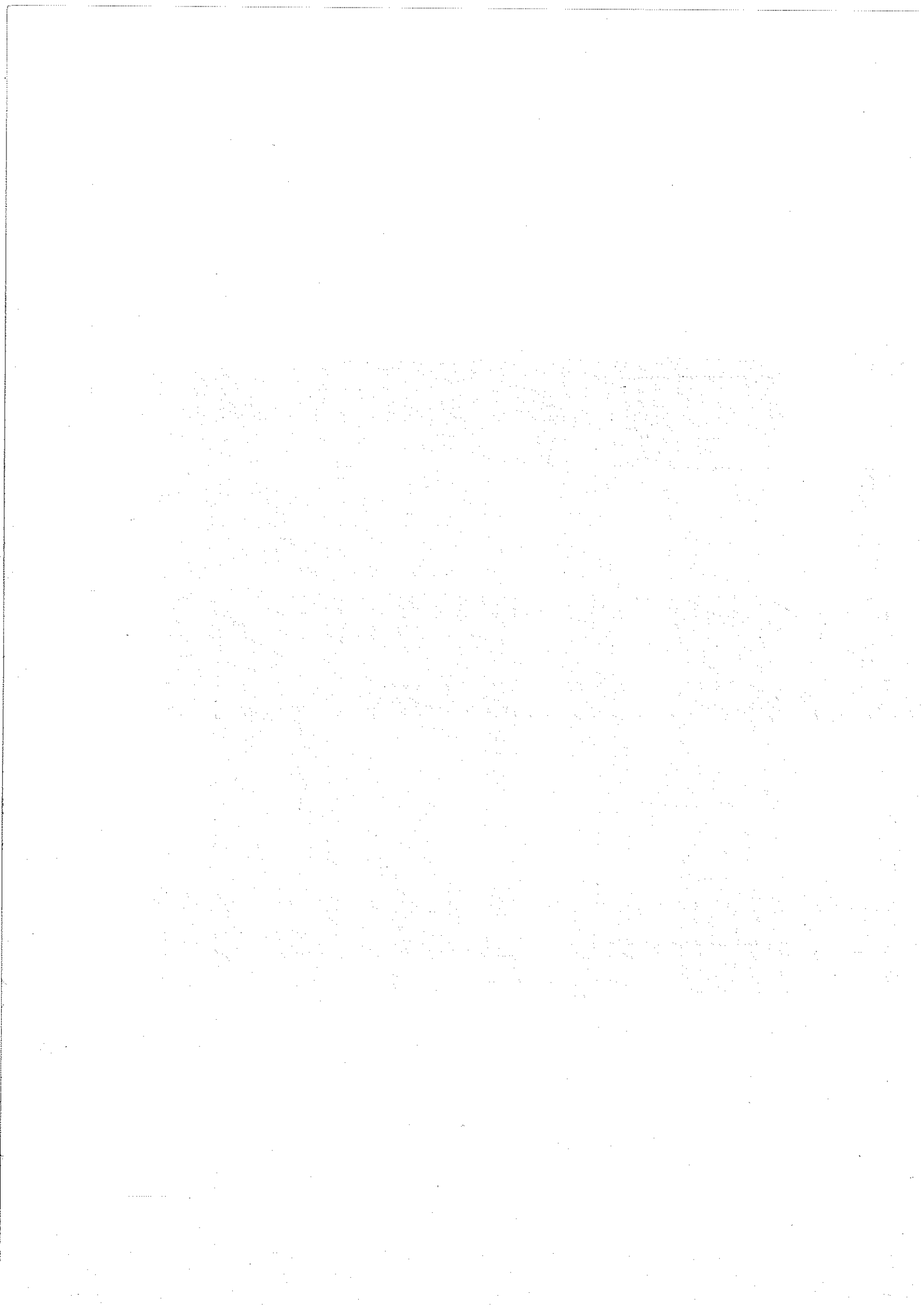


CLAW MARKS XVI





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Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

I dreamt about boils last night. I am very very very glad to be back in this country.

Ha ha ha ha ha!!!

The Plague Carrier

Dear Icky Gangrenous Person

We fail to see the "wider appeal".

Yours Helpfully, Ed Wood and Almondie

Dear Editors

I find the frailty of my friends generally disturbing. They keep on falling down and breaking things. Do you think this has something to do with the increasing amount of pollution in the air of our City, or are they just (sic).

Yours concernedly (but also philosophically)

An Impartial Observer

Dear An

Steel is not strong. Flesh is strong. Watch - come here my child ... ooops, sorry, wrong movie.

Yours Quixotically

Big Ed

Dear Liar (you're totally Partial, you bastard)

The sudden spate of unfortunate wosnames is due to the recent increase in sunspot activity.

By simply covering your head with tinfoil you can avoid further mishap.

Yours Insanely

The Highly-Caffeinated Ed

Dear Ed

I keep seeing this face appear in the paint in the CLAWroom. I feel that this may be some ominous omen, a slowly growing psychic scar.

Signed

Brother Theocracy von Inquisition-To-The-Face

Dear Brother T

The truth hurts. Endure it and keep away from the paint.

Ed

Dear Baby Theo

You're quite clearly a raving lunatic. Lock yourself in a dark cellar and stay there.

Other-Ed.

Dear Editaurus

What is Tag? Can I do it at home? Is there a special license?

Signed

Untagged (this is in no way a collaboration).

Dear Untagged

Tag is the on-campus survival game CLAWs will be playing this year. The object is to "assassinate" target after target. The targets are other participants who are trying to complete their own missions. "Assassinations" are carried out using safe plastic toy guns. A bounty is offered to the winner. Keep an eye on the CLAW noticeboards for details.

Yours

Psycho Eds

Dear CLAWs

What is role-playing?

Clueless

Dear Clueless

You're well-named. Get lost, you wanker.

The Eds and Philip (aggressive)

Dear CLAWmarks

Gary Larson has retired and George Bush will soon be dead. What steps are you taking, etc etc

Yours Faithfully

Mike Tyson

PS I'll do my talking in the ring

Dear Mike

I'm glad you're in America, because I fail to see the "wider appeal".

Yours

Ed

PS Elvis is lord

PPS No he isn't! Andrew Eldritch is! [Other Ed]

Dear Editors

Just as a matter of curiosity, how many of these fine letters were written by you, the editors?

Nosy

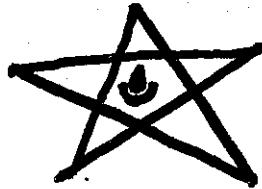
Dear Noseless (a threat)

I'm sorry, citizen, but that is classified information. Please remain where you are.

Assistance is en route from the nearest detention centre.

Yours Fascistly

The Editores



Letter from the Editors

It was with no small amount of trepidation that we began the production of this issue of CLAWmarks. The "number 15" debacle foremost in our minds, we braced ourselves for a total no-show of promised contributions, and a pathetic last-minute scrabbling for filler art as articles whose completion we had repeatedly been assured of failed to materialize. We brooded, we sulked, we ranted, we feared the worst. Additionally, as neither of us had served as main editors of CLAWmarks before, we were certain we would bung something up, even if all went well.

But it was not to be.

Contributors remained faithful to their promises. Deadlines behaved themselves. There was an indefatigable corps of members and non-members who were always ready to step in and help. And it is largely due to their presence that this issue which you hold exists. To them (a more complete list is provided in the back of the magazine) and to the others who all helped us along and promised us chocolate, a pathetically grateful thank you. Whatever it is you're selling, we'll buy a dozen.

Cthulhu for president! Don't settle for the lesser evil!

DYLAN

Cthustin
(Exhaustin?)

PS There should be three names here, but our most valued companion suffered an injury and was unable to help us. Jess, we hope you feel better, and that your arm heals soon.



"Hey Juve. Yeah you! Don't ya know The Dead Snake is our drinking hole? No, Didn't think ya did, ya look new here. I'm Horus, leader of the greatest gang this side of Dust Falls. Lemme show ya 'round."

NECROMUNDA!!!! Played it? then skip to the battle report at the end. Heard of it? then read on to learn more. Never heard of it? then you've obviously had your head in a hole for the last year.

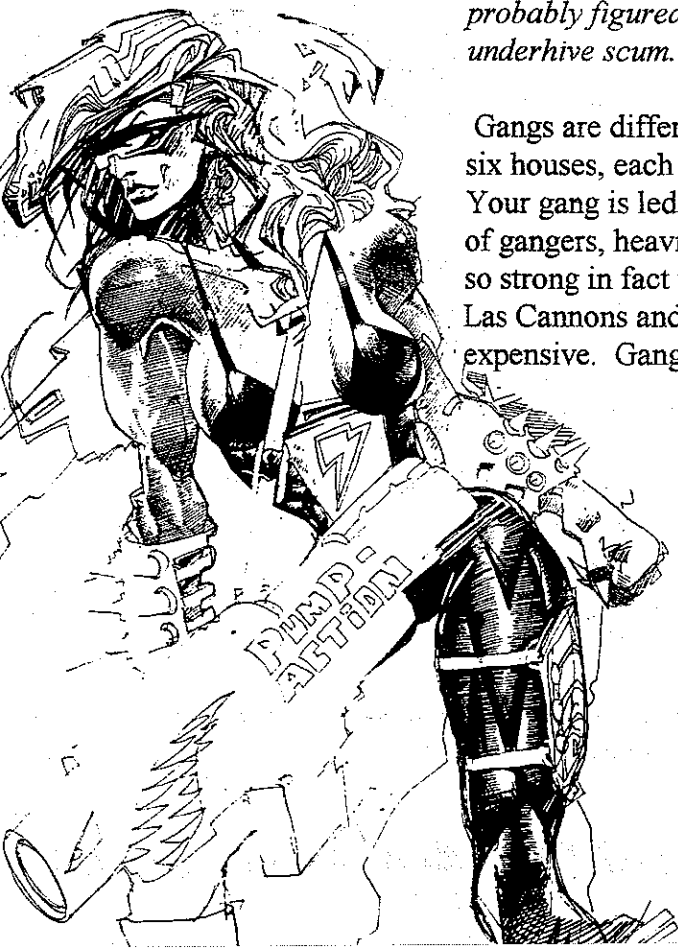
"Down here ya gotta keep yer house spirit alive an join a gang, else ya lose yer willpower an end up like all the other losers in the Underhive, jus' trying to squeeze through life."

In Necromunda you become the leader of a gang who operate in the Underhive. The Underhive is a huge area of rubble and decay where all the dregs of Hive Primus' society collect, either in order to make a name for themselves or to get away from a seedy past uphive. Hive Primus is a huge city, about the size of a country, all rolled up and squished into a needle like tower which is sealed from the dangerous atmosphere of the planet. The highest point of Hive Primus rises 10 miles high, almost into space.

The highest points of the Hive are the most recently built and are inhabited by the nobles. As you move down through the hive people get poorer and living conditions get worse. At the very bottom of the hive the habitat domes are being crushed and are collapsing under the pressure. The air is bad and sewerage and drainage even worse. This is where the game take place.

"Like ya ta meet the Hivelanders. There's Crush, 'e 'andles the big stubber. These are the lads here and this is Old Uncle Rufus, we give 'im money an' 'e runs with us. Zack an' Runt used to be green juves, jus' like yourself. As ya probably figured we're all from house Delaque, 'cept Old Unck, he's just underhive scum."

Gangs are differentiated by the house to which they owe allegiance. There are six houses, each with a different look and set of skills (more on skills late). Your gang is led by a leader model, which represents you. Your gang is made up of gangers, heavies and juves. Heavies are the hulking brutes of Necromunda, so strong in fact that they can be armed with heavy weapons like Auto-cannons, Las Cannons and Missile Launchers. These weapons are powerful but very expensive. Gangers can be armed with basic guns (like shot guns and auto



guns), pistols and hand to hand weapons. Juves are young ganger-wannabes, They are cheap and unskilled, but soon gain experience.

"See the guy with the shotgun? That's Wolf. He's our hand to hand expert and he's an even better shot than me. Not only that but he can shoot that shotgun further than anyone I know. An' Zack there is fast in hand to hand, is good at infiltration and you just can't tie him up, he can escape from any bonds. We've done well over the years, we've got loadsa guns and we've stolen many territories. Yeah we've defiantly become the best gang 'round here."



Necromunda is much like Warhammer 40K. Basically you play on a 4 foot x 4 foot surface with small models that represent members of your gang. You and your opponent take turns in which you may move all your gang, then shoot and then fight in hand to hand. The table is covered with scaled scenery to represent the battlefield, but unlike Warhammer 40K, there are 3-D buildings which allow you to move models up and down levels, over and under things, across walkways suspended high above the ground, and (for instance) to be shot off from buildings and fall to their doom.



I KNEW THE JUDGES WOULD SEAL THIS PLACE OFF REAL SOON. SO I FIGURED THE BEST PLAN WAS TO MOVE IN AS SOON AS I COULD. BEEN HERE FOR THREE WEEKS.

KIND OF DULL, BUT I'LL LIVEN IT UP A BIT NOW.

But Necromunda is not a game of once-off battles (unless you want it to be). No, no! Necromunda comes into its own when the campaign rules are used. As you progress through a campaign your gang earns experience which allows your members statistics to increase and they can gain new skills. Which skills they gain depends on what House they belong to. They can collect injuries too. Some are beneficial, like "Impressive Scars", but most aren't and occasionally members die. But if you collect enough credits from your territories or territories stolen from other gangs, you can recruit new members, buy new guns, or even find something funky down at the trading post.



WHEN THEY KICK AT YOUR FRONT DOOR. HOW YOU GONNA COME?

SIDES IT GAVE ME TIME TO PUT A LITTLE COMPILATION TAPE TOGETHER...

Nothing is more rewarding than taking a gang of juves and turning them into a hardened gang of veterans who chew up and spit out other gangs for lunch. But even if you're a lowly, green gang, fighting the top-dogs gives you substantial experience bonuses.

"Yea Kid, before ya leave sit back an' listen ta some of our tales:

"The game started with the two gangs facing off, readying for a gangfight. The Hivelanders versus their old opponents: An Orlock gang, The Skullsplitters. The battlefield was a bunch of inter-linking walkways, like the metallic thread of a giant concrete spider.

WITH YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD... OR ON THE TRIGGER OF YOUR GUN?



OH MAN

LET'S DO IT.

"The objective for this encounter was simple, just drive the other gang off the turf. The sneaky bastards snuck their Ratskin hired gun up behind Animal before we noticed them - he aimed his shotgun at the back of Animal's head. But we cleverly sneaked Zack over to sort out their Heavy meanwhile.



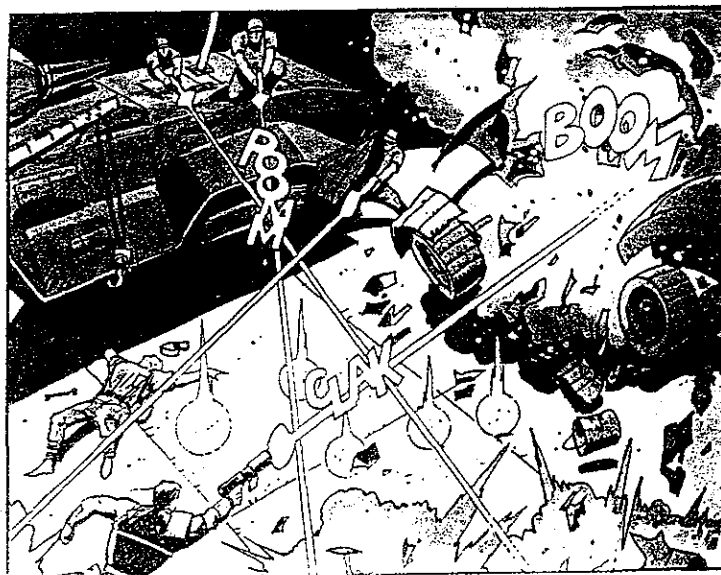
"The battle commenced with the Ratskin firing at Animal at point blank range... and missing! Animal promptly turned around and killed him in hand to hand combat, at this point some of the Skullsplitters climbed out of tunnels and set up in a position to threaten Crush (our heavy). Zack shot their Heavy in the back of the head from one level up but he didn't even flinch as the bullet bounced off his thick skull. Crush failed to deal with the two threatening models and was shot down along with Runt (If you take more wounds than you have, you roll a D6. 1 means you have suffered a flesh wound and you can fight on, 2-5 means you are down and can only crawl at about 2 inches per turn and a roll of 6 means you are automatically out of action. If you are down you get to roll another D6, with the same result, during the recovery phase). To avenge this Wolf gunned down the opposing gang leader, and Animal and Horus caught another ganger in a cross-fire and took him "out of action", leaving him with a spurting chest wound.

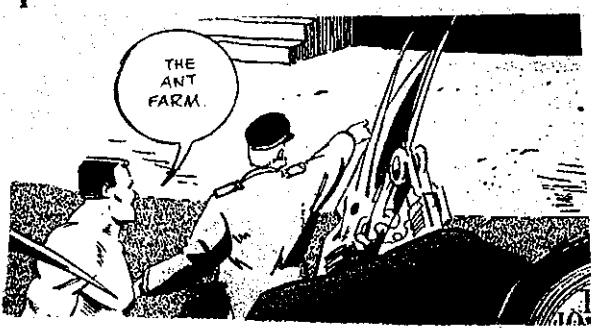
"Zack charged the heavy and managed to defeat him in hand to hand combat, but still failed to wound, and Wolf gunned down yet another ganger. Mean while Runt's wound had become a Flesh wound and he stood up to witness the Skullsplitters running away as they bottled out (conceded).

"And that's how we defeated the Skullsplitters and left them loadsa scars. Well I gotta get going now, got some business to attend to ya know. Look out for yourself kid, and watch out for those Outlanders."

Outlanders is the first rules supplement for Necromunda. It includes new gangs and beasties and allows gangs to become outlawed. It even allows for an arbitrator controlled campaign, where anything can happen.

"But Juve, That's another story...."





7

56 REASONS WHY I HATE...

FRESHMERS



- They don't have Uzis.
- They're silly.
- They eat bananas.
- They're arbitrary.
- They have no resale value.
- They're amazed at the sight of a D4.
- They talk about "classes" and "teachers" all the time.
- They cry when they get lost.
- They play AD&D.
- They have freckles.
- They think the Underhive is where the honey drips out.
- They like things that are cute and furry.
- They think Tim Currie is "cute" in suspenders
- They have no appreciation for expensive drugs.
- They think a baldric is a character from "Blackadder"
- I'm not allowed to leer at them.
- They want a house in the Country.
- They need basic concepts spelled out for them in great detail.
- They think it's cool that Bill Clinton plays the saxophone.
- They think "spell" has something to do with words
- They have a strange fear of what sort of things happen in the CLAW room
- They dress up to come to university
- They think that nights are for sleeping
- They can't pronounce Cthulu
- They don't Gibber... Yet!
- They are naive.
- They like the Green Man
- They write to their relatives
- They don't understand "spon as she iss spokken"
- They grow their hair.
- Free condoms are wasted on them.
- They play with their food
- They think the word "reality" has real meaning
- They live with their parents
- Mommy drops them off outside Outer Limits.
- They wear slippers.
- They trust the Survival Guide.
- They take life way too seriously
- They occupy good table space
- They don't have imaginary friends
- They don't like Disney
- They look ridiculous.
- Many of them drool!
- They make Alan want to "spew chunks"
- They think they are in "big-school" now.
- They are crazed by sex.
- They absolutely, positively, without a doubt, think that they could not, huh-uh, no way, be at the bottom of the food-chain.
- They have morals.
- One becomes nauseous in their presence
- They think Trent Reznor invented alternative music
- They think they discovered alcohol.
- They think White Wolf invented roleplaying.
- They think vampires go "I vont to suck your blood, Blah-Blah" all the time.
- They think they can pass first year without going to lectures
- Their dorkiness legitimises Alan's opinions.

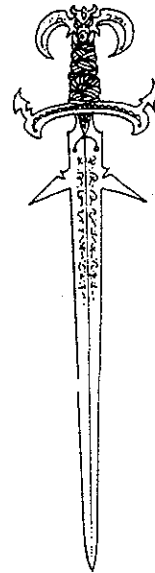
~ The Committee ~

Elected (snigger, snigger) last year, these are the people responsible for CLAW being the wholesome, non-cynical entity that it is today. The AGM, which will be held soon, will decide the new committee for 1997, and so on. Committee members negotiate the CLAW budget from the University, handle society activities during Orientation Week and throughout the year, and run the day-to-day affairs of CLAW. Also, they are responsible for Dragonfire, our annual convention, and the successful operation thereof.

Anyone can run for committee: positions such as Scrivener (Secretary) and the Ad Hoc positions are particularly susceptible to fresher corruption, as all that is required is naive enthusiasm. Elections are decided by votes at the AGM - democracy, rah rah.

The current CLAW heirarch list goes as follows:

- Clawthing: Zara "Delilah" Betts - The Halley's Comet of CLAW, rare and impressive.
- Guildmaster: Dylan "Codger" Craig - Been at this game a while. Can grumble and sweep floors at the same time.
- Scrivener: Jean "Undercover" Hague - Looks normal... CLAW's deep cover operative in Fuller Hall.
- Hoarder of Monies: Patrick "Shylock" Schreiber - He of the explosive automobiles. CLAW's point man on matters of finance.
- Warlord: Duncan "Dale" Sellers - Best Home Page west of the Pecos, (find it at <http://www.cs.uct.ac.za>), and card sharp of note.
- Ad Hoc #1: Wayne "Terminal" Human - The buck stops here, baby... CLAW's favourite Marquardian and generally efficient person.
- Ad Hoc #2: Simon "Boots" Cross - Ich Bin Ein Fish Hoeker. Our resident Elf.
- Librarian: Austin "Goosenargh" Chamberlain : Can tell the difference between an AK47 and an AKM. Tolkein Soc stalwart, and token Goth.



Before the AGM, probably in the first week of Varsity, CLAW will hold it's Preliminary Meeting. This is designed primarily as an introduction to CLAW, in which the new members can familiarise themselves with our twisted view of reality. Additionally, this is a big event in terms of connecting those keen to join Role-Playing campaigns and those willing to run them. This is the responsibility of the Guildmaster throughout the year, but it is at the Preliminary Meeting that the most work gets done. Also, a small discussion of what Roleplaying actually entails in it's various forms is traditional, which explains the whole thing better than any pamphlet can.

Our AGM will follow smartly, at which time the new committee will step up to the mike... and remember, this is our only Annual Gnarliburr Marathon, so make sure your Gnarliburr is healthy and that it's feathers aren't droopy or anything. There's nothing as disappointing as droopy Gnarliburr feathers, believe you me.

There are going to be a host of activities in the year to come, not all of which have been tied to dates yet, but all of which will happen. Our Pentagram parties on the beach are legendary (bring your ID and enough money to bail yourself out of jail), plus we are looking into having weekly video evenings up on campus showing everything from Manga to the Mask. Parties are good - forest parties, nightclub parties, house parties, solstice parties, avalanche parties, member's 18ths and 21sts - and we have 'em as often as we can organise them. Dates to particularly look out for are ICON, the national games and comics convention in Johannesburg in July, and our very own Dragonfire in August. Watch the skies...

The Clawroom

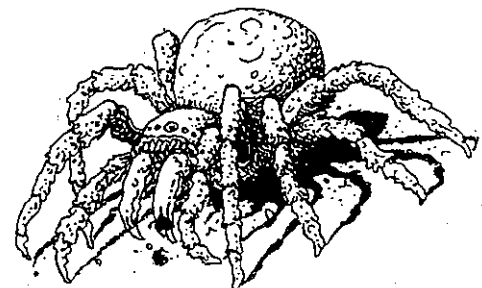
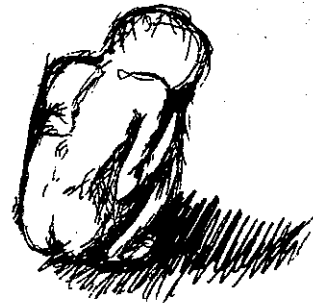
If you don't know where this is yet, why not?

(Sigh)

The Clawroom is our society room on Campus, reserved for the use of our members. With a good view of the plaza and close proximity to Captain Dog's, it's a fine place with lots of coffee and weird people like you in it. If you really don't know where it is, find the CLAW Orientation Week stall at the cafeteria-level entrance to the Student's Union and ask for the guided tour.

Alternatively, head for the corner of the Student's Union closest to Jameson steps - that's it.

The room is the home of the CLAW library, and is available for your use all day. The Inner Sanctum is locked at night and over the weekends for security, but keys can be obtained from the Head Librarian or other Hierarchs for the cost of cutting a new key if you want access during these times. Keys to the library are also given out on a discretionary basis to those lucky souls who wish to become Librarians (see later).

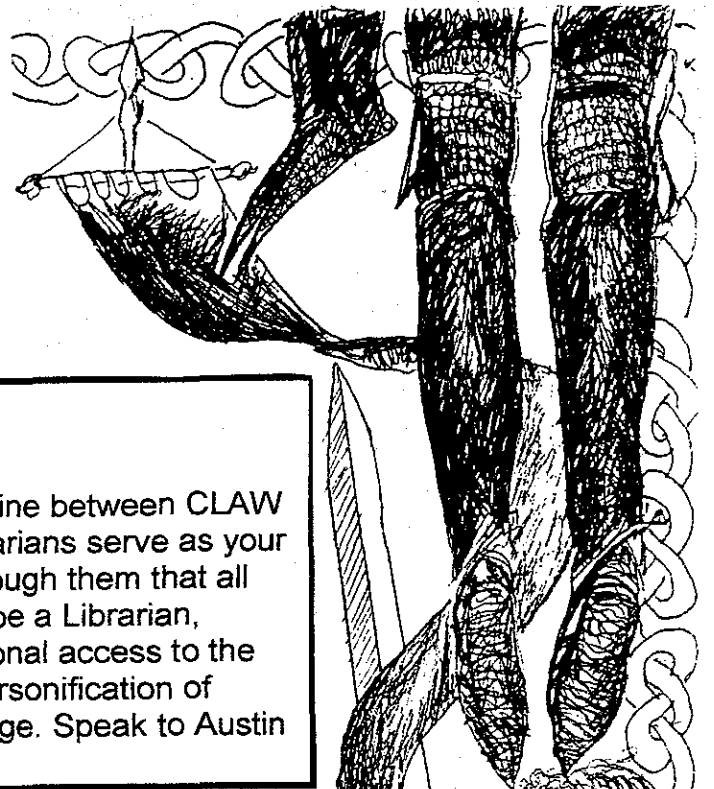
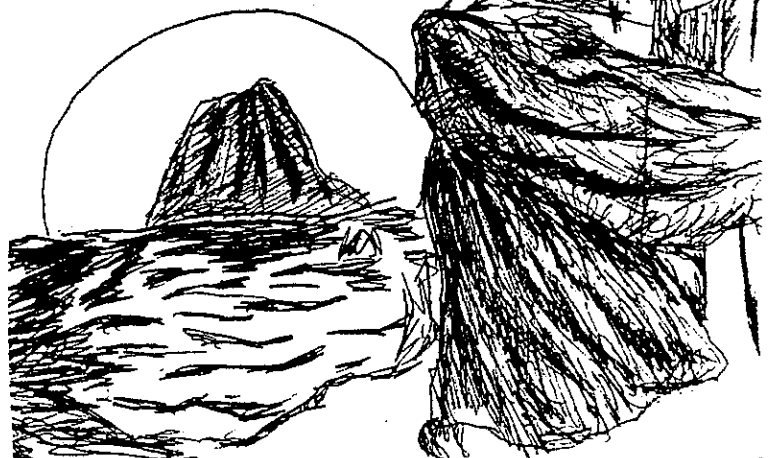


Custodes Librii

Or "Librarians" as we sometimes call 'em. The thin black line between CLAW and illiteracy such as has not been seen since 1988! Librarians serve as your spirit mediums with the CLAW library ghosts, and it is through them that all withdrawals and returns are made. Anyone may apply to be a Librarian, thereby gaining themselves perks such as unlimited personal access to the library and so on, but the Heavy Discipline Party in the personification of Austin will look with wrath on any transgressions of privilege. Speak to Austin if you are interested.

House Rules

1. **Absolutely NO Morris Dancing.** Yes, you with the hankie on your head, we're talking to you.
2. **No Smoking.** This is a UCT Rule (inside buildings), but we only enforce it before and during lunch, when the room is most crowded. Also, if you do want to smoke after lunch, the only place you can do it is the Antechamber.
3. **No Littering.** This is our rule, actually, not some namby-pamby UCT bylaw. UCT will just send you to disciplinary court when you break bylaws - **WE** will shoot you and hang your carcass out for the crows. Two bins should be in the room, use 'em.
4. **Priorities, priorities.** The room can be booked for afternoon RPG's by any member. This means that they have absolute and total rights to the room.
5. No gumboot dancing, either.



The CLAW Library

Now this is where things get interesting. We have at least 200 items in our library, not including modules and magazines, which probably pushes it up to around 500. These are all available for members' use as reference material, or just to peruse. This includes many different RPG systems, all the way from Toon to Vampire, covering most of the RPG genres. Donations or loans from members are welcome, this is one way that our library expands.

Any member can join the Library for a joining fee of R5,00. Once you have agreed to the rules and paid us money, you will be issued 3 cards which are valid for a year. Items may be loaned from the library on a one-for-one basis using these cards, for a few weeks. Items that are currently "out" can be reserved for you by a librarian.

We are looking into expanding the library into including scenery, terrain, buildings and miniatures for RPG's and wargames. If this does happen, the rules will most likely work out slightly differently, but we will keep you posted.

CLAWMARKS

What you are holding. You did **buy** this issue, right, Right?

We produce CLAWMARKS (our society magazine) twice a year, once for Orientation Week and once for Dragonfire. Contributions in the form of articles, artwork, and classified ads are welcome throughout the year, so if there are points you'd like to opine on, get typing. There is usually a Forum section in which proponents of various views get up on soapboxes and argue, but we are just such a harmonious bunch this year that no-one disagreed about anything. Famous CLAW arguments of the past revolved around "issues" like male chauvinism in RPGs, whether Cyberpunk was a valid role-playing system or just an excuse for gore, whether there is such a thing as a "CLAW mentality", Card Games vs RPGs, and so on.

Notice Boards

They're boards, and we notice 'em.

Ha-ha indeed. CLAW has two sets of notice boards. One is at the bottom of the SU building, near the vending machines, on your left as you walk in from the Plaza. The second is inside the CLAWroom. All society activities will be advertised on these boards (as well as on any surface on campus that will hold Prestik - we love the smell of photocopy ink in the mornings), and any notices you'd like to put up can be posted at these two locations. Other ways of contacting the committee, at least, will be available at the stand. Most of us have email addresses, all of us have phones, and some of us hear voices in our heads telling us to do things...

Ed's Note: *Jessica Tiffin and Andrew Sturman are old-time CLAW members who have remained in the fold many years after graduating. While many members drift away once their youth disappears, these two and others like them have stuck with their prodigy (CLAW) faithfully, usually in positions of great respect and adoration. In fact, we are planning to commission idols in their honour on the Plaza any day now. Jessica describes herself as "positively ancient", and is currently a PhD student and tutor in the English Department. She joined CLAW in it's first year (1989), and has since served as Secretary, Secretary's Secretary, Clawthing, and "executive consultant". She likes cats. Andrew is "three months younger than Jessica", and is an envied corporate citizen working with computers. He was a founder member of CLAW and thereafter Guildmaster, and long-time tournament organiser. The following is a transcript copied from the "X Tapes", made in Rondebosch sometime since the drowning of Atlantis.*

(Garbled sounds here - possibly wolves?)

Andrew: I'd just like to state that I'm perfectly happy to co-operate with this interview, and that there's no need to twist my arm like you did Jess'.

Clawmarks Interviewer (CI): Heh, heh. OK, Question the first: How did each of you fall in with CLAW?

Jess : (laughter) Do you want the expurgated version, the tactful version, or the truth?

CI: Ah, our listeners are of course interested only in the truth!

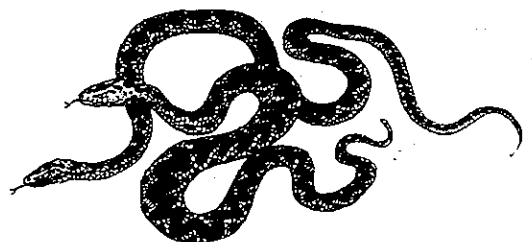
Jess: It all hinged on the fact that I was the first year Greek & Roman history class medallist. At the class medallist luncheon, in the Classics department, I met Kate Gillman, who at that stage was going out with Giles Embleton [Another Founder Member - Ed.]. Happening to mention to her that I had done a little bit of role-playing before, she said "Oh, my boyfriend does that" and gave me the name of Anton Strydom, who lived in Rosebank Res. So, it was during the 10-day vac of my second year at university that, trembling almost audibly, dressed in pastels and wearing a crucifix, I wandered into Rosebank. Six months later I was wearing black, a member of CLAW, and role-playing several times a week, etc.

CI: Living in Tugwell all the while, might I add. And you, mister Sturman? How did you fall so far, so fast?

Andy: Trying to remember how I met Johnno... it was all his fault, as I recall.

Jess: He was the one who used to play a mutant werehamster.

(audible groans)



Andy: Yes, I was becoming quite convinced that I was the only role-player in Cape Town... a lot of my friends who I'd played with had gone into Engineering in a big way that year and given it up, so I was overjoyed to meet Johnno and learn about these role-players from Jo'burg. They were all pretty much nested into Rosebank Res at that time. Yes, I met Johnno and got on very well. Remember being heartily slapped on the back by Richard Pruss.

Jess: Who looks far too much like Rutger Hauer for his own good, actually.

Andy: Yes, I was quite in awe. Together with Richard, Johnno, Giles and Anton - and Anthony, who I'd played with as a kid, and there we were. We pretty much started the whole thing up.

Cl: What are the most significant changes you've seen in role-playing in general since you started?

Both: More women!

Andy: More than one woman was immensely healthy for the society.

Jess: I played in the first CLAW tournament in 1989, there must have been twenty teams of between four and six people in the room, and I was the only female.

Cl: What a living hell, if I might say so.

Jess: Well, it helped me survive on instances in which I should have died.

Cl: Aha! Selective emancipation! Equal rights only when it suited you!

Jess: Well, of course I wasn't "enlightened" back then (grins).

Cl: Anything else?

Jess: Well, more role-playing systems around, not just AD&bloody-D. Diversity is a good thing. There are so many interesting settings you can play in these days.

Cl: Good point. As for the next question - Fondest memories? Specific reminiscings that made you grin?

Jess: But there are so many! (laughs) Umm, in company with certain other of CLAW members... this was illegal, so pretend you didn't hear it... in the dead of the night -

Andy: (interrupting) Do you want to turn that tape off?

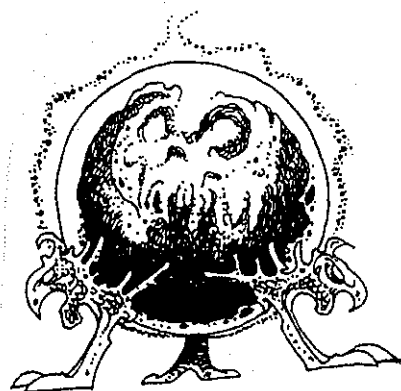
Jess: - removing a large potplant from a suburban -

(More garbled sounds, continuing for some time)

Jess: - call them "Brother".

Cl: Anything to top that, Andrew?

Andy: I think the first Fresher's year, 1989, the first time we were out in the Plaza - the single concentration of black clothing anywhere on the Plaza - the His People idiots shouting : "Jesus Loves You" in our faces.



CI: What expressions did they have on their faces?

Andy: Rapt fervour.

Jess: Constipation.

(chuckles and general hilarity)

Jess: And having them come into the Clawroom and promising to pray for us. Carlo always said that it attacks you on the astral plane to have Christians praying for you.

CI: Like some sort of gooey psychic mucus all over your silver cord, or something. Additionally - and again, there must be many candidates for this answer - worst memories of CLAW?

Jess: There really aren't many. Really. It's been fun.

CI: You're too nice.

Jess: Not really. "When Dragons Die" [Dragonfire module from 1995 - Ed.] is probably the worst. It's the bit I wish I'd never had anything to do with, it's the bit I don't like my name associated with...

Andy: In 5 years as tournament co-ordinator and DM briefer, my face always falls when I see a certain unmentionable DM...

All: Ah! We know him, etc.

Andy: ...and what he does to our beautiful modules.

Jess: This was the gentleman who left the last section off "When Dragons Die"...

Andy: Yes, and read the DM's summary to the players despite the big legend "Do Not Read This To The Players" emblazoned over that section.

CI: Truly a talented individual. What do you see as the future for CLAW in the final bits of this millennium?

Jess: Well, it has a few options. It could degenerate into a card-playing society, which would be tragic. But I think it has some bloody good people in it now, so it could go from strength to strength. I think that our relationship with SAGA, for instance, is a good thing.

CI: What do you consider to be the biggest threat to good role-playing in CLAW currently; White Wolf or Wizards of the Coast?

Jess: White Wolf! Actually, I suppose they're about equal. Card games are taking away people who might otherwise be role-playing, but that's probably a debatable point. White Wolf encourages the kind of role-playing I don't care for - this is a personal hobbyhorse - I think that 90% of role-players are incapable of reproducing the inhuman motivations of their inhuman characters. It degenerates into a power trip - I mean, your basic AD&D munchkin game is enough of a power trip anyway without White Wolf legitimising that style of play and calling it "role-playing".

Andy: They're not alone, though. There are all those systems like Nephilim, Whispering Vault...

Cl: There will always be fringe systems, advocating a different way of looking at role-playing, it's just that White Wolf is so widely played. Next question - what do you think about Bob Dylan?

Jess: I don't think much about him at all really.

Andy: I'm sorry, but I'm sworn to secrecy on that point.

Cl: And lastly - if some weird genie gave you just one wish - between you - for CLAW, what would it be?

Andy: Between us?

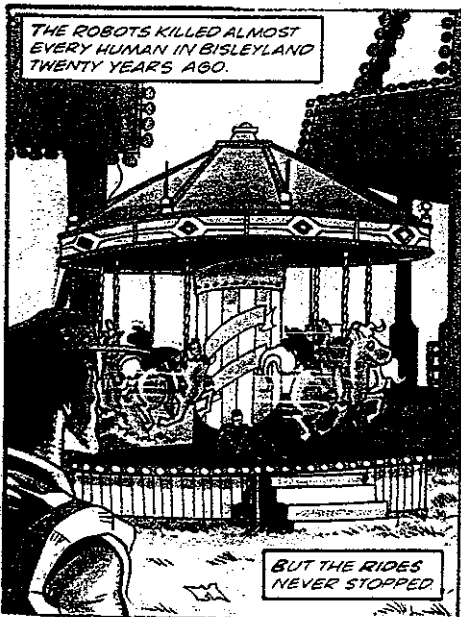
Cl: Yes, just the one.

Jess: That it always contains a small group of committed people who are willing to get the job done.

Andy: World domination?

Jess: That we have already.

(Garbled sounds return until end of tape)



Dragonfire 1996

or, What do you mean, you haven't finished yet!?

The best (or most vivid) memories that tournament organisers have of their tournaments tend to be the points where things went wrong. In 1996 Dragonfire had several points like that ...

Dragonfire 1996 was touted (truthfully) as the largest Dragonfire ever, with five tournaments, four LARPs, wargames, and card-game tournaments. It was run over a long weekend to accommodate all of these events. There were also several modules from ICON (thank you SAGA) and it was all started with a banquet on the Thursday night. The banquet was held in the Mowbray Town Hall and generally went well, except for the caterer wearing a tuxedo, which jarred somewhat with the clothing of the attendees. Dragonfire 1996 also saw much wider sponsorship, with several game companies, computer stores and a pizza restaurant supplying prizes.

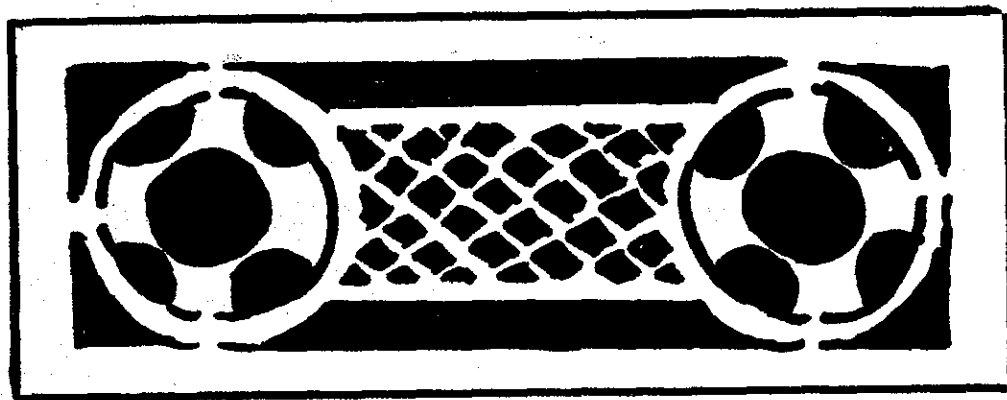
The first day of the tournament proper went surprisingly well, given the number of events being run. In fact, few vivid memories remain, so it must have gone very well ...

In the morning was the Pyrates module and the pirate costume competition. Due to a bizarre case of morphic resonance or parallel evolution or something, a film came out on circuit at about the same time with a disturbingly similar plot to the module. Legal proceedings have been instituted against the film company involved. The Pyrates module was extremely amusing to onlookers, with numerous "Aaaarr" being voiced and wild imitation of swordfighting. The costume competition was rather disappointing, with only a few costumes visible. The prize for best pirate costume eventually went to Dylan Craig, the writer of the Pyrates module.

Also in the morning was the M:tG colours tournament, but this totally biased author has no recollection of what happened or who won.

In the afternoon the Cthulhu module went generally painlessly, despite some tension between the designers. The game itself was enjoyed by all those who played, and various mishaps with eldritch horrors and flare guns amused the scorers no end.

The evening was reserved for the creatures of the night and the first two LARPs. The Vampire module All Hallows Eve was moderately well attended, but the Vampire costume competition was very poor, with only one person having gone to any effort in their costume. The first two LARPs were the Marie Celeste, kindly organised by Shadow of the Mountain (thanks, Mark) and A Falling Out, a beginners LARP written by several CLAW members. Marie Celeste saw great hostage scenes and underhanded dealings, and A Falling Out is memorable for Miami being nuked.



Saturday was when Things Started to Go Wrong.

The AD&D module in the morning went very well ... so well, in fact, that one of the designers (who shall remain nameless) decided to allow it run to on longer than allotted, throwing the whole shcedule out (you know who you are. You have yet to pay). As a result, the MERP module Hand of the Dead started later and was run in a frantic and confused rush. Despite this, it too was successful.

The confusion meant that the prizegiving ran into the LARP time, and the fact that the chief designer of the Cedar Falls LARP was at that moment stuck in the traffic after a cursed rugby match in Newlands didn't help either. But the tournament organisers were not dismayed, and after much frenzied organisation the LARPs started about an hour late. Both, however, ran without a hitch and created some Vivid Memories (tm). (The writers of Cedar Falls are still surprised).

After the insanity of Saturday, Sunday was intended as a relaxing, slow calm day of CCG tournaments and, for the die-hard role-players, ICON modules. This was in error. Sunday went by in the same sense that a chicken flies: it happened, OK; but it was graceless and amusing to those watching. But success happened, and after several ... difficulties, everyone was glad to descend on Pizzazz for the post-convention dinner, and give other people problems for a change.

So, in the general sense, Dragonfire 1996 happened without serious mishap. Those of us who organised know the truth, and we're still going to run Dragonfire this year. We're all mad.



A NEW TRADITION FOR MAGE: THE ASCENSION

Note: This is intended as a joke. Do not take any offence at this, please :) The stuff below mainly reflects how I see things, so there are probably some bits I got wrong

CLAWMEMBERS

Clawmembers are a small tradition, originally formed as a spin-off of the Virtual Adepts, Verbena and Hollow ones. They have also been influenced by the Sons of Ether, but are generally weary of the Celestial Chorus. Some suspect that they are composed of Tradition mages and orphans who have gone Mauruder, while others claim that they are Nephandi, and in service to their dark lords. Most CLAWmembers would probably say that they are both.

Philosophy: While they don't really have a unified philosophy, most Clawmembers seem to hold personal freedom in high esteem, and seem to consider imagination important in everyday life.

Organisation: The Clawmembers are one of the most disorganised groups in the WoD, although they are, at least in theory, lead by a Clawthing, which is elected every Year. They are also heavily influenced by Jessica, an oracle of Entropy.

Meetings: Although few regular meetings are held, most Clawmembers can be found in the Clawroom most of the time, rendering organised meetings obsolete.

Initiation: Most Clawmembers are already awakened when they join, but those that are not are generally awakened through an introduction to Role-Playing. The way this is often conducted is by the mentor inviting the acolyte to a role-playing session, during which the new mages avatar contacts him as one of the NPCs in the game.

Chantry: The Clawmember Chantry is the Clawroom, which is located at the upper campus of the university of Cape Town. In the Umbra, it is positioned near the sphere realm of Entropy, which goes some way towards explaining its appearance.

Acolytes: Role-players, generally rather weird people

Sphere: CLAWmembers do not have a specific sphere, due to the variety of influences. Most CLAWmembers seem to have at least a minimal grasp of Mind and Entropy, and generally avoid Vulgar effects.

Foci: Clawmembers need to be wearing at least one article of black clothing in order to be able to perform their Magick, their other foci include: Caffeine - Forces & Life, Music - Time, Role-Playing - Prime & Spirit, Trench Coat - Mind, Dice-Entropy, Car-Correspondence, Speaking on esoteric subjects - Matter





Character Creation: Most Clawmembers have a concept of Student. Mental Traits and Knowledges tend to be primary. Common backgrounds include: Dream, Avatar and Arcane. No CLAWmember has resources above 1.

Quote: "Reality is for people with no imagination"

Stereotypes: I have presented these in the following format: The first passage represents the opinion of a typical Clawmember, while the second is the opinion a representative of the group has of Clawmembers.

Akashic Brotherhood: "They have some cool moves, but generally too dull"

"They look within, which is a good thing... However, the things they see there worry me"
(Hao Shi-Yen, Master of Mind, Akashic Brother)

Celestial Chorus: "I never really liked priests, anyway"

"The one works in mysterious ways, even they must serve a purpose in its plan, although what that purpose is utterly beyond me"
(Jeanine Mellon, Exarch)

Cult of Ecstasy: "Great parties... Too hippie-like though"

"They are cool, they know how to have fun"
(John Cant, Adept of Time)

Dreamspeakers: "These guys should visit the real world every once in a while"

"Although some of them understand the power of Gaia, they are still overly concerned by the material world"
(He-who-runs-with-wolves, Dreamspeaker Shaman)

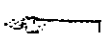
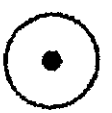
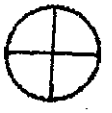
Euthanatos: "These guys are scary, they have some interesting theories though"

"I have yet to meet one of them who needs the good death"
(Irving Sepak, Euthanatos Master of Entropy)

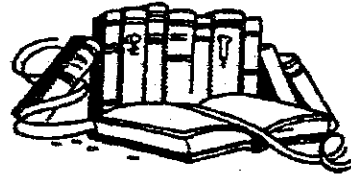
Hollow Ones: "So much like us... Just a bit more normal"

"They seem to appreciate the darker things in life, like ourselves"
(Neville Sinclair)

Order of Hermes: "So... This is what playing too much Ars Magica does to you?"



The Bard's Best Tomes



Great news, Master, calls the Scribe. We have once more a request from those who wish to hear your words and drink in your wisdom. Together with the drivel, he adds under his breath.

Great news? asks the irate Bard. Why and wherefore is this great news? Have I not enough and more than enough work to do? May I not be granted peace and quiet for even such a short span of time? Can you not... Indeed it is great news, interrupts the Scribe before the Bard falls into one of his lengthy monologues. Would you not give the seekers of wisdom the benefit of your vast experience? And, he mutters to himself, we all know just how much you love to hear yourself talk. Well, muses the Bard. For once you are correct, Scribe; I would be neglecting my duty did I not speak to all of what I know.

And therefore, once again I present the Bard's Best Tomes for your edification. But since I am indeed pressed for time, you may find this article somewhat shorter than usual. My apologies, but life is like that...

Let me begin with Tom Deitz's **Above the Lower Sky** and its sequel, **The Demons in the Green**. Set in the near future (2024) in a somewhat idealized Mexico - the underlying premise being the invention of valuable technology by Native Americans and the consequent rise to power of their tribes, coupled with ecological awareness - Deitz makes a valiant attempt at combining technology and magic. A somewhat tired old formula, which unfortunately is made even more tired through Deitz's by now well-used and predictable style of writing and plot creation. And Deitz's integration of Native American and Irish myths and folklore is interesting, but since he used the same idea for his Otherworld series (of which there are seven books, beginning with **Windmaster's**

Bane and ending with **Dreamseeker's Road**) it is becoming a touch worn now.

On the other hand, the books are easy reading and do not require great efforts to understand, so they make good holiday material. Potboilers, these could be classified as, but moderately good ones.

Tell them what they are about, foghead, says the Scribe.

Hrmpf.

Since I do not wish to spoil the story, let me only say that it involves a great number of sea-dwelling shapechangers and (again!) a dire threat to all of humanity. Sigh.

It strikes me that I could attempt to compare Tom Deitz to William Gibson's **Virtual Light**, which is placed in a California split into North and South states following the havoc of the turn of the millennium. However, since Gibson does not deal with magic a comparison is hard, except that both Gibson's style and his visualization of a future society are far more impressive in their quality than Deitz's. I do have my doubts whether technology can advance to the state described in **Virtual Light** in less than ten years (the book is dated 2005) - but hey, you never know...

Most fascinating I found the way in which **Virtual Light** formed a bridge between the present and the world described in **Neuromancer**, **Count Zero**, and **Mona Lisa Overdrive**. Gibson has done an excellent job in **Virtual Light** of hinting just sufficiently at the way in which technology and society are developing to create a clean link to the cyberspace world of **Neuromancer**.

Well? asks the Scribe.

Well what? snaps the Bard?

Plot? Storyline? Characters?

Look, you parchment-waster, says the Bard, why should I reveal everything? Then there is

no reason the read the book, right? I merely give my evaluation of the quality, no more, no less. So don't bother me with expectations of plot synopsis and the like.

My my, grumpy, aren't we?

Although Tad Williams wrote **Caliban's Hour** three years ago, I have only now been able to read it, and found it most pleasant and stimulating. It is the story of Prospero, Miranda, and Caliban (for the uneducated: from the Other Bard's **The Tempest**) but told from Caliban's perspective. Indeed, a very intriguing analysis of what might have happened. Who do you believe, Prospero (who most certainly was the one who told their version of the story to the Other Bard), or Caliban, whose has been maligned all this time?

*No plot descriptions? jibes the Scribe.
Silence! I can be inconsistent if I wish to be!*

For those who enjoy twists and convolutions, you may be tempted to try Dave Duncan's **The Hunter's Haunt**. A sequel to **The Reaver Road** only in that it features Omar the Storyteller, **The Hunter's Haunt** is almost a Canterbury Tale. Seven travellers are caught in an inn during a storm, and (coincidence?) the tales they tell weave together in a most curious fashion. Though Dave Duncan cannot claim to be a brilliant writer, **The Hunter's Haunt** is both enjoyable and unusual.

Unfortunately the same cannot be said for his **Past Imperative**, Round One of The Great Game. Wait, do not misunderstand me - the books is pleasant reading, if you feel bored on a rainy day - but it lacks life. The characters feel like puppets, and though there is a modicum of originality it is lost in a flood of unnecessary words. Perhaps writers should forget about filling the 450-page quota, and rather concentrate on good writing - Patricia McKillip is a prime example.

*Patricia McKillip again!? asks the Scribe.
My hand is sore from writing her name so often.*

Ha! There you have proof of why you are only a Scribe and nothing more. Had it never occurred to you that you write - if you call your scrawlings that - her name so often because she is so good?

*Scawling? screeches the Scribe, outraged.
What about you? Why don't you write all this yourself, eh? Monkeys could do better than you!*

The Bard grins, happy at having been able to needle the Scribe, and continues to work

Hmm, where was I? Oh yes, prime, and probably the best. Her latest book is **Winter Rose**, which should be here soon (ie within the next six months, with any luck). The latest one available is **The Book of Atrix Wolfe** - do I really need to rant and rave about brilliance, originality, and the like? If you care for such, see **ClawMarks** IV, VII, XI, and XII. For those who have not yet read Patricia McKillip I can only say that she writes some of the most original, enthralling, and, in short, best books around.

From the enthralling to the good. Orson Scott Card's **Alvin Journeyman**, the fourth book of Alvin Maker, is exactly that - good. To be honest, I had slightly higher hopes after reading the first book, but perhaps I just expected something different from what O. S. Card intended. Never try to second-guess an author...

Still, **Alvin Journeyman** seems to me to digress a bit from the original tale. Has Card a plan he intends to follow, or is he just adding parts to the story as he goes along, and hopefully will arrive somewhere before the series is ten books long?

Speaking of ten books, I am forced to make mention of Robert Jordan, whose seventh book of **The Wheel of Time**, **A Crown of Swords**, appeared on the market a while ago. Those who are unfamiliar with **The Wheel of Time** I would advise to read the first book, **The Eye of the World**, which is excellent, but after this it gets rough. Each of the books is between 600 and 900 pages long, and the story is not finished yet. Currently, Robert Jordan intends ten books; we'll see whether he'll be able to wrap things up by then.

Admittedly, I have not yet had the courage to pick up **A Crown of Swords** and read it, even though it has been on my shelf for half a year. However, that is not exactly Jordan's fault - I am sure that once I begin reading I will be unable to stop, and then will have to read the other six books again so I remember what was going on. And reading 5000 pages or more takes just too much time...

Oh, as if you had anything else to do. The Scribe glowers at the Bard. All you do all day is bury your nose in tomes.

At least it pays the bills, says the Bard.

Oh no, it doesn't. It's my copying, binding, and selling that pays the bills. Do you know how hard it is to get good vellum these days? That's your problem, says the Bard. Mine is to write this, and that is what I am trying to do.

Well, I have not much more to say, really. The last book on my list is Freda Warrington's **Darker than the Storm**, a kind of intermediate in the Blackbird series but not really connected to it. Briefly, it occurs in the span of time between the second and third Blackbird book, though it is not necessary to have read any of them. It deals with Prince Ashurek and a strange world he is drawn into, a world on the edge of collapse. Warrington's characterizations are a touch too much on the predictable and archetypal side, and though the book is an acceptable interlude I would not call it great, either.

Well, enough of that, sighs the Bard. I really have to depart now. Scribe, just make a dozen copies and hand them to the usual people. A dozen copies? Do you know how long that will take? And how much vellum I will need? Have you not heard a word I said about expenses? But the Bard is gone already.

For those who are curious, why do I seldom if ever give more detailed plot descriptions? Simple - if you want to know, read the book, and if you don't have the time, just read the back cover.

And since I have been talking so much of Patricia McKillip, I think it appropriate to present you with a list of her books (not all of which are available anymore, sadly).

The Riddle-Master Trilogy:
The Riddle-Master of Hed
Heir of Sea and Fire
Harpist in the Wind

The Sorceress and the Cygnet
The Cygnet and the Firebird

The Forgotten Beasts of Eld
The Book of Atrix Wolfe
The Changeling Sea
Fool's Run
The Night Gift



2bit's Tour of the Internet

Roleplaying and the Internet

This list is the result of a late-night tour through the dank, dripping byways of the Internet, during which I searched out places where esoteric knowledge is hidden. I have chronicled the places that I found in rough categories, and attached a short description to each entry so that you can decide if you would like to visit them. When typing in the addresses, remember to preserve the capitalisation. Also, what looks like an empty space is in fact an underscore (_).

Disclaimer: If you're not using Netscape, the addresses supplied will not necessarily work.

General

http://www.yahoo.com/Recreation/Games/Role_Playing_Games/

Yahoo's index of all topics relating to RPGs. This was my starting point

<http://www.webrpg.com/>

An index of RPG sites, companies, tools and utilities. WebRPG also runs surveys, and has a discussion forum. WebRPG seems to focus mostly on AD&D, although it does have a lot of other stuff as well.

<ftp://ftp.funet.fi/pub/doc/games/roleplay/INDEX.html>

Detailed index to the funet RPG archive. This is a large and comprehensive collection of text and software relating to roleplaying. All of it is available for download.

NB. The index is very long. Everything is organised by category, and also by system.

Maps

<http://www.irony.com/webtools.html>

Irony Games provides a truly excellent service on this page: annotated maps of buildings, villages, cities, worlds and more. They have literally hundreds of maps. What's best is that you can download them.

iG also provides other free RPG tools, and has an index of tools made by other people.

<http://www.lysator.liu.se/~johol/fwmg/fwmg.html>

Another excellent map generator. The Fractal Worldmap Generator produces high quality maps in a variety of projections. You can specify the percentages



of ice and water covering the world. The source code and software is available for download at
<ftp://ftp.funet.fi/pub/doc/games/roleplay/programs/mapping/worldgen.zip>

<ftp://ftp.funet.fi/pub/doc/games/roleplay/programs/mapping/index.html>
 Index of an FTP archive of mapping utilities. The same site is listed under
General

Companies

<http://www.fasa.com/>
 Home page of FASA Corporation, authors of BattleTech, Earthdawn and Shadowrun

<http://www.ironcrown.com/>
 Home page of ICE (Iron Crown Enterprises), authors of MERP and Rolemaster

<http://www-forum.stanford.edu/~wbarr/rolemaster.html>
 Rolemaster information and links, including easy subscription to a RM mailing list

<http://www.best.com:80/~rtg1/>
 Home page of R. Talsorian Games, authors of Cyberpunk and Castle Falkenstein

<http://www TSR.com/>
 Home page of TSR, authors of AD&D and Star Frontiers

<http://www.io.com/sjgames/>
 Home page of Steve Jackson Games, authors of GURPS

Newsgroups

<news://rec.games.frp.cyber>
 Discussions of cyberpunk related roleplaying games.

<news://rec.games.frp.dnd>
 Fantasy role-playing with TSR's Dungeons and Dragons.

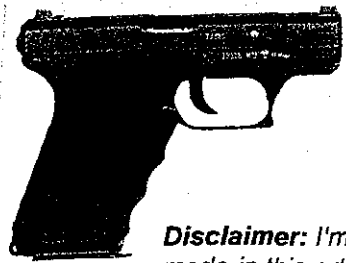
<news://rec.games.frp.gurps>
 Discussions of the GURPS system

<news://rec.games.frp.live-action>
 Live-action roleplaying games.

<news://rec.games.frp.marketplace>
 Role-playing game materials wanted and for sale.



There is a lot more out there, including Play-by-E-Mail games, IRC games and Multi-User games (MUDs, MUSHes, MOOs etc.) If I don't get hopelessly addicted to internet roleplaying while doing my research, I will write about these in the next edition of CLAWMARKS, under the sub-title 'Roleplaying on the Internet'. The WWW sites listed under **General** are good places to find out about these topics and other interesting things on the Internet if you can't wait until then.



Gun Running

Disclaimer: I'm not a professional gunsmith, nor am I related to Samuel Colt! The points made in this article are open to correction, and most importantly, to interpretation. This article is meant to help DM's who are less than conversant about firearms include them as interesting props in their RPG campaigns, and to moderate their abuse by munchkin players. Additionally, some of the points I make are related to the dramatic effectiveness of firearms, and DM's need to decide which side of the "more-style/more realism" divide they fall on before they evaluate them.

Guns are cool

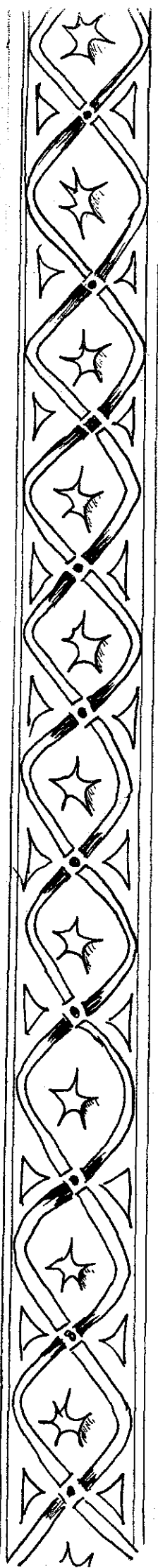
"Suddenly, the street resounds with the murderous thunder of Samson's Tec-9. He's scuttled behind the dumpster in the alley opposite you, and is kneeling there raking the doorway with bullets. Brass is flying everywhere. What are you doing?"

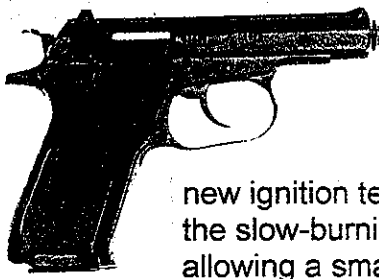
It's very simple to imagine why modern-day RPG's are very often so combat-oriented. We've all seen **Die Hard**, we've all seen **The Crow**, and we exist in a media world where heroics involve gunplay nine times out of ten. And RPG's are about daring, heroics, and action, so when the DM describes a scene like the one above, it's right there in your mind's eye without a missing detail - Samson's shadow thrown against the wall by the strobing flash of the gun, the graffiti, the whizz of ricochets off the crumbling tenement wall beside the doorway, the shouts, the confusion. So - guns are cool. But while the media provides us with a lot of detail about how firefights look, they are a little short on details which keep cropping up in RPGs, and this is where this article is meant to come in.

How guns evolved

Before guns, there were medieval siege cannons. Great bronze things, they threw stone balls further and harder than any catapult. One variant that became popular on the battlefields of the day was a cart with six or eight small cannons bolted on, which could decimate charging knights before they could overrun the lines of the defender. It was only a matter of time before someone got the idea of taking the small cannons off the cart and fitting a shoulder stock so that they could be brought to bear on a target quickly, without having to turn some stupid cart around. These shouldered cannons were called "hand gones" and were basically metre-long pipes, their barrels an inch thick and three inches across the muzzle, with an offset hole at the back into which the gunner pushed a burning splinter or red-hot wire to ignite the charge. They turned armoured knights into mounted sieves, but their maximum range appears to have been about 20 metres, so while they led to the twilight of the chivalric style of battle, they were obviously far from perfect.

Four notable improvements happened to "gonnes" in the next 500 years. Improved barrel constructions made them lighter (as well as cheaper, more accurate and less dangerous to the wielder), powder construction was refined to give better ballistic results and range, ammunition became of standard diameter and weight (molten lead poured into moulds of specific sizes), and





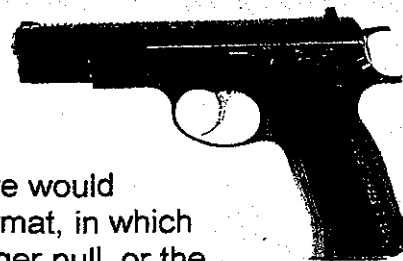
new ignition techniques allowed the firer to dispense with red-hot wires and the slow-burning matches of the matchlock guns, and simply pull the trigger, allowing a small "primer" charge in a cup on the top of the flintlock weapon (for that is what they had become) to ignite the main charge in the barrel, sending a lead ball flying out at speed. Flintlocks were the best weapon around for most of the 16th to the 18th centuries, and even now their statistics are impressive. A flintlock pistol of the 1700's threw a .50 or .60 calibre ball 50 metres with enough force to shatter a skull or break a leg at its point of impact, which is a fair performance improvement over the much bulkier "gonnes" of the Dark Ages. A great many wars were fought with flintlocks, and many primitive civilisations still hunt and fight with them, such as the Berber nomads of the deserts and tribesmen in the Philippine islands.

By the time the American revolution against the British had rolled up, another development had arrived - rifling. Rifling involves putting spiral grooves on the inside of the barrel, making the bullet spin in flight like an arrow and improving its accuracy. But because "rifled muskets" had to have an exact fit between bullet and barrel, they were horrendously slow to load in the conventional ram-the-bullet-down-the-barrel manner and very expensive to manufacture. Their military use only started in the US Civil war, where the first sharpshooters ("sniping" comes from the pastime of hunting tiny birds called snipes, which were very hard to hit) used their octagonal-barrelled Kerr and Whitworth "rifles", fitted with telescopes, to engage targets at the unheard-of distance of up to 300 metres. Normal musket troops were only able to count on accuracy up to around 100.

While the armies of the day still fought with the same weapons as their grandfathers, the 1800's were a very exciting time for weaponsmiths. Samuel J Colt had produced the very first six-shot percussion-cap revolver, the Walker Colt, in .45 caliber. Percussion-cap weapons still used loose powder to drive lead balls (although the ball and charge were now wrapped in paper as a single unit), but incorporated small brass "pills", containing the explosive compound mercury fulminate, which were loaded separately into the back of the gun and detonated, igniting the powder charge in the chamber, when struck by the hammer - working almost exactly like the capguns of today. This made them very weather-resistant, because the priming charge could no longer become damp or blow away.

And then, in 1873, the first gun to fire "bullets", as we would recognise them, was developed - the Henry repeating rifle, made by Oliver Winchester. This was the first incarnation of the "cowboy rifle" so beloved of Hollywood, which held 15 .44 caliber bullets containing a pre-measured amount of gunpowder in a thin brass tube which joined the primer to the ball, which had by now been rounded out into its now-characteristic half-sphere shape. This was the gun that the Yankee troops "loaded on Sunday and fired the whole damn week", in the words of an unlucky opponent. Repeating rifles were widely exported, being used by the Turks against the Russian armies and by the Japanese to great effect.





By 1900, several modifications had turned firearms into ones we would recognise today. Handguns now followed either a "revolver" format, in which 6-8 rounds were held in a cylinder which rotated with every trigger pull, or the a new "automatic pistol" format in which the rounds fed into the chamber from a spring-loaded box in the hilt and were cycled by the recoil of the gun itself. The famous "Colt .45" was first made in 1911, which is a respectable service record by any standards. Rifles were now operated by manipulating a side-mounted bolt between shots to slot a new cartridge into the chamber, and were also fed by magazines of five rounds.

The Assault Rifle

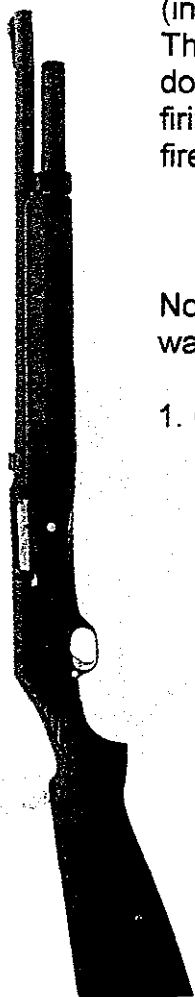
Blame the French, credit the Germans, applaud the Americans. The French "mitrailleuse", a cannon-sized gun with many, many barrels, first led generals to realise that guns firing many bullets at once could supplement or even replace aimed rifle fire by a squad of troops. The "machine gun", a gun that would fire continuously until it ran out of bullets, has its own history, which won't be covered here, and has led all the way via the venerable Maxim gun and the first Gatlings, up to the Vulcan cannons of today which fire in excess of 6000 rounds every minute. But it was the French theory of "*tojours l'attaque*" (always attack) that influenced the development of the man-portable assault weapon. The theory held that advancing infantry, firing portable machine guns from the hip, could thereby protect themselves from defensive machine-gun fire. The theory was a load of cobblers, unfortunately, but the German military theoreticians of the second World War turned it into the fearsome automatic assault theory of Blitzkrieg ("lightning war"), where parachutists armed with light machine guns dropped behind enemy lines and rifle squads deployed to keep machine guns in combat zones in action (instead of the other way around) made war a faster, more mobile process. The Americans finally cemented the assault weapon concept in military doctrine in the 60's, with their "Quick Kill" strategy - in this theory, soldiers firing light, low-powered, automatic weapons completely replaced aimed rifle fire with high-impact bullets as the standard tactic in firefights.

Can we get to the point?

Now that we have covered the historical context, here is the stuff players will want to know:

1. Getting hold of guns for characters: Well, it comes down to three options:

Making them is tricky. To make effective weapons of any sort, you need alloyed, machined and generally abused iron or steel (Colt used horse-shoe nails, melted down, for his first models). Anything else may give a few good results, but pretty soon it will fail on you. However, in a modern, urban environment there is plenty to go around. A "zip gun" (home-made weapon), is usually made of water pipe bolted onto a stock with a wire trigger connected to a nail on a spring. The trigger is pulled, a catch is released, and the nail strikes the primer firing the round. The spring needs to be manually reset before it can be fired



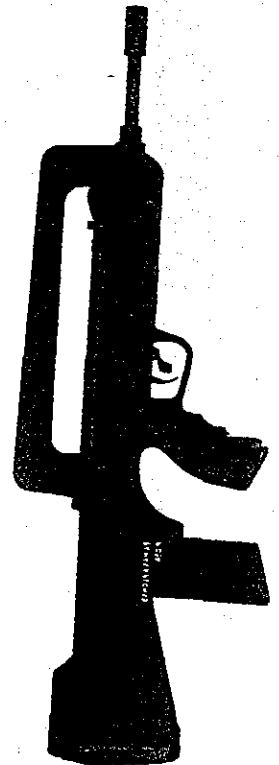
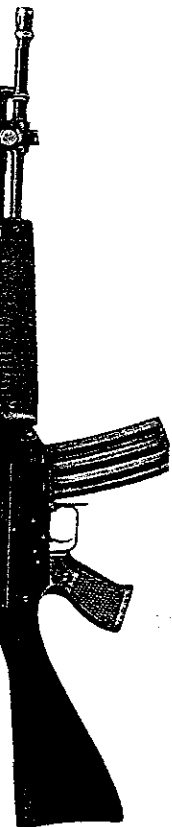
again, so zip guns often have multiple barrels. In terms of ammo, don't waste your time with anything but 12-gauge shotshells. Water pipes are unrifled, and the striker arrangement means that power is lost from the chamber when the round goes off, so most pistol rounds fired from zip guns will either miss or produce disappointing results. A 1-inch water pipe on a zip gun, loaded with buckshot, produces a very nice pattern at 10 metres. I would run zip guns as about half as effective as their "real" equivalents with any other type of bullet.

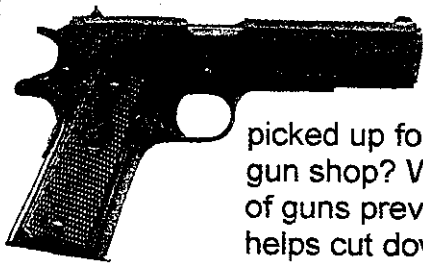
Legal Purchase? Get outta here! Still, the characters may go for it. Most countries allow some kind of personal armament. The US is about the most liberal. Anyone of legal age can buy a gun - most states, though, enforce a waiting period of up to a week. But only in some states does the prospective owner need to even register their firearm with the authorities at all! There are no "gun licenses", as such... however, a license is needed to carry the gun around with you, and this is tricky unless a good reason is volunteered. Other countries may fall between "No privately owned guns ever" (Britain, except in very special circumstances), and this kind of situation. Many countries allow rifles and shotguns (for hunting), but are restrictive about handguns (like Namibia). Others are fairly permissive, but require licensing as well as registration of firearms (like South Africa). Factors to consider in this regard are the state of security in the country, historical factors, etc.

Licensed handguns are a pain. All ammunition purchases are recorded, and gun ownership may make you a suspect in a crime just by virtue of owning the same kind of weapon as was used. As a gun owner, you are responsible for the gun, and if it's stolen and used in a crime, you can end up charged with criminal negligence - the same if an accident with it takes causes injury or death. Without exception, special permission is required to transport it across a border (even if the gun is legal at the destination) - forms, forms and more forms. Carrying a loaded gun (i.e., a round ready to fire in the chamber of an automatic) is illegal in many countries. Cops, who are on the unfriendly end of guns in far too many situations, will react with suspicion even to the carrying of legally owned firearms.

In short, having a legal gun puts you on the right side of the law, but it is also designed to keep you there, and it's a hassle for the average PC to have to worry about these sorts of things all the time.

Which leads us to **Illegal Means!** By far the most fun... but forget about holding on to those cherished illegal firearms for long. The watchword here is "disposable". Police databases are great at correlating ballistic reports and tying shootings together. Special types of ammunition, if purchased, provide another pointer towards the character. Once a gun is used illegally, it should be disposed of or, ideally, destroyed. Illegal guns can be found or bought, but a good connection is vital - after all, who knows what the police databases already know about the delightful little black-market 9mm you just





picked up for two hundred dollars from the back door of that seedy gun shop? Wrapping elastic bands or Elastoplast around the handles of guns prevents effective fingerprinting, and loading one's own bullets helps cut down on detection up to a point, but no expense should be spared in keeping one's nose clean. And getting caught with a "hot" firearm is *bad*. Chemical tests exist to pick up powder traces on your hands to indicate how long ago you last fired a gun, and who's to say that overworked detectives won't pin a whole bunch of "unsovable" crimes on your weapon by falsifying ballistic test data? Ah, but this is the price you pay for that little pound of protection you have invested in.

What's the good news? Some points which need emphasis.

- Modern firearms **don't** need oxygen to work - their chemicals don't work that way. So they will operate even when wet, as long as the barrel isn't full of water. They will even work in a vacuum.
- They also don't screw up that often. A gun in good condition **will** fire thousands of rounds without malfunction if it is wellmaintained.
- Modern ballistic armour (bullet-proof vests, etc) **will** stop bullets from any *handgun*, as long as they are not armour-piercing bullets. So will truck tyres, car doors, wooden walls, and bodies.

What's the bad news? Things Hollywood didn't tell you about.

- They are **LOUD!** Firing just a few rounds indoors from any size hand gun means about a 30% hearing loss for about 10 minutes. Prolonged firing will cause temporary deafness - and the noise is like a slap in the head. Those unused to gun combat will probably be stunned.
- Bad firing technique **will** cause malfunctions. Soaking up too much recoil from an automatic by letting the elbows bend, for instance, will stop an automatic from loading a new round.
- Guns **don't** throw people backwards or spin them around. Think Physics - anything the bullet does to them, the recoil has to do to you. So impacts make targets stagger, not fly through plate-glass windows.
- Green spots ahoy - muzzle flashes are **bright** at night, and can blind you. More so when your vision is augmented by special powers or night-vision gear.
- Shotguns **don't** hit several people at once. The typical shotshell holds eight or nine little pellets the size of Panados, but not as effective. Being hit by all of them is deadly, but splitting the load between two people will just piss them both off.
- They're **very** unpredictable. Heart shots can be useless, even when delivered with a .357 Magnum, because the muscular walls sometimes just seal off the wound like a self-sealing tyre would. Brain hits are as random as it gets, through the heavily armoured skull bones. Spinal hits are hard to pull off, and anywhere else might just make the target bleed, so death is not something you can bet on - sometimes it just **won't** happen! This being said, here is a list of the major calibers of bullet, with their "Stop Chance" - data drawn from actual firefights and



collated by the FBI. "Stop" means anything from "Kill" to "Injure enough that the target surrenders/passes out", and is considered the chance that one bullet "stops" the target under normal circumstances.

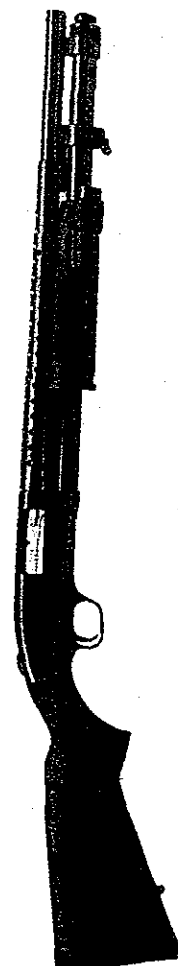
Caliber	Stop %	Sample Gun	Comments
.22	20-29%	Beretta 950BS	Good armour penetration
.25	22-25%	Taurus PT-25	Also called "6.35mm"
.32	40-60%	Seecamp LWS	Small guns with good "punch."
.380	60-75%	Walther PPK	Also called "9mm short"
.38	73-80%	Smith&W. M640	.38 special, a revolver load.
9mm	80-90%	Beretta 92F	Most widely used ammo.
.357	80-96%	Colt Python	Widely used Magnum round.
.40	80-95%	SIG Sauer P229	Very modern, hi-tech round.
10mm	85-94%	Delta Elite 10mm	Used by the FBI.
.44	85-95%	Smith&W. M29	Very powerful Magnum round.
.45	78-90%	Colt M1911A1	Popular mostly in the US.

Although statistics are patchy, it appears that 12-gauge shotgun fire has a "Stop Chance" approaching 100% - but think about it, would you really want to get shot a second time, even if could still fight back? As for damage from rifle bullets, it once again profits us to look at some Physics.

Bullets damage by two processes: *gaseous cavitation* and *hydrostatic shock*. These occur when a fast-moving bullet dumps all its energy of motion as heat and deforming energy into the target. Thus, the bullets that hurt most are the ones that stop in the target, not the ones that punch right through, because the stopped bullets have dumped more kinetic energy. Fast-moving, light slugs like modern assault rifles fire punch through armour, the target, and back out again - it's how they are designed. So whereas being hit by a rifle should incapacitate a target, it is unlikely to kill instantly. Once again, this is a matter of design. A dead soldier is just body-bag fodder, but a wounded soldier needs to be treated, looked after, carried back to base, etc; this all costs money and effort, and is a drain on the resources of his commanders. This is why assault rifle bullets act the way they do. Some examples of light rifle rounds are the 5.56mm NATO round fired by the M-16, and the 7.62 x 39mm round fired by the AK. Heavy, bolt-action rifle slugs like the .30-06, .270, and .600 calibers, on the other hand, will tear you to shreds. They aren't built to wound, and shots to the torso or head will kill you either instantly or within the hour.

Living life to the fullest - buckshot and bullets

Some interesting points about gunfights - again, courtesy of the FBI. Most gunfights happen with the combatants within 15 feet (5 metres) of each other. So if the system you are using is based around longer ranges, modify it. This is the range at which things are going to happen. Also, most gunfights involve the exchange of less than five shots. This can happen in as little as two seconds. If your system encourages ten-minute combats, shorten them. You will be able to convey the confusion and panic associated with gun combat so



much more effectively if the players only have a heartbeat to think about their actions.

As for the number of bullets fired per "attack" - this relies heavily on the skill of the shooter. As regards handguns, novices will be hard pressed to deliver one accurate shot every five seconds. Those with intermediate skills can do "double taps" - firing two shots rapidly after one another before muzzle climb degrades their accuracy - about every two seconds. True professionals can ripple off five or ten shots with normal accuracy in a matter of three seconds. Gun skill also affects firing style. Skilled shooters have perfected "reflex shooting" - that is, they can switch between targets instantly - for instance, firing at two targets in one "turn". Novices will need at least a second or two to sight down their guns and acquire a new target. Professionals are also likely to have practised "speed rock" and "wounded shooter" drills, which enable them to fire from the hip or with their off-hand with only minor loss of accuracy, whereas novices will be at only 50% effectiveness. and so on - if your system does not include it, an experience system to reflect combat practise as opposed to simple accuracy and skill is a vital add-on.

There are other points which it would be worth mentioning, but this article is too limited in scope to address them now. The use of automatic weaponry, sights and sniping, firing with two weapons, stances, and the like would require another four pages, and I'm sure that the point would be laboured. But if you would like more information, you can try any of the very useful reference sources listed below:

Guns and how they work, by Ian Hogg, is available at Rondebosch Library. **Handguns and Rifles**, by Robert Adam, is purchasable at CNAs for R38,00. **Guns and Ammo**, **Magnum**, **Combat Shooting**, **Modern Firearms**, **Soldier of Fortune**, and **Firepower** are some excellent gun magazines with articles on all things ballistic, available at the Kilo Shop or at newsagents. Lastly, my services as a tactical consultant and general gun nut are eminently purchasable! Easy rates, easy rates...

So, in eventual conclusion, let me reiterate some points I find important.

- **Regulate gun use!** Don't let the players consider firearm use a "soft option"! Make each use significant, and make stupidity come back to haunt them - the same will do for PC's with itchy trigger fingers.
- **Keep combat paced!** Remember, "less than 5 seconds". Nothing is more boring than a boring gunfight. Keep the characters moving.
- **Encourage them!** If you like drama, make dramatics worthwhile. if you're a realism buff, cut dramatic characters off short.

And of course, don't fire until you see the whites of their characters' eyes...





CLAWMEMBERS: THE TRADITION (PART TWO)

"These upstarts have no idea of the discipline needed to reach ascension... I am sure all of them went Marauder a long time ago"
(Elaine Simmons, Order of Hermes Oracle)

Sons of Ether: "A bunch of Mad scientists... Be carefull when entering their labs"

"Their knowledge of Science is admirable, and they do not seem to be limited by the lies of the Technocracy as to what constitutes true science"
(Sebastian Moreau, Son of Ether)

Verbena: "I thought witches went out of fashion in the Dark Ages... They are entertaining though"

"They are a part of the world, although they many of them do not seem to be very aware of it"
(Machleus, Verbena Master of Life)

Virtual Adepts: "Some really great software came from those guys, and their VR stuff is a great new way to Role-Play"

"Finally some who at least have an inkling of our vision of ascension"
(FireBurn, Virtual Adept)

Nephandi: "Now, where did I put my copy of the Call of Cthulhu?"

"When our lords return, they shall be crushed like all the others... MUAHAHAHAHAHA..."
(Lord Ralph, New World Order Barrabi)

Marauders: "And I thought I was weird!"

"Cuttlefish, blown through a sick drain cleaner... Ants in my head... See! It's a cadre of bricks on speed"
(Unidentified Marauder)

Technocracy: "Black Hats and Mirrorshades... How dull"

"Our current information on the group known as Clawmembers gives the following predictions:

Marauder infiltration	78.3 %
Nephandus Mages	2.1 %
Threat to Static Reality	100.1 %

We recommend to the council that immediate action be taken concerning this group"
(From a report to the Council, from a New World Order Amalgam)

Werewolves: "Puppies!"

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"<growl> They are of the wyld, although most of them seem ignorant of the threat posed by the Wyrn <GROWL>..."

(Runs-in-the-Night, Silent Strider Philodox)

Vampires: "Nice teeth, where did you get them? Can I borrow them for the LARP, pretty please?"

"Definitely a group worth watching... They know too much"

(Johan Van Mann, Prince of Cape Town)

Changelings: "I am one, actually"

"Who... I just came from Arcadia, I've never heard of them... Yet more prodigal, I am sure"

(A Nocker who wished to remain anonymous)



Notices

Notice: Laelmar: I'm really really sorry - Llewellyn.

Have you seen this person? Answers to the name Lucifer or Light-Bringer. email to tn\$2*^ht6j&c (damn, I hate Arcane).

Notice: Noooo - don't cut down my treeeeee

Wanted: anyone who can tell us about the little holes appearing all over the place.

For Sale: Four midgets. Dance, sing, cast small spells. Apply to Cerdic.

For Sale: Small repellent otter. Apply to Cerdic. Will take any offer.

Wanted: somebody to get rid of all the sand! - Giovanni

Wanted: Reliable Eskimo guide. Non-dog-sled-stealing, non-mutating. Apply FBI special team, Adelaide peninsula, Canada.

Wanted: Regular player for Wednesday Kult game. Must be lucid. Speak to Mark Cummins or contact the editors. [Oooh, look, a serious ad! - Ed]

Wanted: a crematorium. Drop off at Arcanum Chapterhouse, Cape Town.

Would the people trying to kill me please tell me why. - Lucien

Wanted: 50th level dispel essence. Apply 4" high party, currently in Camelot (Merlin better be in, dammit).

Wanted: Koshin the ratskin, dead or alive. Even after I was generous enough to pay 15 creds, he disappeared with my money. 15 cred reward. Contact Wolf of the Hivelanders.

Wanted: Horus, ex-leader of the Hivelanders. Wolf says "All is forgiven. You can return and serve under me."

Wanted: (desperately) Medic. Preferably with good ballistic skill. Contact Wolf of the Hivelanders.

For Sale: The next Skull-Splitter we catch. Cost: 20 creds. Hard workers. Pity about the lipstick, though. Refer to Wolf of the Hivelanders.

Wanted: Bodyguards and protection spells for party kittens (evil DM). Apply Mr. N Karsk, London University.

Warning: To an otherwise faithful Rolemaster DM of the last 3 years (you know who you are!!!). Broken bones are no excuse for cancelling a game, especially when they're not yours! I'm currently being head-hunted by another campaign. This is your last warning. - Gerrald

For sale: One otter skin, expertly tanned.

For sale: One bass guitar. Good 2nd hand cond. In soft case. No-name white Fender Jazz copy, but not a bad instrument. R650 (neg). (currently strung left-handed, easily rearranged). [Another serious ad. What is happening? - Ed]

Notice: The hiills are alive, with the soooound of muuusiiic.

Wanted: One saddle for miniature dragon - suitable for 4-inch rider.

Notice: Llewellyn: you have to sleep sometime - L.

Notice: How would you like to travel, see the world, meet new and interesting people, and then kill them?! Just join the rapidly expanding army of liberation ... based on the Island of Zinnin.

Notice: J - hope your arm gets better soon. - A, D, and P.

RIPs

RIP: Gwyn? - you hope

RIP: Entire population of Woodsocket - victims of Gwyn and a sadistic ST.

RIP: Demon knight. Sir Berthold prevails.

RIP: Generic elf-slaughtering - The Brothers of Light (ha ha ha ha. You slopes haven't seen the half of it).



RIP: Incontrovertible Mythos evidence. Damn you, Andrew.

RIP: More incontrovertible Mythos evidence. Damn you, Jessica. (It wasn't my fault!)

RIP: Joseph Banks' left leg. Victim of Twilight 2000 hit location tables.

RIP: Dokt-R-DTH-1. Don't you hate it when laser pistols malfunction.

RIP: Hamm-R-HED-1. Fizz-Wizz in the blood is not conducive to serving the Computer.

RIP: 16 hunter-seeker elves. Talk to trees, friendly to animals, rot in hell. Hahaha. The Brothers of Light. PS Beaten in their own forest. Hahahaha. PPS The cause of truth is furthered.

RIP: The party's dignity. Four inches high. Mu ha ha - the DM.

RIP: Jack the Ripper. You messed with the wrong people. Death by Shoggoth.

RIP: 32 Polish brigands. Don't mess with the SAS.

RIP: (twice) Phuyatow, aka Charlie. He should be shot! Wait, we did that. He should be hung! Wait, we did that too. Oh well, a hand-grenade, 600 litres of kerosene, 2 cases of dynamite, and 4 bottles of hydrogen got rid of him.

RIP: NATO 4th Brigade. You were just too good a target.

RIP: Jeffrey - becoming a Bane was never a good career move.

RIP: Tremere, pretty please!

RIP: AKA sector recoball stadium. That was, like, cool, dude.

RIP: Mad bunch of scientists, Arctic base, Canada. You were just acting too weird.

RIP: Laelmar's money pouch, victim of an otter's sense of humour.

RIP: Vinnie's sanity. Of course, "they" are to blame.

RIP: Sally Shields (twice), Vincent Silano (2 and a half times), Charlie (twice), several gangsters, 2 cops, several scientists, one polar bear, one giant mutant polar bear, and one cannibal lunatic. Total toll: seven bad guys (yeah!), seven good guys (ooops ...), four neutrals. Anybody else want to mess with J. Edgar Hoover?

RIP: Stubber, an enthusiastic juve ... 'nuff said.

RIP: Kujō - one very ineffectual, infiltrating ratskin.

RIP: Flash Back - killed by that damn Animal Freak.

RIP: Nine Piscadaemons from the seventh depth of hell ... we got ya love - the liberators of Zinnin.

RIP: Some Vermin Scum - that'll teach you to enslave the dezairnil, the liberator of Zinnin.



Credits and Commendations

Editors & Contributors Dylan Craig, Austin Chamberlain
Jessica Tiffin, Andrew Sturman, Philip Anastasiadis, Sarah Smith,
Kieren Shannon, Alex Miller, Patrick Schreiber, Adriaan Wessels,
Ivan Sadler, Robanne Miller.

**Chief Babe-in-charge-of-stopping-Dylan-going-
beserk-with-an-axe-and-killing-everyone:**

Robanne Miller

Things that kept us going: VGA Planets; Bill Gates; Buckminster Fuller;
Kuzmas; The Internet; Sasha, Gus, Jessie and Bojo;
the paint fumes; *Fear and Loathing*, and *Pizzazz*.

**Music that got *Student
Life* through this issue**

: Who gives a shit?

Contact CLAW: CLAW Uct
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