

# CRIES FROM THE ATTIC™

## ON TWENTY SIX YEARS OF ROLE-PLAYING



One of the players from my original AD&D group emailed me a few days ago. To remind me the twenty-sixth anniversary of our 'first' true RPG session had come and gone unnoticed. Had it really been THAT long? His email got me thinking about just how much role-playing had impacted my life.

How different things would have been if back in 1980 my friend Lew Herring hadn't shown up at my dad's barbershop (where we met after hours for game night each week) with a plain looking white box filled with three small books and some funny looking dice.

Normally our game nights were reserved for *Avalon Hill* war games. But on that night, Lew asked if we would put aside *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* and try something called *Dungeons and Dragons*.

There were just three of us at that first game. Lew, myself and Joel Bozell. Lew proclaimed himself the "dungeon master" (he owned the books after-all).

I think I may have remarked, "Does the job come with a funny hat?"

He seemed a bit confused by the rules although he claimed to have read them several times. Even our in-house rules lawyer, Joel wasn't exactly sure what to make of them after speed reading his way through the 'important' parts. Eventually, we managed to struggle through character generation however. Then Lew led us on a small adventure.

All records of that night vanished long ago but I distinctly remember rolling up a fighter named Delius. Joel rolled up a magic-user with a silly name I've long forgotten. We quickly got lost in the woods on the way to the dungeon, were attacked by wolves and promptly killed. I think twenty minutes had transpired.

Later that same night my second character was swallowed by a giant wood while Joel's new magic-user fell in a pool of acid. We didn't know what to make of the game just yet. But the body count sure seemed promising.

Eventually, our characters actually made it to the dungeon and I had a chance to 'loot' my first room. Funny what you remember after 26 years. The very first game item I 'took' was a chisel from a carpenter's work bench (I blame the computer game, *Colossal Caves* aka *Adventure* -- everything

and anything you could pick up in that game later proved important).

There were no survivors that night and we certainly didn't accomplish much. All the same, something magical took place in that barbershop that night.

We all sensed it as we leaned back in our chairs at the end of the night and stared at the funny looking dice on the table. A few weeks later our girlfriends (and future wives) joined us. They wanted to see what all the fuss was about and what their men were spending so much time wrapped up in. Surprisingly they liked it and continued to play with us.

My first player-vs-player experience in AD&D was against Lew's girlfriend, Leslie (who was angry when one of my characters secretly pocketed a ring instead of adding it to the party treasure).

We were hooked. For the next three years we conquered worlds (and created a few). It would be five years before I played another wargame.

After college, my wife and I joined the Army (1983) under the 'buddy program'. We quickly discovered that AD&D was a great way to instantly make friends at new duty assignments. All you had to do was announce "we're getting a game together" and it was standing room only at the gaming table. We also discovered friendships made at the table were the kind that last. Strangers invited into your home to slay dragons don't remain strangers for very long afterall.

So I'm very grateful that Lew pulled out those three little books that night so many years ago.

I have no way of knowing if I'll still be doing *Knights of the Dinner Table* in twenty-five years but I do know if I'm still alive and able, I'll be role-playing with my friends and slinging dice.

And speaking of anniversaries, a very important one is coming up next month — more on that next issue.

Game on!

Jolly R. Blackburn  
September 12, 2006

YEAH, WELL YOU MAY "CLAIM VICTORY" AND LOOT THE TEMPLE TREASURY OF THE HOLY ORDER OF THE GOOD KNIGHTS OF THUMBREE, BUT UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, GARWEEZE WURLD'S SUN SUPER NOVAS AT THAT EXACT SAME MOMENT.

THE PLANET IS ROASTED TO A CINDER AS THE GAUWDS LOOK ON AND MOURN THE LOSS OF ALL CREATION.

GAAA!!!

S-SUPER NOVA....??

HOW MUCH DAMAGE DO WE TAKE?

B.A., I USE MY RING OF INTER-PLANAR TELEPORTATION AND TELEPORT TO THE FIFTH LEVEL OF HURKUM'S REFUGE !!

