



With this issue we mark the end of the second year of Interregnum. They've been two good years; I'm proud of the way the magazine has come along, and proud of the writing of IR contributors.

## END OF AN ERA



With luck, IR will still be around in twenty years. But all things come to an end, and this issue also marks the end of another IR tradition: the \$1 per page/issue deal.

I hate to have to do that...but let me explain why it's necessary.

As some may remember, Interregnum originally cost \$2 per issue plus postage for subscribers, and \$2 per master page for zine writers. That rate was quite good; our predecessor APA The Wild Hunt was charging \$3/3 with a slightly lower circulation, and there were hints that the price would go up soon shortly before TWH expired.

I used cheap bulk photocopying from an office supply store to get that \$2 rate. Eventually someone pointed out that it was strange that I was taking a large job to an outside copy service; after all, I managed a copy center for a large law firm. On that person's advice, I spoke to my supervisor about using the firm machines on my own time.

I was given permission to do so, on the condition that I bring in my own paper. That reduced costs enormously; where before I had been paying three cents per *side* of a page, now I was paying a quarter of a cent for both sides together. I was able to reduce the cost to \$1 per page and produce a number of promotional copies for distribution in game shops around the world. The aggregate number of copies distributed must have been over ten thousand.

Incidentally, the cost of mailing those promotional issues more than ate up the savings in copy costs. Technically IR remained in the red. But it was an affordable cost.

Less affordable was the cost in time. Copying IR would take at least one full weekend day, once a month. Carrying the boxes of free copies to the post office took a full week of lunch hours, once a month. Eventually I had to cut back on promotional distribution.

Where am I going with this? Here's the story: I've been deeply unhappy at my job for a long time. I won't go into the bloody details (email me if you'd like to hear a dreary horror story or two), but at the least I can say that it has presented virtually no intellectual challenge at all—and I *need* to use my mind.



So I'm finally leaving the firm. After this issue I'll have to go back to using a bulk service again; I have a few friends in the copy business now, but the market is such that I'm not likely to be able to get a noticeably better deal on copying from them.

There are a number of factors that have altered the costs of producing Interregnum since we last used an outside service:

- ↳ The Great Canadian Paper Shortage has increased paper and copy costs quite a bit in the last year. I *think* that I can find a two cent per page-side rate, but I haven't had much of a chance to shop around yet.
- ↳ The average issue is larger. At 120 pages a single copy of IR #16 would cost over \$3.60 to produce now; the cover stock generally costs about six cents per sheet, not including copying costs. The cost of envelopes, labels, and staples must also be covered. \$3.80 would reflect the real cost of that issue.

↪ Circulation has grown. Distribution of free issues will end with this edition of Interregnum. We'll cut back on trades, too. Nonetheless we'll need to produce at least 100 copies of each issue, which will leave an *extremely* small number of back issues to be saved.

To try and sum things up, it will take at least one issue for me to work out the actual cost of producing IR from now on. For that issue (#19), we'll return to the 1994 rate of \$2/2. I hope that we can maintain that rate—I think we can. But as an unemployed person I won't be able to cover cost overruns any more. We'll have to work out a charge that covers the cost of producing IR.

One point that I need feedback on is the ratio of costs. As it stands, contributors cover the bulk of the cost of the issue; subscribers make up the balance. Should we consider raising the per-issue price for subscribers to \$2.50 + postage? That could get a bit pricy for a heavy issue. I don't want to lose subscribers.

I'd like to hear from subscribers. Is \$2.50 + postage too high a rate to handle? I know that some contributors were straining at the \$2 per master page cost (understandable, as that could add up to \$20 per issue or more for prolific writers).

One of the few things I mind about leaving my job is this cost increase. I wish there was some way to avoid it. If anyone can make any suggestions at all, please do write to me.

And if you hear of a job that might suit me, please let me know that, too. ☺



## MARGIN OF ERROR

There's one other thing I should remind everyone about, given the end of the special copy deal: margins. Zines really need to have a one-inch margin on the binding edge, and at least a one-half inch margin on the outer edge. When I did all the copying myself I was able to reduce and image-shift as necessary, but that won't be possible from now on. Contributors, please make sure that your margins fit in—if they don't, the odds are good that a portion of your text will be unreadable.

## ARISIA '96

Arisia '96 was very good for Interregnum; over 300 promotional copies were distributed, and every one of them was picked up. Several people asked me about writing for IR, and on every panel I was on I discretely plugged the magazine.

I still have four or five hundred copies of the Interregnum Sampler left. Rather than wait for Arisia '97, I'd like to find some other cons to distribute them. Your suggestions are invited.

## TOPIC #19

The topic of issue #19 is *Structure*. All roleplaying campaigns possess a basic structure that gives them shape and form, as well as influencing the timing of events. The subject of structure is rarely considered, however. Is it necessary to think about structure, or can a gamemaster simply trust to luck? Can a player act to alter the structure of a campaign, and if so, how?

Stay warm and dry, all! And don't forget to write.

—>Pete

