

CRIES FROM THE ATTIC™

THE BEST OF TIMES. THE WORST OF TIMES



It's been a very eventful month since the last issue. A few weeks ago, we made our annual trek to Las Vegas to attend the **GAMA Trade Show** — one of the highlights of our year.

Not only is it a time for us as a company to put our best foot forward and showcase new product — but it's also an opportunity for Dave, Steve, Mark and I to hang out together for a week (Brian sadly couldn't make it this year — you were missed, Dude).

The exciting thing about this year's GAMA was that we arrived with six copies of the **Aces & Eights** core rule book. (FedExed overnight from the printer) to show off at the booth.

Three years in the making, it was nice to actually have the final product in hand as opposed to just saying "It's coming. Someday..." We were like a bunch of proud parents standing outside the delivery room.

The most frequent remarks I heard at the show as people fondled the book (and yes — they DID fondle it) was "Wow!" I swear -- every person who was handed the book involuntarily muttered that word along with the phrase, "It was worth the wait."

Worth the wait -- couldn't have said it better myself.

Despite the delays in getting the game out, we couldn't help feeling that the timing for the game's release is perfect. The landscape, as far as RPGs go, is far different than it was two years ago when we originally planned to release it.

Putting out a new game that you've worked and stressed over for so long is like giving birth to a child. Will it have all its fingers and toes? Will it succeed in life? Will others accept it? Or shun it?

There are no certainties in this business. Especially when you're going after an admittedly niche genre in a niche market.

It was obvious from reactions at the show that our faith in a 'western RPG done right' was justified.

I think the game is going to do well. How well?

Who knows?

But finding out is going to be part of the fun in a few short weeks when the game hits the streets and gets into the hands of gamers (which would be June).

Just before leaving for GAMA news arrived that **Dragon** magazine (along with **Dungeon**) will be ceasing publication in September (See **Game Vine** p70).

Wow. For most gamers (including me) that came as a blow to the chest right out of left field.

My first issue of **Dragon** bought off the stand was issue #39. For years I made the monthly sixty mile trek to the **Board Room** in Indianapolis to pick up my copy. It was a nice excuse to visit my favorite "Not so Local" Gamestore to check out any new games that may have come out between issues.

I'll never forget when **Knights of the Dinner Table** first appeared in **Dragon**. Forget the comp copy — I insisted on driving to a game store and buying it off the shelf — just to have the experience.

I've accomplished many things over the years I can say I'm proud of. But seeing my name in the magazine that had inspired me for so many years has to be near the top.

Of course **KODT** benefited greatly, piggy backing on **Dragon's** readership. And although the \$1,000 a month I got paid for the strip kept me in macaroni and cheese and the fridge stocked with **Faygo**. The much more valuable exposure I received was largely responsible for **KODT's** success.

Hearing **Dragon** will no longer be with us is sort of like hearing of the passing of an old friend. Or, a childhood hero. Sad news indeed.

Game on!

Jolly R. Blackburn

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