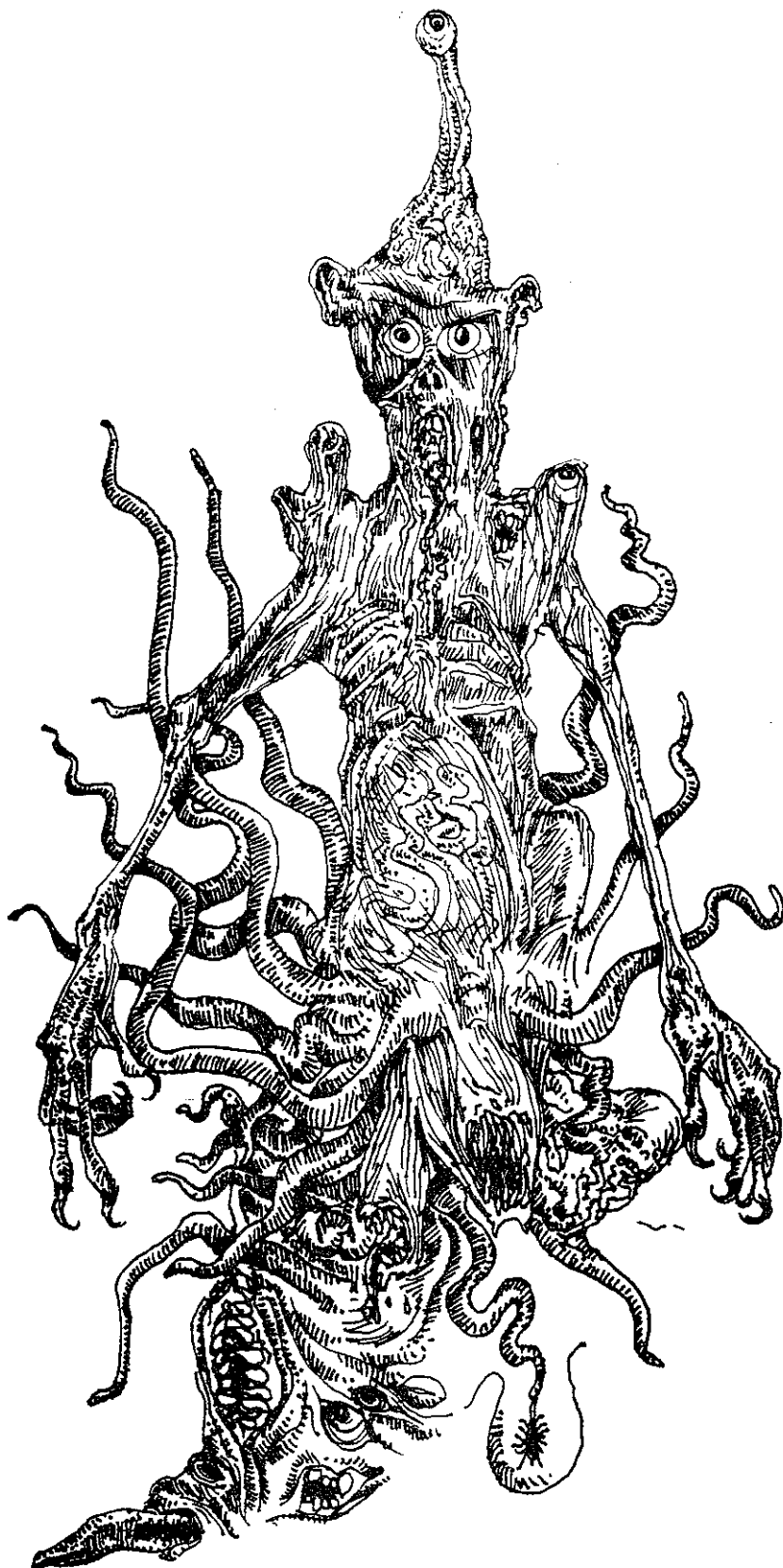
I also find that suspense may be built up in any number of subtle ways. NPC's are a prime method ("Oh no sir, we never go there sir, no sir best not to talk of these things sir..."), subtle hints, "the brownish stain on the table cloth." Sometimes even out of game hints, "Next week, well..."

As for the reality link, this along with the Occum's Razor are the hardest to achieve. Throw out monster manuals and other such compendiums, every player knows the stats anyway. Throw out the superfantastical, and then link items back into your campaign in a far more suitable manner. The big greasy monster is not as frightening as the reality of the small kitty cat by the fire, whose head hangs onto its neck by a single tendon. (Familiars come to mind here, that always keeps the players jumpy). Also try Fetlock, the trusted warhorse, who comes back from the dead three days after we buried him. Do not always let violence take its course, resulting in an endless grasping of dice and chants. I have thrown numerous undead at parties, but none so effective as the time the undead corpse tried to kiss one of the players.

Finally then, make the horror fit to the players, not only to the world/characters. Some players will find nothing horrific in endless seas of corpses and blood, but may find a subtly bleeding lying on his/her pillow terrifying. (I know of a cyberspace group who had waded through blood and guts with large calibre fire arms, but were scarred silly when they walked past a row of telephones and each rang in turn as they passed).

Horror is something that should be judiciously used. Too much and your players grow accustomed, too little and it all falls apart. Just the right amount and you will add a memorable dimension to your campaign.

The key is to know just when to open the door and show what is beyond...



THE TALE OF THE...

(Well, actually, the ICON tournament report)

This year two teams went out on a limb and an Opel to travel to ICON before varsity even gave us any money. Five unidentified bodies drifted up to Joburg on their own steam, one manifested his immense eldritch powers and flew, the rest used their Opel (Gem of not-so-instantaneous teleportation). Somewhere in the midst of this extremely complicated procedure, we managed to misplace some arbitrary CLAW person, who is probably still waiting for his lift home.

Travelling arrangements aside (or behind, depends how fast you're going), we entered one team and a bit in the SAGA (South African Gamer's Association) National Tournament. This year it flopped around in the icy Joburg atmosphere for a whole two days before expiring from exposure. There were two AD&D tournaments, one for each day of the weekend tournament, and a Cthulu game on the Saturday morning.

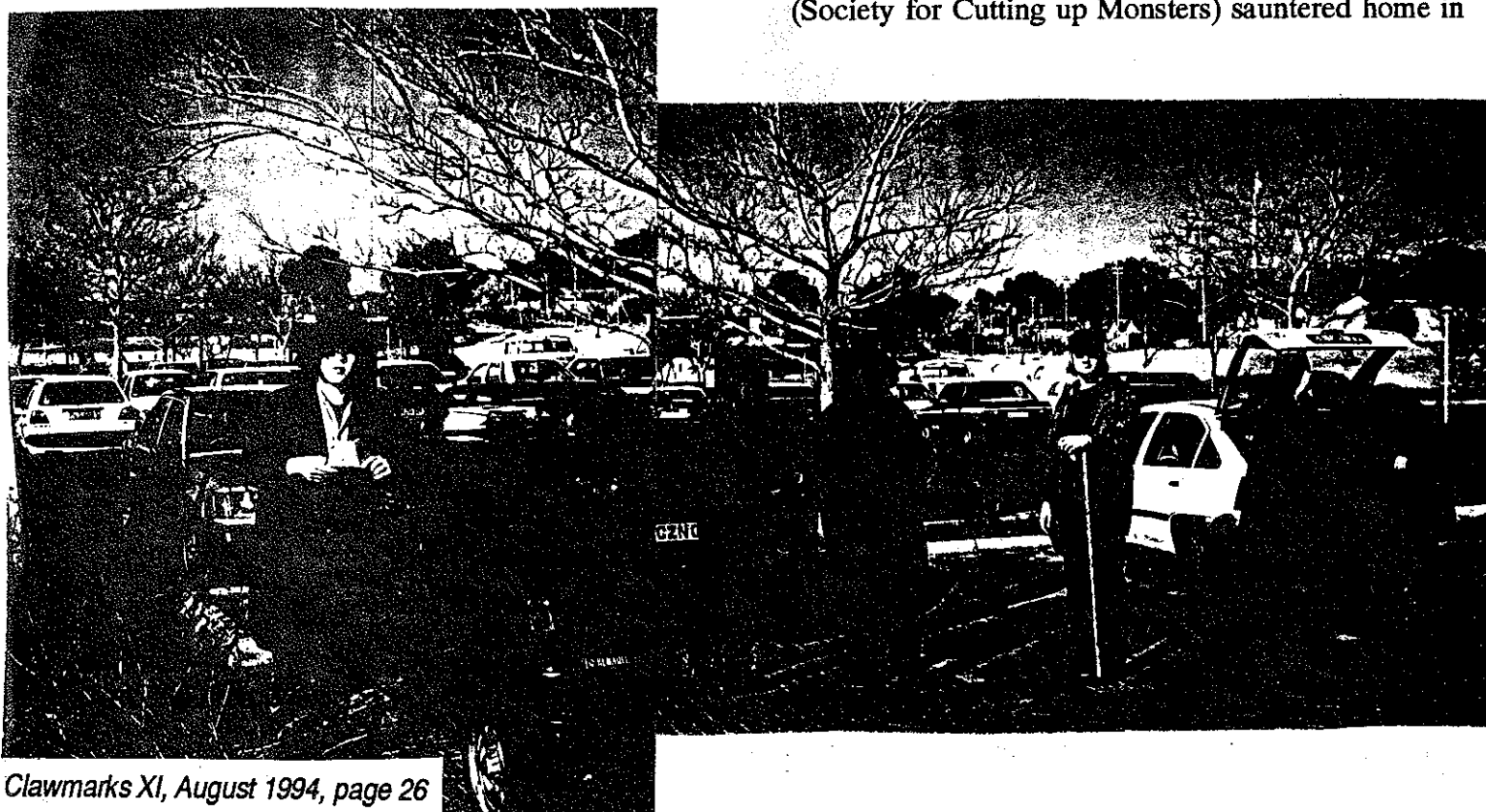
The usual "I'm summoning a monster to rule the world" actually turned out to be a lot of fun. Attack stats for candelabra and burning logs were invented by some unlucky teams, while the WHY ME team (Philip Anastadias, Nicole Antoine, Tracy Dawson, Greg Harrowsmith) blasted the arbitrary great green betentacled thingy with shotguns. They took second place overall in Cthulu and hid it somewhere safe.

The two AD&D Tournaments were totally unrelated modules - three hours each. The first was your basic dungeon crawl with some interesting logistic paradoxes. An angry pit fiend, a cleric with too many bats roosting in his antenna and the obligatory mad mage wandered around in a dungeon no more than 1000 feet square for two days before the party arrived - without obliterating each other. Incidentally, they were all searching unsuccessfully for a lone goblin - who was hiding behind some sacks in an unlocked storeroom.

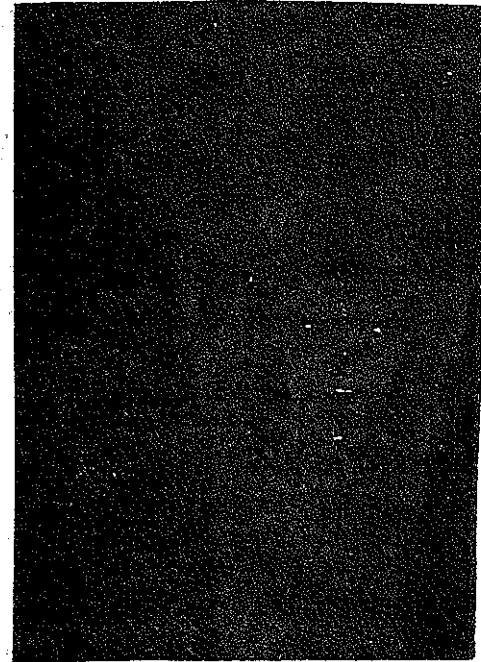
The second tournament was far more interesting, and would have made a very good six hour game - very few parties finished in the allotted three. Both tournament modules and the Cthulu game are available for perusal in the CLAWS library.

The LARP game was rather well designed - and very well attended. Four teams ran the game simultaneously, with rather more violence than has been allowed in UCT games thus far. Mmmm. Perhaps we could rectify that. A little mandatory violence occasionally is good for the soul.

This year SAGA awarded first place honours over the entire tournament to a foreign team - again. Unfortunately, it wasn't CLAWS this year - the Durbanites (Society for Cutting up Monsters) sauntered home in



... MISSING DOBERMANS



glory (lit. a small species of intestinal worm). Understandably, the designers would have felt bad giving us first place AGAIN, and so the contracts on their lives are only valid from next year. Prizes were very substantial and plentiful, with the RPGA sponsoring numerous prize vouchers - up to \$70 per player.

CLAWS head Librarian of the Order of the Banana, Philip Anastadias, used the Joburg tournament to fullest advantage by auctioning off all of the duplicate modules in the library. The venture was highly successful - some poor fool even bought a copy of "ISLE OF DREAD"! With the auction proceeds and the prize money from "Why Me?" we acquired the rule books for WEREWOLF and MAGE, the Batman Roleplaying Game (which has high amusement value), a Rolemaster module and a Cyberspace adventure. Not all is spent - a copy of VAMPIRE - THE MASQUERADE is in the offing. Yea, bow ye in honour and wibbling greed. Gifts of gratitude may be delivered to Box 53, Elsie's River.

When the intrepid CLAWSes "Why Me?" and "Gnomes Seek Mountain, Please Respond" were not off winning money, we were continuing our not inconsiderable reign of terror and black cloaks among Joburg Spurs. By the second visit, yea they did cringe in supplication and send someone else to serve the table. Loud renditions of "But the Hedgehog has never been

*%#@ before" and treatises on how to drive fast while enacting a number of illegal scenarios (all at once) and not spill your drink livened the atmosphere up immeasurably. Both teams gargled enthusiastically and drove very fast lots (two of three vehicles very nearly didn't make it home and retired in Laingsburg and Worcester respectively). If you are wailing and gnashing your teeth because you did not think to join us, never fear. WE'LL BE BACK NEXT YEAR - and this time we'll bring the doberman.

A Songe of Mourninge, or Reflecksions on ICON 1994 (to be warbeled too the melodie of "Greensleaves")

*Alas! Thise yeare it was notte too be
We were foiled in our bidde for Vicktorie
Of corse, we woulde have got more thann one pryze
Iff we hadn't beene parted bie those who organyze*

Chorus

*Groane, weep, wibbel and meep
Oure graspe on glorie we couldde not kepe
Wibbel and meepe, groane and wepe,
But it matters notte, because nexste yeare
We wil returne and creame the lott of them!*



Biggie is back. They bi-annual invasion of CLAWMARKS by the one and only Archbigot has occured once more. This year he may even have directed his loathing at a deserving recipient.

46 Reasons Why I Hate Engineers

There are lots of them.

They're organised.

They can't spell, write or speak English.

They speak a funny dialect of English called Engineerslish.

They have a powerful faculty council.

They only shave at full moon.

They think that something only exists if you can build it.

They clutter simple equations with complicated constants.

They're sane.

They think you should only go to university to learn how to be employed.

They think that physics is only interesting if it can be applied.

They do Applied maths, so that they can apply it.

They're responsible and upright members of society.

They're allowed to make big explosions.

They're always studyng hard.

They always make you feel guilty for not studying hard.

They've taken over the planet.

They get the biggest bursaries.

They get bursaries.

They're arrogant sods.

They suck their toes.

They don't like astronomers.

They get the best-payd jobs.

They live in big houses.

They're capitalists.

They think they're superintelligent Einstlen clones who only go to university to learn how to be employable.

They are superintellgent Einstein clones who only go to university to learn how to be employable.

They get the best faculty T-shirts.

They know about economlcs.

They wear normal clothes.

They think that the meaning of the noun "academic" is "waster of tax-payer's money".
They're practical.
They play with their food.
They're really all aliens from another galaxy and they think we haven't noticed yet.
They're all good at sport.
Their tutorials are run like sunday school classes.
They think tutorials are career workshops.
They think the rest of us are also only at university to become employable.
Their tutors are arrogant bastards.
They inflict their tutorials on helpless science students.
They're always on time for lectures.
They all have cars.
They think an Opal is something you drive.
They always dress neatly.
They get the best lecturers.
They eat turnips.



The Bard's Best Tomes

Again? asks the Bard. It is but lately I spoke at length on the subject of these tomes, as I do recall. Can you not leave me to my work for such short while?

A short while indeed, the Bard's Scribe replies sardonically. 'Tis half a year ago I last dug thee out of thy dusty recess. Take that parchment there, and having filled it with thy rambling words thou canst then return to whiling away thy time with scribblings. A single sheet only to fill? The Bard is offended. When ever was a single sheet enough? I recall the ancient days, those times...

Enough and enough! cries the Scribe. Tomes, said I, not times!

Ever the great are misjudged, the Bard says sadly. How fortunate am I that I at least may reveal true grandeur...

Thus, for instance, the case of *Memory, Sorrow, and Thorn*, as Tad Williams' grand epic is entitled. The first two volumes, *The Dragonbone Chair* and *Stone of Farewell* have been available for literally years, but only now has the final volume, *To Green Angel Tower*, become available. I qualify this: the first part is available - *To Green Angel Tower* is so massive that it has been published in two parts, *Siege* (Part I) and *Storm* (Part II). *Siege* is a worthy successor to *Stone of Farewell*, tightening the story and drawing together the threads far-flung in the first two volumes. The ways in which the story moves may be not entirely unexpected, and it is clear that certain momentous events must occur, but for the final resolution it will be necessary to await the last part, *Storm*.

Another trilogy has reached its conclusion after years of limbo with the appearance of *Mistress of the Empire*, co-authored by Janny Wurts and Raymond E. Feist. Since I personally have not been able to acquire this volume yet I am unable to deliver an informed verdict; however, unimpeachable sources claim it to far exceed its prequels (*Daughter of the Empire* and *Servant of the Empire*) in quality.

A volume to the excellence of which I can well attest is Patricia McKillip's *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld*. Readers of Patricia KcKillip will be acquainted with her originality and beautiful storytelling style, and *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld* (possibly her oldest fantasy novel) is no exception. Crafted like a work of art, *The*

Forgotten Beasts of Eld has the feel of a fairy-tale written under a summer sky, its bright colours and rich images enhanced by distantly Celtic undertones.

Well well well, the Scribe says mockingly. The Bard has finally found someone he thinks might even be near to equal to him...

Silence, thou impertinent quill-carrier! snaps the Bard. As I was saying...

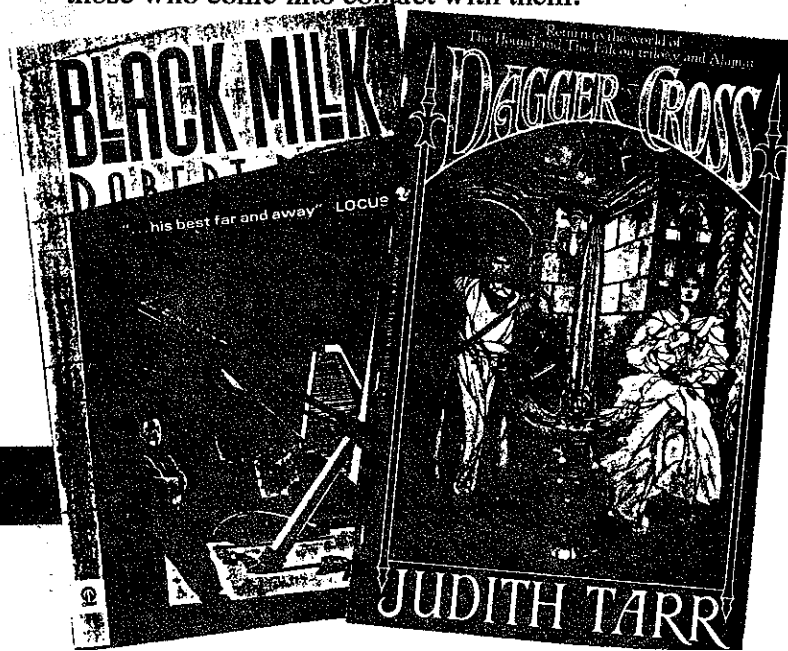
Incidentally and before it slips my mind, it has come to my ears through certain unimpeachable sources the Patricia McKillip is working on a sequel to *The Sorceress and the Cygnet*, allegedly entitled *The Cygnet and the Firebird*. I shall sacrifice to the Muses and Odin as well that we may see it soon.

Scribe, commands the Bard. Look you at these volumes I am about to examine and tell me what you see.

Books? says the Scribe.

Fool! the Bard thunders. Have you no eyes? Each and every one of these takes place right there, on that idiotic insignificant little world called Earth!

The Stress of Her Regard, by Tim Powers, is certainly set on Earth, for where but on Earth would one find Keats, Byron, and Shelley? *The Stress of Her Regard* is a powerfully written tale set in the times of these poets, touching on the lives of each and weaving what the everyone knows as their real lives into a darker, more complex world inhabited by mysterious, ancient, and often malevolent beings drawn from the stones and the air. As fascinating as Powers' deft rearrangement of the poets' histories is, even more fascinating is his exploration of these creatures and those who come into contact with them.



Equally as fascinating, and also with as historical a background, are Judith Tarr's *Alamut* and its sequel, *The Dagger and the Cross*. Set in the Holy Land of the early Crusades, the two volumes are written from the perspective of Prince Aidan, an Elven lord who is not quite part of the crusades. Most interestingly many of Tarr's Elves are Christian, a combination rarely seen but very effectively accomplished. *Alamut* and *The Dagger and the Cross* smoothly blend fantasy and reality, creating a vivid picture of the Crusades as they might have been.

In a more traditional mould - or rather, to me, overused - is *The Forever King*, an attempt by Molly Cochran and Warren Murphy to (once again) 'bring to life' King Arthur in modern times. An attempt, I say, because it fails miserably in just about everything. King Arthur should be granted some rest, and authors whose lack of imagination forces them to resort to him should rather keep well away from pen and paper. *The Forever King* is supremely forgettable, and that is precisely what I shall proceed to do.

Vented they spleen? inquires the scribe.

For a while, the Bard says. But imagine what I could say of one David Eddings, whose never-still pen has churned out The Shining Ones, second book of his so far excessively repetitive Tamuli series. Mayhap it is fortunate that I have not perused it as yet. Rather therefore shall I speak of...

Fires' Astonishment, by Geraldine McCaughrean, which takes place in a village near the coast of England, and is filled with good old-fashioned Saxons, Christians, Heretics, Devils, Dragons, Priests, Fallen



Priests, Lost Sons, Evil Witches, Grim Warriors, and various others. *Fires' Astonishment* reads like a medieval tale, which is exactly what it is, and a most enjoyable one too.

Medieval England is also the backdrop for Judith Riley's *In Pursuit of the Green Lion*, sequel to *A Vision of Light*. Not quite fantasy, and not quite a historical novel, *In Pursuit of the Green Lion* lies somewhere inbetween - grounded solidly in the reality of the Fourteenth Century (The Year of Our Lord 1358 to be precise) with all its plotting, self-righteous lords, and grim everyday life, it nonetheless has its own touches of magic and alchemy. Whichever way it is taken, *In Pursuit of the Green Lion* makes for a most interesting, entertaining reading.

And so, from the distant past to the distant future. *Black Milk*, by Robert Reed, paints scenes of an idyllic future, centered around a group of children, each of whom has unique genetic enhancements and abilities. *Black Milk* simply traces the days as they carelessly pass by, until the day when genetically engineered creatures experimentally created on a moon-sized satellite break free and threaten the Earth. For once, however, the author has not ascribed to his central characters special powers or great heroism - they are children, and they behave as such. *Black Milk* depicts a carefully created, believable future, and maintains a consistent atmosphere throughout.

Lastly now a volume about which I am somewhat ambiguous. *The Earth is the Lord's* is the first book in William James' *Sunfall Trilogy*, the second and third books being *The Other Side of Heaven* and *Before the Sun Falls*. In a far future, an Admiral of the Imperial Navy finds himself stranded on a world ruled by a warlike race which, though its technology is medieval, is aware of the existence of other worlds and other sciences. The book, however, deals little with this, but appears to be no more than another 'stranded traveller joins new society and helps conquer world' variation. Though somewhat disappointed with the fairly mundane account, it may be that the sequels improve the story, for I have been assured that the trilogy is excellent. It remains to be seen (or, more precisely, to be read).

Thus shall I end this account, says the Bard. Scribe, be a good fellow; transcribe a few copies and deliver them to those who may find use for them. Grmph, says the Scribe.

Mindless Bimbos Who Do As They're Told: Women in Roleplaying

WARNING: *the surgeon-general suggests that this article may be construed as being detrimental to male dignity. The writer deserves the right to be outspoken, and stands by the integrity of what she is saying. Don't say I didn't warn you.*

First, some history. In 1989 CLAWs ran its first ever tournament, Dragonfire. There were some fifteen or twenty teams, out of which one player was female (Me). DMs (all male) fought over DMing that group. (This is not vanity. Women were that rare.) The following year saw CLAWs' first female committee member (Secretary, also me). CLAWMARKS II, the 1990 edition, carried an article entitled "Dishcloths and Decolletage: the Feminist's Lament", bemoaning the marginal position of women in the aggressively masculine world of roleplaying. The article (also by me) was annotated and neatly undercut by the (male) editor, who insisted that the most common female in fantasy games was the barwench because that reflected historical reality, and that it was women's fault that they did not insist on a less stereotyped role.

We've come a long way from there, ladies. Active female CLAW membership has increased dramatically; all-male enclaves of players are rare, and some games have more females than males. The CLAWroom now plays host to female discussions on feminine underwear as heated as any male discussions of weaponry. This sounds unlikely, but I've heard them myself. The CLAW committee has had a female CLAWthing for two years running, and the current acting CLAWthing is female, not to mention the women on ad hoc positions. Both Dragonfire '94 tournaments have female design team heads or coheads.

Despite all this, however, has anything really changed? It is still true that roleplaying is perceived as a male pastime, and that female participation still tends to be marginalised.

The experience of a female roleplayer is very different to that of her male counterparts, simply because of the assumptions of the games themselves and the construction of roleplaying society. There are very real reasons behind the fact that the proportion of female roleplayers, while it has increased, is nowhere near fifty percent. ICON this year apparently had around 20 female players in a crowd of nearly 200; the CLAW tournament proportion is probably slightly larger, but not by much.

More women or not, there seem to be fundamental problems with roleplaying in general which make the game, at least as it is mostly played now, basically less appealing to women. The question is, of course, whether such problems will iron themselves out in the long term, as more and more women play. I think not. Read on!

(All quotes are from a discussion with CLAW members on this subject in the CLAWroom recently. I have attributed them when I can remember who spoke).

***"Women don't enjoy hack and slash."
(Kathryn)***

One of the major problems with feminine perceptions of role-playing is that it is a vicarious, glorified carnage spree. This gets us onto the very shaky ground of generalised "feminine" and generalised "masculine" traits, but the fact remains that, by and large, women do not get much satisfaction out of violent, destructive play. There is certainly little for them in that certain type of immature gaming, usually at school level, where hack and slash is the only purpose of the game. The problem becomes one of quality of play. There is as much interest for women as for men in role-playing done properly - a complex, well-sustained game where the actual development of the character is as important as the problem-solving aspect, and where combat is a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

The problem happens at "entry level", i.e. the kind of game most of us start playing, the basic TSR dungeon crawl where monsters pop out of the woodwork and you slash them to bits and soldier on. There is apparently some gratification in this for your average grotty 14-year-old male - adolescent biological urges? Who knows. But there is nothing in such a game for your average grotty 14-year-old female, who at that stage has other things on her mind than venting her frustrations with a longsword.

Christian made an interesting point in this context: that in the Cape Town scene at least, a lot of schools are segregated. Teenage girls are unlikely to go out and look for roleplaying, and they tend not to be exposed to the games of their male counterparts at school level. Hence the head start male players have when they hit university; girls have simply failed to hear about the grotty violence orgies of their male contemporaries even before they have a chance to get alienated by them.

In the 'varsity scene, most males have role-played before, at school, usually TSR-style games; most female players either had brothers who played, or started role-playing only when they hit 'varsity. The discrepancy has quite a lot of effect on the desires and expectations of players.

As well as this problem of access, immature role-playing seems to have a strong element of competitiveness, expressed in a form that does seem more masculine than feminine. I will not for a moment say that women are not competitive, but I think their units of competition do not extend to relative size of longswords, size of magical bonuses, amount of treasure or number of spells - those Grail-aura-ed icons of the adolescent male player. (We should probably leave Freud out of this discussion, or he'll take over).

It may sound sexist to say that most women only enjoy a mature role-playing game, but I believe it is fair to say that an immature role-playing game is built around an appeal that applies almost exclusively to males. It takes an exceptional female player to work through the immature stuff to get to the stage where roleplaying actually has something to offer her. I remember my own distaste for the blood and gore when I first started playing, and my rather grim determination to endure them for the sake of the things I did enjoy - character development, the exploration of a new world, the sheer enchantment of losing yourself in another reality. I think

FORUM FORUM FORUM FORUM FORUM

that many women who would otherwise enjoy roleplaying, and do it well, are unlucky enough to experience an immature game, and retire, alienated, to less destructive pastimes.

Good old TSR, the capitalist pig bogeyman of serious roleplayers the world over, is probably much to blame for this trend. Both D&D and AD&D push a dungeonbased ethos, where development of character and setting are very much secondary to the need to find-a-dungeon-kill-the-monsters-grab-the-treasure-go-up-levels - roleplaying in its most simplistic and primitive form. (I can feel myself making enemies. Do I care? Not!) My conclusion is that women will only start roleplaying in equal numbers to guys when the quality of games on offer goes up. Dramatically. Death to TSRisms. Etcetera.



Male (Toby): "Yeah, so roleplaying used to be male dominated."

Female, sotto voce: "It still is."

Male: "Shut up, you're not allowed to speak!"

The exchange was facetious, but it illustrates my second major point: female role-players, even if they manage to overcome their alienation or found a worthwhile game, simply are not taken as seriously, as players or characters, as are male. Effectively, the general sexism of society at large is reflected in roleplaying, but in a more concentrated form; very few male roleplayers display any sympathy for the feminine equality bit. (I suspect some of them actually agree in theory, and are simply socialised out of it in practice....?)

We could here make some nasty generalisations about the kind of people, generally, who role-play. Without wanting to categorise absolutely, I believe it is fair to say that many role-players, as a specific kind of creative, intelligent and imaginative people (flattery!), are not very well socialised at school level. Certainly many male role-players are simply not used to feminine society, and are thus unable to relax and relate normally when a - gasp! - real woman suddenly arrives in their game. They either ignore her because they can't handle her, or they fall all over her. Either is likely to drive her crazy. And, in an all-male society, awareness of feminism is likely to be laughed to scorn. You can't relate to women as people if you don't know any, and if they then arrive, you're going to treat them as strange aliens from outer space, i.e. women. (I can feel myself making even more enemies. Letter-bombs will be greatly resented).

The net result of all this is to see female as stereotype. The "women play clerics" assumption was very much prevalent when I started playing. The inherent and more general social sexism of "women are housewives" seems to be very much related to this - a perception of women's roles as those of nurture and submission, not of leadership or violence (mage or fighter). The perception is that the male players get on with the real work, and the women stand back and heal the wounded hero when he's finished. Yuk. All the more yuk, because many of my own early characters conformed to exactly this role. (You could say that's because I was a wishy-washy individual, but I think many female players start out with these kind of roles).

This trend, mercifully, seems to be becoming less prevalent as more women play; in a predominantly female game, women are as likely to be fighters as anything else, and in fact seem to enjoy the change from traditional expectations. (A salutary lesson about the potentials for female enjoyment in a situation where neither male players nor the 14-year-old male ethos prevail). However, even if a female player can choose a character unaffected by the preconceptions of male players, she will still be prey to their tendencies either to disregard her, seduce her or over-protect her.

**"Female players aren't taken seriously."
(Toby)**

Damn right. I am talking, here, of the experiences of one or two female players in an otherwise allmale game; the dynamic changes quite radically once women are equally represented or (as in two

of my own games) numerically stronger. A largely male group often has a locker-room atmosphere which either ignores or badly objectifies any female presence, either of which will materially spoil her chances of an enjoyable game.

Quite apart from my own experiences in this matter, I have heard other female players discuss this problem. The strategies that result: always sit next to the DM, otherwise you won't be heard in the general ruckus. Try to play characters who are naturally dominant, so you can shout down male characters while maintaining game consistency. The situation is not for the shy or sensitive player - and I think most women are a little wary when entering so aggressively male a world, resulting often in an intimidated silence and disillusionment with the game.

Of course, something of the problem comes from game settings themselves; we live in a world that has been sexist for more time than I care to contemplate, and fantasy gaming, in particular, is based on a medieval world. All things considered, most fantasy settings rewrite history fairly drastically as it is, allowing women into all sorts of things from which, in reality, they would have been debarred. (Such as fighting, magic, education, etc). The problem becomes increasingly apparent in a realistic setting. DMing Cthulu in Victorian England, for example, female characters have an option of some 6 or 7 classes where males have around 25. No real misogyny on the part of the designers, but at that time women simply were not explorers, clergymen, policemen. The challenge of fantasy gaming is to create equalities where none were before; I recently realised that things such as city guards in my game world should actually be about a third female, and leadership (mayors, etc) half female. Given the ease with which DMs can slip into a simple reflection of social reality, perhaps it is time DMs started actually thinking about the assumptions they are making - and whether those assumptions are marginalising players in their game. The rise of the feminist DM strikes me as being long overdue.

"She uses her body like a credit card."

From the reaction of some male players, one would think that the only reason for having women in the game was - you guessed it - sex. So much so, that those male players who choose (for whatever convoluted reasons of their own - I won't get into this one!) to play female characters, often play nymphomaniacs. Fine for them, but the flip side - to assume that a female character is there only for you to bed at will - is basically an insult to any female player.

The second campaign I ever played in, my character arrived on board ship with the party, only to have one male player assume that I was obviously sent to while away the long voyage. He told the DM "She's sleeping with me", without attempting to role-play any kind of interaction with my character; when I resisted, he told the DM "She's doing it anyway." The DM (also male) was greatly amused and made no attempt to enforce any kind of role-playing at all from this little shithead; if I hadn't happened to be playing a shape-changer, my character would have been effectively raped. Fortunately, you can't rape an angry black panther.

I have no real problem with sexual interaction between characters, IF it is role-played between characters. To assume that a female character is automatically party prostitute simply because she is female, however, is so profoundly derogatory as to make me spit. It's also lousy role-playing. It also begs the question of how

well-adjusted male players who make these kind of assumptions actually are. To me, it smacks of sexual insecurity in the real world...

"Women in games get away with more." (Greg)

All of the above notwithstanding, a female player who is willing to be unscrupulous can actually swing a game her way in quite a number of ways. For a start, grotty passes notwithstanding, many players will go out of their way to protect a female player. This was illustrated in ICON this year, when a female player, playing a female character, was protected staunchly by the rest of the (male) party; she notes wryly that their interest fell off a little when her character underwent an inadvertent sex-change. Toby puts it succinctly:

"Biologically, women are not as expendable as men."

It seems that role-playing taps straight back into the ancient, primitive urges...

Society being what it is, and (mostly unthinkingly) reflected in our sadly unaware gaming reality, a DM will often allow a female character to flirt, hip-wriggle or sleep her way through situations which a male character would have to meet head-on. It ties in with the fact that women are not taken seriously - men assume that this cute little thing fluttering her eyelashes at them is simply game decoration, she couldn't possibly have any agenda of her own. Until she knifes them. The situation is unequal, but it can be used to feminine advantage; the problem being that you either have to be very desperate in a given situation, or be playing a fairly hard-bitten character, or simply give up on role-playing in favour of achieving your goals. Most of my characters would only do the body-as-credit-card thing if it was, fairly literally, a matter of life or death.

The relationship of female players with a male DM is another whole can of worms. DM/player relationships are dicey at the best of times - balancing the power of the DM in a game situation with normal social interaction. A spanner is thrown badly into the works when gender rears its ugly head. Modern society, particularly the unenlightened bits, tends to expect men to dominate, and women playing in a male DM-ed campaign are in at least a double bind - women are inferior, women in role-playing society are especially inferior, players are inferior to DMs. You only need to add an unscrupulous DM with a lecherous eye on a female player into the equation, and the situation becomes exceedingly nasty. (I know I'm sidestepping another issue - what about female DMs and male players - but (a) our sample is hardly large enough to judge, and (b) there are some major social expectations working against a female DM throwing her weight around). Yes, your character may be given everything on a plate (the well-known DMP effect - see CLAWMARKS I), but what kickbacks, emotional or otherwise, is the DM expecting, and in the game situation where he can remove privileges as easily as give them, are you in a position to tell him to sod off?

"Women in games stop guys from behaving like apes." (Guildmaster.)

FORUM FORUM FORUM FORUM FORUM

One of the tragedies of the male/female roleplayer situation is that, actually, inexperienced or not, a female presence in a game is very good for the game. The effect may be detrimental if male players feel impelled to show off for new females, but this is usually a short-lived phenomenon, and overall, games with female players seem more cohesive and goal-orientated, less concerned with personal glorification and display.

Overheard in the CLAWroom:

"Women are less fundamentally escapist than men are; they're more materialistic."

This may add a new dimension to the "why do fewer women play" debate, but its actual game implications are precisely as stated above: women in a game seem to be more practical than male players, more likely to be aware of party goals. (Ask Andrew Higson-Smith about the shopping spree undertaken by an all-female group heading into snow-bound mountains). If nothing else, female players do not feel impelled to rush into battle with blood-thirsty zeal to prove their macho manhood. Women (biological urge or not) are survivors.

"We don't have sexism in CLAWs - we just have mindless bimbos who do as they're told."

The above statement was made, with irony and awareness, by a CLAW male who declines to be named. (Wise man). He was very consciously satirising a certain type of role-player attitude, and the

remark is totally over the top. But the attitude that prompted the comment is actually all too real.

My conclusions? Is it actually worth women playing this funny game of ours? Absolutely. Quite apart from anything else, an infusion of female presence into the hobby on a long-term basis will go a long way towards improving the social implications of your average sex-starved role-playing male. CLAWs itself has changed dramatically over the last few years, with its steadily increasing female presence making new demands on the games on offer. Hell, we even have female DMs these days - something which I firmly believe will attract women to the game, making it less alienating, and producing game situations where general gamer misogyny can be firmly squashed.

It may seem idealistic to say it in this day and age, but true equality is out there somewhere. Roleplayers must be among the most imaginative and creative groups around - ideal characteristics for increased awareness of social ills such as sexual inequality. Ladies, we're bright and non-conformist - we don't have to accept the positions defined by our male role-playing counterparts. Stand up for your place in the game! Squash that grotty male! If the worst comes to the worst, stick him with your longsword...

Jessica Tiffin



**WOMEN IN ROLE-PLAYING
-- IN RESPONSE TO JESSICA'S ARTICLE.**

"Women in role-playing" ... Uh, wow, not exactly words one sees in the same sentence together all that often. In fact, this is the first time I've seen this phrase in more than four years of being active in the role-playing community, being as it is, well, let's say, not exactly conducive to the discussion of women's rights and equality in society.

Role-players, as the prevailing culture within the gaming community generally implies, are all male. This statement, to the vast majority of (male) role-players, would seem so obvious in itself that the uttering of it would be absurd. Women who happen to be in the vicinity of the true role-players (the men) are obviously groupies, or hanging around near boyfriends, or are friends of male role-players and find the CLAWroom as good a place as any in which to spend their time between lectures, or (if the observer is inclined to be Freudian) are pretending to swing swords and sticks around in a parody of real role-playing (i.e. the male kind) in an attempt to alleviate a severe case of penis-envy.

Obvious? Does it seem to you, gentle reader, that the above is merely a statement of true and unchallengeable fact? Well, if so, you are in for a surprise.

It was astonishing to read an article that actually dared to challenge the prevailing attitude towards women in role-playing. Wonderful that someone has finally dared to raise the issue, and brave the tsunami of male scorn that invariably crashes over and swamps the tiny island of objection that peeps above the ocean of prevailing male outlooks.

Yes, guys, it's true! There ARE women role-players. We are in the scene because we enjoy the game, because of the satisfaction we get out of good role-playing - not for any reasons, in fact, that any male would not have started out with.

Women role-players are simply not taken seriously by their male counterparts. In my naive youth I always played male characters in the hope that my contribution to the game would be valued as equally as that of anyone else. However, the problem cannot be solved on such a superficial level - male players in general will see you only as a female, rather than as a person, regardless of how well your character performs.

Why do most men see a woman as being nothing other than a female - seldom as an individual person? Possibly because of the way society encourages people to see each other: women are brought up to see men as successful individuals, as strong, dominant people, whereas men are brought up to see women as the females of the species - sexual objects only. This attitude is strong in many Claw men. I once overheard a Claw male talking to a non-Claw male at a Claws party, remarking as a Claw woman walked past, "As you see, this society has some very nice pretty things in it for you if you join." This epitomises the outlook of most men in Claws - women are just boy-toys.

Let me make a final point. The desire to swing swords about and suchlike does not depend on whether one is male or female. The common mistake made is that males are all masculine and females are all feminine. Male and female are simply physical characteristics of people that ideally should be seen as pretty arbitrary

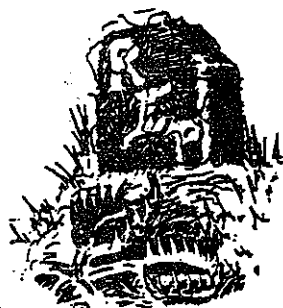
when role-players deal with each other. Masculine and feminine, on the other hand, are purely social constructs that enforce sexist stereotypes. Men and women should be seen as people, and people should not be seen as masculine or feminine, but as individuals.

Liza Van Zyl



CLASSIFIED!

REST IN PEACE



RIP One Illithid hive-mind. Eat our dust, brain-suckers

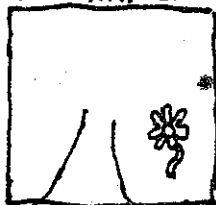
RIP Sir Entheos, Arack the Hunter, Lucinda of the Forest of Life, Araglop the Sorceress, Heuro the master thief, Dane the healer and Cyranon Kinslayer. The grave diggers would be exhausted if there was anything left to bury.

RIP In Advance: Anyone who calls this Fay a fairy. Thanatos.

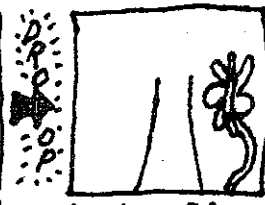
RIP (Almost) Axrael: Faced forty tribesmen on Jihad while the rest of the party displayed their invisibility spells and hiding skills.

RIP (Almost) Axrael: One two foot eye, twenty foot tentacles, total mental domination over a level seven sorcerer and a level seven mentalist. He blinded it, dismembered it and sent it back where it came from.

THE TATTOO.....



18 Yrs of Age



42 Yrs of Age

RIP (Almost) Axrael: Unto the eight foot tall, flaming, liquid metal spirit he said " Back, Foul fiend, unto the pit from whence thee came."

RIP (Almost) Axrael: Bumped into a ten foot high cave bear with big claws and an attitude problem.

RIP Axrael (Finally!) One two foot tall, nonmagical, utterly normal owl; only capable of tiny crits!! (Hooow Huuumiliating)

RIP Count Moranoir de la Rose and henchmen, finally, by invisible poison. Long live Zylvestre.

RIP Little old maiden aunt aunt lady, Miss Emsworth she lost her head when a monstrous type thing arrived through the window on schedule. Sorry about the carpet (shame on you Jessica!)

RIP May the very, very, very special garlic, invisible fish and Volvo never bounce again.

RIP One nameless character killed within five minutes of a single session of Marcus' Rapid Death Cyberpunk game.

RIP Yet another nameless character killed within five minutes of Marcus' Rapid Death Cyberpunk game.

RIP Michael's mother, lost to a tragic accident. Easy with that bow, Anyar.

RIP Not dead, but perhaps somewhat lost: The latest Templar convert from House Mercere. Go in peace. PS. Good luck with that demon.

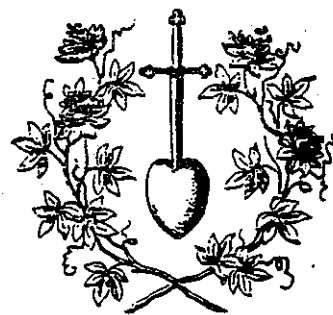
RIP Wolters, unfortunate chemistry student, victim of party sadism and hunting horror. Dead in error while Beyers laughs.

RIP Dr. Randolph "Mad Dog" Briggs, blown to bits by an O1 throw on the first ever hand grenade. Nyarlathotep doesn't care much, unfortunately.

RIP The boar, assorted goblins, a tentacled beastie, the Evil mage, an ogre, various wolves and of course the nasty wicked stone-thingy. Yaaay! We're the winners!

IN MEMORIAM: The 132 dead in the Southampton Central Station explosion. The country mourns the senseless horror of your deaths.

PERSONAL



PERSONAL: This message is so personal, I can't even put it in the personal column, woops I just did.

CONDOLENCES to the following characters assigned to Limbo (along with the campaign) due to DM workload: Brythkar; Geresendze; Sophia; Tasna; Anadrone Vorloch (ret.); Aquilus Penhaligon (aka Cherenne); Naia; Listril Shore-seeker; Wossname the Redheaded Firemage; Vincent Bainbridge

CLASSIFIED!

CONDOLENCES to the following NPCs who now find themselves suspended in Limbo: Tomas; Bishop Verth Dratar; the Elves of Eha'Liara; and everyone else in that particular universe.

LOST IN THE HUB: Ring of Maar (sacred artifact and key of knowledge beyond men's dreams); Sword of Maar (Holy artifact of incredible power and temporary home of powerful Sorceress); One axe +30, +60 to DB with two attacks per round (Dragon-enchanted item of great power); Sword +10 (sentimental value). Reward in terms of honour and gratitude.

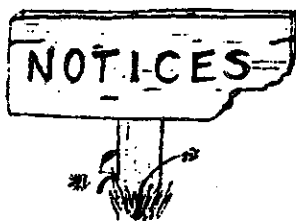
CONGRATS: Kurlian, for convincing Father Sebastian that your only interest was camels (not breasts).

WANTED: One girl in Grass Skirt. Must have genuine Grass Skirt. Don't worry, we're leaving the combine harvester out of this.

EL PRESIDANTE: Your days are numbered and the numbers are getting low. You will be punished for you fascist actions.

TO ALL MERCENARIES: El Presidante announces that you will all die in a hail of fire. We have a secret weapon. So don't even think of invading Kubanistan.

NOTICES



A Violent Comic.



NOTICE: The betrothal is announced between Zylvestre du Monte, lawful overlord of Hexworthy, and the lady Isara of Nottingham, gentlewoman and enchantress. The village waits and watches...

NOTICE: The betrothal is announced between Alysius of the Sidhe, mage of Hexworthy, and Aylwyn, bard of Camelot. No vegetables.

NOTICE: the community of High Heather wish to extend their thanks for the deliverance of their Crown Prince, Starwind, from ignoble death in Silverdrake Forest. The brave rescuers may always call on High Heather in time of need.

NOTICE: Reward offered for information leading to the arrest of 3 men believed to have caused the Southampton Station disaster. Description: 2 well-dressed men, the third unusually large and well-built. Contact Inspector Williams, Scotland Yard.

FOR SALE: certain valuable books of occult interest, including Fraser's Golden Bough and the Book of Dzyan. Apply Lord Crispin Alexis, 13 Oak Rd, Knightsbridge.

NOTICE: To the idiots who tried to attack Equnoque, we know who you are, we have your ears, we are coming for the rest. The Sandmen.

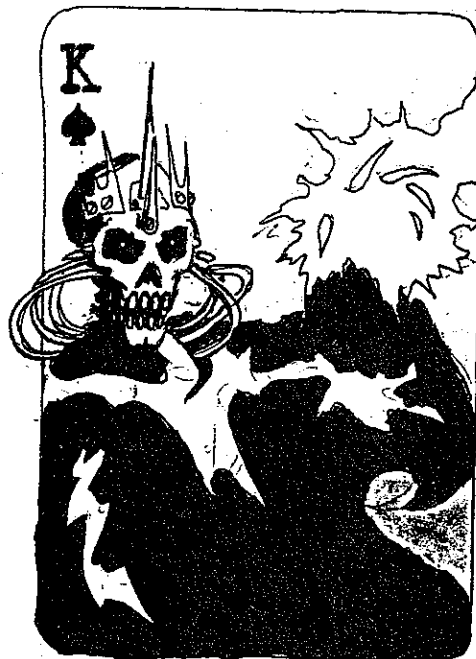
WANTED: An experienced butler to fill for person on extended leave. Apply Galgotha, Archmage, city of Derrel Burren.

FOR SALE: Gems and jewels, lowest prices due to market problems. Apply Honest Cut Costs Jewel Merchants, Derrel-Burren.

WANTED: New organic groupmind (last one damaged by bugs). Apply: The High Illithid, The Hub, Center of Universe

WANTED: Dog Trainer for wolfhound cum guard dog. Needs to be potty trained and weaned from master's leg. Contact Jan Miller-Follow the yellow stink road.

The Clawthing is dead. Long live the Clawthing!



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EMPLOYMENT OFFERED: Dobermans!! If you are still young enough to be trained, apply at Shell Ultra City, Laingsburg (No wet-noses Please)

NOTICE: Cockroach

MISSING: Paperweight of the Gods wanted. Follow the line of destruction, somewhere in Nin.

EMPLOYMENT OFFERED: Suitably mean cleric to replace one on study leave. Apply at baton-By-Sea. Nin.

WANTED: Optic nerve to secure eye in eye socket. Please reply soon. Its Lichen's Birthday in two months. reply to Auriel c/o monastery.

The Clawthing is undead. Long lurk the Clawthing!

NOTICE: To every Illithid everywhere: "Of all the things you lost, you miss your mind the most?" Mu-ha-ha, The twiceborn.

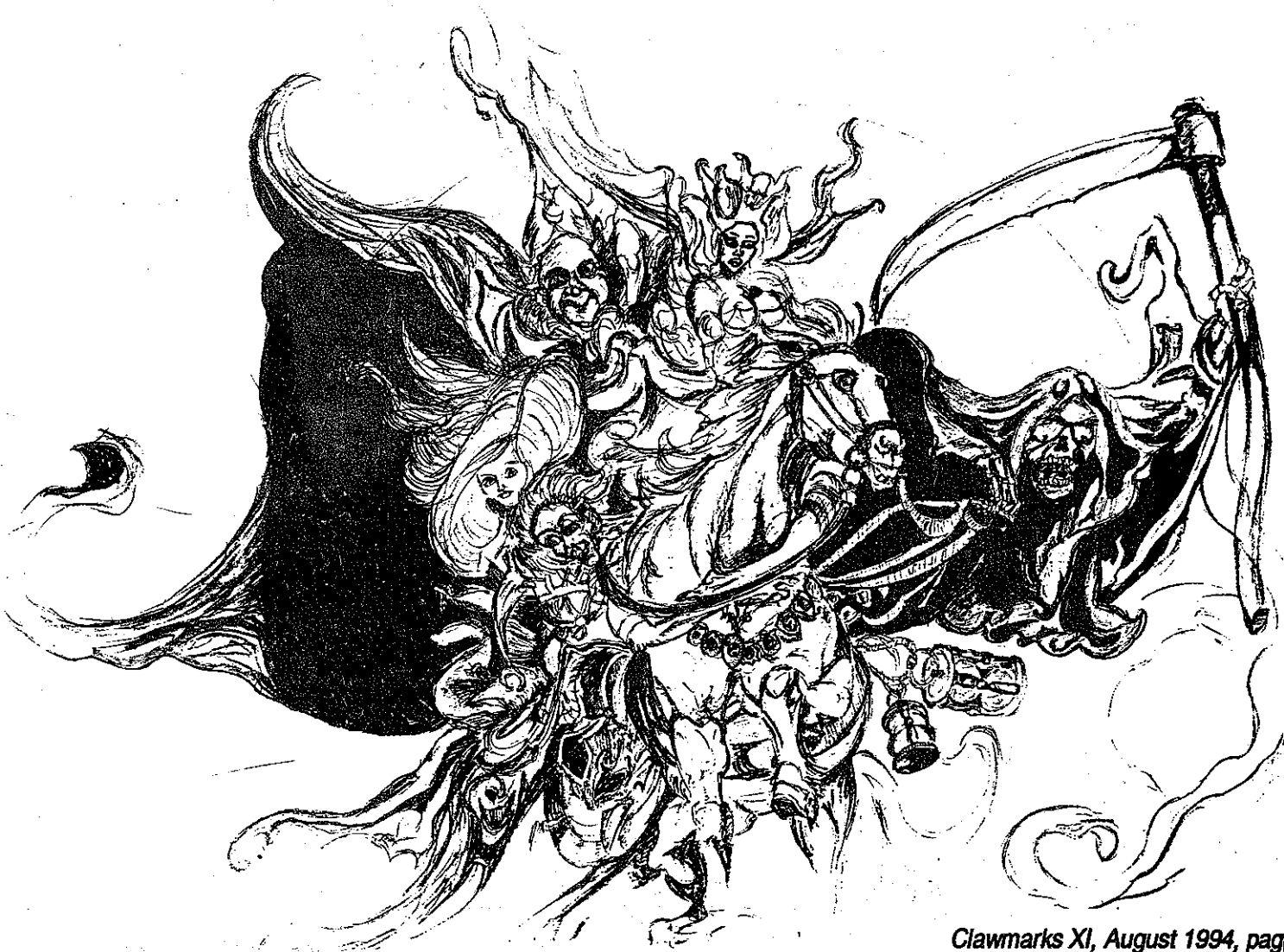
NOTICE: And how are all the good people out there today? Now we all know that sacrificing clerics isn't a good idea, don't we? (ha! ha! ha!) Sister Forthrighteousness.

The Clawthing is!! Long lurk your livers!

NOTICE: It has been discovered that people were invented by cockroaches, so that we could construct skirting boards, to improve the habitat of the cockroaches.



CONCEPT ASHTRAYS: Genuine aluminium. Finely crafted at the hands of the masters. All styles, including ashtrays for the 90's. Cheap, very cheap. Contact the Societe de Unite la Makers de Aluminium Ashtrays.



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