

CRIES FROM THE ATTIC™

Editorial of a madman



ARE WE LIVING IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF GAMING?

A few readers took my editorial last month as some sort of 'doom and gloom' admission of the future of gaming. Far from it. I was merely commenting that with the economy tanking the gaming industry isn't immune. There are some tough times ahead for game retailers, distributors and publishers.

From where I sit, however, it seems gamers have never had it so good. In fact we could be living in the Golden Age of gaming as we speak.

There are more rpgs, card games and board games available now than ever before. Try following DriveThruRPG on Twitter for a few days. You'll be amazed at the continued stream of new products going up.

When I was the editor of **Shadis** magazine, I found it very easy to keep my thumb on the pulse beat of the industry. I could count the number of products released in any given month on two hands. And it was easy to keep track because 90% of it came across my desk in the form of review material.

But now...? It's virtually impossible. I'm constantly running into folks playing games I've never heard of — let alone seen.

With digital publishing lowering the barrier, more people are making games than ever before. The end result of course is that our hobby has become fragmented. It's harder for folks to make a full time living making/selling games. But personally, for me gaming has always been about the love of slinging dice rather than making money. I'm sure that's true others.

So more games than you could ever hope to play. What's not to love?

I know what you're thinking. Too many damn games. Fragmentation of the hobby. Try finding someone to play the games YOU'RE playing?

Well — not so difficult as it turns out.

With the Internet becoming so entwined in our lives, finding others who

share your tastes in games is just a mouse click away. There are entire websites/forums devoted to Fairy Meat for example.

Still mourning the fact that Greyhawk has been abandoned? No worries. Just use your Google-fu and set your browser and explore thousands of pages of homespun material on the setting and rub elbows with fellow gamers who share your passion.

Not being able to find players locally who play the same games you do isn't a problem either. All over the world gamers are playing via the 'net with webcams, chat rooms, map tools, virtual gaming tables.

In fact, as I type this I'm preparing to bring my wife into our weekly **HackMaster** game via webcam so she can join in while watching our kid at home.

None of the above is new, to be honest. But it still amazes me just how far gaming has come in the last few decades.

Which is why I sort of roll my eyes when someone tells me, "Table top gaming is dead — only a matter of time."

I'm very excited about the future.

This summer, despite the fact my gaming shelf is threatening to buckle under the weight, I hope to get my hands on the new version of **Titan**. Grab a copy of **Pitch Car Mini**. Chase down the expansion to **Last Night on Earth**.

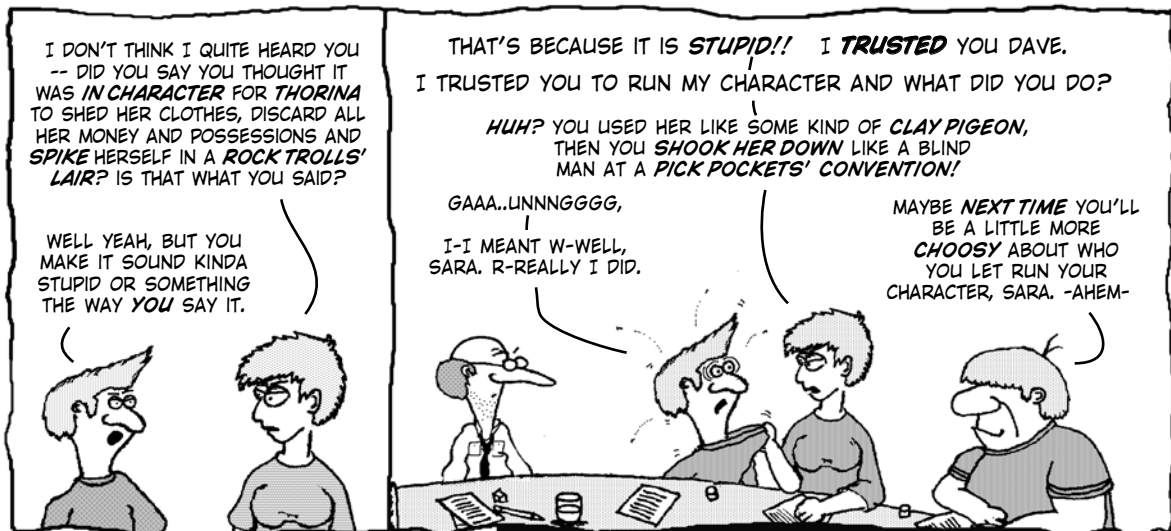
And I plan on making time playing these games and more (in and around sessions of **Aces and Eights** and **HackMaster**, that is).

Speaking of which — I have to go prepare for our campaign tonight.

Game on!

Jolly R. Blackburn

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TEN YEARS AGO THIS MONTH: This panel from **Knights of the Dinner Table** Issue 28 — **Should'a Been There!**