



Loose-leaf support

Dear Editor,

The major reason for this letter is to let you know that I give my whole-hearted support to Mr. Malone's idea in TD #30 that the AD&D manuals be printed in loose-leaf form. Even though I already own the three AD&D volumes, I would purchase the loose-leaf form also for the ease of use.

I must also comment on your pictorial in TD #30, "Where the Orcs Are." Steve Brown has done a fabulous job on his orc castle I wish I had seen it in person! I especially like the bartender, being an E.R.B fan.

Earnest Rowland, Jr. —MO

In addition to his fine article on GenCon XII, Jack of all Trades Mohan also receives the credit for the photos used in TD #30. Glad you enjoyed it. Here at TSR Periodicals, we continue to strive to live up to The Dragon's subtitle: *The Premier Magazine of Games and Gaming, and that includes coverage of gaming conventions. You'll be seeing more such coverage of the various aspects of the gaming world as time and manpower will allow.*

As for the loose-leaf format for the AD&D books, we've had a lot of positive responses to Mr. Malone's suggestion, but there are no plans for such treatment in the near future. —Jake

'The bottom line'

Dear Out On A Limb,

Kim Mohan's premiere article (TD #30) was one of the best I have seen on a convention in some time. All too often, the veteran gamer reports cons from the slant of facilities (usually poor), weather (usually poor), or lack of time to participate in everything (usually right!!) Mohan reminds us why we acquire labels such as "weird." We are friendly.

The press for D&D regarding the disappearance of Mr. Egbert has certainly been pure sensationalism. The grains of truth are few and misinterpreted. Many major sources have been a real disappointment in their reporting.

We just grin and bear it, I suppose.

On another subject, will we see a review of the *The Best of the Dragon*? I would like to send it to some folks as an "INTRO TO D&D —101" (worth 3 semester hours) But if the content is too "DM" oriented it would be a bad idea. The review would be the answer.

Thanx for making each issue as good as the last.

R.F. McCaughey—NJ

Man of Many Talents Mohan tips his hat to Reader McCaughey (how much longer it will tip remains to be seen).

The brouhaha surrounding the whole Egbert affair is similar to what journalists refer to as the

"Bum Down the Well" syndrome. Your basic panhandler on the street is ignored until he polishes off a bottle of muscatel and falls into an abandoned well. Suddenly, big companies offer to supply rescue equipment, scores of volunteers come forth to risk life and limb in rescue attempts, and the various media have their crews maintain a round-the-clock vigil, with hourly broadcasts on the status of the situation. The guy down the well is no longer just a bum, he's NEWS! And everybody wants in on the act.

Now, suppose you intend to set up a social service program for the less fortunate. Approach the same companies that supplied the rescue equipment and ask them for a donation to help build a halfway house, and they'll slam the door in your face. Ask those same volunteers to donate a few hours work for your project, and they suddenly don't have time. Send a press release to the media detailing the success of your program, and maybe you'll see an inch-and-a-half report buried back on page 37.

The point is: Positive, "up-beat" news generally doesn't sell—it's the sensational, tragic, or bizarre that sells. That's why the National Enquirer is the largest-selling newspaper in this county.

Take the mysterious disappearance of a young man, couple it with references to a generally unknown game (anything unknown to the general public can be immediately translated into "weird" or "bizarre") and add a few irresponsible and untrue quotes, and you have a hot-selling item.

The bottom line is: There is not, and never was, any connection between D&D and the disappearance of James Dallas Egbert III. Even the detective hired to find James has admitted that fact. But do you think all the media that were so recently tying the two together will be running stories to that effect? If you do, I've got a bridge you might be interested in purchasing.

Hopefully, the whole matter will be forgotten, since now James has been found alive and well. But there will most likely be a lingering association of the two in the minds of non-D&Der's. It will be up to us, the gamers, to try to set the record straight at every opportunity.—Jake

'MIT math'

Dear Editor,

I would like to correct some numbers that appeared in "How Tall is a Giant?" (TD31). In the article, 3mm figures were equated with 1/500 scale, and the reader was led to expect that his rational guess of 1/600 was blatantly wrong. As a math major at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I would like to point out that the article was wrong—3mm figures are actually 1/600 scale (1/609.6 is the exact number).

Since $3\text{mm} = 3/25.4\text{ inches} = 3/(25.4 \times 12)\text{ feet} = 3/304.8\text{ feet}$, the scale is $(3/304.8)/6$ because the figure represents a man 6' tall. This number is 1/609.6 which can be rounded to 1/600. As any high school student knows, you can

not continually round numbers in the middle of a computation and expect to come out with a correct answer.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that I am pleased with the direction that The Dragon is taking and I look forward to its final form Recent articles are, in general, of higher quality than previous ones (and they weren't bad before) and the artwork on the covers has been quite good. The greater diversity is well worth the effort!

Robert T. Willis III

Never argue with a man from MIT. Mathematically speaking, Reader Willis is entirely correct. (Gales of jerring derision in the direction of the Fantasysmith: NYAAANYAAA!) But, though my specialty is neither math nor miniatures, my calculations show the difference between the calculations used by the Fantasysmith and Mr. Willis to be a multiplier of 0.00035958 (1/500 - 1/609.6). Using a 72-inch-tall model, the difference between the miniatures would be 0.02588976 (72 x 0.00035958). Or, to obtain the same figure backwards, a 72-inch model would be 0.144 inches tall at 1/500 scale (72 x 1/500) and 0.11811024 inches tall at 1/609.6 scale. $0.144 - 0.11811024 = 0.02588976$ inches. That's slightly less than the space between these two lines: Math majors will probably yell at me about significant figures, but the micrometer manufacturers will love me. Now your only problem is deciding where to measure from—is that a crest on the helmet, or just a piece of flash...?

—Jake

'No new ideas'

Dear Sirs,

In response to the letter in *Dragon* #29 by Mr. Brian Wagner, I must both agree and disagree, strongly. I agree with Mr. Wagner in the sense that *Traveller* is a game filled with boring paperwork; it gets a bit difficult to maintain the books on a mercenary company and maintain proper college studies at the same time. There is numerous dice rolling, but I say considerably less than an exciting game of *D&D* where dice rolling is not always a burden; ask any gamer who's about to go into combat with a Balrog or make a saving throw against being polymorphed into a lump of Grey Ooze. We are obliged as gamers and refs to do some random-number generation, as long as we cut the fat away, the dice rolling stays at a minimum.

I, and others, however, take our criticism of *Traveller* one step further; in the time *Traveller* has been out, there have been *no* new ideas for the game other than *Mercenary*, and Heaven only knows when *High Guard* is coming out (By the way, I sincerely hope that GDW acknowledges Mr. Heinlein for the use of a term out of *Between Planets*, such a man deserves it.). Other than the Navy article in *Dragon* #25, there is a definite lack of new material; nothing for the Scouts, Merchant, even the lowly Other. The opinion of *Traveller* in Cincinnati is that it is an exciting, creative and even highly amusing game system. Here I must strongly disagree with Mr. Wagner and suggest that he check his *Traveller* ref for a pulse; it would seem that someone is falling down on the job. It would take me far more pages than this brief reply to properly convey the action and spirit of a *Traveller* campaign that is nearly a year old. You want high adventure? Come to Cincinnati and see what RPG'ing is all about. Intrigue, love, conflict, bold and daring actions by equally bold characters. We

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