

THE LOG THAT FEELS

#10

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81 Washington St., #2
Malden, MA 02148

home: (617) 397-7958
InterNet: maranci@max.tiac.net

I've been busy.

The Interregnum Sampler

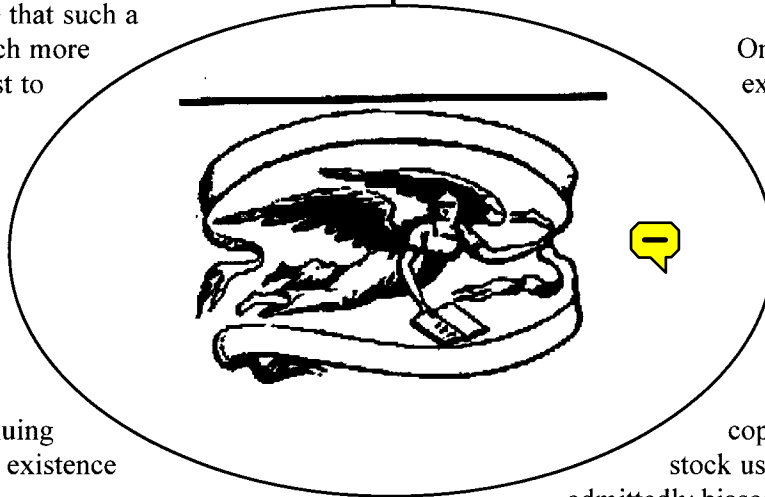
The **Interregnum** Sampler project was dragging. Other projects kept pushing it aside, while the two conventions I'd wanted the Sampler for were getting closer and closer. I knew what I wanted: a slim mini-issue containing interesting excerpts from a number of zines published in **IR** in 1994. It seemed to me that such a sampler would be much more likely to attract interest to **IR** than a mere flyer. Fliers are often picked up at conventions and game stores, but how many of us ever *do* anything with them? A complete issue, on the other hand, is a continuing reminder of the actual existence of the magazine.

Of course the Sampler would be expensive to produce, compared with a flyer. But it seemed likely that the increased appeal would be worth it. I couldn't help but remember that I got involved with zines because of **The Wild Hunt**—and the only reason I started writing for **TWH** was that I'd dug up an issue that someone had given me several years before.

Time was running short. I wasn't sure that I could get the Sampler together in time; both Arisia and RuneQuest Con 2 were coming up fast. It took

fast and furious work one Saturday to get the master put together, and 350 copies made.

It was a difficult job. Sacrifices had to be made, and though I tried my best I couldn't include every **IR** contributor. My greatest regret was that I couldn't print **George Phillis'** "Who Slays Satan" in the Sampler, but limited space made it simply impossible. As it was, the Sampler came to 46 pages—16 more than I'd planned for.



On the other hand, I was extremely pleased with the back cover—a collage showing the miniaturized front covers of issues #2 - #9 in a double fanfold. Issue #1 was reproduced in reduced size on the front. The covers were copied on the light green stock used for issue #9. In my

admittedly biased opinion the whole thing looked great.

I shipped 100 Samplers and some flyers to **Curtis Taylor** via FedEx for RQCon2—expensive, but there

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was no other way to get them to him in time. The other 250 copies were for Arisia.

ARISIA '95

I didn't know what to expect from Arisia '95. Previous Arisia's had always been fun, but mixed; some problem(s) always turned up to mar the convention. Last year had been the best yet, the only real problem being the hotel's screwup on our room. To make up for that, the Gamemaster's Hall of Shame video won "Most Entertaining" in the Amateur Video contest, and the award ceremony was incredibly lavish.

In a way, that made me dread Arisia this year. There was no way it could match the '94 award ceremony; there's nothing like being lionized, and there was no way that I'd get the same treatment this year. I wasn't entering the video contest this year. I'd had an idea for a video, but it was a Star Wars parody—and the contest rules were so stringent that there was no way I could make it. How can you make a parody without using the music, costumes, or names of the original?

As it turned out, there was no video contest at all. There were other queries, but no one submitted anything.

We'd arranged to bring several entries from past contests to be shown during the amateur video timeslot. The GM's Hall of Shame is always a hit, and the recut Probability Ship is really pretty good. But showing isn't the same as competing. I'd get no plaque, no chance to walk out in my white tie and tails on Saturday night in front of a thousand people...

As fate would have it, there were other things to do. I found myself getting excited about promoting Interregnum at the Con; the

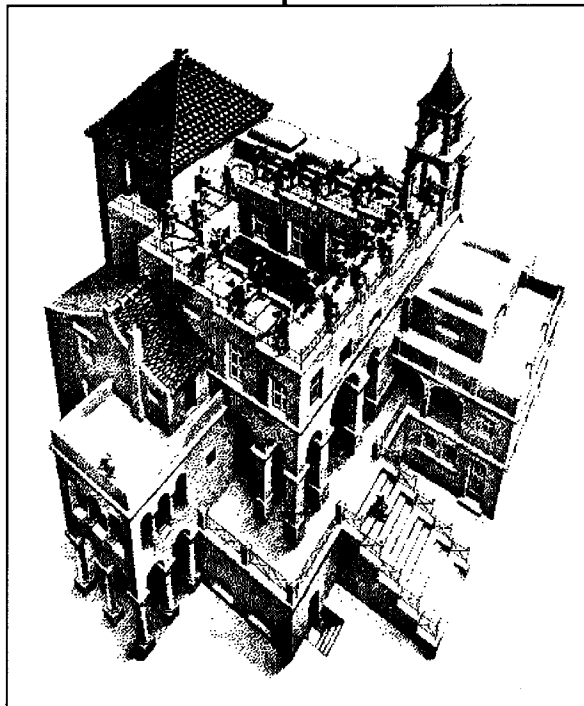
hard work I'd put in on the Sampler was already paying off.

An odd chain of circumstances resulted in my sitting on five panels. I'd never done anything like that before, but without false modesty let me say that I knew I'd be great (or at least pretty good ☺). Years of GMing have made off-the-cuff public speaking a breeze for me, and I think I have some natural talent at that sort of thing. A few twinges of panic gave me pause now and again, but basically I wasn't worried. And the prospect of sitting in front of people for an hour at a time and talking was really appealing. Perhaps at last I'd get a "Program Participant" ribbon for my badge! In all the years that Lois and I had been doing amateur video we had never had a ribbon. They always forgot, or lost them, or something.

The Regency dance was also something to look forward to. It's ironic: when I was a kid, I'd gained the ability to force my temperature up several degrees rather than square dance in school. Yet last year I'd spent \$135 on an ultra-formal white tie outfit to dance in at Arisia. And now the dance would be one of the high points of the con.

I'd taken Friday off in order to get to the con early; we had pre-booked a room this year, but since the Park Plaza has often screwed up room reservations I wanted to sign in as early as possible. However, I had a problem. The box of 250 Samplers were far too heavy to carry in on the subway (the "T"), and I didn't want to spend \$60 on parking for the con. The only thing to do was drive in with the luggage and Samplers, put them out and register for the con and hotel. Then I'd drive back home and take the T back in. A waste of time, but a necessary one.

And that's what we did. Hotel registration



went smoothly, for the first time ever. There was a momentary scare and delay at con registration, where it turned out my badge had been grossly misfiled, but it turned up after a few minutes. And I was early enough to find decent spaces to put out the Samplers and the fliers.

On the way home I made a quick stop at Keezer's, a store in Cambridge that sells new and used tuxedos. An extra bow tie, two pairs of white gloves, a silk handkerchief and a set of matching cufflinks and shirt studs came to remarkably little. I drove home, changed, and went in to the hotel.

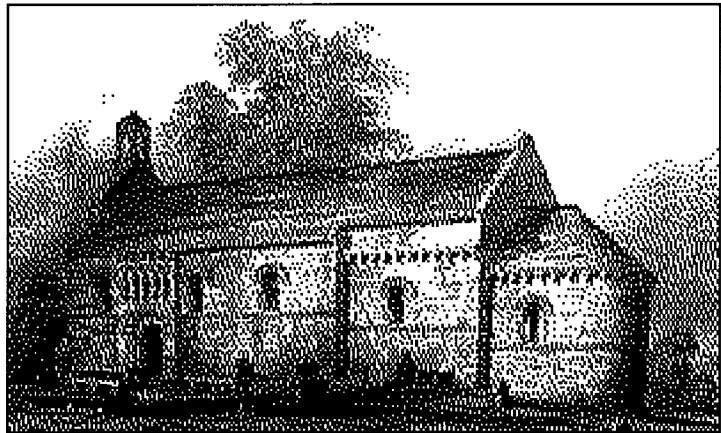
Many Samplers had already been picked up, and people were reading them in the halls. It was difficult not to ask them what they thought of it, but I managed to restrain myself—I might not have liked their replies. ☺

I'd had a hard choice for Friday night—or rather, a painful situation. Scott Ferrier was sitting on the “Advice to New Roleplayers” panel, and was showing “The Gamemaster's Hall of Shame” video to illustrate the sorts of GMs that new players should avoid. Of course I'd dearly have loved to sit in on that panel, and to see the reaction of the audience. But the Regency Dance was scheduled for the same time, and that came first.

The dance was wonderful. If you've never done a formal dance, take my advice and wear white gloves; they're an absolute necessity

The last dance was incredibly strenuous. The “couples” were actually triples, one man and two women; the man had to dance with both women alternatively, while the off woman stood still. Since the dance involved energetic galloping, I was soon in a state of extreme overexertion. Mind you, I did dance fairly well; an acquaintance who watched me later asked where I'd learned. In fact, thanks to my youthful fear of an aggressive girl named Mary Lou in square dancing class I never *had* learned to dance. On the other hand, perhaps his question was a veiled sneer. ☺

Where was I? Oh yes. When the last dance ended I tottered feebly to a chair. Suddenly I realized that my



heart was pounding furiously, more rapidly than I'd ever felt it pound before—like a spasmodic rabbit. I felt as if I were glowing, giving off intense heat like a red-hot over element. It was a hot flash of sorts, something I'd experienced only once before. I couldn't help but wonder if I'd have a heart attack right then and there, or drop dead in a few hours. Would I wake up in the morning? Would I be missed, or forgotten in a few weeks?

As it turned out, I did die, and am now writing this account as a ghost. Ha ha! Actually I recovered fairly quickly, and am much reassured as to the state of my health—though I really should work out more (as in, at least once in a while ☺).

The rest of the evening was spent walking around and checking out the con. It's always fun to show off when you're in fancy dress, and I dare say Lois and I looked rather impressive in our Victorian outfits. Many folk stared at us, and several made compliments.

After a bit of effort I managed to pick up a “Program Participant” ribbon from the Con suite, which completed my outfit. Around midnight we tried to get dinner at “The Swans” in the lobby, but the kitchen was closed. We were forced to go to the snack stand in the lobby. This stand was a new thing for Arisia, and a remarkably good idea: it was run by the hotel, and served junk food until 2AM. The prices were high, but not unreasonable. Having filled up on

sterno-heated weird-looking hot dogs and very gloppy pizza, we headed for the room.

I took a long shower in the room (one thing I love about the Park Plaza is the huge dispensers of soap, shampoo, and conditioner in the bathrooms), and spent an hour or so making notes for the panels I'd be doing the next day. Panelists were almost always rather lackadaisical at past cons, but I wanted to make my first experience as a panelist a good one. Notes made, I hit the sack and slept like a log.

Saturday

8:30 AM

We got up early the next day. That wasn't typical for me, but I had the "Fanzine Publishing" panel at 10AM, and wanted to get a decent breakfast. On an impulse I picked out an odd outfit. I kept the tux pants, tailcoat and shoes from the previous night. But instead of the piquet shirt, vest, and bow tie I wore one of my most visually striking T shirts: a unique import from England that I picked up last year at **The Man From Atlantis** store in Harvard Square. It's a jet-black **Prisoner** shirt, with the face of Patrick McGoochan staring out grimly from a background of overlaid blue 6's. The picture is striped with blank strips, giving the appearance of prison bars. It's incredibly cool, and the whole outfit worked extremely well. More than a few people stopped me in the halls.

I should explain that I'm not at all fashionable in daily life (ask anyone who knows me). My wardrobe is dull and ill-fitting. Sartorial splendor is a once-a-year thing for me, so fun and unusual that I can't help but remark on it.

We decided to do breakfast in style: the buffet at the Cafe Rouge in the hotel. It was an incredible meal. The orange juice was delicious, and I had eight or nine glasses; I must

have sloshed as I walked out. But they definitely lost money on me. ☺

10:00 AM

The fanzine panel was small: at the beginning, **Lee Gold** of **A&E** and I were the only people on it. The audience was small to begin with. But people kept trickling in, and eventually **Chris Aylott** of the new **Babylon 5** APA "**The Babylon Project**" joined us. It was a lively, interesting event, and when we finished I thought that another hour would have been a good idea. Next year, I'll suggest two fanzine panels: one a "how-to" and the other a general discussion group.

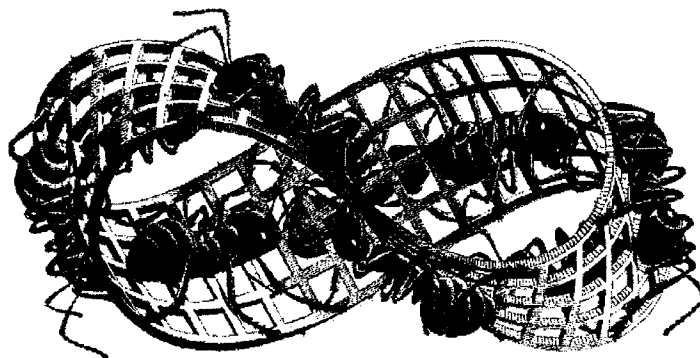
My memory of the panel is somewhat obscured (must have been the orange juice), but I can say that it went well and I was reassured that panels were both fun and easy to do. I do recall noting that the field had suffered a major loss when **Glenn Blacow** of **TWH** passed away last May. It was an odd thing, since I'd last seen Glenn at Arisia '94—his final con, as far as I know.

After the panel I got a chance to talk to Chris for a while, and picked up the first two issues of **The Babylon Project**. It's an extremely interesting APA, and I'll write a zine for it soon.

I walked around and looked at the con best as I could, and managed a quick peek at the Art Show. It was interesting, but as usual there was nothing that I really *had* to have. The dealers' room, on the other hand, was amazing. It was bigger and more crowded than ever. One video dealer had a huge selection; out of habit I asked the usual hopeless question. "Do you have *The Lathe of Heaven*?" I've been looking for that for many years, and had come to believe that it no longer existed. I was absolutely floored when he turned out to have a copy! \$20 was out of my pocket

and into his hands before he knew it. Yahoo!

Scheduling problems loomed. I had a panel from 1:00 to 3:00, Lois had belly-dancing at 1:30, and the Amateur Video show would be



at 2:00. I really wanted to see the reaction to The GM's Hall of Shame (I never get tired of getting laughs), but it would be hard to get away from the panel in time.

1:00 PM

The panel was "GM's Helpline". There were six or seven panelists, and all but one of them knew each other well. Nonetheless I think I more than held my own—for one thing, I was the only one with prepared notes. Also, the agenda for the panel was somewhat vague; were we there to answer questions, or talk about gamemastering problems? The result was a measure of chaos. But interesting chaos.

At one point a woman asked about a problem she was having with her Amber campaign: keeping the PCs together. They tended to split up, each to their own Shadow, and the basic plot and campaign would break up and be lost. A number of solutions were offered by the panelists. I outlined the "Genesis story" concept (from "Bar Wars" in Interregnum #1). Suddenly I came up with an off-the-cuff suggestion: why not have the PCs randomly exchange bodies at unknown intervals? That would force them to stay together, if only to make sure that their bodies weren't being abused! And the reason for the interchanges would make a good overarching long-term plot. She seemed to like the suggestion. The whole thing turned out to be so much fun that I couldn't break away early, though I'd planned to.

3:00 PM

When the panel ended, I rushed to the video room. I was just in time to catch most of a *second* showing of the Hall of Shame. The audience was sparse, but it got several laughs. I was glad to hear that the showings had gone out over a line feed to the hotel rooms, too. A writer for Variety magazine who'd judged the contest last year later stopped me and told me that the video held up well, and he'd enjoyed it very much.

4:00 PM

My 4:00 panel was "Tabletop vs. LARP". It was considerably more crowded, with seven or eight panelists. It was more chaotic, but interesting; several of the other panelists were members of

NERO. However I managed to avoid hostility. I positioned myself as someone who'd played a lot ofLARPs, but was down on them, which was true. Articles I'd written for The Wild Hunt and Interregnum prepared me with a useful knowledge of the topic, and gave me something to say.



6:00 PM

I'd scheduled a meeting in an event room for Interregnum contributors and readers. **Lee Gold** and others from A&E were there along with **Chris Aylott** of TBP, making it a general APA event. Among IR folk present were **myself**, **Gil Pili**, **Mark Sabalauskas**, **Lois Folstein**, **Scott Ferrier**, **George Phillies**, and **Dan Johnson** (did I forget anyone?). We chatted, consumed munchies, and scared away anyone who looked through the door. ☺

8:00 PM

After dinner at Swan's, we went over to the main event of the evening: the Masquerade costume contest. It was in the Grand Ballroom of the Plaza. There was quite a selection of costumes, four stand out in my memory:

- A re-enactment of a scene from *Labyrinth*
- A SteamTrek piece featuring a wind-up Mr. Data, put on by the Boston Star Trek Association, which won the main prize
- A reoccurring *Doom* show in which a zombie was repeatedly slaughtered by the player who then stole his weapon (at different levels he had more powerful weapons)
- And a truly bizarre show called "Charlie and the UFO"—some sort of advertisement for Boston in...um...some year soon. I'm not sure what they were promoting (a Worldcon bid, probably), but the sight of a giant UFO being carried around the

audience while some extremely strangely-dressed characters cavorted onstage has stuck in my mind...I only wonder what the hotel staff thought of it all.

10:00 PM

Lois and I had been invited to a Watergate party by Matthew Saroff, the founder of Arisia. A microphone taped to the ceiling lent verisimilitude to the event. I tried, but couldn't match the level of wit displayed—someone beat me to the G. Gordon Liddy jokes. ☺

12:00 Midnight

Arisia was packed with vampire people. A Vampire Dance was scheduled for midnight. I find some vampire folk rather affected in the Holden Caulfield sense, but Lois wanted to see the dance. She was dressed for it—once again she'd dressed as Death from the Sandman comics, and looked great. I looked rather great myself, in my tails and Prisoner outfit. We took a turn around the floor (the dance was packed) and I'm glad to say that we looked cooler than a lot of the people there. After a few minutes, we headed over to Dealer's Row.

The Arisia Dealers' Room is too small for all the dealers who come. Dealer's Row is where the extra go, along with those who want to be open later than the room. We gawked at all kinds of cool stuff, but didn't buy much. We looked in on the Con Suite, then headed back to our room to crash.

3:00 AM

I'd planned to get some sleep. But with all the inevitability of a Magic addict I turned on the TV. Wouldn't you know it—they were showing *Army of Darkness*. It's a great movie, and I sat like an idiot laughing until 5 AM. I barely managed to stay awake long enough to turn off the TV.

Sunday

10:00 AM

Another great breakfast buffet at the Cafe Rouge.

12:00 PM

"Roleplaying as an Educational Tool". Once again I was enormously helped by the fact that I'd

written extensively on the topic in TWH and IR. An audience member told the story of his experience in high school Social Studies class, in which the class had played the roles of U.S. Senators; he'd stood up to everyone else for his beliefs, only to back down at the last moment. I jumped in: "Perhaps you were better off backing down. I was in the same circumstance, and filibustered until they were forced to compromise with me. After class three of the biggest guys grabbed me outside of class, dumped me in the snow, and buried me. It was educational, all right. The lesson was: Buy good running shoes, and stay away from jocks."

1:00 PM

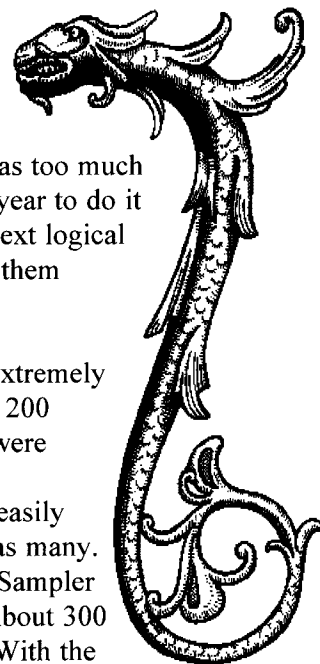
One last swing round the Dealer's Room before we left. I was glad to see that The Weapon Shops of Isher were there; I'd missed them last year. Giving in to my urge to spend money, I bought their last Annoyotron: a metal tube with three photocells that made weirdly differing noises depending on how much light hit them. A silly purchase at \$30, but I was in the mood.

And then, home. And sleep.

All in all it was a perfect convention: nothing at all turned up to blemish the experience. I'd been pained to give up the conflicting RuneQuest Con 2, but it couldn't possibly have been better than Arisia '95.

In fact, I have the bug. I really want to do more cons; promoting Interregnum and doing the panels was too much fun, and I can't wait a year to do it again. Boskone is the next logical target, and I'll write to them immediately.

Overall Arisia was extremely successful for IR. Over 200 copies of the Sampler were quickly snapped up by con-goers, and I could easily have distributed twice as many. It would seem that the Sampler idea was a good one. About 300 fliers were also taken. With the



Samplers and fliers taken at RQCon 2 as well, Interregnum has seen more promotion this week than in all the previous months of existence combined. It will be interesting to see what all this seed work produces in the next few months. I'll keep everyone posted.

FS5: NEW OUTRAGES

Readers may remember that I've had quite a few problems with Factsheet 5, a large "reviewzine" which turned out to publish reviews without reading the sources. After considerable battle, I'd decided to let the issue go. "I won't let myself be drawn into this sort of thing again; while re-reading the autobiography of Isaac Asimov recently I was surprised to see that he'd had much the same experience. I'll profit by Asimov's experience." (TLTF #9 p. 7, IR #9)

Apparently the staff of Factsheet 5 don't want it to end that way. Many weeks after the topic was dropped on the Internet, I was amazed to receive the following postcard:

"INTERREGNUM #3, August, 1994 A pretty good APA about RPGs. Too bad it's spoiled by a publisher who is a whiney little asshole.

No trades/submissions wanted. Price: \$4. (0 pages/standard/DTPed/12 times a year/JP)"

That's the complete text of the new review. Note that this was written by Jerod Pore, the science fiction staff writer who'd told me that Seth Friedman (the chief editor of FS5) didn't always read what he reviewed. It pretty much speaks for itself, I think. I don't know if they'll print it. It doesn't make them look good, but they obviously aren't gifted with the best judgement...

POSTAL DAY OF JUDGEMENT

I'd had several nasty run-ins with a real bastard at the local Malden PO—an older white-haired man who said that since IR was photocopied, it wasn't "printed matter" and couldn't go by book rate. He seemed to make a point of hassling me; I found

myself storming out of the building, cursing and with IRs unmailed, several times. Eventually I stopped going there, though it meant going miles out of my way and a delay of hours or days.

Not long ago I was in desperate fix. I had to mail a package right away, but was short on time. I decided to grit my teeth and use the local office.

When I got there, the white-haired guy wasn't



around. After mailing my package in perfect comfort, I asked the other workers what had happened to him. "Why?" they asked. "Well...he hassled me several times." I admitted. At that they all burst out laughing. It turns out that I wasn't the only one he'd abused, and

some irritated customers had filed complaints. A month ago his superiors had moved him from the front desk to the back, away from the public. Apparently he wasn't very popular among his co-workers, as they all enjoyed telling me stories about how obnoxious that guy could be...

It seems that sometimes Right prevails, after all. Even at the Post Office. ☺

COMMENTS #9

Rich Staats:

Very funny, Rich. I kept getting the giggles while I was reading your Splorkoid scenario. I'd love to try It Came From The Late Late Show sometime, but no one around here has it...

Doug Jorenby:

It's interesting that you should mention Steven Brust's Jherog as an example of a society in which resurrection is commonplace; that happens to be

exactly what I was thinking of when I selected the topic, myself. Personally, I rather liked the series—at least until Brust started using it as forum to work through his personal problems.

That gives me an idea for a future topic, possibly: Roleplaying as Therapy. What do you think?

George Phillies:

It was good to see you again at Arisia, George. Thanks for the publishing schedule idea, and the recommendations on local cons.

The world-setting of “The Warrior Unseen” has a very interesting depth to it; have you considered running a game in that world? The story continues to be extremely interesting—I hope you’ll tell us the ending, even if it isn’t written. The language does become a bit disconcertingly modern at times.

Curtis Taylor:

Sorry to hear that the PO is giving you trouble again. They don’t seem to like you, do they? ☺ Perhaps the new higher postal rates will encourage postal workers to be more efficient and responsive to customers’ needs.

I look forward to seeing the next installment of SoloQuest.

Virgil Greene:

Regarding the Republican takeover of Congress, all I can say is that I no longer read the newspaper or watch TV news. The inherent bias in the media to the party of wealth and privilege is so widespread that no matter what the GOP does, the media will find some way to blame it on Clinton—and the public will swallow it whole. In the political world cause and effect have been de-linked, and it would seem that Bob Dole can have it both ways. A disturbing situation.

Your fictional presentation of the possibilities of resurrection was very well done. Nice job.

Regarding Arena, the **Magic: The Gathering** book: *sigh*. What’s next? **Magic** TV dinners?

Magic breakfast cereal? **Magic** suppositories? This has got to stop! ☺

Scott Ferrier:

We’ve got to get you laser printing, Scott. Don’t lag behind the IR crowd. Conform! ☺

Your review of local game stores was very interesting, though I have to wonder how useful it will be for our many far-flung readers and contributors. Ah well—if they ever visit Boston they’ll have a shopping agenda all ready!

Actually I still think that you could have added one or two more stores to the list. Some are only accessible by T and bus, but the bus isn’t an insurmountable obstacle. After all, we rode the bus twice a day for years.

Collie Collier:

Time Warp! It’s interesting that you reprinted your zine from The Wild Hunt in this issue, Collie, since the last issue of TWH was mailed so recently.

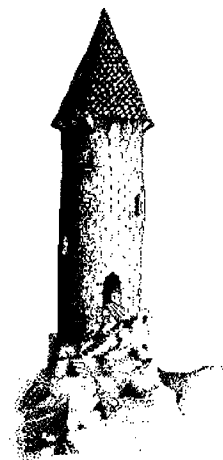
You asked if men are slaves to their hormones. After some thought, my answer is this: Most are, but I’m not! ☺

Your Tease character sounds like a lot of fun to play. Must have scared the other players to death! Actually that’s a problem I had myself on some occasions. I’d be roleplaying my character in a group of wargamers. Group bafflement and eventual rejection were the result. But I’ve told that story before.

I’m not sure that GMing is what I like best about gaming, actually. It’s just that it’s *so* rare for me to find a GM who runs a game of the peculiar type that I can really enjoy...it’s been years now. Running my own games is the closest I can get to my personal gaming ideal.

Tara & Jenny Glover:

Welcome to Interregnum, Jenny and Tara! I’m glad to have



you aboard as our first overseas contributors. And Tara, you've broken the age record for IR contributors!

Gender: Gaming in the US is fairly male-dominated as well, but the statistical universe is larger (and perhaps more fragmented). Yes, there are many groups of adenoidal teens here; however, we don't game with them. In fact, we never *meet* them! Perhaps that's because so many of the gamers I know are no longer in college. There's no centralized gaming group or organization, and so gamers tend to naturally congregate with those of similar inclinations. Though mature roleplayers are undoubtedly in the minority, they're all I see.

It would seem that mature roleplaying attracts a more gender-balanced group of roleplayers. But perhaps I'm being smug.

There's a quarterly APA which is just about gaming by and for women; men sometimes contribute to it, but the focus is definitely female. Pallas' Podium is the name, and I believe they come out quarterly. I can probably dig up the address, if you'd like.

How would I react to an 11 year old girl joining my campaign? If she was an intelligent and imaginative roleplayer, as anyone else—I'd welcome them gladly. Can you be in Malden by next Wednesday, Tara? ☺

Gil Pili:

The Harn campaign sounds very interesting—which is strange, since my memories of that setting were that it was dry, overcomplicated, and dull. Of course, my exposure to Harn many years ago was brief. Perhaps it's all in the presentation.

I liked your review of Interview with the Vampire (and has anyone else wondered with it's Interview with the Vampire and not A Vampire, as in the book?). I haven't seen it, and probably won't. In fact, the only movie I've seen in months was *Vanya on 42nd Street* with Wallace Shawn—a

very interesting movie. But since he wasn't playing the Sicilian or the Grand Nagus I won't review it here. ☺

FILLED WITH SHAME

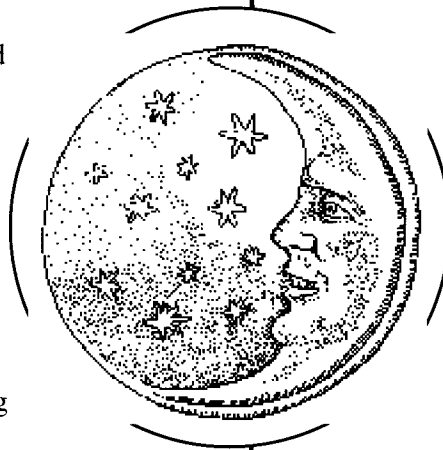
Following this page is the slightly re-written and DTPed version of "The Gamemaster's Hall of Shame", which first appeared in "Rack & Rune" #2 in The Wild Hunt. I'm working on a sequel of sorts, and a Player's Hall of Shame too.

NEXTISH

You wouldn't believe what I had to leave out of this issue. More on the Wonder campaign, Star Trek: Voyager, the story of my strange and profitable experience with a "survey" on a new product, reviews of The Lathe of Heaven, Space Ace on CD-ROM, the new complete collection of the works of Cordwainer Smith, and lots more. Will they ever see print?

Um...probably. ☺ Take care, everyone! See you on March 1st!

—>Pete



COLOPHON

The Log That Flies #10 was gestated in a *P. Maranci 30.8 brain*. Much of the text was then written with *PC-Write 2.5*, an ancient but serviceable ~~villain~~ word processor.

The text was formatted for desktop publication using *Publish-It 4.0 for Windows*, a cranky but cheap DTP program.

The DTPed document was printed on an Okidata OL400e 300 dpi laser printer—at last!

Most of the art in *TLTF* is taken from books of copyright-free clipart published by the **Dover Publishing Co.** of Mineola, NY. Reviews of various Dover books may be printed in future issues.

The art was copied on a **Kodak 2110** high-speed duplicator.

Am I the first person to conceptualize a card game called *Mundanity: The Scattering*? ☺

—>Pete

Every roleplayer has heard stories of the classic "Monty Haul"-style gamemaster, who gives out treasure hand over fist until the players are practically drowning in loot. Such games soon become boring. But there are other kinds of bad gamemasters too, often forgotten by the gaming public. Roleplayers should learn to recognize the warning signs of these scourges of the gaming world. As a public service we are therefore proud to present:

THE GAMEMASTER'S HALL OF SHAME

10) Minnie Haul (Also known as *That Cheap Bastard*)

Quote: "Okay. After twenty-seven sessions you have finally slain the Three Giant Dragons of Chaos. In the treasure vault you find... 12 copper pieces and a rusty fork. Who gets the fork?"

Good Points: You'll never be over-encumbered.

Bad Points: Majority of characters killed by starvation, plus risk of lockjaw from rusty fork.

9) Mr. Softee (Also known as *Pathetic Guy* and *The Amazing Mushman*)

Quote: "You're taken 3 points of damage? Uh... suddenly the troll falls over and spontaneously combusts! Magically, the smoke heals you."

Good Points: Characters never die. Ever. No matter what.

Bad Points: Who cares?

8) Anger Man (Also known as *Mr. Psycho* and *It Wasn't Me, Master*)

Quote: "What?!? You won't obey my NPC? Suddenly all your limbs fall off. And your head explodes. Happy now?"

Good Points: Order and discipline.

Bad Points: Discipline und Order.

7) Das KillMeister (Also known as *Dr. Death* and *Why Do I Keep Playing?*)

Quote: "Better roll up six characters each. That should last the first session. Maybe." [evil chortle]

Good Points: The thrill of danger.

Bad Points: The boredom of constant defeat.

6) The Sexist Pig (Also known as *The Sleazeball* and *L'il Friskies*)

Quote: "They rape you and you love it, like all women. Ha ha ha! Now you're pregnant!"

Good Points: Not boring.

Bad Points: Extremely irritating. Will emotionally scar any player under the age of sixteen. Knows no shame. Will probably enter politics.

5) Das PunMeister (Also known as *Stop and Please, I Beg of You, Kill Him*)

Quote: "A killer Ent is *lumbering* toward you! *Woodn't* you know. I'd *leaf* him alone. Bet his *bark* is worse than his bite!"

Good Points: A wacky, funny, laugh-a-minute guy.

Bad Points: Will not stop.

4) Monotone Man (Also known as *ZZZZZZZZZZ...*)

Quote: "Hi. I'm the King." "Hi. I'm the peasant." "Hi. I'm the wizard." "Hi. I'm the knight." "Hi. I'm the Dragon."

Good Points: Will never cancel due to laryngitis.

Bad Points: Save vs. Paralyzation or Die.

3) The Drunk (Also known as *What's That Smell?* and *Not Again!*)

Quote: "H'lo. BLEUUEUERGGHH!!! G'bye..."

Good Points: Vivid descriptions of strange, bizarre creatures.

Bad Points: Rarely coherent. Will probably die soon.

2) The Insane Plotter (Also known as *Machiavelli* and *Mr. Myxylphxx*)

Quote: "But the twelfth arbitrary conundrum *signifies* nascent ursinoids rising. Any idiot can see that!"

Good Points: Dazzling, intricate plots, sub-plots, and sub-sub-plots.

Bad Points: Makes you feel really stupid.

1) The Grrreat Actor (Also known as *Get A Life*)

Quote: "Alas, poor Yorrick, I knew him well. 'Twas but the bare bodkin of our discontent which ravelled his sleeve of care. And now all is lost, forever lost!"

player: "Does that mean I can order a drink now, Mr. Innkeeper?"

Good Points: Vivid, dramatic, well-characterized NPCs.

Bad Points: Vivid, dramatic well-characterized NPCs won't shut up. Really embarrassing to be seen with in public. Will probably end up in an institution or on daytime TV.

QUIZ

Question #1: Which of the above have YOU been?

Question #2: Which of the above have I been?

Question #3: So what?

Send quiz answers to your parents. All entries will receive a "Why do you play those silly games?" lecture, free of charge.

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A video version of The Gamemaster's Hall of Shame is rumored to exist...