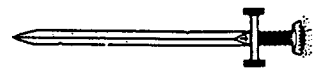


RACK & RUNE



RACK & RUNE #20b: Recursions and Recidivism

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January 27th, 1994

The last few weeks have been hectic, with many strange twists and turns of fortune. So many, in fact, that the zine I wrote last week was soon hopelessly outdated; fortunately delays in collation should give me just enough time to get through a major rewrite.

WHAT'S GOING ON

When I heard that The Wild Hunt would soon be going on indefinite hiatus I realized that I wasn't ready to give up writing Rack & Rune. In the middle of the night I decided to start up a new roleplaying APA. I'd name it Interregnum—I've always liked that word, and it seemed rather appropriate. Working quickly I wrote up an announcement for Rack & Rune #20, and made up a flyer about Interregnum to distribute at the Arisia convention. I'd already had a number of TWH flyers made, but wasn't sure if I should distribute them under the circumstances.

Then the word came that TWH wasn't indefinitely suspended, that only February collation was cancelled—March collation was still on, with collations after that up in the air. This was good news, but it put me in a quandary: what should I do about Interregnum?

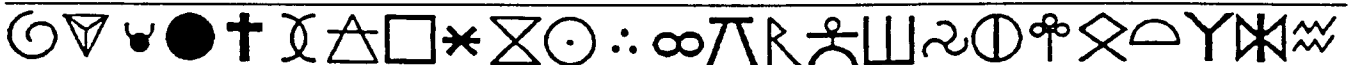
I won't bore you with all the issues I

wrestled with. Suffice it to say that after long and careful thought I've decided to go ahead and start the Interregnum APA. Of course I'll still write Rack & Rune for The Wild Hunt, as often as it comes out. I've done far too much work promoting TWH to slack off now! 8^>}

The primary focus of Interregnum will be roleplaying games and science fiction/fantasy. Some of the material I print in TWH will be duplicated there. But I'd like to push the envelope a bit, publishing some things that might not fit in TWH. I'd like to see at least one piece in every issue of Interregnum that has nothing at all to do with RPGs, science fiction, or fantasy. I have a theory that the occasional 'wild card' article might shake things up a bit and bring out some new and completely unexpected ideas and approaches to roleplaying. I'd even like to try to bring in an occasional piece from non-gamers. The main focus will always be roleplaying, though.

Several folk are interested in contributing to Interregnum already. In fact, the first issue promises to be fairly large.

There are a couple of small national game-related organizations that would apparently be interested in participating in an RPG APA—the details remain to be worked out, so I'll not name them here.



The proposed relationships would be fairly loose, since I'd like to remain fundamentally independent. Still, these organizations should offer a good base of potential new readers.

The dry details:

- Interregnum will come out every month if at all possible.
- The deadline for the first issue is March 10th. Why so late? Well, it's the day before my 30th birthday, and it'll give me something to look back upon with a glow of satisfaction (I hope) amidst the angst and turmoil. 8^>} Also, I'd very much like to have as many of the contributors and subscribers of The Wild Hunt participate as possible. A few extra weeks may give a few more people time to sign up (for this first issue only—future issues won't be delayed if I can help it). **AFTERTHOUGHT:** To avoid conflicting with the March issue of TWH I'll delay the first issue of Interregnum for two weeks after TWH #186 collation, just this once. If for some reason the March TWH collation is cancelled, Interregnum #1 will be collated at 2pm on Sunday, March 20th. Please write, call, or email me beforehand if you want to write a zine for the first issue.
- Subscriptions, contributions, and editorial policy will be handled much as they are in The Wild Hunt (TWH is the only APA I know well; the procedures seem to work), but please note that Interregnum is separate from TWH in every way—this is entirely my project.
- The suggested topic for the first issue is, originally enough, "Beginnings". 8^>}
- Interested parties should send checks or money orders to establish an account (please make them out to Peter Maranci). Contributors pay \$2 for each master page, and no other costs except postage. For

subscribers each issue costs \$2 plus postage. Once I get a good idea of what the copy count will be, contributors may simply send in pre-printed zines instead.

- The issues can be mailed by any method available from the US postal service. There's a post office half a block from my house, so there should be no difficulties or delays.

- There's a copy of the flyer for Interregnum at the back of this zine. If anyone would like to copy it or pass it around I'd be most grateful. I can also supply copies of the flyer for conventions and such. Any solicitation of new readers or contributors for Interregnum will be very much appreciated! I'd like to make this a success.

Send comments, questions, or payments to the following address:

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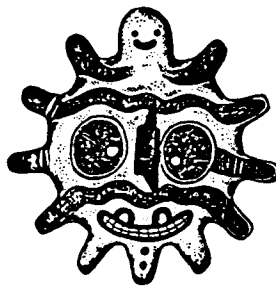
Hope to see you in Interregnum!



When I saw a clip-art image of my subway stop I knew I had to use it!

A TOP-NOTCH (RQ) CON

RuneQuest Con was simply huge—not in the number of people (there were perhaps 140 attendees) but in sheer volume of interesting events and activities. I'll admit that I wasn't exactly looking forward to the con; my interest in RuneQuest had flagged more than a bit in the last year, and I was feeling rather intimidated by the sometimes incredibly complex and daunting discussions of the finest points of Gloranthan minutiae in the RuneQuest Daily Digest. In fact I'd given up reading the Daily, even though **Sandy Petersen** of Call of Cthulhu and Doom (the hottest computer game on the Software Plane) had recently been making frequent appearances there.



It also seemed like a huge expense. Each of us was getting our own hotel room, from Friday through Sunday night. The room were reasonably priced at about \$60/night, but three nights would still add up. We were staying Sunday night because **Greg Stafford** was scheduled to speak Sunday evening, and the prospect of driving from Baltimore to Boston in the middle of the night was an unpleasant one. Fortunately that Monday was Martin Luther King day, a holiday.

I was also regretting signing up for **Home of the Bold**, the SIL-style LARP that would take up eight hours on Saturday. The character I'd received seemed less than promising, almost the opposite of what I'd requested for in personality. As far as I could tell he was a minor character, an outsider in the "circle of power" (if there was one in the game), and a boring jerk. Too close to my real life! 8^>}

Yet another reason to be mildly apprehensive: I'd agreed to act as agent at the auction of old RuneQuest merchandise

at the con for a major RuneQuest collector. He had given me a long list and a very large quantity of cash. Since I'd never bid in an auction before—hadn't even seen one except for short bits on TV—I was a bit afraid of making some huge mistake. Maybe I would sneeze at the wrong time or twitch and accidentally bid \$10,000.00 on a soiled Lunar-style handkerchief. 8^>}

I suspected that I wouldn't fit in at the con, or at least not very well. I'm not a "name" in RuneQuest; the comments I make on the RQ Daily and the RQ4 playtest discussion group rarely receive much response. I felt ignorant and out of it.

In addition I sometimes (rarely these days, fortunately) feel rather alienated and isolated in large and convivial groups. That feeling was already starting to kick in. All in all, I was close to regretting my decision to go to the con. My only consolation was that I'd have Arisia to go to on the next weekend.

What can I say? I was wrong. RuneQuest Con was great!

Friday



We started at about 5 AM. There were four of us in the medium-size sedan: Mark, Gil, **Scott Ferrier** (my roommate, of Aye, Matey! fame), and me. The car was crowded, particularly in the back seat behind the driver.

There was virtually no leg room in that spot, and sitting there soon became a torture test. My joints would scream and creak, but there was no way to straighten my knees...

The plan had been to share the driving but the car was a standard shift model, and I only know how to drive automatics. As it turned out Mark did all the driving down, a nearly eight-hour trip at fine speed. We

rotated positions several times, but that left rear seat had me in agony after the first half hour every time. We arrived at the hotel in bitter cold.

Registration for our rooms was a breeze. As we were checking in I experienced a strange sensation, one that I experienced throughout the weekend: there were several guys standing in the lobby, and though there was nothing to show that they were gamers I somehow *knew* that they played RuneQuest. This was far stronger than the similar effect one experiences at other conventions—it was as if I knew them well. Bizarre!

Throughout the weekend I couldn't shake the feeling that I knew all these people—and not just from reading the works of some of them. They were strongly familiar as *types*: highly experienced and intelligent RuneQuest players of the same kind as the guys who first introduced me to the game.

Only one person at the Con didn't match that "RuneQuest player" archetype in the back of my head. I could recognize the storytelling and communication abilities of a "deep roleplaying" gamemaster, but for some reason **Greg Stafford** does not trigger the "RQer recognition" effect in my mind. Odd, eh? 8^>}

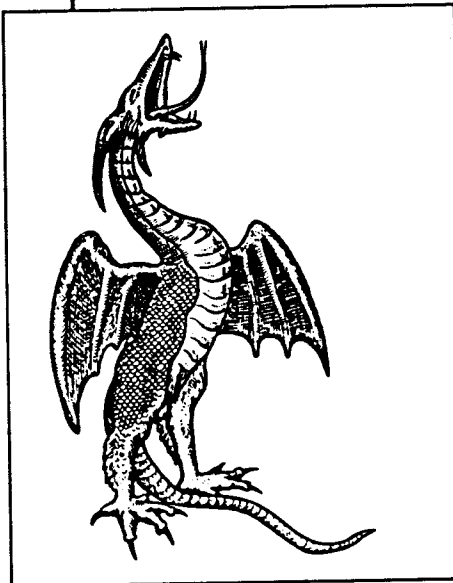
I should also mention that in general these folk were older than the average gamer. I'd guess that the average age was about 30 years old. No one I saw looked younger than 25 or so.

Con registration went fairly smoothly. As I stood in line I dropped off a pile of **TWH** fliers on the table, and noticed some **A&E** fliers. Suddenly the name **George Phillis** caught my eye. His name was listed as an officer on a flyer for an organization called the Strategic Gaming Association (I hope I have that right). As it

turns out, though, George wasn't at the Con.

While I was waiting to get into the room where opening ceremonies were being held I suddenly found myself confronted with one of the last people I'd expected to meet at RQ Con: one of the nastier members of the old guard of the SIL, the one who'd started the **Foundation & Destiny** LARP off for me by revealing that he knew all my character secrets and that my actions didn't matter (ego-crushing and

petty cruelty are apparently typical behavior for him—I was amused recently when the GM of a SIL-type game told me that several players in the game had specifically asked not to be paired with this guy).



Before I knew it I was shaking his hand (I've never been able to work up the rudeness to tell him what I think of him). He was running a small LARP game at the con on Friday only. I was shocked and somewhat disheartened. Not a hopeful start to the Con! Fortunately he left after Friday night, and I didn't see him again.

Later I was surprised to see that both he and an old-guard SIL member I had recently disagreed with at length on the Net were being published by Chaosium. The wicked rewarded. How could this happen? A body-blow to my ego! I guess I shouldn't be surprised that writing ability and a pleasant personality do not necessarily go hand in hand. 8^>}

I was signed up that night for Chaosium's new card game, **Credo!**. This had been my last choice on the preregistration form, since it was a card game based on the Nicene Creed—I'd had to fill in that last blank somehow. I stink at cards, and the guy running it was less than enthusiastic. In fact at one point he said something on the order of "this game stinks". Not a good sign. 8^>}

It was a card game, much like any other. Nobody really got into it, I'm afraid. The rules make the only roleplaying possibility, arguing over creeds, pretty much irrelevant—players cannot change the beliefs of others through argument and debate unless the victim has no belief card of their own, a somewhat unlikely occurrence. When it *is* possible, the arguments are based on power, not belief. That may well be historically accurate, but it negates the most interesting aspect of the game. The thing I liked most about the game was the names of the different sects and their differing creeds: I wish there had been a description of these in the rules (perhaps there was; I didn't get to read the rules anyway). I suppose **Credo!** might be fun for a theologian or dedicated cardplayer, but its roleplaying aspects seem negligible.

After **Credo!** I went back to my room. Baltimore was freezing. It didn't help that we had to walk through two open-to-the-outside passages to get to the main Con area from our rooms. Obviously this hotel had not been designed with winter in mind. Brrr!

Later that night **Sandy Petersen** gave a great seminar, talking about Call of Cthulhu and much more. He told some great hair-raising stories, but I won't repeat them here—I want to steal them and use them in my games! 8^>} He also said that the gaming industry has won out over BADD and other the anti-gaming organizations. I'm glad to hear it, and hope he's right.



Saturday

I'm a little fuzzy on what happened when. I know Greg Stafford did an interesting seminar on HeroQuesting; I think that was Saturday morning. I was late, and so asked a question that he'd already covered in his opening remarks (before I arrived): The secret power of the God Learners was something called "RuneQuest Vision". Did that mean that they were actually roleplayers, and if so was their flaw that they were hack n' slash?

The answer was yes. I felt a little foolish, but found later that the answer hadn't been expressed in the same terms before, and so was not entirely without merit. What the hell, at least I figured out a small secret of the God Learners on my own! 8^>}

Most of Saturday was to be taken up by **Home of the Bold**, the interactive literature Glorantha LARP game. About 75 people were signed up for it, including Scott and myself.

There was an introduction to Glorantha, a quick opening ceremony, and the game began. The setting was the

Gloranthan town of Boldhome. The central conflict was the battle for power between the occupying Lunar Empire force and the underground Orlanthe resistance, with a number of neutrals caught between the two. Though (as I mentioned earlier) I wasn't entirely happy with my character, I was determined to make every effort to make the game a good one, socializing and intriguing to the best of my ability. True, I was a sleazy scumbag rather than the humorous and kind neutral I'd asked for; nonetheless, I'd come a long way and would try my damndest to have fun at the game. I went to the Market of Boldhome to find my criminal contacts.

One of them was easy to find. He was supposed to lead me to my main contact, but didn't yet know where he was. In the meantime I occupied myself by making deals and learning what I could.

NOTE: In keeping with past tradition in these pages I will attempt to change names and alter key details so as to avoid spoiling the game for others.

My character goals were simple: sell off some illegal materials in my possession without getting caught, sell off some legitimate goods too (my character was basically a trader), make as much money as possible, pay off a gambling debt incurred in my character history, investigate the possibility of acquiring Full Lunar Citizenship (which gives great prestige and power to the holder), and get out of town alive and with money.

The problem was that much of this was supposed to be done through my main criminal contact, and I never met him. I found out later that he drank a Troll drink

at Geo's (a tavern) in the first few minutes of the game, and promptly expired. This was most unfortunate, as it rather left me hanging out to dry.

Nonetheless I did my best. I met with the Prince, a twittering ninny played brilliantly and hilariously by Nick Brooke (the RQ culture vulture). I traded rather well for a membership at Geo's early on, which gave me a place to "sleep" (every hour of real time was a day and night of game time). My illegal possessions were soon traded for a fat profit. Before long I had 17 Lunars, which was a truly fabulous amount in the game: Lunars in HOTB are worth hundreds of times more than in RuneQuest. When the Tax Demon approached me I claimed poverty and diverted her by asking for a job as a spy (some quick talking on my part, though the idea of being a Lunar spy really did interest me) As I Fast-Talked her I kept a careful hand on the 17 Lunars in my pocket to keep them from clinking. She never guessed. 8^>} I also acquired a written recommendation for Full Lunar Citizenship from a major Lunar noble.

Greg Stafford was playing the Lhankor Mhy Chief Librarian, a role he obviously relished (perhaps because it gave him an excuse to wear the weirdest beard I've ever seen). He was one of my listed contacts, and my character history suggested that I have him analyze some mysterious materials I'd picked up in previous experience. I did so, using my usual plea of poverty to avoid paying anything near the usual prices. Eventually he reported to me that the materials were worthless.

I was a bit crestfallen, but determined



to make the best of it by selling the arcane objects to some wealthy and gullible fool. My secondary contact agreed to find such a fool for a reasonable percentage. In the middle of the excitement my contact grabbed me. He had found a perfect wealthy buyer—and here he was!

I was face to face with the Prince (Nick Brooke). Before I could say much he called to his Chief Librarian to verify the worth of the rare materials he was about to buy.

“I don’t understand,” Greg said, “I told you these were worthless.”

Panic attack. Major sinking feeling. Why me?

“You misunderstood,” I said as calmly as I could, “these are a gift to His Highness. Though worthless, I hope that they will please them as curios.”

I handed them to the Prince and got out of there as quickly I could. After the game was over I found out that those had been the single most powerful artifacts in the game, though my character had no way to know this or use them. Moral: Never trust a man in a white leopard-skin fabric beard! 8^>}

I went out and continued to mix, though there was little left for me to do. I wasn’t necessarily having the time of my life, but I was working hard and having some fun. Suddenly things took a turn for the worse: I was arrested on the word of a bounty hunter. In fact I wasn’t guilty of the crime of which I was accused; my character was innocent but appeared guilty due purely to events which were part of my character history. I was taken to jail at Lunar Occupational HQ.

I spent about an hour of real-time sitting there, I’d say. During that time I

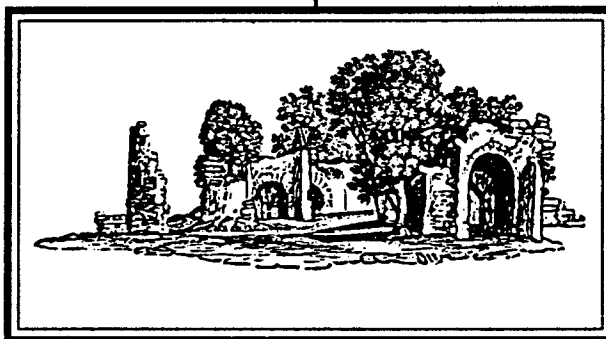
was beaten, tortured, and threatened with death by my captors. I screamed (quietly) for the guards, and was told to shut up. The role of victim is not a fun one to play for long; the other two prisoners didn’t seem to be having a very good time either, and I’m talking about the players, not the characters. This seemed to be the SIL syndrome again.

The Tax Demon approached and accused me of picking her pocket, a charge which I naturally denied, since I was innocent. She had me searched, and when the 17 Lunars were discovered they decided that they had found the thief. I insisted that I had evidence that I had earned the Lunars honestly

(well, some of them), pointed out my letter of recommendation, and demanded a receipt for my Lunars. They gave me one, and since I couldn’t read the guard witnessed my mark. He then informed me that I’d just signed a confession of pickpocketing and would soon be executed. I was taken to court to be arraigned.

At this point I was really pissed. I was entirely screwed by my character history, and was innocent to boot! The whole thing was a goddamn nasty experience, and I swore that I’d never play another SIL-type game again.

While I was waiting in court and chatting with a Humakti I noticed that I was no longer being guarded. After several minutes thought and a careful look around I decided that it would be stupid to stay when a quick walk out the door would get me free—then I could go to the GMs, inform them that my character had quite intelligently decided to leave town before he was killed, and get the hell out of the game. Lying down alone in my hotel room



would be better than this.

I made my move unseen by the guards. Unfortunately I was only 20 feet past the door when the jail guard hailed and grabbed me. I had a power of escape called *Sharp Eyes*, which enabled me to escape a situation in which someone was trying to attack; unfortunately the guard had not yet attacked me. I put up my fists (a game mechanic for combat without weapons), and he fell for my ploy by pulling his sword. I immediately played *Sharp Eyes*. A GM ruled that I'd escaped, and I promptly headed for the Dragonewt GM (David Cheng, organizer of the Con) to leave the game.

I told him the story (leaving my dissatisfaction out of it), and he let my character leave the game. However, he had another character for me to play. I accepted it though I don't know why, and was already kicking myself as I went back into the main game area.

As I entered I was grabbed by a GM and the guard, who informed me that an error had been made and that my old character had not escaped—he had been killed. Jeeze, thanks a lot! That was just what I needed to hear. It made no difference to the game, but it helped piss me off even more!

I had more than half a mind to simply walk. If I did, though, I knew it would taint the entire weekend for me, perhaps putting me off RuneQuest forever in the bargain. When I get negative I get very negative...I lose my temper. Over time I've learned to be aware of that and try to counteract it as best I can. Grudgingly I took a look through my new character info.

Whoa! This was the character I should have been given from the beginning. What a great role!

My new character was a mildly disgraced young Lunar noble looking to make good. He was also an arrogant fop, and a near-perfect

textbook example of an upper-class twit. His goal was to get into the local Lunar government administration despite his total lack of qualification or experience. His only apparent asset was a sword and Full Lunar citizenship.

WARNING: SPOILERS. I thought I could write about the game without spoilers, but I was wrong. Please skip the shaded section if you ever intend to play Home of the Bold (though who knows, I think they probably change the characters a little each time anyway).

In fact I was the Imperial Inquisitor, the personal representative of the Red Emperor himself. I possessed an Imperial Warrant that gave me the power to oust the Lunar government and replace it with anyone I chose—including myself. My brief was to check on corruption and inefficiency in the local Lunar administration. I had dossiers on a number of local Lunar officials. The Tax Demon was listed as a reliable character to whom I could entrust the secret of my status when and if I had to.

So now I had almost all the things my previous character had desired: Full Lunar citizenship (in both my real and false personae), a job as a Lunar spy, and soon I was even working with the Tax Demon—though it could be said that she was working for me. >>> The only drawback was that the game was almost over!

I played the role to the hilt, in the broadest Monty Python upper-class twit

Q: How many Trollkin does it take to change a light bulb?

A: (crunch, crunch, gobble, swallow) What light bulb, Master?

style I could manage. Loud, stupid, insisting on the privileges of rank, treating non-nobles with condescending contempt and non-Lunars as amusing animals (When confronted with an ambassador from the Grazelands: “Eh! Natives! How...charmingly rustic! And you allow them in the Lunar HQ often, Sergeant? How kind of you to provide entertainment for your men!”).

I'm not bad at dialects, but my cheezy English accent must have caused truly agonizing pain to the Brits in the game. Hee hee!

There's not a lot more to tell. I didn't really have time to do much about my character goals, but I had a great time hamming it up for the rest of the game, and I got quite a few laughs from other players. It was a lot of fun. The Lunars lost, incidentally, but I think my character survived.

Each player got a heavy minted Lunar coin to take home. They made beautiful keepsakes. But I took away another keepsake, one far more rare: an Imperial Warrant signed by Greg Stafford. I don't believe in autographs, but I couldn't pass up the chance to get the Warrant signed by the closest thing to the Red Emperor that I could find. 8^>}

Sunday

Trollball at 9 AM? Outside!?! The temperature was in the teens at most, and I'm talking Fahrenheit! Those Aussies who were running the event really *were* crazy. Still, I had to do it. I'd spent \$40 on my weapons: a five-foot-tall inflatable version of Edvard Munch's “The Scream” plus

“The Scream Jr.”, a 19-inch model (I'd bought the small one first, then found the large one at the last minute). I even worked up a story about them from my Uz warrior perspective: An Aldryami (elf) slated for the dinner pot had attempted to escape with its child, interrupting my wife in the middle of an important sorcerous ritual (possibly involving some means of attempting to negate the Trollkin Curse). The resulting backfire turned the hapless entrée to stone, and petrified its child as well. Now I used them in Trollball as weapons, Florentine style. I daresay I looked pretty bizarre with a Scream in each hand! 8^>}

Scott had picked up an inflatable Stegasaurus. It was bigger than my big Scream, but then I had two weapons. Also, his wasn't really suited for one-handed use, while both of mine were. I was pretty sure I'd have the reach on him.

When we got to the meeting place few people had showed up. Michael O'Brien of Tales of the Reaching Moon explained the rules (perhaps I'll detail them later—they included spells). Since Scott and I had the biggest weapons we were chosen to be team captains. Each of us could choose two warrior Uz; only four others were willing to

play in the deadly cold so early in the morning, though there were perhaps ten more spectators.

Only one other person had an inflated weapon at all, a red four-foot shaft marked with the mysterious Mostali-runes “Crayola”. The other Uz combatants used small stuffed animals. The Trollball itself was clearly a mutant with stringy red



hair—I suspect that if the Trollkin's shirt had been opened we would have discovered a small heart-shaped tattoo saying "I Love You" on its chest. 8^>}

The limbs were velcroed on but the head was not detachable.

As we went out into the icy winds of Valind's Glacier our weapons immediately wilted, the warm moist air inside contracting at an amazing rate. After some quick re-inflating we were ready for combat—or so we thought.

It turns out that plastic gets very brittle at 10°! In bare minutes all the inflatables were shredded beyond repair. Undaunted, we used them as flails.

It would be impossible to tell the full story of the mighty game of Valind's Glacier. Videotape exists, but Chaos clearly played a part in the shooting—it's almost frustrating to watch the camera turn to the ground at the most exciting parts. Understandable, though, since it was all so bizarre! I must thank Mark Sabalauskas for braving the cold to film the event.

In the end my team, the mighty Bozztown Bashers, claimed victory. We had destroyed the enemy, with a towering score double that of the Chaos Crushers! I raised my weapon in victory, composing a crooning Uz victory song on the spot. "Aaaaaahhhhhh...Uuuurrrrrr... OOOOOOGGGGGHHHH!" the last a new verse spontaneously created when a player from the losing team brought her weapon crashing down on my head from behind. Despite foul treachery I claimed my prize (as did all participants): a ticket to compete in the Lunar Dart Competition.

So much more happened that weekend! But there's little time left to write...

The Dart Competition was a bit of a disappointment for me: what use do I have for a Tekumel fanzine, even in color? But it was more disappointing to Scott, so I can't really complain. I'd give the details, but I'm afraid they're secret...8^>}



• Jack Dott, the president of Avalon Hill was at the Con selling RQ material—including some great RuneQuest T-shirts (I bought two). A brave man, and much younger than I expected. Scott didn't know who he was, and told him that the marketing people at Avalon Hill were idiots (I may have the phrasing slightly off, but I'm sure Scott will correct me).

Jack had no comment. 8^>}

• Prices at the auction were sky-high. Though the package of old issues of TWH didn't make it down to the Con, Sandy Petersen sold a bunch of his for a fairly high price—I forget the exact amount, but I think it was around \$70 for ten issues. I bought a number of issues of *Different Worlds* magazine, plus Plunder, RuneMasters, and the RQ edition of *The Dungeoneer*. Turns out I'm not too bad at getting my price, though the tip I got from the guy I was representing was the reason for my success: Bid close to the final price you want to pay in a loud firm voice as soon as bidding begins.

• Everyone at the con was unusually nice. I expected to be intimidated and ignored by the new elite of RQ, but that simply didn't happen.

• It was a pleasure to meet TWHers David Dunham, Curtis Taylor, and John Sapienza at the Con. I didn't get as much of a chance to speak to any of them as I'd have liked.

• It turns out that I didn't get a chance

to play in even one roleplaying scenario! And I have never played in a tournament scenario yet, nor have I ever roleplayed at a convention. Those who did play gave very good reports, though.

- A new company which is possibly sort of associated with Chaosium in some way has been formed. It's called **Wizard's Attic**, and it sells rare and unusual game-related items at a premium (though not unreasonable) price. This is stuff that regular distributors won't be carrying, for a small but select market. Their number is 1-800-213-1493. There's a chance, at least, that they may be interested in carrying The Wild Hunt including possibly some of the back issues (especially ones with Stafford zines).

- A new all-in-one version of RQ3 is out, with all the books in the Deluxe Set bundled into one perfect-bound book. I'm not sure that the binding is sturdy enough to last for long, but it has to be stronger than the old pamphlet-style books. At \$26, it's much more reasonably priced than the original Deluxe Edition.

- There are a number of new email addresses that RPGers interested in Chaosium games should check out. majordomo@erzo.berkeley.edu is an automated mailing list for Chaosium news. "subscribe chaos-info" will get you on that list. The latest Chaosium catalog lists chaosium@aol.com as the address to write for specific information and correspondence. Finally, Wizard's Attic has an email address, too: wizattic@aol.com. I haven't tested that last one, and so can't tell you anything about it. But the company does look interesting...

- I was pleased to see that the new version of RQ4 is out, and that I'm on the (now rather limited) list of playtesters. It's an enormous improvement on the previous version, with much of the magic and style of RQ2 restored. Glorantha is once again the main focus, a good idea in my opinion. Best of all, it's complete—the Runes and

cults are listed with enough detailed information to allow even a relative newcomer to enjoy the game with just the one book.. Shamanism and Sorcery have been rewritten and expanded, too. I'm sure I'll find specific points to critique (in fact I already have), but I can say with confidence that things are on the right track.



- I was also pleased to discover that The Wild Hunt is once again listed in RuneQuest as a source of information. Nice to see an old tradition come back. 8^>}

- The trip down took about 8 hours. The trip back took 14.5, due to some incredibly bad weather and accidents! At one point we didn't move for nearly three hours. When we went by the accident site, we saw a sanding truck that had melted down, literally—the cab was half gone. An amazing sight. But a pretty scary trip. Mark Sabalauskas deserves major kudos for handling the lion's share of the driving.

All in all I find my enthusiasm for RuneQuest and Glorantha much refreshed

after RQ Con. I'll do my damndest to attend the other ones.

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

For those who have been wondering about my Secret Source for new clip art, I may now reveal the truth: I've discovered that the Dover Publications company of Mineola, New York publishes hundreds of books of copyright-free art of the finest quality. The books are grouped by subjects, and contain anywhere from 200 to 1,800 images apiece; though not all are of equal quality, the average piece is still excellent. I've picked up 13 books so far, totalling at least 5,000 images. Many of these are reproductions of medieval woodcuts. They're wonderful, but I will admit that I wish that Dover would put out a collection of science-fiction or space art. Right now my collection is somewhat lopsided.

I photocopy and reduce the art to fit the empty frames in my document. Then I tape it onto my master pages. The image quality is finer than I could get with a digitized image on my system. And my documents are much easier to edit and print without digital images.

This huge backlog of images will serve as a convenient backup source of cover art for *Interregnum*, come to think of it. Certainly I'll never lack for back-cover art.

I plan to review the Dover books I have, but am not yet sure where those reviews will be printed.

The address for Dover is:

Dover Publications, Inc.
31 East 2nd St.
Mineola, NY 11501

They have a number of free catalogs. Make sure to request both the clip-art catalog (there are some good images printed in the catalog itself) and the complete catalog as well (no images, but over 5,500 books are listed). Though books can be ordered by mail I've found a good bookstore that orders them for me, and receives them in less than two weeks at no surcharge. The books are quite cheap, incidentally; the prices range from about \$5 to \$15. Definitely worth checking out!



COMMENTS #184

I've received a number of comments from readers lately to the effect that comments are a waste of time, and should be restricted to letters. I don't entirely agree, but I do see their point. Therefore rather than cut down on the volume of comments I'm simply reducing the type size, making it easier for those not interested to quickly skip over them. Should I develop a major thread within a comment I'll try to excise it from this section and place it elsewhere.

Mark Swanson:

➤ What a terrible turn of events! I hope that a good job turns up posthaste. I thought the economy was supposed to be improving—so much for truth in journalism, I guess.

➤ Thanks for the opportunity to read *Beauty and the Beast* to Franny at the last collation. It was a very interesting experience; I never realized that





GMing was good preparation for reading to children. She was an excellent audience, though, so perhaps I didn't actually do as well as I thought.

➤ Let's hope that we can write about Happiness and Triumph in *The Wild Hunt* soon (though of course I realize that a new job takes priority). I hope you have the best of luck in 1994.

George Phillies:



➤ Thanks for your kind comments re I Do Declare. It came upon me in kind of a fit...these things happen. Though not often enough for my taste. 8^>}

➤ Attractive young ladies like old science-fiction writers? Hmm. Maybe I should think about putting extra effort into my writing. But if I have to wait til I'm old, what's the point? 8^>}

➤ About the Arisia Amateur Video Contest...well, you know what happened, after all. You were there. Wow! I'd planned to write up Arisia for this issue, but will have to save it for the next one.

➤ It's a pity that you can't reproduce that great picture of Eclipse that you picked up at Arisia in *TWH*. It would make great cover art for the book, though.

➤ I have mixed feelings about seeing the end of the Pickering saga. It's strange knowing the end of it, even if I can't see how it gets there. I seem to recall that there's a little more to the end, right?

Bill Ricker:

➤ Glad you liked the Grey Company writeup. One of these days I'll publish that revised outline somewhere.

➤ The border art is amusing, as usual. Must be nice to be able to just dash off art like that.

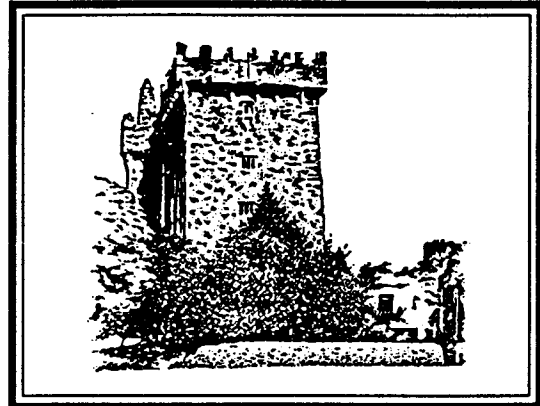
➤ Sympathies on the timing belt problem—I once had mine changed. When they took it out, they found that one of the teeth was hanging on only by a hair—even a couple more miles and it might have snapped, costing me hundreds of dollars. Cars are treacherous.

Scott Ruggels/Collie Collier:

➤ Wow. The Jaggiri Part III was too big and impressive for me to do it justice in the short time I have here—I'll have to save my detailed remarks for later. I assume that the stats given are for Champions?

➤ Just how much Jaggiri stuff is there now, anyway? What are the eventual plans for it? GURPS Jaggiri, perhaps? 8^>}

➤ Loved the art, as usual. I'd really like to see how Collie would render the Jaggiri. The Weapons page was particularly nice. Tail clubs—very imaginative.



Curtis Taylor:

➤ It was great to meet you at RQ Con. The zine looks very good, and I'm glad to see another RQer in *The Wild Hunt*—particularly since the RuneQuest Daily Digest is seducing away so much of David Dunham's time. A computer with InterNet access is practically a necessity for a dedicated RuneQuester these days, but don't stop doing your zine! I hope to see more of your work.

➤ Interesting to see that RQ font is copyrighted. I wonder if my own Runes are some sort of violation? I did make them up myself after all, but of course based them on the Runes of RQ.

➤ Nice Cthulhu Runes, by the way—were those part of the set?

➤ The campaign outline is rather a teaser—very interesting, but too sketchy to give a good picture. You really need to put in more detail to make it fully comprehensible. And if I have problems figuring out the fine details, it must be totally wasted on those who don't know Glorantha. Have you considered writing up the whole thing for *Tales of the Reaching Moon* or one of the other new RuneQuest magazines?

➤ How does your unofficial list of RQ3 cults differ from the *Gods of Glorantha* book? Many more cults were listed there, as I recall. Very nice and concise presentation, by the way. Hmm, I notice you've left off a few of the Chaos Gods.

➤ Re Ducks: Perhaps you haven't heard, but the latest furor on the RuneQuest 4 playtest discussion on the InterNet (which is now processing about 250 messages per week) is over the inclusion of Ducks in the basic book. They were missing from the



playtest edition, and the upset from players was amazing! Apparently the omission was due to time constraints, and Ducks will be included in the final version.

David Hoberman:

→ The Jedi quotes at the back are hysterical—believe it or not but I get the giggles every so often, thinking about the “Where’s my lightsabre?” line. Too bad you can’t shoot a video...say...what do you think? There’s always the Arisia Amateur Video Contest for next year. Want to do a little acting, Dobie-Wan? 8^>}

→ Wish I could participate in the online game, but there’s just no bloody time right now. Wouldn’t you know it...

→ Re Mood and Music: I just was given two Dead Can Dance CDs. Talk about synchronicity! I also picked up some bizarre music from the Tibetan highlands. Weird, but combined with incense it sets the mood for Wonder perfectly—not that I’m anywhere near ready with Wonder.

→ Did I read you right—your first experience with a published RPG was Battletech? You make me feel the weight of my years. 8^>}

Scott Ferrier:

→ Avast, ye swab! That description of Termite was...perhaps a little biased? Tree-killer! I should set the record straight. Termite is the most notorious Evil Druid in the local IFGS realm. And he still hasn’t adequately explained why he murdered that innocent sapling...

→ Say (as I buff my halo), what was the idea, putting that highly sexist and exploitative picture in your zine? Shocking! 8^>}

→ I like the pirate motif a lot. Arrgh.

→ I’m impressed by that self-portrait. I’d ask you to do one of me, but a) I know you’d refuse, and b) if you didn’t you’d make me look like a gorilla with a steroid problem and a bad case of facial mange. 8^>} Still, now that you’ve revealed that you can draw I may ask you to do some art for Interregnum...an artist right downstairs. How convenient. 8^>}



FROM ABROAD...

I’d nearly forgotten! Included at the end of this issue is a flyer for Inter*action,

a new journal about roleplaying which will be published in England. It’s a bit unusual in that the editor plans to take a particularly scholarly approach to the subject; he’s hoping to have Inter*action carried in collage and university libraries. An interesting scheme to give roleplaying some much-needed respectability. I hope it works. 8^>}

I have no real connection with Inter*action; I somehow met the editor on the Net. I doubt that I’ll attempt to contribute anything to it. My writing style is probably far too lowbrow to meet its standards. On the other hand, there are a number of the Pack who would be well-suited to contribute learned dissertations.

NOT JUST ANOTHER NET CHANGE

The continuing saga of my changing Net access has no doubt bored a number of readers to tears in past issues. This time is different, I hope.

All of my addresses in the past have had problems. Argus is highly unreliable, with very few newsgroups. Trystero is quicker, but has lost all newsgroups and could disappear at any time. Slough at MIT has been my only full-access account. I love it, but have been limited in how much use I could make of it -- after all, the MIT administrators would probably not be pleased to find me there. Once the system administrator leaves in June it will only be a matter of time before I’m purged from the system.

Which is why I am particularly pleased to have found The InterNet Access Co.. They’re a

local company which offers full Net access for only \$19.50 a month, with no limits on time and five megabytes of online storage.

It seems that I've finally found a permanent email address.

maranci@max.tiac.net will be the official address for Interregnum. As time goes by, I'll be moving more and more of my correspondence off my other accounts and over to Tiac. There have been a few initial problems with email, but I'm hoping that those are due to the newness of the system. If not, you'll certainly hear about it here! 8^>}

THE LAST LAUGH

I can't think of a better way to end this issue than this.

As Scott, Mark, Gil, and I were on that long drive back from RQ Con, we amused ourselves by listening to tapes of the BBC Radio version of J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. It wasn't long before we started jumping in to supply our own dialogue, in the style of Mystery Science Theater 3000. This is from memory, so it may be slightly off. When one of us was interrupting and speaking as a character, I've enclosed the real speaker's name in parentheses.

The Lady Galadriel is meeting for a last time with the Nine (now Eight) Walkers, as they prepare to leave Lothlorien. She presents the doughty heroes with gifts.

Galadriel: For Sam Gamgee, here is a box filled with earth from my garden--

Galadriel (Pete): --my friends bet me that I couldn't give you dirt and make you thank me.

Galadriel: For Merry and Pippin, belts of silver shaped like the leaves of Lorien--

Galadriel (Pete): --they say "I went to Lothlorien and all I got was this crappy belt."

Galadriel: And what would Gimli the Dwarf ask of me?

Gimli: Nothing. Unless it might be

permitted to ask, nay to name a single strand of your hair, which surpasses the lustre of gold as the stars surpass the gems of the earth.

Galadriel: And what would you do with such a gift?

Gimli (Scott): You don't want to know.

NEXTISH:

I had to punt a ton of stuff from this issue...reviews aplenty, the Arisia convention writeup, From the Closed Shelves, more Nereyon...oh, there's no lack of material, believe me. And it'll all come out in the wash. 8^>}

Take care, all!



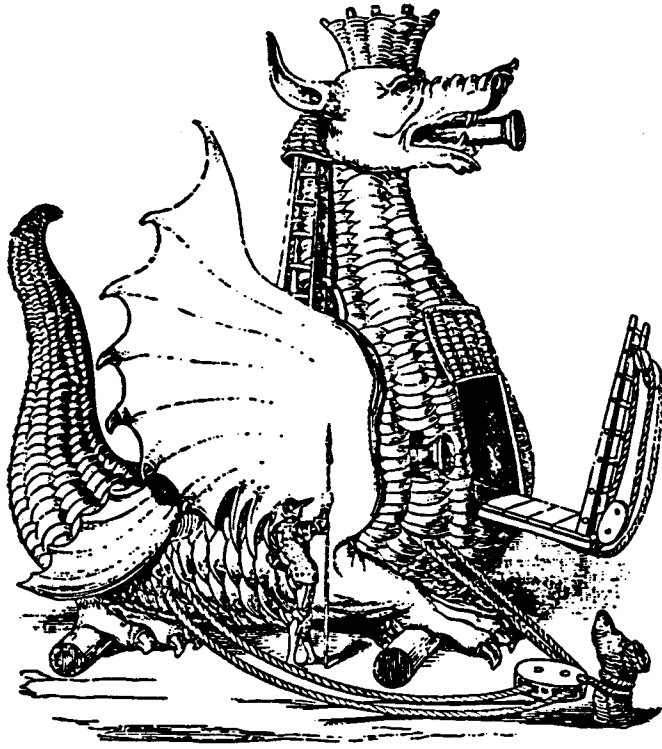
—>Pete

Colophon

Rack & Rune #20b: Recursions and Recidivism was generated in ASCII form using PC-Write 2.5. It was formatted for desk top publication using Publish-It 2.0. It includes clip art generated with the Windows 3.0 Paintbrush utility, as well as clip art downloaded from several BBSes and from the Dover series of books. It was printed at a commercial laser-printing service at 300 dpi. It was copied on a Kodak 2110 duplicator. The paper was made from Druid-murdered trees. Happy? Why did you want to know? 8^>}

—>PM





A NEW VOICE IN AN OLD ROLEPLAYING TRADITION

Announcing the premiere of a new roleplaying APA magazine: **Interregnum**. It's a forum where you can speak your mind, try out new ideas, write up your best (and worst) gaming experiences, and get feedback on what you write. Anyone can contribute and there's no commitment; you can write as often as you like, once per issue, once per year, or even once in your lifetime. Fair warning, though: many people have found that APA writing can be habit forming!

What's an APA?

The letters stand for Amateur Publishing Association. An APA is basically a collection of magazines (called "zines") which are sent to a central editor by writers from all over the country (or world). The editor copies the zines, binds them together with a cover, and mails out copies to subscribers and all the contributors.

APAs have been around for a long time, by the way. The noted horror writer H.P. Lovecraft held offices in several American APA organizations in the 1920s.

What do contributors write about?

The main focus of **Interregnum** is science-fiction and fantasy roleplaying. But contributors may write about anything that interests them. **Interregnum** is about anything that relates even a little bit to roleplaying games and what roleplayers are interested in: all sorts of reviews, game philosophy, RPG scenarios, original game material, boardgames, current events, new RPG concepts, and

comments on previous zines. Other likely topics include:

- Online Gaming
- Convention Reports
- Live Roleplaying (in many different systems)
- Reviews of RPG systems, supplements, books, TV, movies, and other media
- Sex, Romance, and Gender in Roleplaying
- How to Find Players
- Humor
- The Public Image of Roleplaying
- Science Fiction on TV
- Common Myths About Gaming

...and much much more.

All game systems are open for discussion.

Is there a standard format?

No. Many contributors format their zines by computer, but that's not necessary — a typewritten zine is fine. Even among the zines that are desktop-published there's a great deal of variety. Contributors set up their zines the way *they* prefer, which is part of the fun.

How do I get started?

Write to the editor at:
Peter Maranci
81 Washington St., #2
Malden, MA 02148

Or send email via the InterNet to maranci@max.tiac.net for more information.