

THE LOG THAT FEEDS

#8

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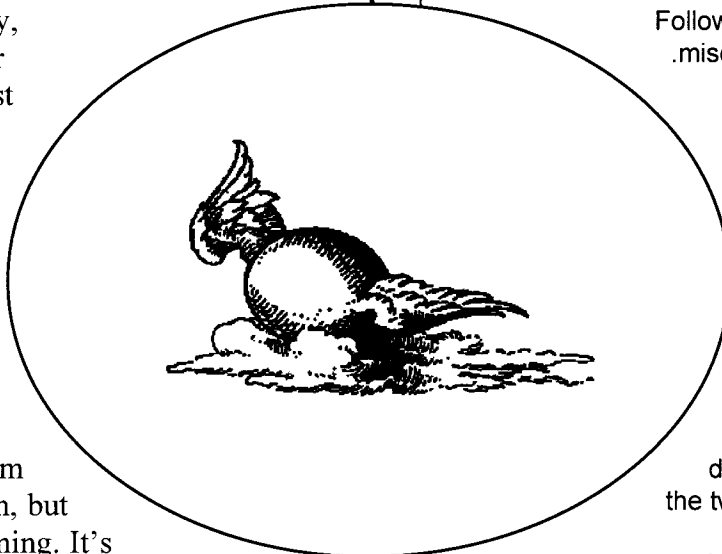
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Perhaps it's the change of seasons. Perhaps it's because I've been re-reading the works of J.R.R. Tolkien this month. Perhaps it's the cessation of Daylight Savings Time. Hell, maybe it's because I'm thirty. Who knows? But something strange has been happening to me lately, something that I never expected in my wildest dreams as a kid.

Poetry. I find myself putting words into patterns without even thinking about it. Limericks, blank verse, rhyming couplets...most of them don't get written down, but they seem to keep coming. It's odd, since I'm one of the more prosaic people you'd ever meet. Certainly I never thought I might become a poet! ☺

I'll inflict (if that is the correct word) some haiku in a page or two. But first...



rec.games.frp.announce (moderated) #1278
From: Scott D Haring <sdharing@io.com>
[1] [INDUSTRY] White Wolf, SJ Games Reach Settlement

Followup-To: rec.games.frp-
.misc

Date: Wed Oct 26
00:01:15 EDT 1994

PRESS RELEASE

Steve Jackson Games and White Wolf announced today that they have reached a full compromise on all disputed issues between the two companies.

GURPS MAGE: THE ASCENSION will be released in October, with full White Wolf approval, but will be the last GURPS/STORY-TELLER release. The SJ Games license to sell the four existing books in the GURPS/STORY-

THE GAMING NEWS

My thanks once again to **Steve Jackson** for permission to reprint the following Net-posted press release in this issue. Though I don't suppose it was necessary to ask his permission this time—after all, it is a *press* release, and Interregnum is press! ☺

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TELLER series will remain valid until the end of 1997.

GURPS VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE will be released in French and German, utilizing already-finished translations, but there will be no other foreign editions of the GURPS STORYTELLER books.

White Wolf has recognized SJ Games' concern over the similarity between SJ Games' trademarked logo and a graphic in White Wolf's WRAITH series. White Wolf will be removing the graphic from future printings of WRAITH products. No existing WRAITH books will be removed from sale.

Company presidents Steve Wieck and Steve Jackson praised Phil Brucato and Derek Percy, of their respective editorial staffs, for helping to keep lines of communication open and make the settlement possible.

For further information, contact White Wolf at 404-292-1819 or Steve Jackson Games at 512-447-7866.



Haiku for You

The haiku bug bit me badly this month. I found myself making haiku about almost everything I saw, and of course roleplaying games were not excluded. Here are a few roleplaying haiku. Each is about a particular game system; can you guess which is which? The answers are revealed on page 7.

1. I jump from behind
My dagger cleaves the orc's back.
Five XPs for me!
2. Mom was Blyzth the Ghoul
Dad, a Deep One named Xaxlax.
Why'd they name me "Bob"?
3. Praise the Computer,
Although—yes, Vulture Leader
I'll come quietly
4. Past Aldebarran
Grubby little shopkeepers
Want to make a deal?
5. Wearing black, I lurk.
Child of the Night, I hunger.
Stop calling me "geek"!
6. Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap.
Late at night, when I'm alone
I fondle my cards...
7. Giant metal men
In a high-tech future world?
Makes no sense at all.
8. Hacker, Runner, Thief
Bleak urban-tech-angst future,
strangely dungeonlike.



And now, a few more haiku. These aren't roleplaying-related, but do have some connection to science fiction or fantasy. The last is unique in that it has a title; I don't know if that's acceptable to the traditional definition of haiku, but what the heck. ☺

No mere turtle, he.
Flame blasts from arm- and
leg-holes.
Friend to all children...

When I close my eyes
I hear a dragon roaring
Instead of a flush

How to cook Hobbit?
Gandalf's stone-soup recipe
Ends all argument.

Godzilla's Milkman?

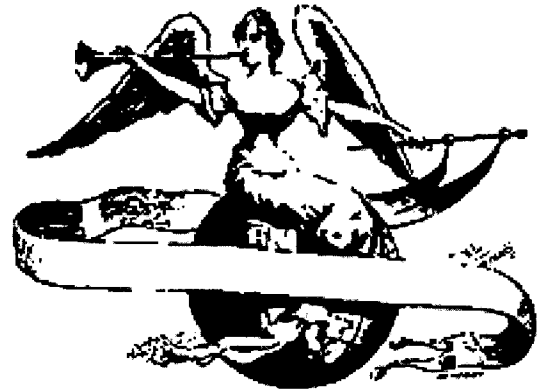
World's strongest monster.
Why does such a champion
Have such a lame son?

There will be more haiku in future issues, I'm sure. Though I probably won't inflict it on contributors as a topic again. ☺

WONDER OF WONDERS

It would seem that a valuable lesson has been learned from my experience with the recruiting effort for the Wonder campaign: A flyer that's too polished will scare everyone off. The Wonder flyers produced not one single player, while announcements on a few Internet newsgroups and on a Boston bibliophiles email list produced more than enough. All that remains is to get all the characters ready, set a time, and begin. I'm looking forward to it, and hope that the writeups will prove interesting.

I'm not altogether sure that it will be possible to write up each week's adventures as scenarios, but it should be interesting to try.



COMMENTS #7

George Phillies: Apparently TSR has actually been writing to FTP sites on the Internet and threatening them with legal action if they do not delete any TSR-related files. Copies of their letters have been posted in public newsgroups, and I must say that they're arrogant, rude, and dictatorial. Interestingly enough the TSR Internet representative suddenly stopped posting several weeks ago. It may be a coincidence, but I'd posted a rather strident analysis of the contradictions of his various statements. When he responded threateningly to my suggestion that authors were afraid that TSR might appropriate their work—was I suggesting that TSR carried out illegal acts?—I was pleased to remind him about the Tolkien copyright infringement, and remarked that the SPI incident, if not illegal, was nonetheless extremely evil.

He didn't respond. But a number of people emailed me, asking for the details about the TSR-SPI incident. ☺

I'm enjoying No Tears for a Princess very much indeed, which is perhaps a bad thing—since you say it's a novel fragment, I'd hate to get too interested only to end up frustrated at a sudden break. Is this a project you've abandoned completely, or might you finish it off eventually (if inspiration strikes)? It's really excellent work, certainly as good as any fantasy that's published these days—and more...well...*textured* than many new fantasy novels. Perhaps it's just me, but most new fantasy seems somewhat crude and almost embarrassingly simplistic.

You know, George, matching the math/physics characters of your zine numbering for the Table of Contents is becoming quite a challenge. I was forced to desperate measures for #7...can you guess what they were? ☺

Doug Jorenby: I've often thought that the best way to run a horror campaign would be to tell the players that it was something else to start with. The problem, however, is that there are too many players these days who simply wouldn't accept the change in tone. In fact, I've run into many players who simply go on strike if a game doesn't follow their very strict expectations. For example, I've had players who've deliberately walked into near-hopeless situations which they *knew* were suicidally dangerous, only to get angry and fight when faced with overwhelming odds! This left me with the choice of having them all killed outright (since the odds were twenty to one against them) or harming the game by crocking a win for them. Either way, the game—and ultimately the players—were bound to lose. That's simply bad roleplaying, in my book.

Hmm. If something like that were to happen now, I think I'd kill them all and let them continue the game as ghosts. It would be an interesting change of state. Even more interesting would be to have them return as various kinds of undead: ghouls, zombies, ghosts, vampires, etc. A party like that could be

extremely amusing, if it were handled with a light touch. For one thing, it would make buying new equipment a major challenge. Merchants would keep running away! ☺

The idea that the players must always be able to triumph over any odds harkens back to the wargaming roots of roleplaying. I can't imagine a novel, for example, in which the protagonist(s) never suffer reverses; such a book would be



extremely dull, and probably unpublishable. In The Lord of the Rings Merry and Pippin were seized and carried away by orcs; yet in a similar situation I know of many players who'd refuse to accept such a situation, whining and breaking out of character at the "injustice". A game where the characters do nothing but suffer wouldn't be much fun (and Moorcock's Elric series sometimes has this quality, as does the *Hellblazer* comic book), but misfortune often offers outstanding dramatic opportunities to roleplayers.

My own games these days are all serial-types, with extended plotlines that run for years. I enjoy such games, but sometimes feel that I should leaven the plot mix with something a little quicker.

Curtis Taylor: Where do you get your line art, Curtis? It looks great, but somehow familiar.

I've written to **Wizard's Attic** (about eight or nine months ago) but haven't heard anything for ages. Do you know if they've folded?

Thanks for the POG counters, Curtis! I haven't started any POG games yet, however. For one thing, I don't know anyone around here who plays them. Also, I'd probably lose. Then I'd start sulking, and be all bitter and stuff. ☺

Ah, **Lost Worlds**. I'd forgotten about that. I really should pick up a copy, if any are still available. I don't think the LW fad ever approached the mammoth popularity of **Magic: The Gathering**, though.

It's funny: I'm terrible at wargames, but the few times I played **Lost Worlds** I was unbeatable. Guess I really *should* buy a copy! But since everyone I could play against reads IR, I guess I've just warned them all off...☺

A very nice RuneQuest cult listing.



Gil Pili: Hee hee! **TSR** is no longer the "biggest game shop on the corner"; **Wizards of the Coast** is. One of the very few good side-effects of **Magic: The Gathering**. ☺

Your article on Horror was excellent. I hadn't thought of looking at the subject so analytically. It makes me feel a bit guilty...I should have written more. Oh well. At least my zine will have the most by far about this month's topic. ☺

In any case, the best explanation I can come up with for **TSR's** corporate behavior is this: they're bastards. It's simplistic, I know. But it does seem to cover all points, so Occam's Razor would indicate that it's the best explanation. ☺

It's interesting that you feel that gaming is better with good friends, since I've been specifically looking for new faces for the Wonder campaign; I'm not ruling out old friends as players by any means, but much of the current gaming group has gone stale for me (going stale or burning out will undoubtedly be a topic in some future issue of IR).

Of course, it's necessary that players not be hostile to each other. But need they be "good friends"? I'm not sure. On the other hand, good roleplayers who get along in my games are the kind of people who make good friends in any case. ☺

Scott Ferrier: It would seem that **Doom** is the standard by which all other computer games are measured. I find that interesting; was there a previous standard which was displaced by Doom, or did it fill a vacuum?

The **Corel Art Show 4** CD-ROM sounds like a complete ripoff. Thanks for warning me about it. I probably wouldn't have bothered anyway, though; most CD-ROMs of clipart have little of the kind of art I need for **IR**. It's a good thing my Dover collection is large enough to last for many years.

I didn't understand the spoilers at all. But since I won't be playing Doom II, I guess that's nothing to worry about.

Regarding the SJGames/White Wolf announcements, I find it interesting that Steve Wieck suggested that people email him privately for information, but did not reply to my request for permission to reprint his response. He's certainly far less accessible than Steve Jackson.

Re your comment to Curtis Taylor: I agree that the Net discussions of RuneQuest these days have had a dampening effect on my interest in Glorantha. I wonder if I'll ever run Glorantha again; it used to be a good background to go back to every few years, but now there's so much nitpicking material that it seems a waste of time. I couldn't possibly absorb all that material, and so any game I would run would be that much more detached from the main stream of Gloranthan reality. It's not that I feel that a game world has to be "regulation"; not at all. But there've been so many major retroactive changes and such a huge increase in the volume of (really boring) material that I can't possibly learn it all and keep it straight. Nor am I interested in doing so. If I ever do a RQ Glorantha campaign again, it will be on the strict understanding that any information or material from the Net and

Greg Stafford's King of Sartar will have to be approved by me.



Virgil Greene: An excellent analysis of vampires, Virgil, thorough and thoughtful. But I notice that the Dracula of the Saberhagen series (my personal favorite vampire series) doesn't fit into your list: Vampirism as a rare but natural human state.

I've long felt that Ann Rice's vampire books were vastly inferior to Fred Saberhagen's Dracula; twisted sex and sadomasochism made the Rice books intensely annoying to me, while the earlier Saberhagen books were intelligent, exciting, witty, and much more enjoyable. I only hope that the current Vampire craze inspires Saberhagen's publishers to bring the Dracula books back into print.

Regarding *Deep Space 9*, it seems strange to say but I must admit: I no longer find the show interesting. It just doesn't feel like science fiction any more; instead, it features moralistic preaching, New Age nostrums, and soap opera relationships. The writing is flaccid and predictable, the dialog is stilted and corny, and

the special effects are not particularly well handled or interesting. The tendency to preach which Gene Roddenberry sometimes evinced now dominates the show. If I want to be preached at, I'll go to church.

On the other hand (and also to my surprise) **Babylon 5** has been getting better and better, to the point that I consider it the premier science fiction show on television today. The more I watch it, the more that I'm convinced that the creator was not only a roleplayer, but probably a deep-roleplaying gamemaster; the plot structure and the way elements unfold are very reminiscent of some deep-roleplaying games I've seen. Though the show isn't perfect the plots are interesting and complex, the dialog is improving, and the special effects (including alien make-up) are first-rate.

An Interregnum reader has put together a Babylon 5 APA, The Babylon Project. I haven't had a chance to get a copy yet, but I'm certainly planning to. I'll see if he's interested in a plug in IR, and if he is I'll put subscription info in the next issue.

NONE DARE CALL IT "FILLER" 😊

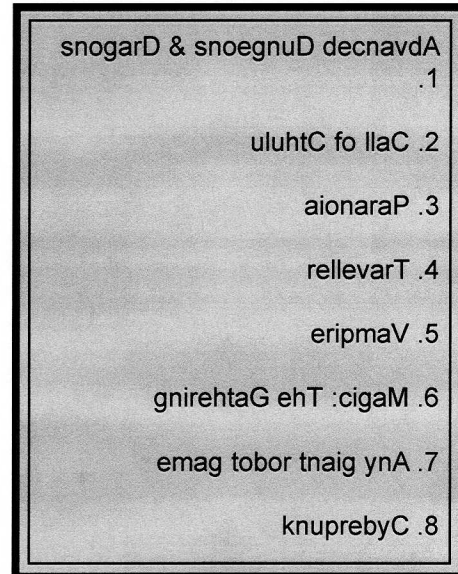
Rich Staats to the rescue again! Directly following this page.

NEXT ISSUE

There was a lot I'd planned to write for this issue, but I simply lacked the time. Perhaps I'll make up for it next time—in any case, I'll give it a good try.

Haiku Answers

To decipher the answers, hold this page up to a mirror (or read backwards—it's not that difficult, just like the haiku themselves ☺). The answers are in the same order as the haiku.



—>Pete

COLOPHON

The Log That Flies #8 was gestated in a *P. Maranci 30.6 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 at a ruinous cost at a laser printing service, on a 300 dpi laser printer.

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.

Camera is friend to all children. But don't ask him to baby-sit; he has a problem with snacks ☺ —>Pete

