

Judges' Guild

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JOCULAR JUDGEMENTS

All the material contained herein is intended to spark your imagination, O Magus Mediator, so take what you want and leave what you don't want in your campaign. This material is designed to broaden the scope of an existing campaign or enable you to start a campaign with some aids to draw upon. None of this material will replace the magic touch that you personally can add to your game. Pick a legend or non-played character listed, let your mind run awhile, jot down a format (it can be as dramatic as you want), and build your campaign upon orderly increase of fantasy-filled fun. Don't attempt to sketch out the plot of your format in one adventure. Let the players discover it for themselves- they'll appreciate it more. Do try to allow your players as much freedom as possible without wasting preparation time. If you let them choose between N number of adventures, you might waste N-1 number of hours. Nothing is more frustrating than to create a well-thought out creative game and find that the players think it's too scary to play because of the sketchy details you let drop in a rumor.

Above all don't be a Monte Hall judge from the beginning and it won't destroy your campaign later. If the players are hungry enough (chickens are two for a penny), they will jump at the prospect of 100 GP each. Also, be careful that their 'social level' does not increase quickly. To play fun-fraught D & D is the goal. To judge same (and enjoy it) be cheap, strict, limiting and friendly. Yep, you'll be glad you did! The action is fun and the magic the kicker, but no player wants to be put out of action game after game, night after night. Kill if the rules (or common sense) says you should... but not because you can. Any judge can do that- the rules give you carte-blanche control- even gods!

SCROLLS FROM THE ARCHIVES by Chancellor Seneschal, Archive Archon

As archon, my position frequently brings to my attention interesting chronicles of valor and barbaric spectacle. With considerable editing to shorten the tales, I shall present them here. Should you, o masterful judge of adventurers, find such a record- forward it to me with permission to edit and publish same- and perhaps I can persuade our scribes to immortalize it.

However, tis lately been a hectic month and I cannot find any tales worth immortalizing.

Just the same, a few minor rumors have come my way.

First, it is said that the noted sage, Maed Makistakator, has been going around with the unlikely alias of Bob Bledsaw, presumed age 33. With this guise, he has posed as an expert designer of artifacts for a certain General Elektrik. With similarly obscure purpose, this same alias has appeared on the roles of a local university. Purportedly married, a visit to his apartments often finds some of his three offspring cavorting with various magical items; it is suggested that the visitor to the Makistakator guard his most treasured belongings. While his 20 years of gaming experience are yet unconfirmed, unquestionably, many dawns have seen numerous warhorses tied outside his quarters wherein can be heard the clatter of 'bones'.

Second, in a visit to the blue marble splendor of Llangewellen's (pronounced hklangewehklen) tower, an anonymous source informed me of the existence of a simulacrum of 'LL'. This 22 year old animated iceman is reportedly one and the same, Bill Owen, local travel agent specializing in teleporting clients to the north pole (he advises taking a warm sweater). In fact, a few people returning from 'a balmy cruise to exotic islands' report unbelievable experiences aboard slave scows fighting off wild natives. This hundred battle veteran of the 'Traktix' wars, now mostly directs hostilities at ICD chapter of the Lancers' Club from an armchair. However, be alert newcomers to the city-state, for it is rumored, that he has even more titanic 'package tours' in the offing.

SHREWD SLANTS FROM THE SAGACIOUS SAGE (Maed Makistakator)

As astutely pointed out by the halycon heroes of the north (TSR) our artist-scribe took considerable artistic license in depicting the weapons on our Tac Cards. Rest assured history scholars, a new deck (with many unusual weapons) is being designed accurately... else our pen pusher will run the expectorate gauntlet with his drafting table tied to his ears!

Vikings rejoice- a literal Valhalla-full of hyboreans have joined magnificent order of magus mediators. Welcome aboard Canadian legions and may bigfoot never step on your dicing hands!

I never thought it would happen- but it did! GenCon IX brought to our wizard's eye the new enthusiasm for Swords & Sorcery. Touching the well spring of chivalry too long missing in the bustling pace of our technocratic society, who knows where it will end. To the nethermost with impending doom; legends, sagas, heroes & quests are what we need. Each adventure should be an episode in a greater drama. Today Mars- tomorrow the stars!

ITEM! An awesome original poison chart will be published in next issue along with certain alchemetical ingredients. And a bit of bufoonery, but be patient oh restless one- we already exceeded our promises to date by badly fraying our balrog whip!

ITEM! O.K. People, now you can get out of the cheering section and back to you papers. Do you want a letter page? Communing has done me little good and Llangewellen has ordered a new pair of specs from the Sorcerer's Supply House after his eye-popping crystal ball session. In any event, we intend to keep you abreast of the action and to make you as proud to be a first subscriber as we are proud to produce this service.

ITEM! Speaking of pride, tune up your clairvoyance and gaze into our fable-fraught fortress. Paneled, carpeted, air conditioned, newly rented and filled with frantic fans gathered around our two humungous felt covered miniature tables. Before you ogle your orbs, remember its only two titanic rooms (would you believe large).

ADVISE COLUMN Be careful with the novice dungeoneer. It is usually advantageous to take a Tolkienist attitude with beginners and allow 'providence' to lend a hand when the character is played to meet alignment/circumstantial expectations. Thus guiding the player-character until he is strong (in the sense of alignment choices) to stand on his own decisions. Bad judgement at this stage of development should meet with disastrous results. Certainly no rule should be broken to aid a player no matter how low level. Players enjoy the orderly progression of a character and this adds a real dimension to any campaign. Never short circuit the experience points earned, unless you want a short-lived campaign with little to show for the hours of preparation you put into its development.

ITEM! If this introductory package mangled your mind, keep your peepers peeled for the following installments. Llangewellen is gloating over the lists of thousand and one ways for players to spend their gold and our pet ogre keeps drooling on the potions' ingredients list. Never fear, my universe scanning peers, I have carefully hidden away the other glorious goodies still to top secret to mention now.

ITEM! I have been exorbitantly outraged by the preposterous suggestion that I have been going around with the alias aluded to by Chancellor Seneschal, the Archive Archon. Woody, our pet ogre, is at this moment delievering my justifiable slander suit to the most expensive legal trickster to asure at least that he at least run the expectorate gauntlet!

Mud Mucksticker

TIPS FROM THE TOWER (Llangewellen the Blue)

While expounding on beneficial rays obtained by pouring putrid ooze from the swamp into a crystal skull, a lowly apprentice once asked me why all of the street lamps were sixty feet apart. Before changing him to a hangnail on our pet ogre's big toe, I explained how dungeoneers might leave their slide rules at home in figuring their moves.

Still, llooking down from my two hundred foot tower, I stared in wonderment of the fact. Long ago, when Judges Guild was bubbling to the surface, many things were different. At first, we were to produce a (smelly) grimy blueprint of this giant city and mass of mimeographed loose leaf sheets. But the moral (and financial) boost we got at GenCon was to set our gnomes feverishly to work on a new, more pratical format. While the super-detailed city had since been tastefully offset-printed in eye-ease brown, the piles of notebook paper was to be re-worked into a handy offset-reduced booklet. This, and the hundreds of bits of paper to be pasted on the Tac Cards, delayed our mailing deadline by exactly six days. But, at no higher cost to you, we think you'll agree it's well worth the wait.

The Tac Cards are an inovation, that can be a big boost to any game system. While most of the actions are self-explanatory (and optional), it might not be first apparant that players desiring to strike merely hold their Weapon card face up; there is no strike card. Likewise, to perform an action, orient the particular side face up. Generally, it should take one full round to perform any of the activities listed-like change weapon (they should put the weapon they are changing to next under), load weapon (or more, perhaps?). While the players will still have to write down what they're carrying, the main value of the cards is to tie down the more squirrely players and to experiment with simultaneous turn sequences, for example. Notice that you got more swords than anything else, that's so you can mark them up with '+1's and fancy names and so on. There's six action card sets (3 per set) and six of the most commonly used weapons. Also, note that the pike & lance are back to back, since a player would never use them together; the wand/staff card is relatively blank to let you customize them.

One of our biggest puzzles is not coming up with material to give you, but how to get it all out to you. Just the city-state's shops & taverns is humungous, it will last dozens of games. We could only fit seven pages this time, so rather than give you a little at a time, we're going to publish a 40+ booklet, available December 1st. This way you can get it all at once, and we can print details pertinent to the castles, villages & manors to be published in the upcoming installments.

d & d

WHAT YOU HAVE PURCHASED

You have purchased a subscription entitling you the starter package, five bimonthly supplements and our newsletter. A Guild membership, costing \$12, is good for one year. It is renewable after one year with a one dollar discount, if renewed before expiration of current membership. We look forward to any comments and criticisms you may have.

However, it would be most effective to submit an example of any improvement, to support the criticism. Which brings us to our offer, to publish your D & D related rules extrapolations, levels etc. You can expect us to carefully consider your submitted material for publication but we reserve the right to decide if it is of suitable quality and if it is, when it can be fitted into our production schedule. Also, we reserve the right to redraw or make changes; please make sure copies are dark enough. Submitted material that is published earns you \$1 credit per page.

We do not maintain premises for general use for our members. While we would welcome visitors, there just isn't room nor does membership entitle you to sit in on current games. Any may place Classified Ads or Notices in this newsletter- @5¢ per word for Guildmembers and @10¢ per word for all others. At this time, all other products listed below are available separately only to Guildmembers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our personal thanks to Dave Megarry, Tim Kask, Dave Arneson, Rob Kuntz and the TSR legions for the encouragement and +1 blessing given the founding of the Judges Guild. Their help at GenCon IX levitated us 30' above the launching pad... GenCon is a virtual saga with S & S fans en masse, it was good talking with many of you there. We won't have to wait until next August as rumors have been confirmed of another big one, come January 8-9th! Get your carpets ready, the Winter Fantasy Gaming Convention is being mobilized already, another great event for fantasy fans!

We'd like to point out that Judges Guild services etc. is designed as players' aids for D & D, not a replacement. Judges Guild charts etc. reprinted from DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Copyright c 1974 Tactical Studies Rules, used with permission.

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