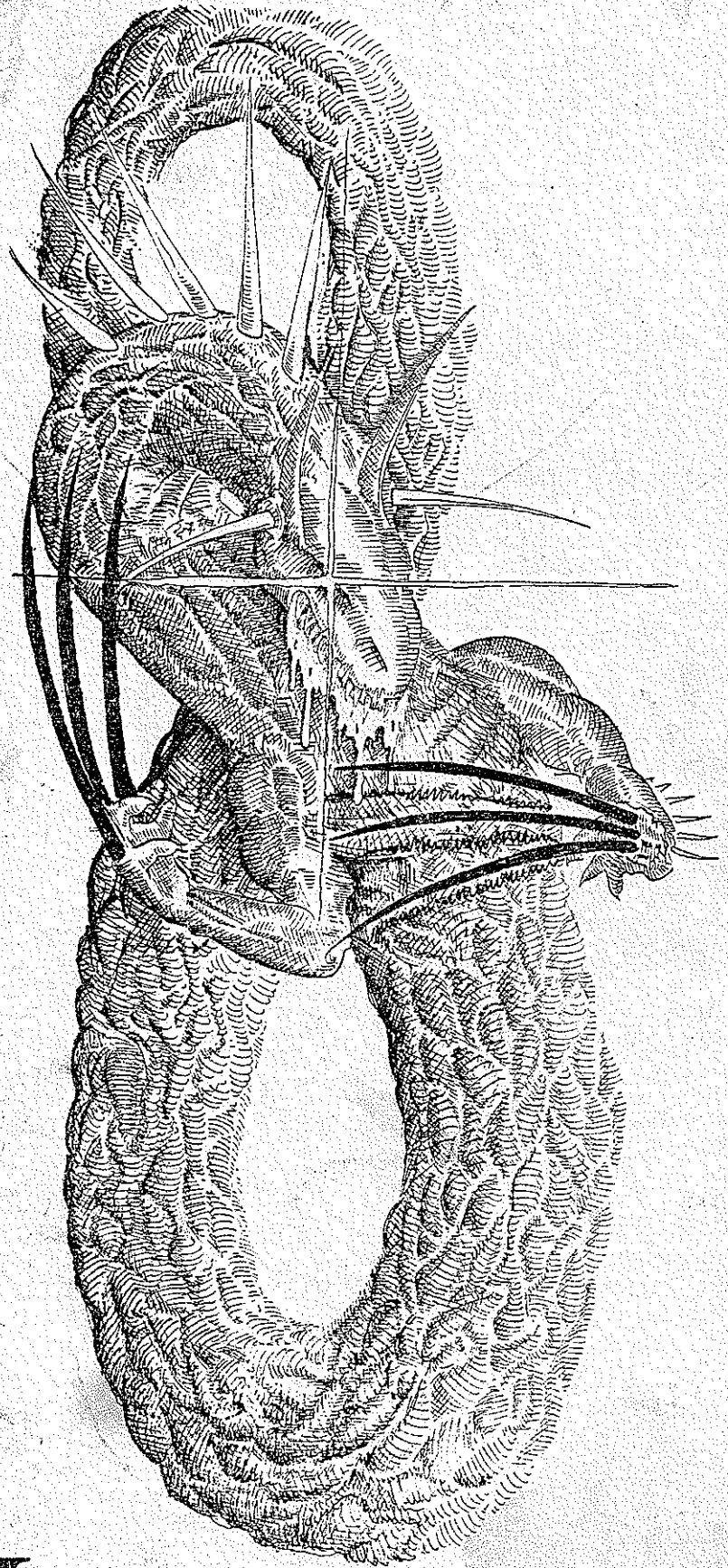


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XIII



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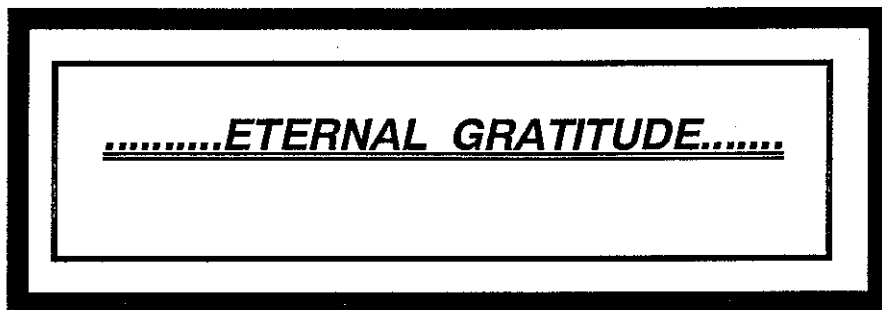




Letter From The Editors

Greetings, Oh Illustrious Readers

We are proud to bring you yet again another edition of **CLAWMARKS**. Another Chief-Editor-in-Chief's brain has turned to mush, and the kind and helpful Chief-Assistants-in-Chiefy-Chief-Assistance have run howling in terror at the sight of my humble self. Articles and art have been pried, wrung, squeezed and wrenched from the many long-suffering donors. For this, in writing, they all have (as promised) my Eternal Gratitude:



[Cut along the dotted line. No expiry date].

We hope, of course, that all our wonderful readers will be suitably impressed and provoked by the array of material that we have brought to you. Any reactions will be gratefully pried from you for the next edition.

Er, we hope that **CLAWMARKS XIII** is sillily serious enough for all concerned, that pointed points have been pointedly pointed and that everyone not only survives **DRAGONFIRE '95** and **CLAWMARKS XIII**, but can use them to ward off that impending sanity.....

THE Editors.

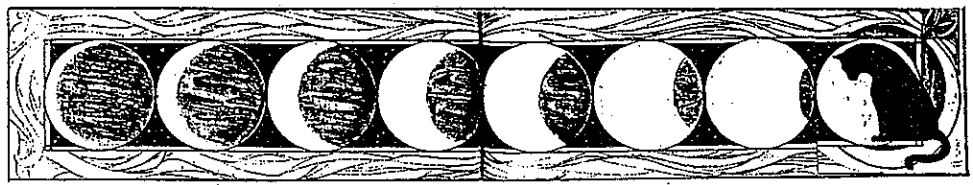
P.S....

Austin

Kathy

Jessica





Letters to the Editors

CLAWs UCT

c/o SRC

Red Level

Private bag

Rondebosch 7700

Dear Editors

I have been maligned for the past month, and feel I can remain silent no longer. When I arrived in Cape Town at the very end of July, you and your people took me in with open arms. Many of you had already met my cousin in Cape Town, and we took great pleasure in re-uniting amongst you. That was a happy time for both of us. However, I look around me now, and find that my cousin has been driven out, and only a stalwart few amongst you have seen fit to continue acting as hosts for me. This sudden about-face leaves me angry and upset. I often think about returning to Johannesburg, to sadly report to my kindred there that Cape Town people are hypocrites.

I report this with the deepest regret,
Fluenza Demic, Esq

Dear Mr. Demic

We deeply regret the rudeness with which you have been treated. Ahem. Be assured that in the future, we will do our best to act as suitable hosts Maybe. If our friends breathe on us. But maybe not. Actually, I don't really care, I'm only the Editor. Try referring to Ma Dawson.

Coff, coff.

Yours in complete unregretfulness
The Editors.

Dear Clawmarks

I think your magazine is a total load of bollocks. Put me down for seven.

Yours

Slag the Slothful

Dear Slothful One

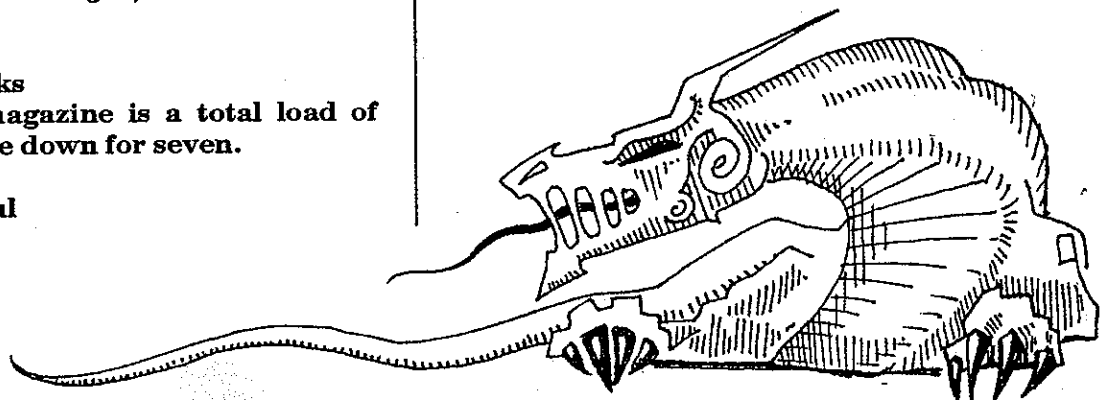
Our magazine is in such great demand at the moment (well, actually all the time) that there may be some difficulty in doing this. However, for a small fee...

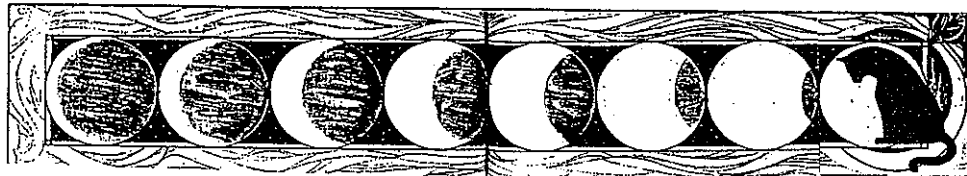
Yours in hopeful greediness
The Editors.

Dear Idioters

We, the ultimate creation, The Frisky Limpets, have decided to inform you - the lowest lackeys and morons within the CLAW regime (- the most unbelievably gullible too!!!) - that we have nothing to say absolutely nothing at all nope, not a word not a zip in fact if this letter were to be condensed, it would form a black hole and suck in the entire universe, it contains so mch nothingness ... so hah Well actually we just wanted to say that The Frisky Limpets are going to clean up the tournament so any aspiring groups, stuff an apple in your mouth and call yourselves glazed pigs - that's how badly beaten you're gonna be!!

Yours in condescending communicado
Homeyklaus - Official Cook
The Frisky Limpets





Dear Limpy Klaus
How rude! How dare you call yourselves the ultimate creation? WE are the ultimate creation, and after us comes Clawmarks. And who are the Frimpy Liskets, anyway? Never heard of 'em.

Yours in extreme dudgeon
The Ultimate Editors.

P.S. So hah, yourself.

Lettuce to the Editor
Tomato, onions (sliced fine), croutons, olives, feta, spices and a small brownie (for flavour).

Yours in salad dressing
Chives

Dear Chives
We don't even need to eat, and when we do we're carnivores, and anyway, we always get take-aways.

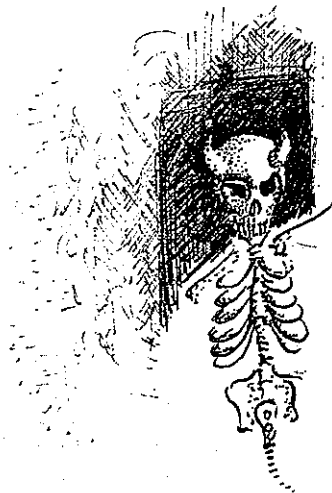
Yours ungratefully
The Editors

Dear Editors
Why do you keep demanding letters? Don't you know we have more important things to do? I categorically refuse to write any letters to you.

Yours Busily
Busy
PS This is a letter to the Editors, isn't it?
Oops.

Dear Silly Busy
So it would seem. Our hold over you grows stronger by the hour...

The Editors



Dear Editor (short people below me)
Every time I look down all I see is hair. Is this because of my height or because I lurk up here?
Cabinet Lurker.

Dear Lurking One
It all depends on whether the moon is full, waxing gibbous or waning. All Cabinet Lurker's heights vary according to the phases of the moon. Thus, sometimes it will be because of your height, and always because of your lurking habits.

Yours
The Expertly Informed Editors.
P.S. The amount of hair visible should also vary according to the phases of the moon.

Dear Clawmarks
I don't usually write personal letters, but in this case I thought I'd make an exception. You have an excellent magazine and a really worthwhile society going, and if I wasn't so busy, I'd drop in more often. Keep it up!
Pope John Paul

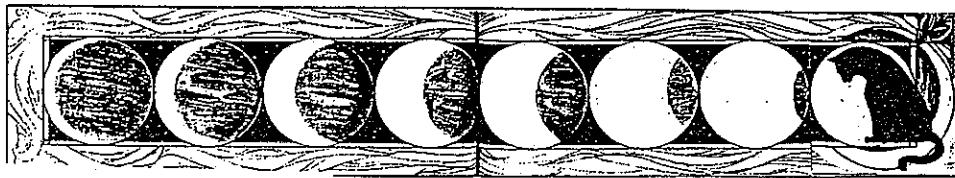
Dear Johnny
You honour us. Perhaps you would care to kiss the Clawroom floor next time you drop by, or alternatively, there's always my ring. Looking forward to your next visit!

Yours, in black,
The Editors.

Dear Editors
This is a letter to commend you for working all those late hours to bring out yet another wonderful edition of Clawmarks, and to thank you for being such wonderful and brilliant beings.
Yours in admiration
Goosnargh III

Dearest Goosy
Oh, get along with you! You flatter us, you old sweetie. But it's always nice to be appreciated, so flatter away.

Yours
The Chuffed Editors



Dear Eds ...
The answer is NO!

Yours in assertiveness training
Ethel the Unready

Dear Unready Ethel
No it isn't, it's 42.

Yours
The All-Knowing Editors.

Dear Editor
This is a revenge letter:
BANG! Gotcha!
No, really, the infamous (mis)quoter forgot
to include these in Clawmarks XI.
DAVID: I had a late night.
MARCUS: What, too many women?
DAVID: No, just Toby.

Unsigned

Dear Anonymous
Say no more...

The Editors.

I think i think therefore i think i am.
I thought i was therefore i think i know i
was.
I think i know i was, therefore i know i
think.
I know i think therefore i think i am.
I don't know what i think i am, therefore i
think i am not.
What i think i know myself to be.

Yours in confusion
R. Descartes III (i think)

Dear R. Desparate
Don't think

The Editors

Dear Editor
I thought you might like to get at least one
serious letter in this edition of CLAW-
MARKS. I also thought (this has been a
heavy thought day) that as Clawthing I may
as well contribute some meaningful, in-
sightful literature to the magazine. Also, I
would like to offer my thanks to all our kind
sponsors, advertisers and contributors. It

was so sweet of all of you to help us out.
Thank you to all my committee, who lifted
my spirits and cheered me on through the
dark times. And thanks to mummy and
daddy for being so understanding, and to
my significant other fuzzy friend who's fun
to be with. And thanks to my analyst, who's
helping me through this all. As you can tell,
I'm recovering nicely. Me too. And we all go
out for ice cream every Sunday. And thank
you to my doggie.

Can I have early retirement? (on grounds of
impending sanity).

Yours in my padded cell
Ma Dawson (Clawthing)

Dear Ma Dawson
Oh dear.

Yours concernedly
The Supportive Editors.

Dear Editors

Tell the fucking committee to stop the
fucking smoking in the FUCKING
Classroom.

Yours
A certain senior CLAWsmember (not un-
connected to past committee positions.)

Dear Senior Coleslaw-Member (past)
Oooh! Shocking language! But your slightest
wish is my command (of course). Hee!Hee!

The Manic Editors.



In this, the thirteenth edition of *CLAWMARKS*, we are proud to bring you the first in three instalments of Andrew Sturman's rules for the *Ars Magica* system of...

Necromancy: the Black Arts

Introduction: Bad to the Bone

Necromancy - The oldest and most forbidden of the magical arts. *Ars Magica* has some necromantic spells in its spell lists, but doesn't go into details. How do mages become necromancers? What are the limits and risks of this black art? These are the questions this tome is intended to answer.

Necromancy: the Order

Necromancy is a dangerous art, partly because it is often mistaken for diabolism. Indeed, the paraphernalia and techniques are very similar, with black tomes listing the names of powerful and knowledgeable spirits; protective circles, amulets and wardings to avoid possession; and rituals of summoning and binding. Within the order, the Quaesitors keep a close watch on necromancers, who are often accused of endangering the order, as their activities (graverobbing and the like) tend to upset the local mundanes.

A group of Jerbiton mages even attempted to have necromancy outlawed, like diabolism, and came very close to succeeding. It was only the intervention of House Bonisagus that stopped it, when they pointed out that the original longevity potion formula was a product of necromantic research, and that the boundary of life and death was an important topic of ongoing research. They also noted that "Whispers through the Black Gate" was an invaluable tool of the Quaesitors, and it should be a pity for it to be banned. Since that time, however, House Jer-

biton has forbidden its members from studying the art.

Of the Houses of the Order, most necromancers come from House Tytalus, building on that house's specialities of corporem, mentem and vim, and their somewhat suspect summoning lore. Naturally they see Death as the ultimate challenge.

Other necromancers are found in House Criamon, with their ghost mages; Ex Miscellenia has several necromantic traditions, most notably the Spirit Masters; and even a contingent of Verditius mages, who construct undead as magic items. Some Bonisagus study the theory and metaphysics of spirits and souls, but seldom get into the practical aspects of the art. Even House Tremere is rumored to have a group studying the topic, but like most things, they don't discuss it outside their house.

In fact, the only houses without necromancers are the nature-orientated Bjornaer and



V. 1976

Merinita, and Jerbiton, for the reason mentioned above.

Metaphysics: Body, Soul and Spirit

What does Hermetic Theory say about necromancy? What happens after death? Why are undead different to the living? What is a ghost? What's the difference between a spirit and a soul? Are undead evil? These are some of the questions apprentices ask their masters.

In Clawmarks IX the Bonisagus, Belisarius the Undying, had much to say on the subject.

The response of renown necromancer Thanatatos the Old, of Tytalus, was :

'Pah! Who cares if the Bonisagi can explain it, it works. There's nothing theoretical about an army of dead at your door.'

Besides, Bel still hasn't explained how he is still alive after 600 years. When he reveals that I'll listen.'

Necromancy: Theory and Practise

"Necromancy is the art of making the flesh crawl...where I want it to." - Thanatatos

Necromancy has two major fields of study, that of the Flesh, and that of the Spirit, or in hermetic terms, Corporem and Mentem. These are the two arts that necromancers are best at, with the study of Vim also important. Corporem spells mold the dead body, and control the Animus, whereas Mentem spells are needed to control and communicate with spirits of the dead. Vim components are needed in spells that bind spirits and imbue them with magic might.

The majority of necromantic procedures involve bringing the dead back to some semblance of life. This involves either summoning a spirit of the dead, or reanimating a corpse, or a combination of the two.

Necromancers distinguish between two types of undead.

1) The Walking Dead. These are the weakest of the undead, being merely corpses with mindless animi still in them. These are what are created by the common spell "The Walking Corpse", and the ritual "Awaken the (S)lumbering Corpse". These mindless dead respond only to the direct commands of their creator, and have no volition of their own. Apprentices even call them "Meat Puppets", and a necromancer who can create only them is unworthy of the title.

2) True Undead. These normal consist of a spirit, imbued with magic might, which may, or may not be bound into a corpse. (Corporal or Incorporal Undead). These are either of 'supernatural' origin, being the work of powerful spirits or demons; or are crafted by necromancers (see the section on Necromancers in the Lab).

Necromancers also divide these into Greater and Lesser Undead, depending on their powers and might.

They also distinguish between 'animated corpses' [the modern term zombie is an anachronism, but some troupes might prefer it], which have most of their flesh intact; 'skeletons', which do not; 'constructed corpses', which have body parts from several different corpses, but are largely humanoid; and flesh or bone 'constructs', which have little resemblance to human form.

Some apprentices experiment with animal undead, but aside from tireless undead mounts, this field is largely ignored, as most necromancers have little inclination to improve their Animal Art.





BAD TO THE BONE

Bodies:

Corpses are the major raw material required by necromancers, and their acquisition is quite an endeavour. The major problem is that to be usable to a necromancer, the corpse can't have had a proper church burial, or be buried on hallowed ground. This means the corpses tend to be those of criminals, heretics and suicides buried without ceremony, and not in hallowed ground; or those of paupers and plague victims, who a lack of time or money deny ceremony; or those fallen in battle who are buried on the field, or worse, left to rot where they fell. Other corpses are stolen from their coffins before burial, but this is risky and always causes considerable disturbance. Some unscrupulous necromancers have even been known to murder selected victims for their corpses.

Both the last two methods could be grounds for charges under hermetic law, for incurring the wrath of the mundanes, if brought to the attention of the Quaesitors.

And pity the careless necromancer who falls into the hands of an angry mob, or the Church, while at his trade. The rope, rack or stake surely await him.

A junior necromancer needs a keen eye for a corpse's condition, and a skill at grave-robbing. (Evaluate Body, Stealth and Grave Digger skills) Only older, wealthier necromancers have the trusted servants to do the dirty risky job for them. And the servant had better be very trustworthy, or fearful, or he might mention his master's nocturnal activities to the authorities.

The reason for all this trouble is simple, not all bodies are created equal, and the undead's physical stats are determined by those of the corpse. A person who was strong in life often loses muscle in illness before death, and certainly does if in the ground for long. While a mage can augment the undead's stats with magic, this is costly, as it requires vis. This is why some even resort to constructing an

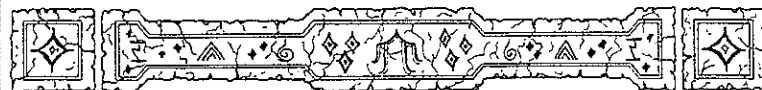
undead from several different corpses, so as to get the desired attributes (this does however make the binding and control of the resulting undead more difficult - see the lab section).

The reason why corpses buried with church ceremony are unsuitable, is that the ritual drives the animus, the lower spirit from the body. Without an animus to link a summoned spirit to that body, the corpse is useless to the necromancer. It can be controlled by Rego Corporem spells, but only as a meat puppet, requiring the caster's concentration for every movement.

Spirits:

Apart from the raw material of corpses, the second key component of necromancy is the spirit of a dead person. Again, not all spirits are available. Only those not yet at their final rest. The church burial ceremony ensures the spirit leaves the body. Most spirits spend a period between worlds (or in Purgatory), and can be summoned while in that state. Some spirits cannot be summoned, namely those of crusaders and saints who travel directly to heaven upon death, and those who have sold their souls, who are taken direct to hell by their liege devil.

Those spirits who have not had proper burial are bound to this world by the link to their body, the animus (the silver cord to shamans). They are only freed when their bodies are reduced to dust(which depends on climate conditions, but is normally hundreds or thousands of years. Note ,though, that cremation also fulfills this requirement.) Only a spirit still bound to this world can manifest, and use and regain magic might. These are where ghosts come from.



The burial ceremony banishes/releases the spirit from this plane, to the land of the dead. Without this, the spirit wanders this world. It can remain in its body, but most don't. Some of these wandering spirits are destroyed or banished, and all eventually fade. The implication of this is that any body suitable for necromancy, probably has its spirit somewhere on this plane. The necromancer can bind another spirit to the body, or use that spirit if it is around. Wandering spirits can be bound easier than spirits at rest (in land of the dead), as they don't have to be summoned back from the land of the dead first. The wandering spirit may become upset if it finds its body has been used to make a zombie, with another spirit in control. But it is normally powerless to do anything. Some botches with undead control might be explained as the original spirit regaining control, bent on revenge. This is another reason why necromancy is much safer when performed within an Aegis.

Many spirits are insane, and effectively mindless or of animal intelligence, as a few weeks or months of death causes madness by sensory deprivation or soulless lassitude. Only the strongest will and motivation can keep the personality and intelligence from slipping away. This is of course assuming the trauma of death didn't snap the mind immediately. Factors in the preservation of the spirit's sanity are motivation in life, unfinished tasks, family and friends to look after, enemies to get revenge on, etc. Spirits that are still bound to this world, due to no church burial, have a strong motivation to seek release.

Spirits and Emotion:

Do spirits have emotion? Yes. The medieval theory that emotions arise from the bodies humors and organs is wrong, and magi know this, as all their emotion-affecting spells are mentem. Thus the spirit/mind and emotions are affected by mentem spells, while the body and animus are affected by corporem spells.



Spirits and Magic: Destruction and Banishing

Spirits are affected by mentem spells, whereas a vim spell acts on the spirit's tie to this world, and its magical power. A perdo vim spell can destroy the spirit's tie to this world, hence banishing it back to the land of the dead, whereas a perdo mentam spell could actually destroy the spirit permanently, by destroying the mind/personality and memories, leaving the magical energy to dissipate. Note, however, it is easier to banish a spirit than to destroy it, A perdo vim



spell, similar to Demon's Eternal Oblivion (certainly a misnomer), Banish the Haunting Spirit (PeVi gen) will reduce a spirit's might, banishing it once it's might reaches 0. This spell can be cast several times, eroding the spirit's might slowly. On the other hand, to destroy a spirit totally requires a PeMe of level 40, or twice its current spirit might, whichever is higher.

Gaining Spirit Might:

A banished spirit must reform another magical form before it can manifest in the mortal world again, just like demons, but unlike demons, they won't regain the might they lost when banished, unless they have some physical bond to the land of the living. or magical rituals are performed to give them the power to return, ie summoning.



Some spirits can gain might by killing, taking the power of the victim's spirit. Dark rituals exist which use this method to bestow power to a spirit by sacrificing creatures to it.

This spirit gathering power, where the undead increases its permanent might by half the might of its victim, can be troublesome for a necromancer, as a previously controlled undead servant can gain enough power to break its bonds.

Spirit might: A typical person's ghost has a spirit might equal to the person's confidence + stamina in life (+ 3 for the strong-willed virtue, + 1 per point of passion virtue.) ie, typically 1-5 might. A mage's spirit has an additional might point for each twilight point.

Will is confidence + stamina (bonus of +3 for strongwilled). This is used for will conflicts, fighting for/against possession, controlling spirits etc.



Evil Spirits and The Damned

There are two 'power sources' for undead, the Magical realm, and the Infernal. Magical undead are those with magic might (aka spirit might), and are the ones created by necromancers. Infernal undead are created by demons or diabolists binding damned spirits from Hell. This is the only way to affect a spirit who has gone to Hell, ie, to have the infernal connections and power to get the spirit's leige devil to loan out the spirit (Naturally the soul stays in Hell). (Another sort of infernal undead is when a demon in spiritual form possesses a corpse or object - treat these as walking dead or constructs.) A damned spirit can only rise to the mortal realm with the aid, and by the command of a demon of at least Echelon rank.

An evil spirit differs from a damned spirit, in that the damned spirit is the spirit of a person whose soul is in Hell, ie either a diabolist whose pact ensured his soul's immediate descent to Hell on death, or an evil person whose soul ended up in Hell after a period in Purgatory/Land of the Dead. An evil spirit without infernal connections will only have magic might, ie the spirit of an evil soul still in Purgatory.

An example of an evil, but not infernal spirit is the evil ghost Harlin from AM3 (pg 316).

Good spirits also exist - either the spirits of ancestors and family members who watch over their loved ones (the ghostly wander virtue), or the spirits of the Blessed, angelic spirits sent down from Heaven to protect and aid the pious (guardian angel virtue). Obviously these would have magic or divine might as appropriate.

The most powerful undead are those who by some accident, curse, ritual or infernal pact, have their souls trapped in their dead bodies. This gives them the drive and initiative that most undead lack. Also, if they had the Gift in life, then they can still cast magic, as the Gift is part of the soul.





PHANTOM ARMIES:

Is Postapocalyptic Role-playing Possible ?

If So, What's the Trick ?

This year I finally finished work on *Clash By Night*, the game system that I'd been working on on and off for two years, and, feeling experimental, I ran a campaign set in a post-apocalypse world. Six months later, I have to wonder - was it worth it ?

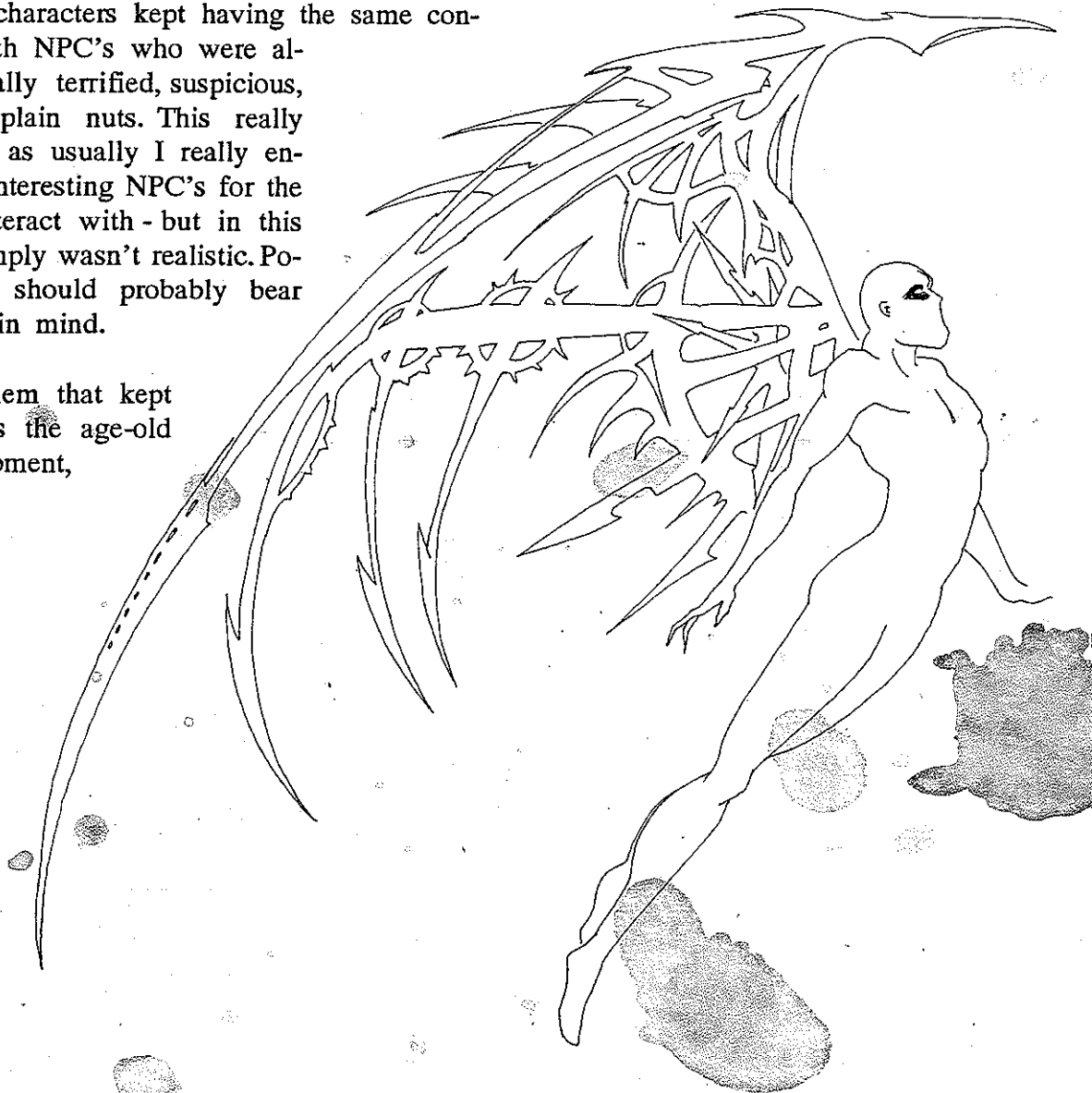


The campaign was set amidst the ruins of San Francisco, twenty-five years after a disaster no-one could remember. The characters were all (save one) young enough that they could not remember the times past, before what had come to be known as "The Burn". In this campaign, the remnants of society had come together in a system of "Covenants" - fortified buildings or areas housing sixty to two hundred people with some crops, generators, livestock and the various items of machinery that had been hoarded and salvaged over the years. The group was composed of the people who, by reason of their particular skills, were more useful outside the Covenant as traders, messengers and scroungers than inside. Two players had scout/fighter characters, one played a trader, and the last two played scientists. Their adventures often took them into the decayed ruins of the city (the Covenants existed mainly on the city fringes), with various agendas each time. Their enemies ranged from animals (predatory mutant rats), to monsters (huge, misshapen termites), all the way to the robots and security drones that were the remnants of the old civilization - not to mention hostile Covenants and city gangs. All in all, I found the setting to be quite large enough to provide ample *opportunities* for adventure, although that was not the problem, as I will discuss later.

The main currencies in the game were weapons, technology, and knowledge. The first two are self-explanatory, but it was the third one that was most interesting. Whether it was maps of the city, or clues to the location of a certain piece of recoverable technology, much of the "treasure" gained in adventures was in the form of information. Like the other currencies, it was hoarded jealously and nothing was given away for nothing. People with unique knowledge were, like medieval blacksmiths, often imprisoned and made into slaves, kept safe from those who might try to snatch them. In a way, the characters became agents for social renewal as they spread information around, linking Covenants and people by sharing the knowledge they possessed.

The aspect of this setting that I had never experienced in other games that I had run was the despair. Unfortunately to convey this to the players was an unpleasant task. Every meal was tasteless and bitter, the landscape was bleak and full of decay, and burned-out or looted buildings crowded in on all sides. Nature was poisoned, the seasons were haywire, and nothing remained pure. I think that this constant dreariness took its toll on the game - realistically, there was nothing that the characters could do about their situation, and that can be frustrating. One of the situations that kept arising was in interpersonal relationships. In a world where everyone is a bitter and hardened survivor, the characters kept having the same conversations with NPC's who were almost universally terrified, suspicious, arrogant or plain nuts. This really frustrated me, as usually I really enjoy creating interesting NPC's for the players to interact with - but in this world that simply wasn't realistic. Potential DM's should probably bear this problem in mind.

Another problem that kept appearing was the age-old one of equipment,



especially guns. Guns were very rare, but occasionally the group would find one. Unfortunately, this rarity really affected game balance - once the group was well-armed, the enemies had to become well-armed too, which led to even more guns, and so on. It could have been worse, because the PC's had to give up most of the guns they found, but it still became a problem.

Despite all this, I had a lot of fun with the setting. It was really fresh and exciting for the first time. My verdict is that to really work, the setting should be reserved for "special occasions". On its own it can become rapidly stale. It could be used, for instance, as a certain adventure in a Cyberpunk campaign where the group have to leave the big city and journey across the blasted wastes of America to achieve some goal.

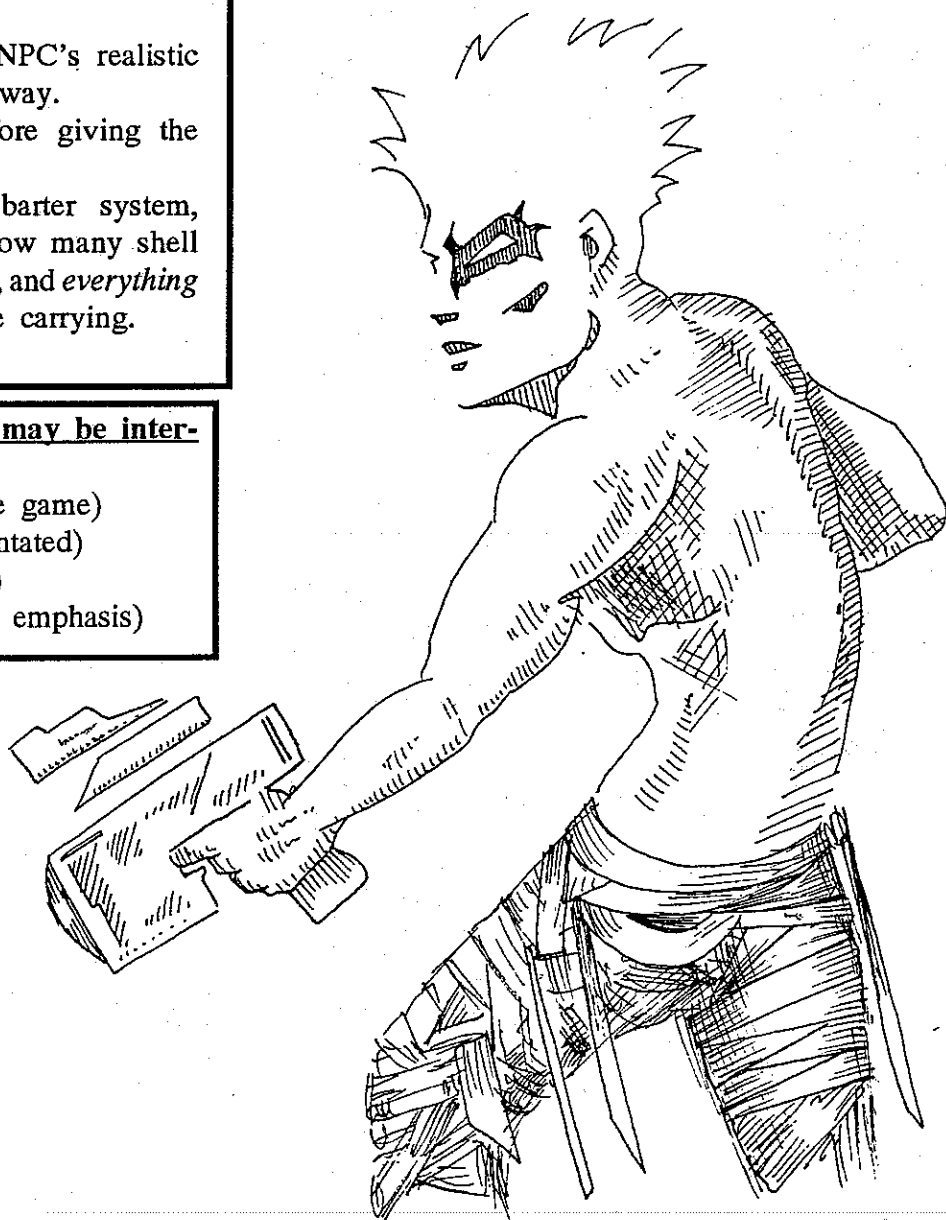
Bearing in mind that, like the only cyborg group ever found in my world, those with cyberwear are likely to be shunned as unnatural demons and that all a street samurai's fancy weapons and drugs do not help when your waterbottle's empty.

A checklist for potential DM's:

1. Try really hard to make NPC's realistic survivors but interesting anyway.
2. Think long and hard before giving the group guns.
3. Detail! Remember in a barter system, groups will want to know how many shell casings it costs for one beer, and *everything* their vanquished enemies are carrying.
4. Good luck, and enjoy.

Post-apocalyptic systems it may be interesting to look at:

- Twilight 2000 (Military-type game)
- Gamma World (Fantasy-orientated)
- Tank Girl (it exists, oh yes)
- Skyrealms of Jorune (Sci-Fi emphasis)





Aged, ailing and awful

A user's guide to codgers, crones and their fearsome ilk

"A codger is a lovesome thing,
God wot."

(Sadistic DM)

It is inevitable that any game will have codgers. Or if not codgers, crones, hags, even biddies. No DM can resist the opportunity to unleash on the party a gap-toothed ancient who sits on the porch in the sun, in a rocking chair, with a pipe or a lapful of knitting. This individual will listen with apparent fascination to your carefully-worded five-minute resume of your problem, before grinning toothlessly and croaking, "What's that you say?" They will require to be bought drinks before they will say anything else. They will pinch the cheeks of six-foot fighters and tell them how "you remind me of my grandson when he was a little boy." They snort, spit, mumble and groan. They have corns, and tell you about them. They knit the mage's beard into the strange garment they're creating. They are hideous to contemplate, and no DM can resist the chance at a funny voice.

Herewith, so that ye may see them coming in future, and avoid them like the lightning plague*, is the definitive guide to codgers and their female form, crones, with tips as to their treatment and thwartation. This comes to you after meticulous research at great personal risk and inconvenience, not to mention cost in ales and dentists (after much gritting of teeth).

* lightning plague: distressing infectious disease, during the course of which the victim is continuously struck by lightning. Symptoms include blackening, charring and death.

Old person: general type

male: codger

female: crone

A collective term, designating the aged in general, and being divided into a number of subtypes. Codgers and crones alike may be easily spotted at a distance - look out for their characteristic bent, shuffling silhouette, or rocking chair or wheelchair. Avoid the ones which lurk in dark and filthy huts which smell funny. These are difficult to identify and often particularly dangerous. Up close, wispy white hair, toothless mouths and multiple layers of clothing give the game away immediately. Sticks, canes and small dogs may be utilised as lethal means of defense - be wary.

Correct usage

Collective nouns, should you be unfortunate enough to have to refer to these aged terrors en masse, include the following:

a shuffle of grandfathers

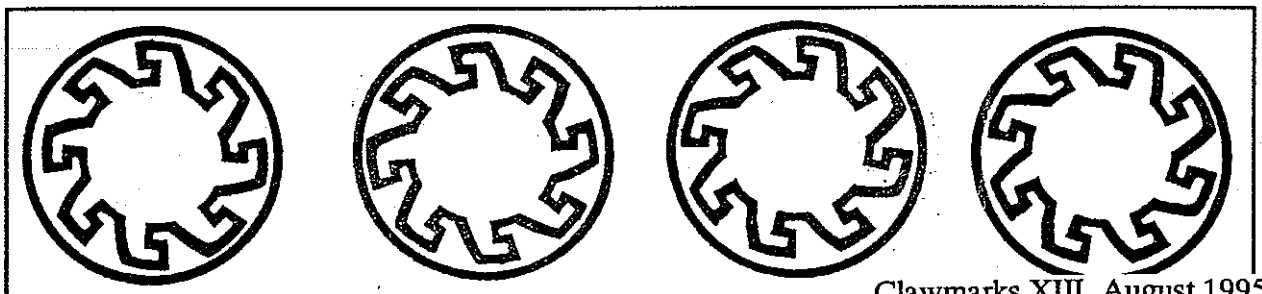
a coven of crones

a mumble of codgers

a slyness of gaffers

a glare of beldams

a dotage of coots





Sub-type A

male: gaffer

female: gammer

One of the more pleasant of the codger/crone subtypes, characterised by extreme, often irritating good humour. Gaffers are the ones who sit in pubs and imbibe an apparently continuous supply of ale. They may be recognised by their tendency to dig you in the ribs and make ribald jokes in a cracked voice. They are usually small, bony and spry. They have been observed to denote extreme knowingness by placing one finger alongside their nose and going "Arrrrrrrr" a lot.

Gammers are often plump, on the other hand, and content themselves with beaming toothlessly at you and offering you something of a technically edible nature from a large basket. *At all costs avoid actually eating this!* If it doesn't actually poison you, it'll break all your teeth or keep you up all night in acute discomfort. Gammers tend to take offense if you refuse their awful offerings; wide sleeves and an ability to mime enthusiastic eating are an asset here.

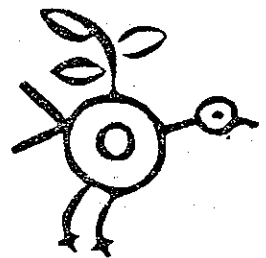
Gaffers and gammers are in their natural habitat at rustic gatherings on village greens, where they will exhaust and embarrass the younger generations by hopping around till dawn in various energetic country dances, shouting "yippee!" at intervals and waving large mugs of anything alcoholic. The initiated may recognise the inevitability of songs about hedgehogs in the above context.

Sub-type B

male: coot

female: bidy, also old bat

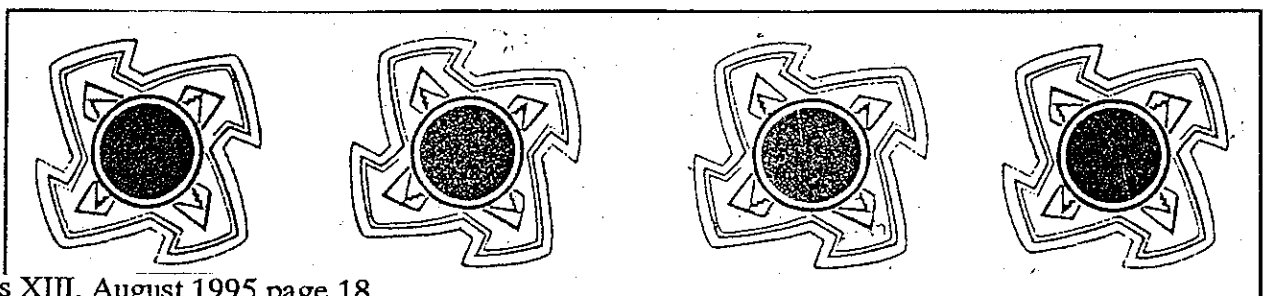
The defining characteristic of either a bidy or a coot is their complete lack of contact with reality. See the phrases "daft old bidy" and "mad as a coot". While not being actually ill-disposed towards humanity, they are eccentric to the point of actual insanity, and completely unpredictable. Physical characteristics include a wildly improbable dress sense, abrupt motions and a tendency to cackle. Not to be confused with Subclass D, the hag and the old sod, who have a similar appearance but are far more malign. Coots and biddies characteristically inhabit large and crumbling dwellings full of assorted junk, among which they appear and disappear like jack-in-the-boxes. Good examples are mad mages, ancient alchemists and weird old witches who gather herbs on heaths.



Sub-type C

female: beldam, also dowager and grandam

Noble ladies who have out-lived several generations and still rule their families with an iron hand fall into this category. Beldams are easily identifiable by their strong-mindedness, powerful wills and complete disregard for anyone else's opinion. Granny Weatherwax is perhaps the best example of this class. The old woman pottering around her garden who takes umbrage at your rudeness and insists on you



mending her thatch before she'll tell you that the men you are looking for were due to leave town ten minutes ago, is probably a beldam. If you refuse to mend the roof, she'll hit you over the head with her broom, or hit you with a really horrible curse. Characterised by a tendency to address you as "young man" or "young woman," beldams are capable of looking through you with an eye like a gimlet if you annoy them. Strong men wilt. Don't mess with these people, they often have power and are utterly ruthless.

Civilisation is unable to account for the fact that it records no exact male counterpart to the beldam.



Sub-type D

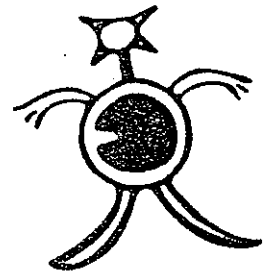
male: old sod

female: hag, also hellhag and baggage

Often similar to the coot and the biddy, but be warned! What you think is the old coot whose antics are harmless and amusing may actually be the old sod who hops amusingly over in order to remove most of your teeth with his stick. Likewise, the bent and wrinkled figure tottering over the moors may be an old biddy out looking for her cat, but you don't want to find out that she's actually the old hellhag out looking for her demon familiar just after your third amusing comment about her lack of teeth.

Unlike hags, who are often loaded to the gills with unpleasant magic, old sods tend to be malicious on a purely practical level. The toothless old codger who cheerfully overcharges you for his old horse may be revealed as an old sod when all four of the animal's legs fall off three miles from town. Most bad-tempered and

grumbling codgers and crones fall into this category, the kind who run their wheelchairs deliberately over your foot.

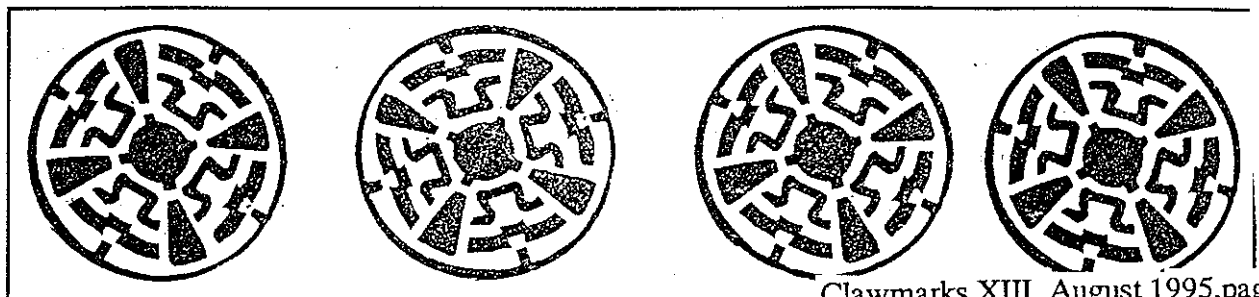


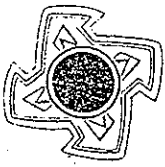
Sub-type E

male: the veteran

A near-lethal form of codger capable of delivering shattering and regular boredom criticals at ten paces for hours at a stretch. The veteran is particularly likely to be found sitting in the sun outside the inn with a mug of ale. Any codger exhibiting a wooden leg, missing arm or eyepatch should be viewed with extreme caution. The veteran can spot a newcomer to town three miles away in a snowstorm during a total eclipse of the sun, and possesses a peculiarly irresistible ability to attach himself to the unsuspecting like an elderly leech. Victims have reported a curious numbness of the limbs and brain as the tide of reminiscence washes over them. Resistance is usually useless.

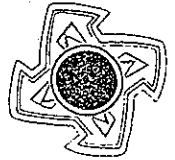
Veterans have no practical value, their only subject of speech being the battle of Craddon Field or the campaign against the Bonehead Orcs back in '63, and their own part in this possibly mythical event. Do not wait to be taken three times in exhaustive detail through the reasons why this particular veteran missed the death-and-glory final charge, "which is why I'm still alive today, young fellow, and all thanks to me having me trousers on inside out." The veteran has no information on any topic other than his reminiscences, and only notices the outside world when it involves ale, food or someone to talk at. If he shows any signs of wanting to show you war wounds or battlefield relics of any type, run for it.





Too long I have pulled my punches. Too long the Archbigot has left undiscriminated one of the most despised and freckled groups of all. Did I hear someone spit out the name of claws? Here at last is the long awaited and much justified tirade of abuse against the members of that most hated of all groups: Claws. Not even the Editors can stop me now [exit Archbigot to the tune of insane, mocking laughter]

101 Reasons Why I Hate CLAW Members:



They're stupid.
They play Magic.
They think that magic is a social game.
They think they're dangerous.
They smell *bad*.
They don't have real friends.
They think that the other students think they're cool.
They act just like His People.
They have *tons* of freckles.
They sit in the ClawRoom rather than attend lectures.
Their marks decline because of CLAWs.
They aren't embarrassed to be CLAW members.
They're nerds.
They're disgusting.
They think techno is unhip but like Disney soundtracks.
They like Disney.
No-one likes them.
They're virgins.
They liked Rob Roy.
They think that Dungeons and Dragons is clever.
They think that Rolemaster is clever.
They look ridiculous.
They play role-playing games.
They collect swords.
They read fantasy books.
They think that Highlander was brilliant.

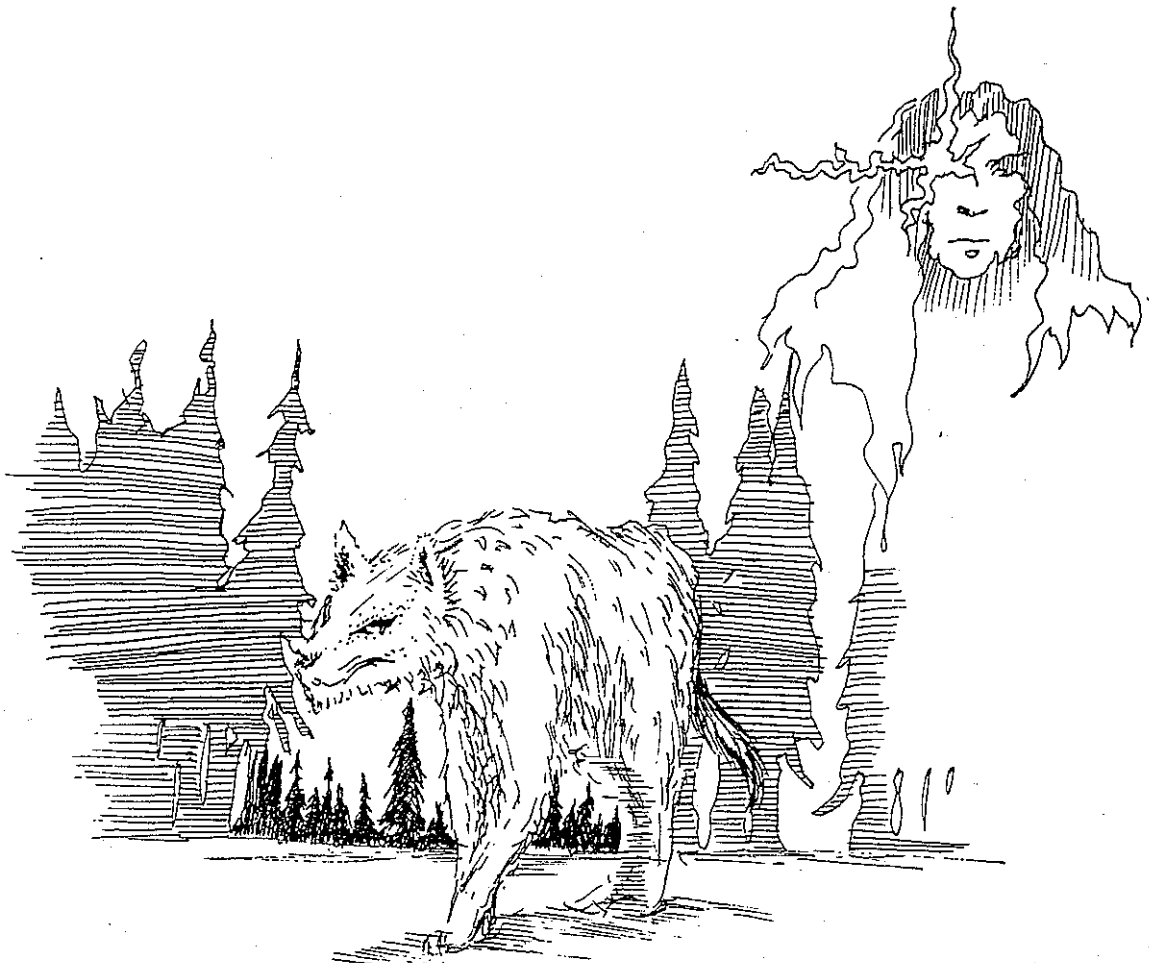
They are sexist.
They are racist (weeeeeeell).
They read Clawmarks and laugh.
They would be caught dead at a Role-playing tournament.
CLAWs was started by people that no-one liked.
They're ugly.
They don't play role-playing games.
Their name is dumb.
They even look uncool at Lloyds.
They are physically inept.
They actually enter Wizard's Warehouse.
Many of them drool.
They make me want to spew chunks.
They have a "Head Librarian".
They're wimps.
They think cats are clever.
They are descended from monkeys.
They talk about guns.
They think they're clever.
They wear black.
They quote Monty Python.
They "cruise the Internet."
They think the Internet is cool.
They don't wear black.
They like Star Trek.
They *want* to be fairies.
They're homophobic (weeeeeeell).
They play boardgames during varsity.
They like the Pixies.





They're universally loathed.
Magic decks are their signs of status.
They think people respect them.
They have dumb in-group humour.
They Fnarglewurm their wompoms (sic).
They aren't funny (in any sense).
One is nauseous in their presence.
They have a "Claw room".
They're impotent.
They waste the University's time.
They waste everybody's time.
They don't commit mass suicide.
Their relatives have freckles.
They think Cyberpunk is clever.
They're scared to leave the Clawroom.
They're conservative.
They're communists.
They think that role-playing is social.
They drink Schnapps.
They're easily impressed by phallic symbols.
They're useless.
They drink tea.

They think they have lives.
They draw fantasy pictures.
They're full of shit.
They play Live Action Role-Playing.
They don't grow facial hair.
They think they're sexually liberated.
They can sometimes like themselves.
They thought the general election was un-cool.
Even their lecturers hate them.
They think they discovered alcohol.
They have *pathetic* magazine articles.
They're ugly.
They get red and sweaty.
Their parties are too dead for roadkills.
They think drugs are dangerous.
They think that Clawmarks articles are funny.
Bergies wouldn't associate with them.
They take drugs.
CLAWs is the highlight of their lives.





THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY: ICON 1995

Seventeen people from these nether regions of rocky mountains and wet seas found ourselves at Capetown station on the 27th July 1995 at approximately 08H00. Actually, I lie - six found ourselves there at 08H00 - the rest dribbled in over the next hour and almost missed out on the ultimate goal of our mission. This, of course, was to hijack the train travelling to Gauteng and then return the means of not-at-all-instantaneous transportation to its rightful platform five days later. We only wanted one carriage, but even then our efforts were thwarted by masses of aliens bearing down on us with black bags and enough alcohol to fuel the train to Addis Ababa and back. We should have taken this as an evil omen, but no, bravely we took to the rails. One of the group nearly left them when three team-members disappeared at Laingsburg station. That tale is perhaps best forgotten...

Previous experiences in eldritch Toyotas and Opels, which culminated in twisted knees, backache, short tempers and even shorter life-expectancies for the vehicals in question [see CLAWMARKS XI] prompted CLAWS to search for new ways of transporting gamers to the ICON national gaming convention held by SAGA (South African Gamer's Association) in Gauteng. With money kindly squandered, ahem, sponsored by the S.R.C., UCT societies council and the players themselves, CLAWS scraped together enough boodle to buy us return tickets (third class) with compliments of Spoomet. Our numbers comprised fifteen CLAWS people and two from Cape Tech who came along for the ride. CLAWS sent up two official teams this year and one that was sort-of official. Some members found their own way there. Intense interrogation has proved fruitless in uncovering their secret powers.

The Toby-machine is still working on the problem.

Anyway, I digress. On arrival at the station in Gauteng (some twenty-five hours later) we undertook the two-block walk to Outer Limits (Grant Charleton's shop, which acted as the not-so-official centre of information, co-ordination, planning and of distribution of players at ICON). The walk miraculously unfolded itself into a twenty-minute scenic tour of the city centre. We finally arrived, were separated, and were taken to our respective hosts to meet again at the Edenvale Community Cen-



DOOM ENGINE (from left to right): Philip Anastasiadis (in the winning costume), Carlo Kruger, Tracy Dawson, Jessica Tiffin and Dylan Craig.



tre where the Tournament was being held.

Our official reign of terror on Gauteng Spurs ended as we were forced by geography to visit the local Pizza Hut instead. Our reputation obviously preceded us as the following night there was not a single establishment (apart from Bimbo's - enough said) that was open at 22H30.

The tournament itself ran over the entire weekend (its condition is still critical) and it was bigger and better than last year. The entire foyer and main hall were taken up by a monstrous number of stalls offering a vast range of items. The games themselves were moved to the side halls where the usual screaming, shouting and killing could continue without alarming "normal" spectators and visitors. There were two tournaments held on the Saturday, only one of which was competitive. There were different modules running concurrently so the teams could choose which one they wanted to play. Both CLAWS teams, the DOOM ENGINE (comprising Dylan Craig, Jessica Tiffin, Tracy Dawson, Carlo Kruger and Philip Anastasiadis) and LAPPISH MEMORY WALTZ (comprising Nicole Antoine, Glen Jones, Jonathan Napier, Austin Chamberlain and Adriaan Wessels) as well as the Cape Tech team took part in Castle Falkenstein on Saturday morning. This was the first experience of its kind for the Capetonian players, as it is a new system in which combat is not decided using dice-rolls, but a normal deck of playing cards. The Cape Tech team came first in this module, and LAPPISH MEMORY WALTZ was given third place, despite a team-member asking the G.M. whether there was a key-hole in the ancient sarcophagus. Saturday morning also saw the advent of the costume competition, in which Philip Anastasiadis took second place. The afternoon session was the competitive Cthulhu module based on the play Salome by Oscar Wilde. Mal Morrow of Cape Tech won best G.M. for his efforts (and second-best G.M. over the entire tournament) while the rest of us just had a lot of fun.

Saturday night saw the LARPs being held. One was the Marin County (held by Shadow of the Mountain society last year in Capetown) held by SAGA, and the other was the ARCANA, brought to Gauteng by Shadow of the Mountain. Players were all characters from the Tarot deck, one of whom sold her power away for sex with Death.

Saturday was also the occasion for wargaming, as well as the first few rounds of the Magic tournament. This last was completed on Sunday, and fabulous prizes were given out.



Carlo Kruger in costume for the LARP as The Fool.



Capetonians took second (Giles Kipps), third (Jason Parsons), and fourth (Glen Spies) positions. Ray! Ray!

On Sunday morning the CLAWS teams participated in the Cyberpunk competitive module. Lessons were learnt, metal and mental hits were lost and lots of fun was had.

In the afternoon session DOOM ENGINE played the Vampire module while LAPPISH MEMORY WALTZ played the AD&D module "Morte d'Chunnel", which was tremendous fun.

The tournament was a wild success and even recieved television coverage (five of us CLAW-members could be seen haunting the screen on breakfast telly) and the end-of-tournament party/dinner went down even better. Unfortunately, so did a few of our players, with the dreaded Gauteng lurgy-to-end-all-lurgies which was then generously brought back down from Gauteng to share with all of our friends. Remnants are still waging war in the anatomies of a few choice CLAW-members. We're taking it in shifts.

The near live-action gun battle on the way down nicely ended off our trip. So if you have a strong constitution, nerves of steel and a 9mm automatic - be there next year.



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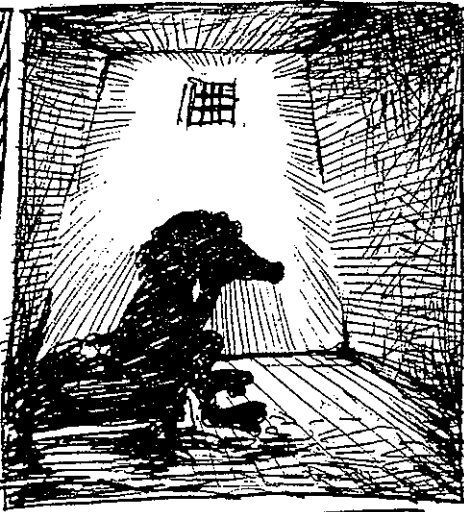
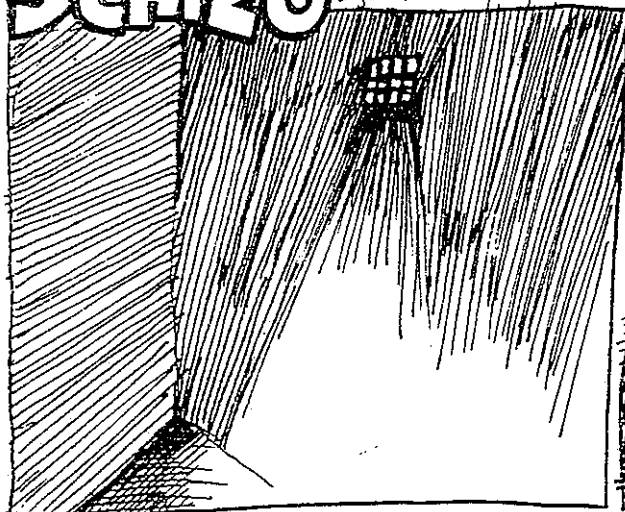
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SCHIZO

by IVAN

"A COOL COMMENT ABOUT MEDIA VIOLENCE IN THE 90's (or some shit about a maniac)"



DEAR LORD... MAKE MY RESOLVE STRONG! MAKE MY BRAIN WORK... WRRR.. UHG LET ME FIND THE MOST FITTING RETRIBUTION, AAYE!

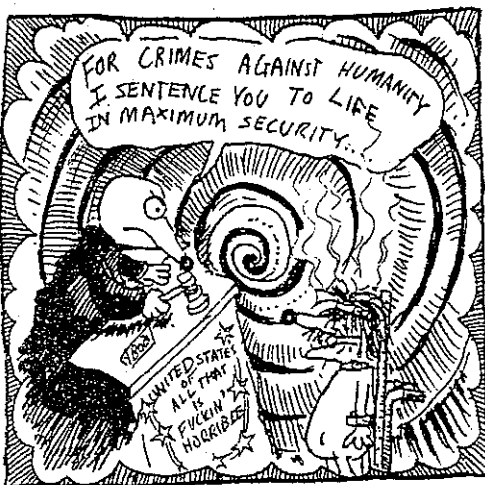


MY DAYS ARE LONG.... I FEEL AS THOUGH IVE BEEN HERE FOREVER ...



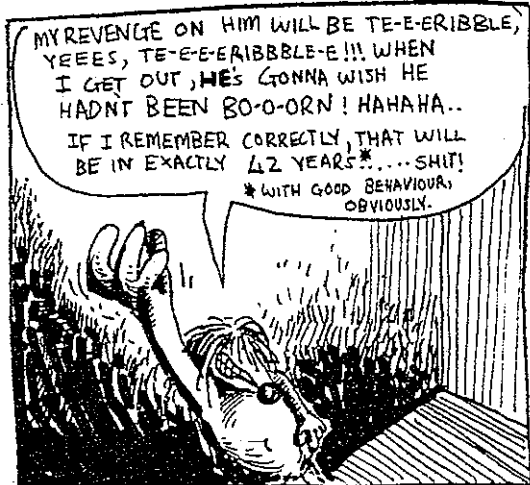
BEING SHUT UP LIKE AN ANIMAL CAN DO THINGS TO A GUY....

WHEN I GET OUT OF THIS HELL! THEN PEOPLE ARE GONNA SEE! I CANT JUST BE WRITTEN OFF AS SOME IMPOTENT MANIAC, INCAPABLE OF EVEN THE MOST INNOCUOUS ACT OF BRUTAL VIOLENCE! GAAAH!



FOR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY I SENTENCE YOU TO LIFE IN MAXIMUM SECURITY...

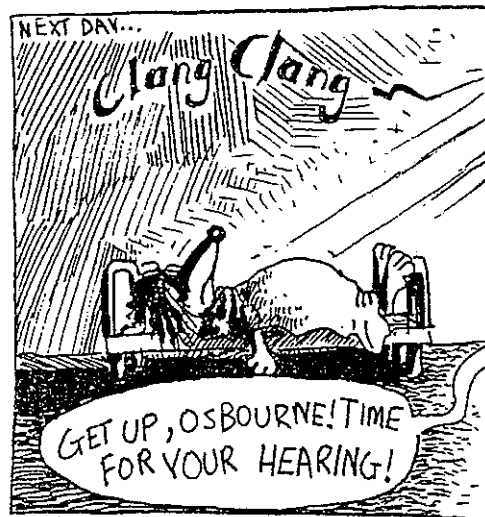
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ALL OF THEM FICKIN' HORRIBLE



MY REVENGE ON HIM WILL BE TE-E-RIBBLE, YEEES, TE-E-E-RIBBBLE-E!!! WHEN I GET OUT, HE'S GONNA WISH HE HADNT BEEN BO-O-ORN! HAHHAHA.. IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, THAT WILL BE IN EXACTLY 42 YEARS!..... SHIT! *WITH GOOD BEHAVIOUR, OBVIOUSLY.



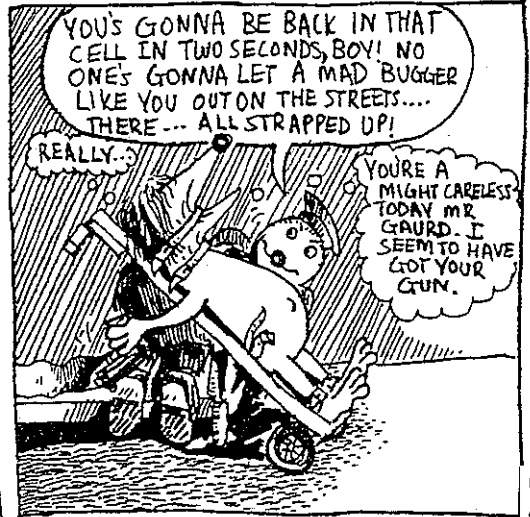
PERHAPS, ... YES, PERHAPS SOONER. I'LL NEED TO HATCH ME A PLAN... TOMMORROWS HEARING MAY BE A GOOD PLACE TO HIGH TAIL OUT O' THIS NECK O' THE WOODS...



NEXT DAY...

Clang Clang

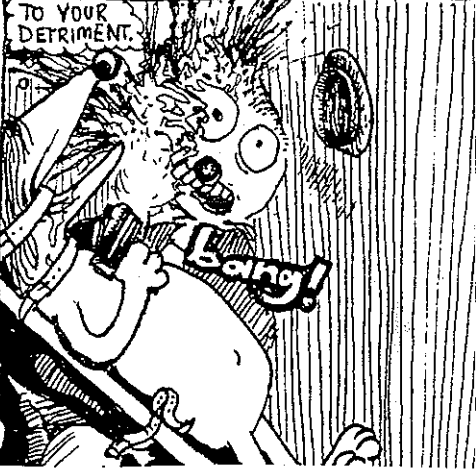
GET UP, OSBOURNE! TIME FOR YOUR HEARING!



YOU'S GONNA BE BACK IN THAT CELL IN TWO SECONDS, BOY! NO ONE'S GONNA LET A MAD BUGGER LIKE YOU OUT ON THE STREETS.... THERE... ALL STRAPPED UP!

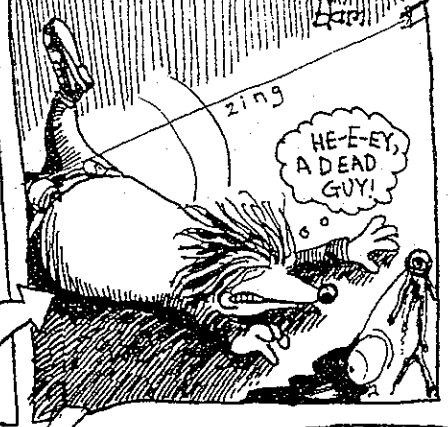
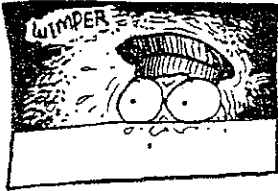
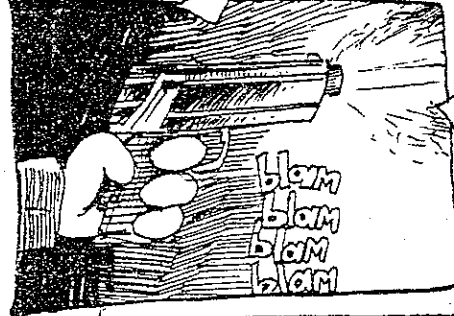
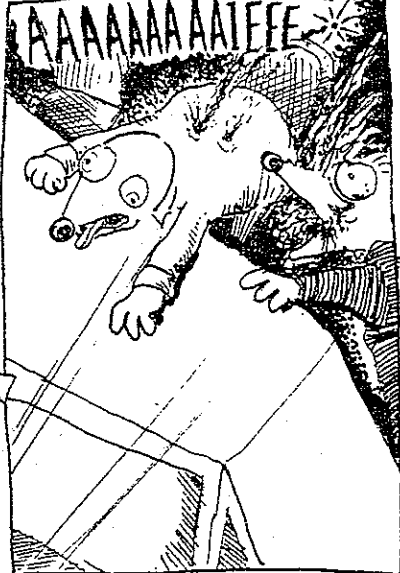
REALLY..?

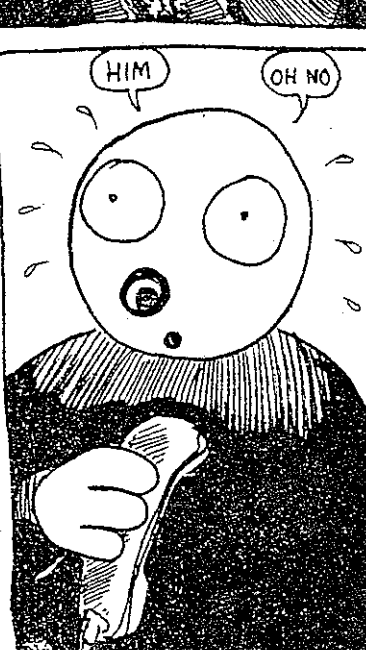
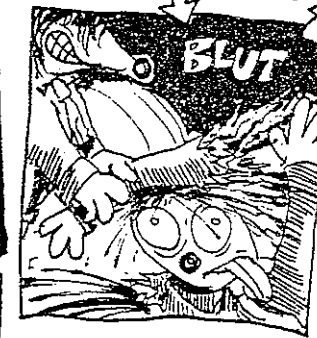
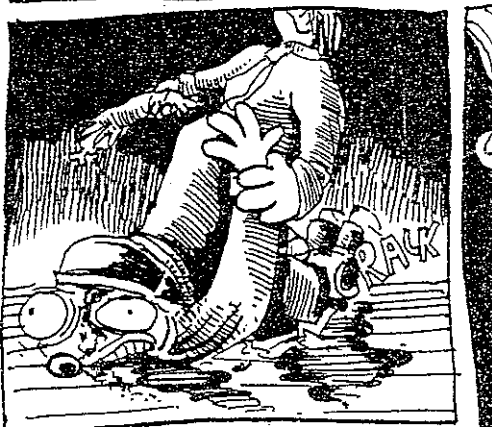
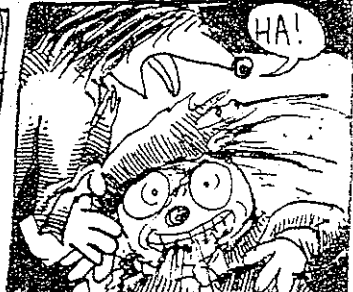
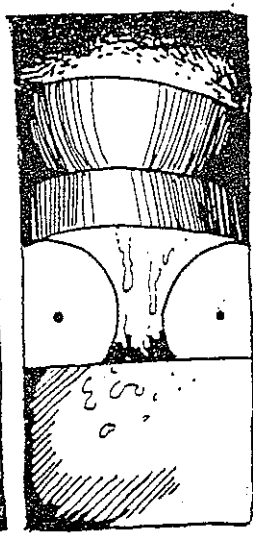
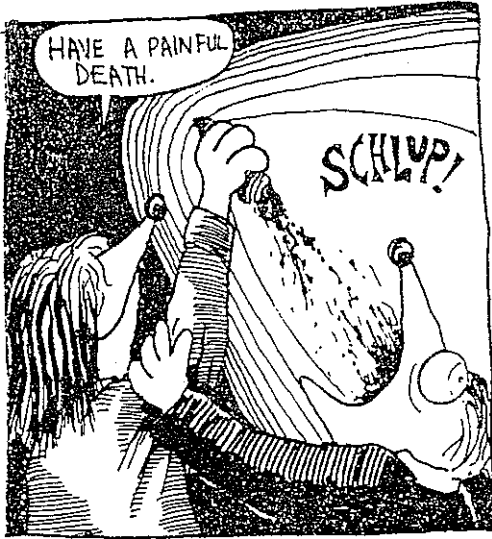
YOU'RE A MIGHT CARELESS TODAY MR. GAURD. I SEEM TO HAVE GOT YOUR GUN.

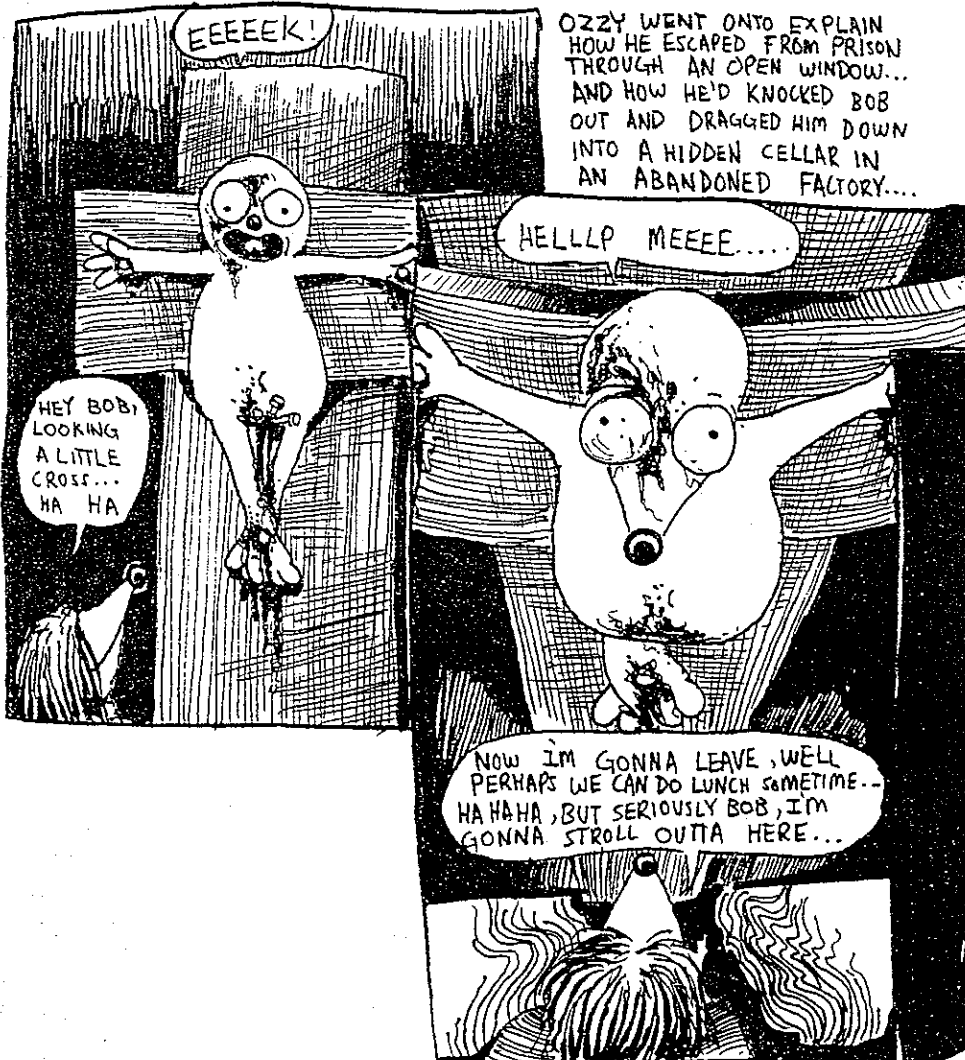
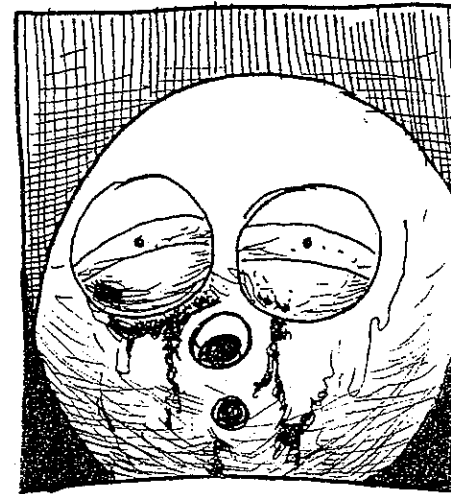
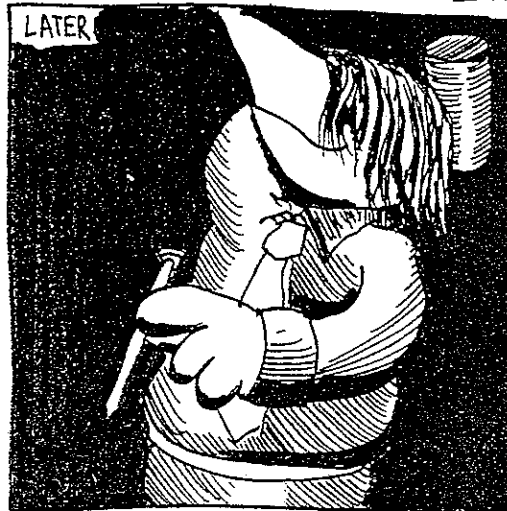
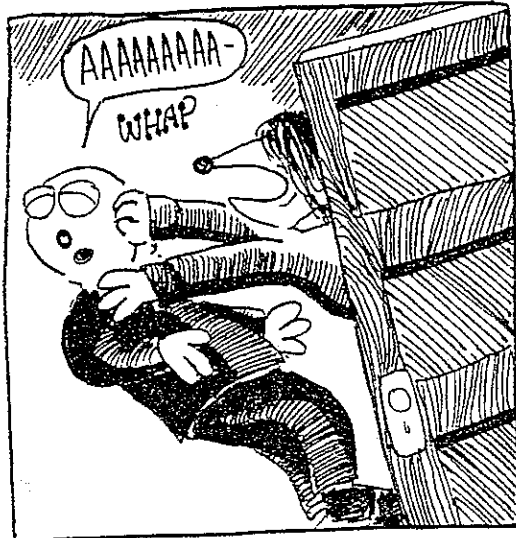
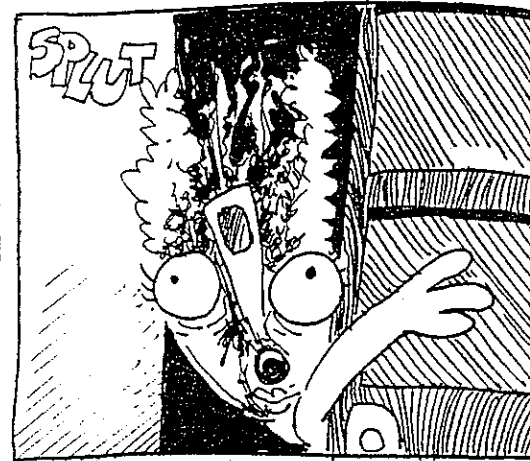
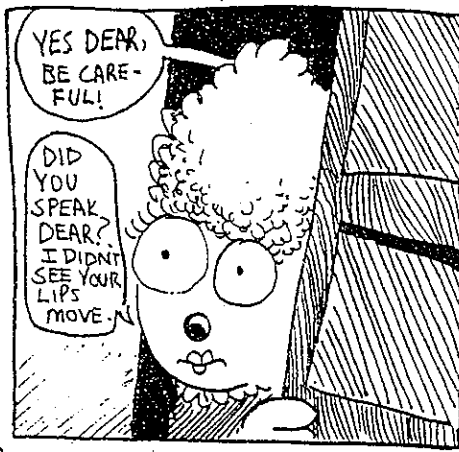
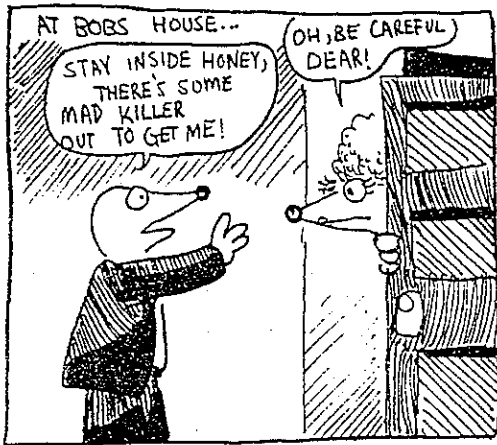


TO YOUR DETRIMENT.

Bang!







AND YOU'RE GONNA FUCKING DIE! GOODBYE....

click-kerklang
Fading footsteps...

OH SWEET LORD, PLEAAASE...
PLEEEEAASEE !! DON'T LEAVE MEEEE !! OH
NOOOOOOOO....

SO, BOYS AND GIRLS...
EPILOGUE:- HOW MANY WEEKS DO YOU THINK BOB LASTED IN EXCRUCIATING AGONY?

END



CLAWs Then and Now

or

The old Grey Mare She Ain't What She Used to Be.



For those who do not know I joined CLAWs in 1990 during my first year at UCT. This was its second year of official existence having been brought into the limelight under the then 'flourishing' Tolkien Society. It was the brain child of a few people and used the grounds of a club called Idol's for its activities. Paul Freebody, the ex-proprietor of the Playground, still harbours lingering bitterness for the theft of the name. CLAWs was supposed to have been a Cape Town organisation and not a campus one in its original conception, but Richard Pruss and Giles Embleton got there first.

At that time CLAWs had less than fifty members, about twenty of which were playing in Giles' game. It was the focus of the society's hierarchy and social life. Whenever two or more gathered they did so in the name of 'The Game.' Meetings were largely impromptu, taking place on the fabled Gargoyle Rock - an institution which was basically the first pillar on the right hand side of the plaza as you look at Jammie Hall. It was so named because it was the self appointed duty of the CLAWs-types to sit around, dressed all in black and stare at the passers-by.

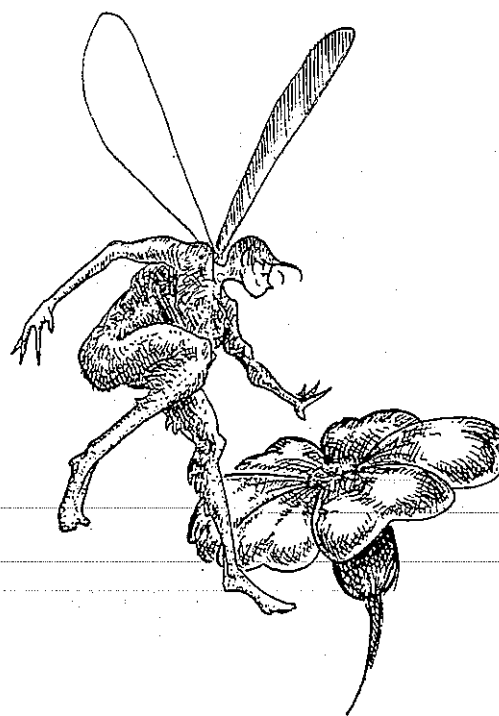
It must be understood that at the time the only people who dressed all in black were Goths. And at the time it occupied a great deal of the consciousness of CLAWs. It was reflected in their choice of soundtrack, the drone of Andrew Eldritch's voice over the brooding bassline of the Sisters. It was also the height of the 'Personality'- led witch hunt on Satanism and Dungeons and Dragons.

The People were restless and seeking scape goats; I myself was called a Satanist more times than I care to remember. But CLAWs seemed to set itself up for these martyr-like situations, revelling in the romanticism of being the target of bigots, believing themselves superior to the seething mass of humanity by virtue of their imagination.

It was a time of unbridled originality and creativity. There were many discussions on the technical points of our common art- form; Role-Playing.

But it was far from idyllic.

Many people now in CLAWs seem to regard that era (1989-1991 approx.) as being the golden age of CLAWs. In point of fact it was at times an ugly seething mass of jealousy, bitterness, in- fighting, back-stabbing and gen-



eral nastiness. CLAWs was basically a clique of too many men fighting over too few women and various other trophies. Misogyny was common and exemplified in the use of the term, 'wench' when referring to women.

An unstable situation it was aggravated by the fact that we spent too much time together. CLAWs needed to expand to survive the conflict that had started to paralyse it half way through 1990. It is a continuing tribute to the people who did make it work through a great deal of hard work on sacrifice.

It is a sure sign that it has worked that no-one who was involved in the society then holds any position in it now. It is a mark that they built something that could last. The character of CLAWs has changed dramatically since then. The people who make up its members have undergone a transformation.

There are a great deal more women who can be seen at its functions. In point of fact; the first CLAWs Dragonfire in 1989 had only one female competitor. For those who are interested, ask Jessica about the horror.

One of CLAWs' more staunch critics once commented that its underlying problem was that it was mainly composed of sexually frustrated male chauvinist pigs. She was probably more than right about it then.

I was also gratified to see that it was no longer an exclusively male WASP hobby. In order for it to have any integrity that needed to change, and it has.

The problems now confronting CLAWs are that much greater and could tear it apart once again. It is a problem from which Gaming in Cape Town has always suffered, starting with its first attempt in 1989 at organising the tournament which was run in Goodwood (if my aged memory serves me correctly).

The two problems are inter-connected and spring mainly from the character of those who find Roleplaying enjoyable. Their intelligence and individualism generally makes them ill-suited to being followers and their apathy makes them unfit for leadership roles.

And there in a nut shell is the problem that has to be confronted. The committee usually devolves to two or three people trying to do the job of six. This is partly their own fault for their inability to delegate and partly the fault of the slackers in their committee for whom the position is some sort of prize of a popularity contest.

The trip I recently took to Gauteng to the ICON Convention was an eye-opener. I do not think that it is necessarily the direction in which CLAWs should go; I look upon it as the potential which could be unlocked. Major sponsorship from The Sun and Lufthansa among many others proves that it is possible to get these things if it properly planned. The mere size of the event is a monument to the planning and ability of the organizers - and few of them were students, most were working people with a great deal less time than students normally have. They were a small group of people who had vision.

And primarily that is what CLAWs lacks: vision. They called themselves SAGA (South African Gamers Association) long before they had any right to the name and have gradually grown to fill







it. They are now poised to be the first national gaming association in the country. They have managed to attract the attention of the industry in the form of Wizards of the Coast and will almost certainly have them back here next year for their improved ICON 96.

It is my belief that CLAWs should affiliate itself to SAGA to take advantage of the umbrella nature of such an affiliation. Using the positive media exposure of SAGA, gaming can finally walk in the sunshine without fear. It need not give up its individuality in so doing. CLAWs as the strongest body of gamers in Cape Town needs to address its responsibility to the larger community by making a concerted effort to broaden its horizons. There are thousands of people in Cape Town who have or do play some form of Roleplaying Game, or card game (e.g Magic has apparently hit the schools). Some way should be found to draw all these people to one society which is not based on campus. All we need are a few good people.

So lets stop lamenting the loss of the so-called good old days of CLAWs and concentrate on the things that really matter, the games we play. For whatever else we can say and the scorn we heap on people for playing the system they play it is our one unifying factor. We all play some sort of game. Now if only we could agree to play together.

I'm not idealistic enough to believe that it will be easy, and too much of a critic to get involved and I guess in that way I'm just like a lot of people in this community. But I'm doing my bit, I'm DM'ing. Any body for a game?



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Alan's Seething Cesspool - The Overflow

It came to my attention some time ago that people are not taking the shocking state of CLAWs too seriously. Clawmarks has continued to print role-playing articles which no-one reads or "humourous" articles (ie The Archbigot of Necropolis and other worthless crap) that everyone reads but benefit nobody. Consequently the magazine is a pointless rag and nobody takes any notice of what is happening to CLAWs.

A typical letter to the Editors might read:

"Dear very clever editors (NB most of the letters are written by the editors or their friends),
Flurgle Narble bigwat Floun. I have come from Mars and don't know how to use a toilet. Please help!!!

Yours in extreme urrggghhisshness,
S. Ome Worthless Bastard"

What the fuck is the point of the letters column when it is filled with this same rubbish in every issue. A more realistic letter would read as follows:

"Dear Editors,
Claws is falling to fucking pieces because it's full of losers and its leadership is grossly incompetent. What can you suggest in order to rectify the situation?

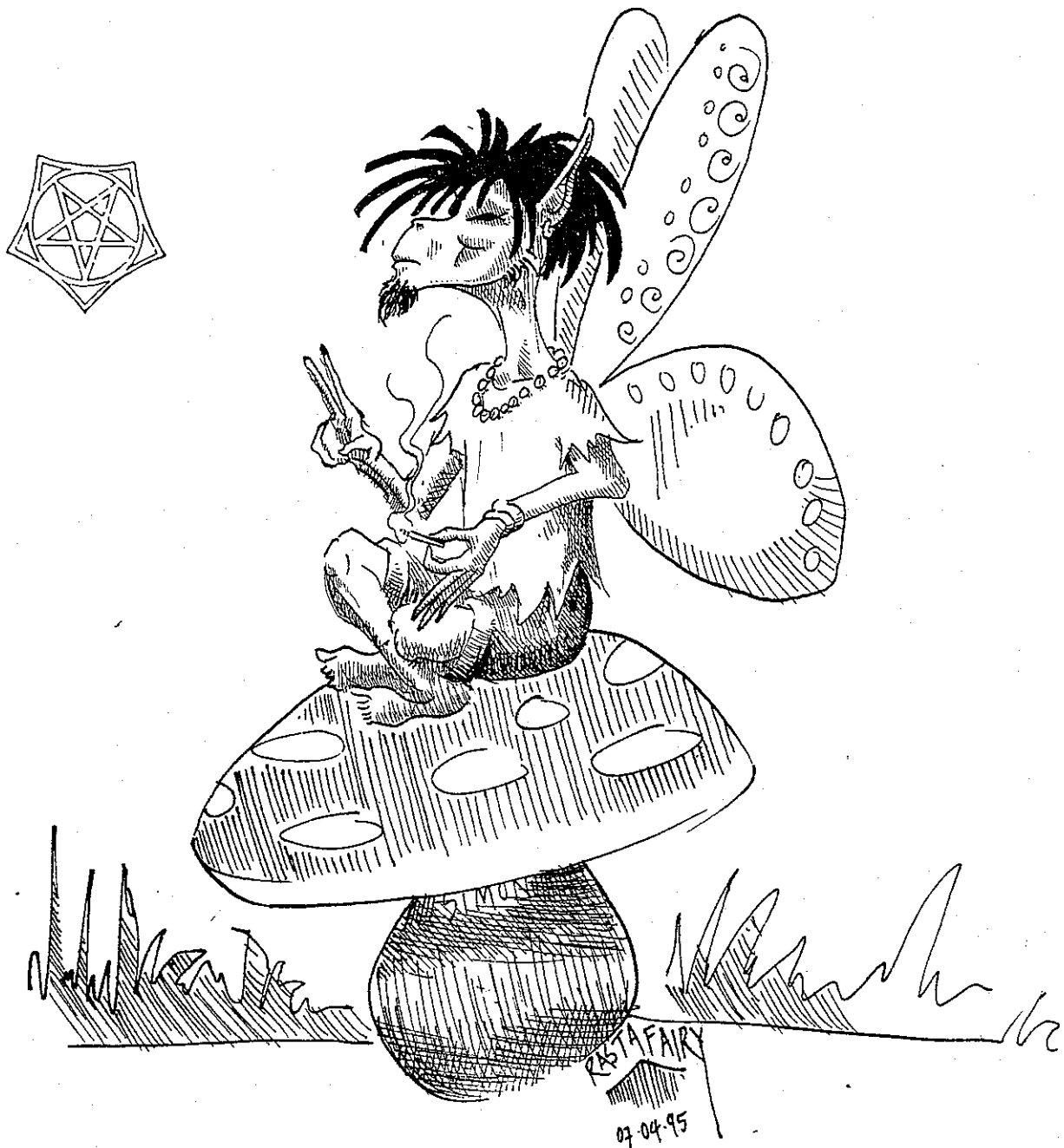
Yours in absolute desperation (to be writing to Clawmarks)
A. Real-Person"

This is the reality. The change in society membership rules from the old "if you sign up you gotta deregister or stay a member until you drop screaming into hell", has led to the revelation that CLAWs is no longer a large and prosperous society but is, in fact, a Dodo fleeing a madman with a machinegun. What has caused this decline of a once hip and cool society?

The most obvious reason is the fall from grace of the Gothic ideal on which the society was founded. This was a very unusual way for a role-playing group to be founded as they are, as a rule, nerds. This unusual interest by a group that was, at the time, very hip led to the society being regarded as cool, or at least dangerous by the varsity population as a whole. One must remember that at this stage Satanism was the South African boogiemer and so the fledgling society was super-deviant.

Notwithstanding this modicum of cool with which the society started, many, if not most, of its members were social rejects who could not find support in conventional social groups. The Goth image meant that a lot of people wanted to be associated with CLAWs just to be cool. Alas this now seems like the fantasy of a lunatic.

1992 was the year in which Goth was finally kicked to shit by Nirvana and its seething devotees. It had become too commercialised and was a mockery of its former self. CLAWs could not adapt as its foundation was in the Gothic. They were obsessed with "clinging to the underbelly of reality" (what fucking crap). You can't really be

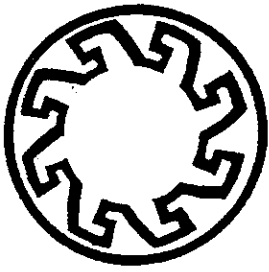


a cool Grunger if you wave a non-existent sword around in your spare time. Consequently, cool role-players moved into the closet and the hangers-on fled from role-playing's increasing squareness.

Thus, almost overnight the mighty empire of CLAWs turned into a sad collection of nerds trying to find social identity. It is truly sad to hear them talking about CLAWs as if nothing has changed ("Most students are scared of the Claw Room"). My bum. Most students avoid it in case other students associate them with the gross social turd that is CLAWs.

Farewell CLAWs. Hasta la vista. It was fun while it lasted but I don't see too many Clawmarks' in the future.

By the way, if you want to engage me on this interesting topic (perhaps you hold another viewpoint), then you can go get screwed or, if you prefer, you can write a letter to the Editors. But don't expect me to read it because I couldn't give a shit.



Bard's Best Tomes

In the Bard's Tower, a single light flickers. The scratching of a blunt quill and the occasional rustle of parchment are the only sounds drifting through the quiet of the night as the Bard works - the only sounds, that is, besides the frequent curses directed at life in general and at recalcitrant scribes who will not work throughout the night in particular.

Hmph, says the Scribe when he reads this. Thus the gods made us: to work when it is day and sleep when it is night, and if you seek to work both day and night you will have to defy the gods on your own.

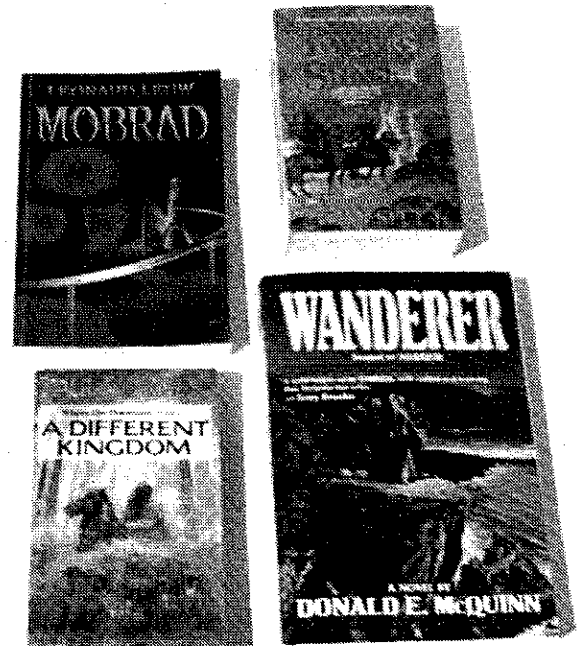
Enough of your babble, says the Bard. These pages are my babble.

Well, to begin the babble, I shall speak of **Dragoncharm**, a tale told by one Graham Edwards. A fair-sized work, **Dragoncharm** takes place in a world where the age of magic is ending and the age of nature is emerging, a world where dragons live in great communities and have spread across the whole land. Humans or similar creatures do not exist; everything is seen from the viewpoint of dragons.

This in itself is an excellent idea and makes a very refreshing change from the usual humanocentric paradigm. However, the plot itself is more or less the usual fantasy fare: evil plots, a great catastrophe approaching, only some young dragons able to avert it etc. The dragons are also portrayed in a more or less human fashion, there is little feel of the awesomeness and grandeur a dragon should inspire. I might have wished for just a bit more of an alien nature in Edwards' dragons. As it is, the book is not bad but it hardly makes a difference that it is dragons the story revolves about instead of humans.

Admittedly, there is some novelty in actually writing about other creatures for a change. Very few fantasy writers seem to be able to do this convincingly; in fact, none of the other volumes here even attempt it, except perhaps for Leonard Leuw's **Mobrad**. Incidentally, Leuw is South African and even happens to live in Cape Town!

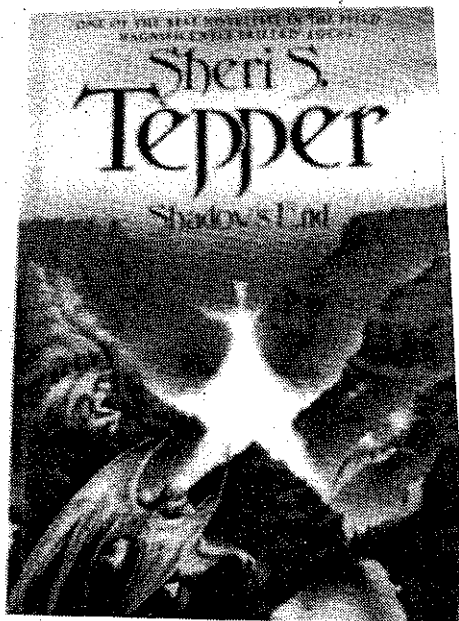
Mobrad is science fiction, and I can very simply say that it is different. To summarize, **Mobrad** is a planet on which two species encounter each other (neither of them quite human) and attempt to build a joint civilization. For a while, it seems as if a near perfect society has evolved, but eventually gradual uneasiness builds into direct con-



frontation. Leonard Leuw has managed to present a community where the differences are only hinted at, never directly explained. Neither does he explain the ideologies in clear terms; it is left to the readers to form their own idea of them, and it is this very quality which prevails throughout the book which makes it such unusual reading.

In the last issue, I believe, I mentioned **Wanderer**, sequel to Donald McQuinn's post-apocalyptic **Warrior**. In **Warrior**, there were constant vague hints about a mystical "Door" beyond which great knowledge could be found: **Wanderer** is the quest of the Rose Priestess Sylah to find this door. Overall, **Wanderer** is not really remarkable for either plot or novelty; however, Donald McQuinn has a fluid and pleasant style which makes for relaxing and enjoyable reading. There are some semi-mystical elements which jar a bit with the image he creates of our world five centuries after nuclear devastation, but otherwise he is quite consistent in combining the new and the old. And, perhaps, future volumes will explain.

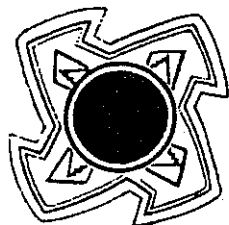
Speaking as I am of post-apocalyptic worlds, those who remember Jon Shannow, the Jerusalem Man, may be pleased to know that he is still alive in David Gemmel's new book **Bloodstone**. David Gemmel's books all have the common attribute of important characters escaping by a hair's breadth from near-impossible situations through miracle-like coincidences. Combined with his penchant for violent descriptions they make for exciting reading, but tend to become somewhat predictable. **Bloodstone** is no exception, it is "more Jon Shannow", pumping lead left right and centre, and if you enjoy the Jerusalem Man (as, I admit it, I occasionally do), **Bloodstone** should appeal to you.



However (there is always a "however"), I am somewhat annoyed at Gemmel's very weak attempt at rationalizing the time-gates between the distant past and the present. Instead of building on this, he postulates an infinity of universes (again!) which the gates connect, rather than being actual gates in time. Personally, I think that the infinite-universes-where-everything-that-can-happen-has-happened-somewhere idea should be consigned to permanent destruction. David Gemmel falls into the common trap of giving the reader far more problems and paradoxes to cope with than if he had stuck to his original thought - which, I think, was rather a good one.

Well, since I am complaining, I'll continue to do so. If you only wish to hear good news, continue reading after this paragraph. The book I am so unimpressed with is Paula Volsky's **The Wolf**





of **Winter**, and what can I say about it? I am not even sure exactly how to describe it, aside from being (mostly) about the necromancerous younger son of a king who by his arts gets rid of his brothers and seizes the throne. Pretty much standard fare, especially when the beautiful niece takes the stage. The characters are somewhat standard and feel rehearsed instead of natural, and behave in generally predictable and archetypal ways.

In places the book has a distinctly Gothic atmosphere, like the postulate that all magic is performed by raising the spirits of the dead, or the madhouse where the burnt-out necromancers spend their mindless years. This atmosphere, however, alternates too much with a more normal one to even remain in the background. If it had, the book could have been very good, but as it is I found it impossible to settle comfortably into one attitude from which to view the story, and this, combined with the flatness of the characters more or less made the story fall apart for me.

All right, I will work my way up to something better, such as **The Towers of Sunset**, by L.E. Modesitt (Jr.), which is a prequel of sorts to **The Magic of Recluce**. Very much of a prequel, in fact, since it takes place quite a few centuries before the events in **The Magic of Recluce**. **The Towers of Sunset** is written in the same onomatopoeic style, which takes quite a bit of getting used to. In fact, I still find it rather irksome at times. Admittedly, it is rather different and in a way refreshing, and does make for interesting reading. The story itself is a fairly good one, as well, effectively centering about the conflict between two people linked by an unbreakable spell. One of them just happens to be a super-powerful storm wizard, not to mention that he is also a devil with a blade. All in all, it is fun reading, nothing serious, nothing mind-bending, and if you can stomach the style you should get some pleasant hours out of it.

Still, this business about immensely powerful magicians who are also invincible swordsmen, or vice versa, annoys me somewhat. It seems very unlikely, if not completely irrational to me that one character should be so massively overpowered. Besides, it leaves little scope for other characters, and either the author inflates everything to give the hero even a semblance of competition, or there is little point to the story. Besides, it is unfair to the villains, who really have a tough job.

Allright, I am getting to the point. This was not just me venting my spleen, I happen to have exactly this complaint about Maggie Furey's **Aurian** (which I mentioned in **ClawMarks XII**) and its sequel, **Harp of the Winds**, which continues **Aurian**'s search for the lost Artefacts of Power. Last issue I thought **Aurian** your typical rainy afternoon reading, and that's exactly what I'll say now: **Harp of the Winds** is your typical rainy afternoon reading.

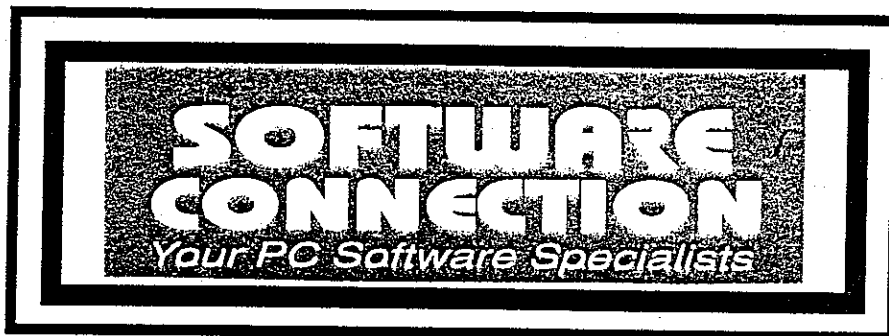
Rather better is Paul Kearney's **A Different Kingdom**, the somewhat strange tale of an Irish boy who is lured into a world entirely different from his own. The book is rather slow to start, and keeps to a somewhat mediocre pace. Aside from that, however, the "different kingdom" is well thought out - a huge, seemingly never-ending forest, the haunt of wandering tribes and of ancient creatures of the wood. In places there are enclaves of humans protected by their prayers to a single god, but elsewhere the forest magic rules. And throughout the forest roams a strange and terrifying horseman with his pack of wolves. **A Different Kingdom** is intriguing to read, and certainly has an intriguing ending.





Well, seeing I have come to the end, I suppose I cannot but help mention Sheri S. Tepper's latest volume, **Shadow's End**. As always, Sheri Tepper's book is excellent, both in concept and in execution. Mankind has expanded throughout the universe, firmly believing that they are the supreme lifeform and replacing all plant and animal life with that which is useful to humans, when suddenly whole colonies are eradicated without a trace. Only one world is spared, and on that world must the riddle be solved before all mankind is destroyed. Yes, all right, it is again the usual save the world, but Sheri Tepper's skill in creating realistic worlds and people more than makes up for it. It is your own loss not to read **Shadow's End**.

And here, says the Bard, must I leave you. It seems my Scribe has vanished, the whole day I have seen nor heard aught of him. Therefore be content with what I can give you now, and wait till my Scribe is found afore I can give you more.



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The gentle art of



LARP

A beginner's guide

LARP (*vb*) *abbr.* to gather in a large room many people wearing strange costume, who proceed to converse earnestly for up to 8 hours, attempting to kill each other at intervals.

Art, yes; gentle, often not. But catching on fast, nonetheless. If you haven't actually played in one, you've probably heard of them. CLAWs has run them at Dragonfire for several years; ICON had two this year, and Cape Town has its very own informal LARP organisation, Shadow of the Mountain, operating under the aegis of Mark Cummins. Not to mention the ambitious (and expensive) several-day marathon sessions in pastoral surroundings which have

been run recently by a bunch of people whose name for the moment escapes my memory.

LARP, for the confused, stands for Live Action Role-Play. Adherents and heretics such as myself would say that it's more fun than Magic. The best description is to say that it's like classical role-playing, but in real-time, in a limited environment, in costume. A bit like the professional murder weekends run overseas - a LARP often has a central murder or mystery to solve, but should be a lot more complicated than that.

So, in answer to the apprehensive young lady I met in the ladies' change-rooms just before the ICON LARP, yes, you should have no problem LARPing for the first time if you've role-played before, even if it's just AD&D. (Low crack showing systems bigotry, but hey). The basic idea of getting into character is the same, although you have to keep it up for a lot longer without interruption. At the same time, it's easier to do - the setting is more realistic, you're in costume, intrusions from a DM are minimal (unless you feel impelled to kill people often). Of course, since action is defined entirely



by the players, with no real manipulation by the DMs, characters tend to be more complex, and you'll have a whole list of agendas, guilty secrets, plans, plots, friends and enemies by which your actions in the LARP will be motivated. Natural schemers tend to enjoy LARPing.

About that DM

Almost certainly DMs - unless you have access to a unique individual capable of resolving the sword-fight in one corner while simultaneously adjudicating the Cardinal's attempt to strangle the Queen in another. (Sorry, I just watched *The Three Musketeers*). There are usually a minimum of three DMs in any one LARP, who must, in addition to resolving combat, be able to fill in characters on anything they ought to know which isn't covered by the character sheet. (Designers are not physically capable of thinking of everything. Says she with feeling).

The DMs in a LARP don't, as I say, control the action in the same way that a DM does in a standard role-playing game. At the same time, it's up to the DM to make sure that things are moving fast enough to be enjoyable. If not much seems to be happening, they have the option of introducing new information, bringing NPC characters onto the scene, etc. A LARP is fascinating in that, unlike a normal module, the DMs have no real idea where the action is going to go - it depends on a number of factors, particularly the players themselves - which characters are most active, etc. There are always sub-plots and information which never really come out, without in any way detracting from the game as a whole.

The other problem with DMs is that they don't really exist. That is, they're not characters in the LARP, unless they briefly become pizza delivery boys, the cleaning staff, the police, etc, when the action needs it. They are non-existent entities who are perfectly obviously wandering around, and this may often break the carefully-created

atmosphere generated by a whole bunch of people in character for hours at a stretch. DMs work best when they're disguised as something else. The Dragonfire module this year is a good example - it's in a restaurant setting, and DMs are dressed as waiters/waitresses. While not actually refereeing gun battles, they serve drinks. Players know that they may not interact with these background people as they do with real characters, but they don't break the mood and setting.

From my experience, the DM's-eye-view of the action is simultaneously frustrating and fascinating. As an invisible person, you can overhear conversations and get some idea of how things are progressing, the problem being that a LARP often looks like a roomful of people in funny costumes talking very quietly to each other in small, nervous groups. Watching this placid surface and wondering what's seething beneath it in the corners of the room where you aren't, is maddening.



System versus role-playing

LARP is great for the role-playing purists, because it's based on character interaction in real time, and some characters can spend an entire evening plotting, scheming and politicking without ever having to refer to a system at all. On the other hand, there inevitably comes a time when another character annoys you, threatens you or has something that you want to the extent where you'll at least try to kill them.

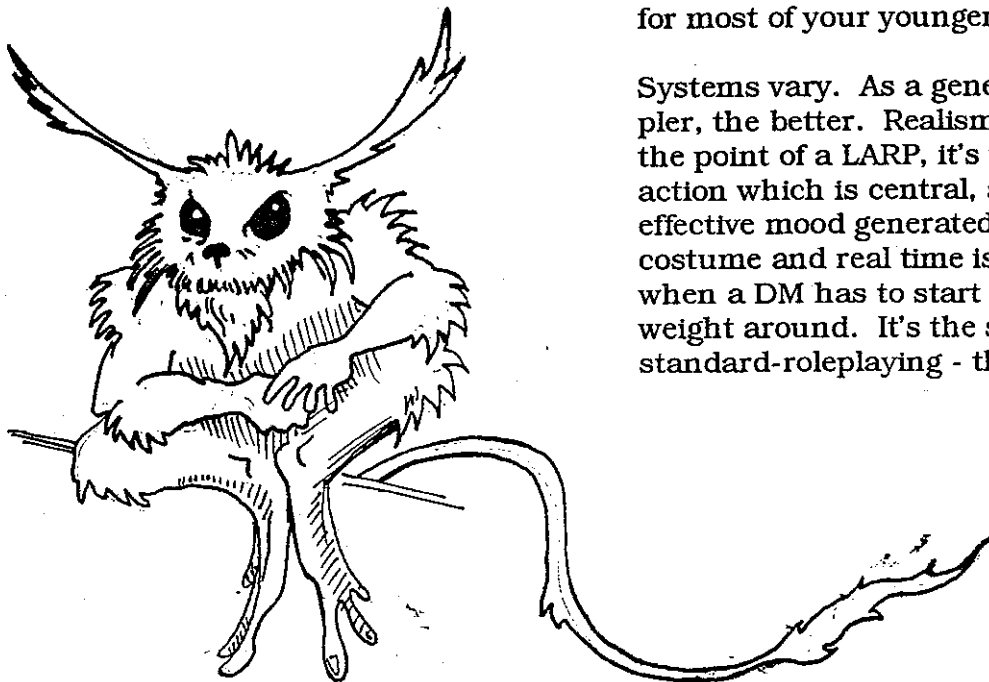
One way of doing this is to actually act out combat, obviously with fake weapons. LARP itself comes partially from the mock-combat tradition of devotees of medieval costume such as Britain's Society for Creative Anachronism, who used to hold tournaments where maniacs garbed as knights beat each other up with foam rubber swords. This is obviously more realistic, in a bizarre sort of way, and doesn't break atmosphere too badly. At the same time, it relies on players having bash skills appropriate to their characters, and actually very few of us would role-play if we had to be super-fit combat-ready experts in order

to play a simple knight. That degree of realism limits very badly the kind of skills that characters may have - think of having to actually pick someone's pocket without being detected, for example. Your character may be technically able to do it, but you probably can't. In terms of this, some kind of game mechanics which resolve actions in the same way that a normal role-playing system does, is obviously required.

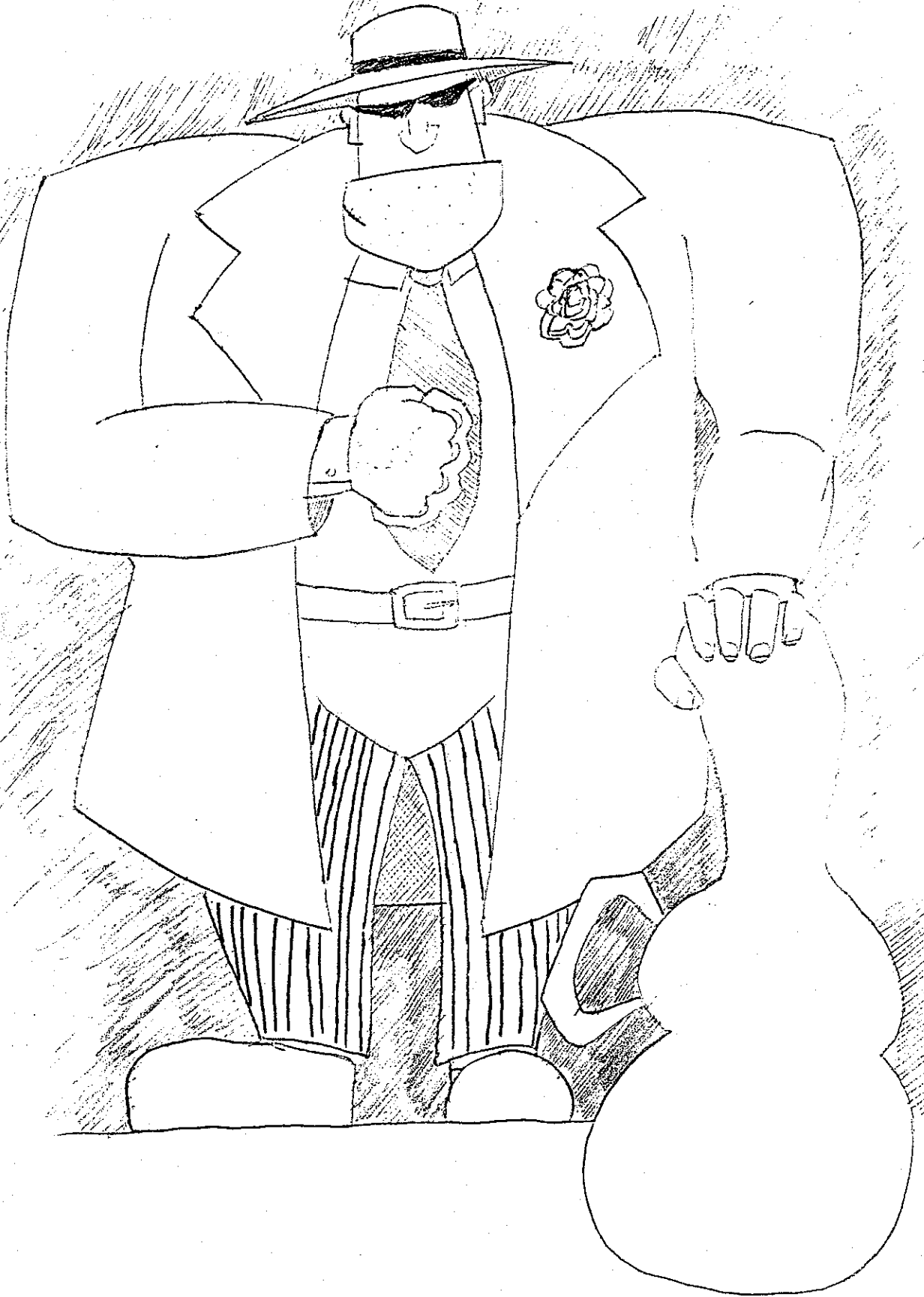
Thus, as in your average gaming system, LARP characters have different skills and abilities, although by and large these are known to the DM rather than being specified numerically on the character sheets. You'll know that your character is good with a gun, for example, or fit and athletic, or able to blast the unsuspecting with lightning bolts at a whim (of which, more later). The DM will have a list of character skills, and the idea is that when you decide to stick a knife into your ex-husband, for example, you call the DM over and he compares some scores and rolls some dice, or whatever the particular system entails. It's then up to you to explain it to the other characters while the bleeding corpse is carted off. (Your ex-husband didn't know that you were throwing knives in a circus for most of your younger life).

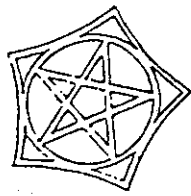
Systems vary. As a general rule, the simpler, the better. Realism in combat is not the point of a LARP, it's the character interaction which is central, and the often very effective mood generated by role-playing in costume and real time is inevitably broken when a DM has to start throwing his/her weight around. It's the same dilemma as standard-roleplaying - the balance be-

tween mechanics and role-playing is very tricky, and often comes down to personal taste. Attempts may be made to tai-



LUIGI WANTS YOU





lor the system to the setting, of course - *Arcana*, the LARP run by Shadow of the Mountain at ICON this year, had characters based on the archetypes of the Tarot deck, and combats were resolved with a poker hand played with the minor arcana. I personally found this intrusive and long-winded, although the idea was appropriate. I prefer the Dylan-Craig-copyrighted system used at Dragonfire and in the nuclear-bunker LARP earlier this year - a simple d6 roll from the DM, read off against a single sheet of scores for the characters, and resolvable in seconds. In the example of the non-existent *Three Musketeers* setting I used above, a playing-card system might be appropriate, although I'd tend to base it on one card rather than a hand.

On top of this, there are always ways of using skills in interaction without having to call a DM. It's always necessary to balance this with good role-playing, of course, but you may simply not be anything like the dangerous and cold-blooded killer with the bad reputation who has to scare someone into talking. In this case, many LARP systems use ability cards. You simply flash at your victim your small cardboard strip which states unequivocally, "I kill people for a living and you know I could kill you. Do as I say"; within the parameters of the game, s/he'll have to comply. Unless the victim has a card which says "I'm slightly insane and convinced I'm invulnerable, so you don't impress me," for example. Such cards may also be used for skills other than combat, e.g. picking pockets - it's quite a strange experience, in the game setting, to have someone wave a card at you which says "Give me one item from your pocket. You didn't see me take this," and have to act accordingly.

Setting, costume and props

This is one of the great attractions of LARP - most role-players leap at the chance to dress up funny with all four feet. In terms of the setting chosen, anything goes. CLAWLARPs have included a medieval ma-

gician's conclave, a Victorian auction for Cthuluesque artefacts, and a mob meeting in a restaurant in 40s gangster Chicago. A well-defined setting and costume code is wonderful for generating atmosphere and realistic role-playing. At the same time, it can't be too way out, or the players, being simple mortals, are going to have the devil's own time getting hold of costumes. Besides, costume is a prop, not a central issue - you shouldn't really be spending more time agonising over what you're wearing than you do over how you're behaving.

Likewise, it's easier to think of yourself as an aggressive gunman if you're actually brandishing something which bears a vague resemblance to a .45. Guns, knives, swords, even chainsaws, can usually be represented by toys or non-lethal facsimiles without contravening the Traditional Weapons act. The same is true of other props - bits of jewellery, money, important papers, can be passed around, exchanged, stolen and hidden realistically, without recourse to the system. If actual items are unavailable, cards similar to ability cards may be substituted; less desirable, but they still work perfectly well for the purposes of picking pockets, searching bodies, and backing up your statement that "I'm pointing a gun at you."

Setting can be more of a bitch. Mark and Shadow of the Mountain scored an undoubted coup earlier this year with their *Mary Celeste* LARP, which they ran on the *Victoria*, the reproduction sailing ship at the Victoria and Albert Waterfront. Most modern or near-modern settings are not a problem - any large room will do, and it's quite easy to bring in enough props to suggest a restaurant, a meeting hall, etc. Or you can run it in some unsuspecting person's house, if that's what the setting is. It's not essential to be accurate, but it does add to atmosphere. The *Call of Cthulu* system have recently published a LARP-style game set on board a submarine, which should be run in two different rooms connected only by two-way radio, to simulate

the fact that half of the characters go off in a smaller underwater vessel of some sort. Excellent for atmosphere and realism.

Laser-designators, longswords and lightning-bolts: LARPs and power

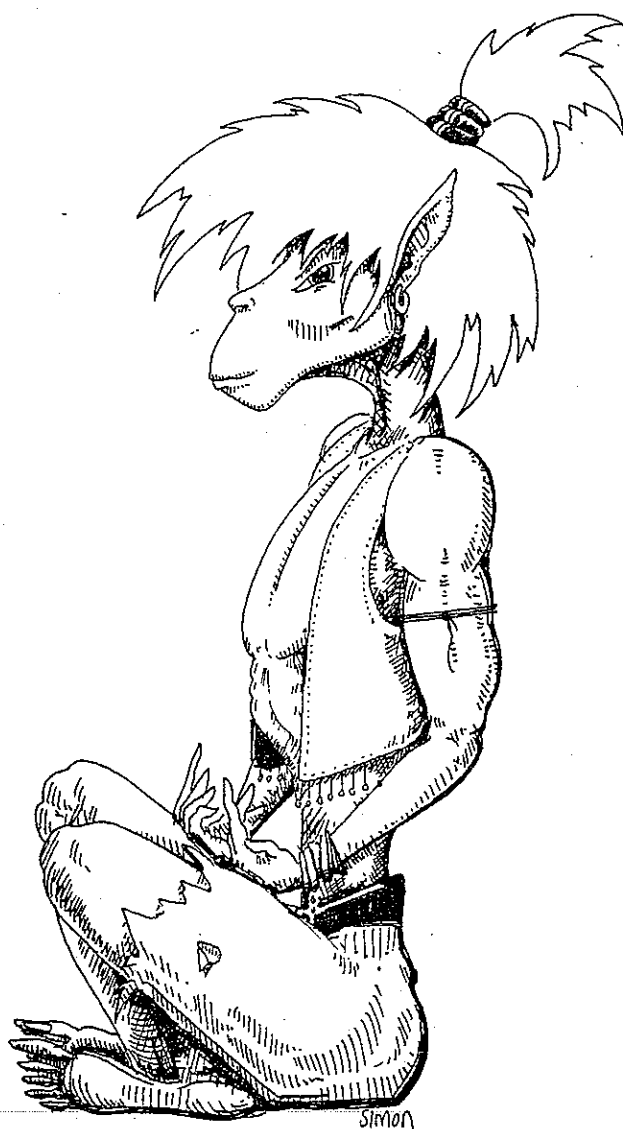
LARPs are often perfectly realistic modern or historical settings, but some of the most fun ones I've played require magic, telepathy and the like. This is wonderful fun, but again the problem of breaking the atmosphere comes up - similar, in fact, to the problem of gunfights in a realistic setting. The first CLAW LARP entailed a convocation of mages, but the wily designers got over the problem of characters blasting each other to shreds by creating a convocation code by which no mage was permitted to use magic within the meeting. This avoided some unpleasant incongruities. Think of the situation: a candle-lit room, set out formally with tables and benches, containing a group of dignified figures in medieval robes who occasionally break off their earnest debate to wave bits of cardboard at each other and shout, "I lightning bolt the sucker!"

In the year 2040, we may cheerfully (and geriatrically) be running LARPs in which we can actually smite the ungodly with bolts of fire simulated by laser technology, or where a hologram ghost may wander realistically through the room. Our guns may look and sound like the real thing. But until then, we have to make do with cards which describe the effect rather than the effect itself; with a DM telling us that "you hear a shotgun blast from outside" rather than a satisfying boom. The suggestion that LARPs would be interesting under the Laserquest system is perhaps a step in this direction, but until then, large effects which are removed from reality, however fun they may be to plot around, do detract from the realism which a LARP aims to create.

How to play

If the above has succeeded in interesting you, I have not been opinionated in vain. To those panting to LARP with the best of them, I can offer the following suggestions:

- LARPs are becoming a regular feature of tournaments, both Dragonfire and ICON. Get in early with your entry forms.
- Shadow of the Mountain runs irregular but fairly frequent games, and Mark has no objection to running the same one

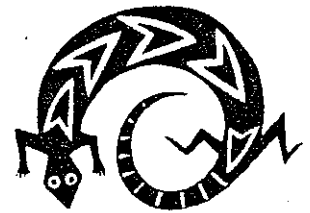


several times if there are lots of people who want to play. He gets at CLAWs types through myself; notification of LARPs to be held is usually put on the CLAWroom noticeboard, with lists for people to write down their names if they want to play. Or you can contact me personally to find out when the next LARP is happening.

- CLAWs has a few demented and masochistic designers who have run one LARP earlier this year just for the hell of it. There may be more. We promise nothing.
- Look out for the adverts for the epic several-day events, although be warned that these can be expensive.

- If you DM, or have played for years, and can put together a bit of LARP experiences, gather some like-minded fiends and design, design, design!

And anyone interested in designing the *Three Musketeers* LARP which I invented above should speak to the author, who's a sucker for punishment.



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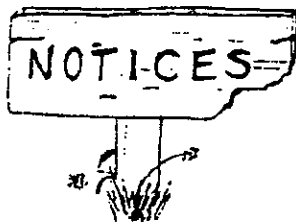
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Notice: Natural, refreshing: Coca-Cola.

Wanted: Plane-load of mulatto-national mercenaries, last seen highlighted by a nuclear blast somewhere in Brazil. Contact the Public Relations Officer, Pepsi-Cola International.

Notice to Andre: Daughters of the butternut family can't be transplanted for very long. Go and sit on a goat's horn.

Notice to Pumpkin: I am the greatest bell-ringing, hoof stomping, earthshaking, mountain wandering friend of Heidi for you.

Notice to Craig: If I have my rectum pierced, will you...

Notice to Francois Gobi: You are the Eric Clapton of Cape Town, my boogie.

(Haiku)

Me, now.

Tumbling inside a
Heavy head, Crow seeks a way
through thehotsick sky.

NOTICE: Who are the Frisky Limpets?

NOTICE: The only good slope is a dead slope.

WANTED: The Brothers of Light, for peaceful questioning. Last seen entering Demetar. Large reward for information. Contact Blood Cause, town of Alexandra, King-land.

WANTED in connection with theft, arson, and the use of sorceries against a guardsman, a small band of vigilantes named the Brothers of Light. Be warned that they are heavily armed and possibly dangerous. Contact Town Guard, The Hall, Crysland, for further details.

WANTED DEAD: Band of savage killers calling themselves the Brothers of Light. Guilty of atrocities against the Elven Nation. Be warned, they are armed and dangerous, and possess a primitive human cunning. Kill on sight. Huge reward offered. Apply to Wartown, Elvenlands. Once again, be warned, these humans are indiscriminate butchers.

NOTICE: What are the Frisky Limpets?

Notice: Anyone who enters my lab will be ~~eaten~~ ~~by demons~~ really sorry. Necromantic greetings from Benthis of Aghieru.

Notice: To Sammy Singer and Madame VinCoco -- Heey Baybee! Love and kisses, pretty ladies - from Cheesy Chilada.

NOTICE: SAGA blow goats. Have proof.

Wanted: A sort of a ... kind of ... ummm ... well, you know what I mean. Contact Benthis.

Notice: Thar sectoids are everywhere. Hoss up, boys - we gonna have ourselves an ay-lee-yen barbecue. From the psycho hick, Ed Horton.

Notice: Wides is watching you.

Notice: To Sir Enthios. A new body. Again!

Notice: To Sir Enthios (sort of). Have fun with your new body (heh heh).

Awards to:

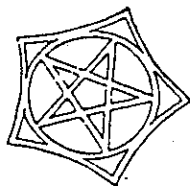
- Unit 6, Company C, Blue Platoon, 101st Airborne
-Pfc Antoine "Blooper" Cooper - Purple Heart
- Cpl Ryan "Beans" Frankle - Purple Heart (posthumous)

-2Lt James "Doc" Jones - Purple Heart (posthumous)
-Pfc Ricky "Grape" Gray - for calling a Major a dick-head on an open frequency. Peeled potatoes, anyone?

-Beware of the Frisky Limpets!

Wanted: MUFFINS as promised 5 months ago by one Love Doctor. Rate of interest: 2 a month. Plus 2 for recent credit transactions, plus original 1 = 13 muffins. Start baking doc!
- Chutney

Notice: The Cabinet needs cushions. It is hard and



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cold up here. Reply to Binky, if you have cushions for I (me) it!

-Do the Frisky Limpets exist? . . . Find out at Dragonfire!

Notice: Wallets love hiding under tent flaps. It's dark and they won't get abused for their money.

Notice: The limpets are back - we're going to clean up, so sod the whole lot of you! (hah - that should scare them).

BITCH CORNER:

-People who don't use indicators correctly.

-People whose watches tick loudly.

-Short-loan photocopy centre.

-Restaurants that don't use real ladies for their ladies rump (mis-advertising), real clowns for Chico the clown, real brownies for choc fudge brownies.

-People who use "cute" as a commendation.

-People who drive orange or pink cars.

-Elvis.

-Blondes.

-People who don't believe me when I tell them I'm not in denial.

-People who try to substitute unreliable real life for good solid fantasy.

-Terry Pratchett Fans who insult Douglas Adams.

-Douglas Adams fans who insult Terry Pratchett.

-Stephen Donaldson.

Notice: Terry Pratchett is god.

Notice: My cat's breath smells of catfood.

Wanted: Competent Doctor or new-fangled psycho-analyst to assist in the treatment of a noble gentleman afflicted with an unusual and persistent coma. Please contact the Marquis of Firle, West Firle, Sussex.

Lost: One memory, slightly used. Last seen in the, umm... Anyone with information please contact the Editor-in-Chief.

Wanted: Experienced, respectable and trustworthy Reeve to oversee Lord's holdings in small village. No magic. Apply Lord Daven of Davenport.

Notice: To Kalian on a bed in some inn somewhere. Have a nice life.

Notice: Kalian. All will be forgiven if you return. I have new recipes. Mistress Brynna.

Free to Good Home: One owl, well-trained (ex-familiar). Fully recovered from recent accident. Also, one miniature dragon, good with children. Completely recovered from recent accident.

Wanted: Giles, previously Reeve of Drakewhistle. Last seen heading for Ashbourne. Warning, he is an unpleasant man, and could be dangerous. Please con-

tact anyone in the village of Drakewhistle.

Wanted: Large smoking oven, suitable for lung-oyster surplice.

Notice: To Nikky van der Walt, I thought you might want to see your name in print in the fabulous CLAWMARKS! K

NOTICE: REWARD for information leading to the whereabouts of Arthur William Dent (possibly an alias. English gentleman. 5'11". Dark hair, thirty years old. Known to be a strong swimmer. Last seen in the vicinity of Lisbon harbour, and thought to be making for Amsterdam. Apply Throckmorton and Pilkingtonwine, Solicitors, London, or the London and Lisbon police, or any official of the Peninsula and Orient Steamship Company.

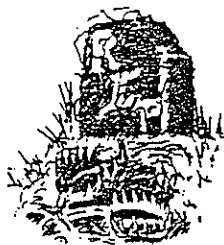
To those who thought the Roman dead was my death. They who deal in death do not die. I watch. Tertius.

The Society Column: A little bird aboard a certain *Eastern*-bound liner tells us that a well-loved *philanthropist* and *peer* of the realm has enlivened his journey with a *romance*. If the lady so distinguished is a little *unequal* in fortune, we are sure it does credit to Lord C-'s *heart*.

For Sale: 500 cans finest grade Knysna smoked oysters.



REST IN PEACE



RIP: The flashbacks, the flashforwards, and all sense of temporal stability for the Main Street Scavengers.

RIP: Most of Unit 6, Company C, 101st Air Cav. Thanks to Cpl Ryan Frankel (the short-timer) and 2Lt James Jones (the rookie nice guy) for giving their all in the cause of dramatictradition. Not that you give a damn - next stop is Viet Nam.

RIP (sort of): Kalian. In Peace, anyway.

RIP: (We think) Araglop. Stepping into strange circles can lead to losing track of your place in the world.

RIP: Several dwarves. Thanks for the armour guys. Heuro.

RIP: One bright and violently blue catawal. Thanks for one bright and violently blue cape.

RIP: Fre Eochar. Mild-mannered mages are more than they seem...

RIP: Leader of the Sharks. Offed by Leif Ruller at 250m with 50 calibre shrapnel, messy!

RIP: Leader of the Sharks. You sure looked funny with no head.

RIP: Fre Eochar. Survived back-stabs, slimy tentacled things, bears in the forest, half deafness, fireball. Shockbolt at point-blank range was another matter...

RIP: Fre Eochar. Malin might miss you, Keira sure as hell won't!

RIP: James Jones. Newbie docs always stand during combat, don't they?

RIP: Lisky Frimpets - The Frisky Limpets.

RIP: Selma/Elouise, never let your progeny back into the nest.

RIP: Mr. Suicide. Don't, I repeat don't, ever duel with Malk, they always cheat!

RIP: Gook sniper. You can run, but we will find you in the mountains. Long live Napalm.

RIP: Nashoba Nawat - Died in the first combat, in the first round, from his own grenade. At least you killed the bad guys...

RIP: Twenty-five Red and White Ravens, only now maintaining radio silence (schmucks).

RIP: Past, present and future Editors of Clawmarks.

RIP: Over half the Elven town-guard of Demitar. Shot, coldballed and finally fireballed (the two survivors kicked to death). Roast in peace you slope bastards. The Brothers of Light.

RIP: Elven courier - didn't see that invisible tripwire, did you? Stupid slope.

RIP: Elven sailor. Bludgeoned to death with a morning star. I love the smell of slope-blood in the morning. The Brothers of Light.

RIP: Two members of Blood Cause, fed alive to wolves. Simply delicious. The Brothers of Light.

RIP: Various swathes of Elven forest - it burns so well on a dry Autumn's day. The Brothers of Light.

RIP: Elven guard, dragged down and butchered as he fled the guardhouse massacre. You can run but you can't hide, slope. The Bothers of Light.

RIP: One pair of Elven ears, blasted off a townsperson. Minor maimings to the other persons in the blast radius. Go home, slopes. The Brothers of Light.

RIP: Four members of Blood Cause, torched in an inn. We jumped on the heads of the survivors, as per standard practice. The Brothers of Light.

RIP: One Blood Cause mage. We cut off his legs and ran away with them. He died, of course. The Brothers of Light.

RIP: One Demon, harried, cornered, brought to ground and slain. The Brothers of Light.



CLASSIFIED!

RIP: Little white people on the ice-pack. We butchered them and used their spears for firewood. The Brothers of Light.

RIP: One tiger, the vicious brute, but I just love the fur. The Brothers of Light.

RIP: One Ice-Elf, beaten to death. Don't try to double-cross the experts. The Brothers of Light.

RIP: Spotlight Junkies, egos on strings, crow's wings, whore's rings and those sorts of things. Long live STAR !!!

RIP: Fre Eochar - death by friendly fire. Pity the Morrigan isn't going to be terribly impressed with your method of death. Ah well, rest in peace anyway.

-Anubis has received into the afterlife his priest and followers. The Guardians of the Gate howl for vengeance.

The Running Dogs hunt.

RIP: Various members of the Cult of Anubis.

RIP: Killegar, loyal servant of the fief of Cavan in Midhe, with followers Sraith, Drumas, Duchar, Cabhan. You are mourned by Lady Siobhan of Cavan and the Sidhe of your land.

RIP: Tertius, necromancer with ambition. Couldn't handle the amulet when he found it. Death by undead horror was appropriate, somehow. P.S. Cute owl.

RIP by fire, yet another Drakewhistle harvest...

OBITUARIES: Sir James Jennings, in St James, London, after strange illness. A well-known explorer, knighted for his discoveries in Central Africa, Sir James has lain in a coma for several weeks, and expired without becoming

conscious. He was a member of Whites and the Explorer's Club, and has left a considerable collection of African artifacts which have been presented to the London Museum. The *Times* extends condolences to friends and relatives.

RIP: Doctor Frederick Morton, officer of the *Carnatic*. Stabbed to death protecting his patients. Glad to go.

REASONS TO HATE THE LURVE DOCTOR:He...

...always gets the bad girls first

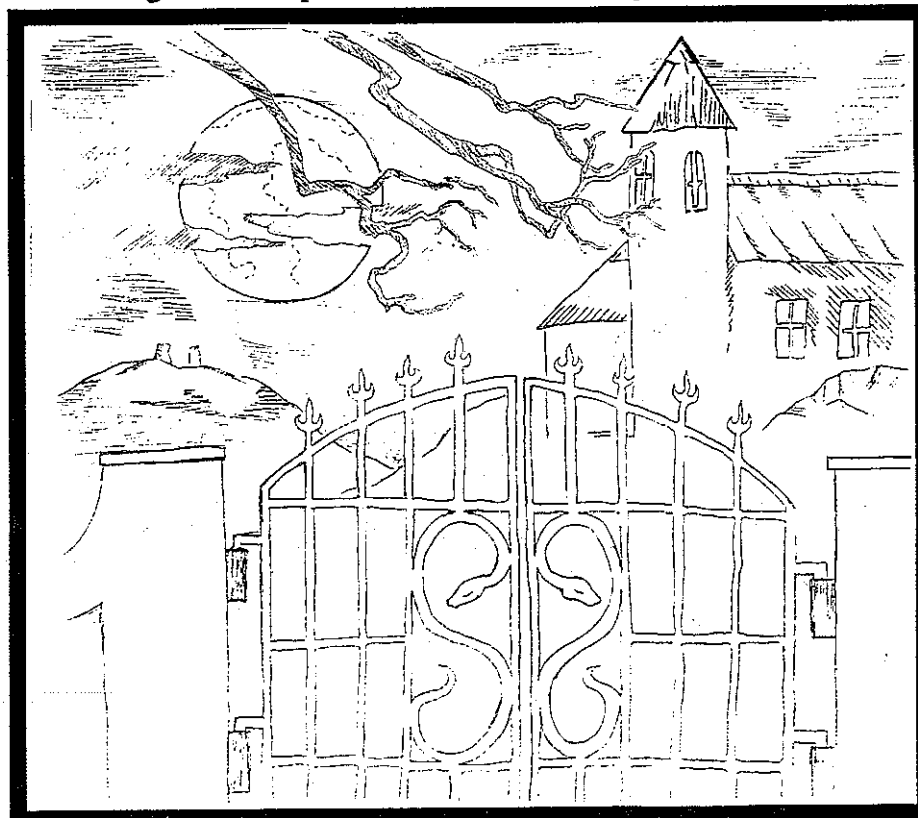
...wears a white coat

...has corny pick-up lines

...doesn't bake the muffins he promised to

...doesn't have tentacles

...has freckles.

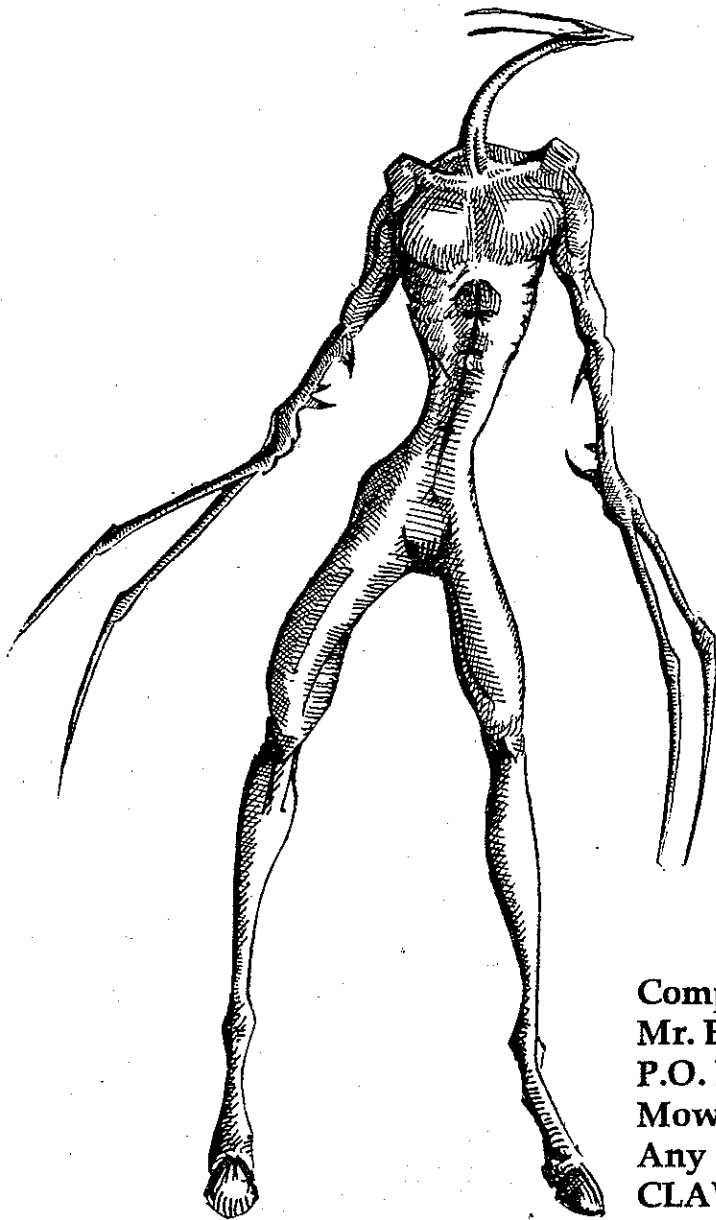


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ARTWORK (in alphabetical order):

AD&D The Lords of Darkness

Ars Magica's The Maleficium

CLAWMARKS: Past Editions

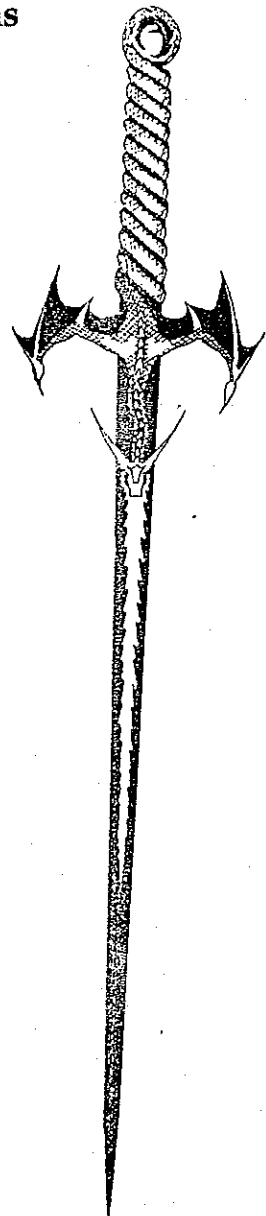
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