



RACK & RUNE



Rack & Rune #21: TEMPUS FUGIT

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IN MEMORIAM: GLENN BLACOW

I didn't know Glenn as well as many of the Pack. I'm just a Young Turk (well, Armenian) around here, and he was the oldest of the Old Guard. In the three to four years I've been writing *Rack & Rune* poor health kept Glenn from writing much; we didn't have much chance to interact in these pages.

But he was at almost every collation until close to the end. And even before I knew about TWH, I'd seen him at MIT and at conventions, a unique individual; I knew he was somebody in the field. By coincidence I'd read his "Four-fold Way" article in Different Worlds magazine years ago, and laughed for more than a few minutes; in fact, that was the only DW article that I ever copied and passed around to friends. It took years for me to notice the name of the author of the article and put it together with Glenn. But somehow I don't think I ever remembered to tell him how much I enjoyed that article.

Beyond that? I delivered TWH to his apartment a few times in the past few years, during games; he clearly was the sort of GM who inspired strong reactions from his players. The loyal band I encountered at those times was obviously having fun.

Another time I joined Dana Erlandsen, Bob Butler, and Dana Derryberry in a visit to

Glenn at the hospital. He'd just had a toe removed, and was unable to visit Arisia; still, he made no complaint. You can bet that I'd have had more than a little to say, were our positions reversed! As it happens he did make it to the Con on the last day, in a wheelchair (Bob Butler published pictures of us all at the Con in a past issue). Glenn had no badge, but I stuck my own on him and pushed him around—no one ever stopped us. It's an odd thought: for a while, Glenn was me. But his imposture was less than perfect. Throughout my somewhat clumsy pushing, Glenn made no complaint at all. 8^>}



It's discomfiting to think that a writer for TWH can just go like this. I don't like it. I hope that some of Glenn's older, more knowledgeable friends will write more about him and his role in the creation of TWH.

INTERREGNUM REPORT

A brief update: Interregnum APA is rolling along nicely, picking up steam at a surprising rate. Issue #4 hit the stands in early July, and issue #5 will be out in early August. The latest issue was about 90 pages long and 11 zines, our longest yet.

I've gained access to photocopying at a cost of under ¼ cent per single-sided master; as a result, the contributor's cost per page has been reduced to \$1. Likewise, a subscription now costs \$1 per issue plus postage. Best of all, the copy count has been raised to 200+ copies—and

promotional copies are being distributed in game and book stores across the US, in Canada, and in England.



REVIEW: KEEPER'S COMPENDIUM

“Rules Expansions, New Tomes, Notes on Mythos Races, Exotic Places, & Secret Cults”

A supplement for **Call of Cthulhu**

Author: Keith Herber with Aniolowowski, Ross, Clark, Jeffrey, Szachnowski, Geier

Publisher: Chaosium, 1993

List Price: \$12.95

Format: 8.5 x 11” perfect-bound paperback, b&w glossy cover & interior art. 78 pp. long.

I haven't played **Call of Cthulhu** in some time—but come to think of it, I haven't played *any* game in some time. Nonetheless, CoC has consistently been one of the most impressive roleplaying games on the market. The supplements are generally good to great, and

the *Dreamlands* supplements set a new standard for roleplaying excellence.

Keeper's Compendium won't disappoint. It's a bit of a mongrel volume, with something for everyone. The book has four sections: *Forbidden Books*, *Secret Cults*, *Alien Races*, and *Mysterious Places*. Each section contains expansions of older material available in the main game and other supplements, plus some entirely new material. All in all, however, the material is well-handled. The presentation, writing, and organization are quite good, very accessible. A few typos catch the eye, but these are relatively rare.

Keeper's Compendium contains a wealth of scenario hooks. As such, it might not be the most appropriate book for players to purchase; the element of surprise might be ruined in some cases. On the other hand, we all know what's going on when we deal with Cthulhu—don't we? And the intrepid investigators may need all the help they can get... 8^>}

Though strictly black & white, the internal art is good to excellent.

At \$12.95 for 78 pages, the volume is a bit slim for the price. Unfortunately it does seem that the prices of books and game material are on an ever-increasing spiral upwards.

In any case, Keeper's Compendium is definitely a very useful supplement for any Keeper. The wealth of information it contains will certainly be of use over many years.

Rating: B+. It might have been an A-, but the *Dreamlands* books have raised standards...

COMMENTS #186

Mark Swanson: Please accept my condolences on the loss of your friend and co-founder. I'm glad to hear that other personal difficulties seem to be clearing up—it's about time.



The “balloon and lamb” that Franny received from the Belmont School—I assume that the lamb was stuffed? Images of a heaping platter of roast lamb come to mind. 8^>}

I agree that **Champions** character design is often hard to take. It seems far too complicated to me. Call me a math idiot, but I just can't create a character for **Champions** without feeling that I'm in a math class.

Pendragon, on the other hand, is truly elegant. The character design is simple enough to be easily understood, while actually offering *more* to flesh out the possibilities of the character. But are the personality traits really desirable? Not for me. Perhaps I haven't played with top-quality **Pendragon** GMs, but I see no point in having my character's personality reduced to a series of scores. I prefer to *roleplay* a challenge to my chastity, for example, rather than roll a die and look at the juiceless result. It's true that I could choose to roleplay the incident as well, but in taking away freedom of choice from the player the roleplaying element is diminished. Essentially the **Pendragon** approach seems to betray a lack of trust in the gaming public—aren't we capable of making our own character-appropriate choices?

Come to think of it, most of us probably aren't. 8^>}

Regarding **Computers & RPGs**, my use of the computer *vis a vis* my games is very limited. During the games themselves the most I do is very rarely run over to the PC to look up on of my special tables. Otherwise, my activity is confined to designing and printing the various character sheets I use (which I actually haven't used for years), and in **APA** writing.

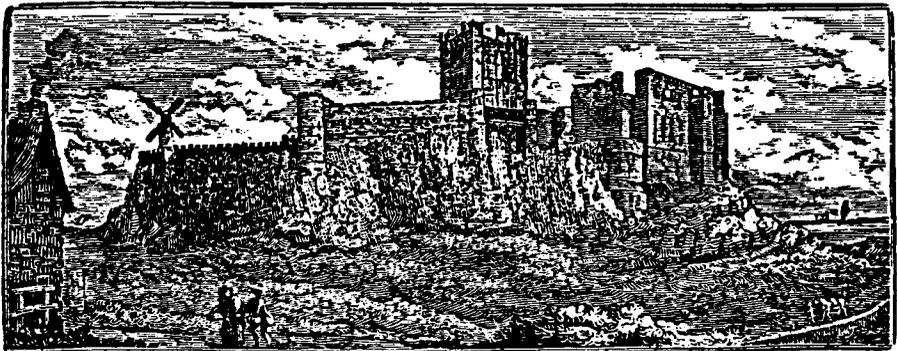
Since I'm a firm believer in the primary importance of the human element in roleplaying I'm unlikely to use a PC for anything other than record-keeping, even if they become more convenient to use.

Scott Ruggels/Collie Collier: Re *Something Inflammatory*: I find it odd that liberals are so often accused of being the primary cause of censorship these days. Yes, some ignorant folk in the putatively 'liberal' camp do attempt to censor for reasons of violence and racism; however, much more censorship is attempted by conservative groups. Look at what Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition is doing in school boards across the country.

Of course, conservatives seem to object more to sex and unorthodox views (religious and otherwise) than violence.

I make no defense of censorship by anyone, but it does seem to me that the much-ballyhooed idea of “political correctness” is little more than a cynical political ploy by elements of the right to suppress criticism of their own agenda; a way to dismiss and stigmatize opposing views rather than answering them. As it happens a small number of fools play into this perception...but the primary threat to freedom comes from fanatics on the right such as Pat Robertson, as far as I can see.

It's unfortunate that politicians find social and moral issues such a convenient way to avoid the real issues of the day. But hardly surprising.



Re Jaggiri IV: Nice job as usual. Who does the art? Is it a combination of efforts? On page 7, are we seeing the invention of bowling among the Jaggiri? 8^>}

Another possible "first contact" Jaggiri scenario: A downed interstellar pilot attempts to gather together the means to signal the Jaggiri mother ship. This could be set in the past, present, or future; a sort of "ET" with an attitude, as it were.

Re Giant Robots: I LOLed. I thought I was the only one who had that damn phrase stuck in his head...but what the heck is it from?

Curtis Taylor: Whoa! You really carried the lion's share of this issue, Curtis. You writing machine! 8^>}

Speaking of machines, congratulations on the new computer. Your layout looked great—it's hard to believe that you didn't print your zine on a laser printer.

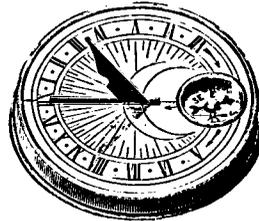
I must admit that I don't recognize one of the images in your RuneStrip. What's the one that looks like a square standing on a corner with an X through it?

Your writeup of RQ-Con was excellent: I'm impressed by the accuracy and detail of your memory. Re **Sandy Petersen** not getting to play Call of Cthulhu: I imagine that many GMs would feel a bit nervous running a game for him. After all, with ordinary players you can fudge a bit and hope that they'll miss it. Screw something up in front of Sandy, though, and he's sure to know. Did you notice that he was correcting **Greg Stafford** in the lore auction?

Incidentally, I videotaped about the first 30 minutes (out of perhaps 90 minutes) of Greg Stafford reading his Arkat story. Then the tape ran out, and I had no backup. Right before the most exciting part, too—wouldn't you know it. I hope that someday the story is finally published, but I suppose time will tell.

Regarding the **RuneQuest Daily Digest** on the Internet: Is it just me, or has the list been getting too damn esoteric? It seems to me (and was also pointed out by **Gil Pili**, coauthor of the long RQ scenario in **Interregnum #4**) that a lot of the discussion on the list is little more than word-chasing, empty metaphysical dialogue without any real usefulness to the game of RuneQuest. Okay, it seems that Greg may not be very interested in RQ these days; still, for those who still play the game it almost seems that there should be another, more relevant-to-the-game list.

I went on a bit of a rant about this recently: "The minor god Snurblesnaf signifies the left-handed spiral found in the fewmets of cranky seven-striped hyenas in the Moolar Valley region of Hsunchengoria. But a recent HeroQuest revealed that Snurblesnaf had actually been displaced by the God Learners long ago and replaced by the god Snurblesnaph, who also signifies the left-handed spiral found in the fewmets of cranky seven-striped hyenas in the Moolar Valley region of Hsunchengoria—but with a slightly tighter curl. And the significance of this difference is: **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!**" 8^>}



—>Pete

Colophon

Rack & Rune #21: TEMPUS FUGIT was generated in ASCII form using *PC-Write 2.5*. It was formatted for desk top publication using *Publish-It 4.0 for Windows*. It includes clip art generated with the *Windows 3.0 Paintbrush* utility, as well as clip art downloaded from several BBSes and other sources.

Fewmets: The droppings of a hunted animal which are preserved as trophies of the hunt (medieval). I didn't make that up—honest! © —>PM