

EDITORIAL

Mica Antelope An editorial for parents

It was tragic but inevitable. John, my four-year-old son, acquired a taste for "Tidja Midja Nidja Turtles" from watching their show at his day-care center. Shortly thereafter, he also acquired a taste for a mutant turtle T-shirt, sneakers, night light, breakfast cereal, plastic toys, home videos, and movie (twice). John's favorite character is "Mica Antelope," whom John has decided to emulate in every way, even to briefly adopting the name.

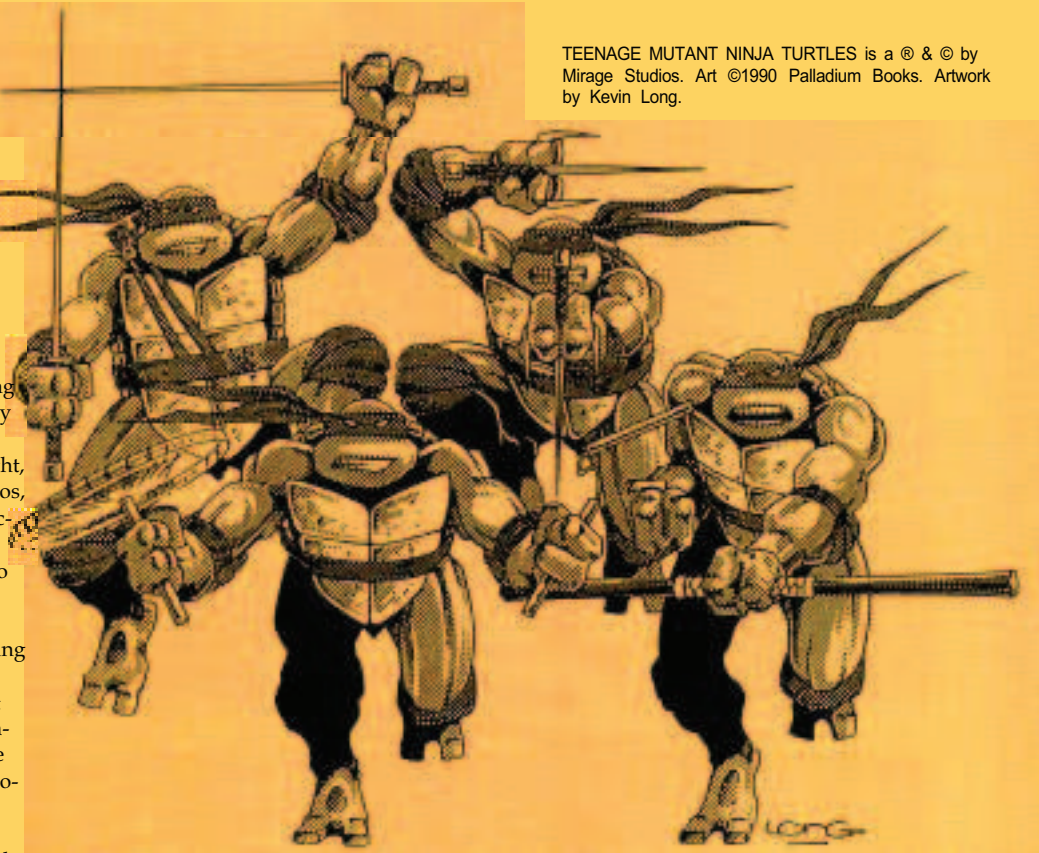
This new interest has a few negative side effects. For one, he won't stop singing the theme song from the show, and he doesn't know many of the words except for the oft-shouted refrain: "Turtlesonna-halfshell! Turtlepower! Turtlepower!" He will sing this with no provocation whatsoever, day and night, but usually when we're in heavy traffic.

Another problem is the language that he has acquired from the show ("Hey, toots! Wanna split a pizza? Cowabunga, dudes!"), which he often uses when company is present.

The only behavior that I had to put a stop to was his habit of making swords out of rolled-up paper and flailing around with them in the kitchen while I was trying to make supper. That was right out. I eventually banned any other sort of martial-arts flailing around in the house because I developed that prehistoric parental fear that he would poke himself in the eye with one of his paper katanas.

Nonetheless, I enjoy watching him play with his turtle toys and other unfamiliar media-spawned delights. He has a healthy and active play life, one shared by many of his friends. "Tidja Midja Nidja Turtles" won't teach him a lot about life, but I don't believe that recreation has to be educational at all; it just has to be fun. And as a parent, I like to encourage the good recreation and weed out the bad. Mica Antelope & company are fine with me.

Some parents are less enthusiastic than I am about the "Turtle Power" phenomenon. I've even seen an article or two in the local paper in which the cartoon's use of violence to solve problems is knocked around, and a woman interviewed on a radio program said she wished there had



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES is a ® & © by Mirage Studios. Art ©1990 Palladium Books. Artwork by Kevin Long.

been female turtle characters with which young girls could have identified. A recent letter to a newspaper even criticized the appearance of radioactive sludge on the show (the source of the TMNTs' powers) as glorifying pollution.

Well, I've seen the TMNT videos (I really had little choice), but I can't see that the cartoon violence on them is harmful; any unwanted reaction to it was fixed with a little discipline. As for the second point, I'm less sure and will just withhold judgment. But glorifying pollution? Well, we can't all be on the same wavelength.

But I can see now, firsthand, how daunting it is to a parent to have your children bring home an unfamiliar recreation—like a role-playing game, for example—and have this item take over your kids' brains like a space parasite. Just as the world of "Turtle Power!" is fairly alien to me, the worlds of role-playing must seem equally confusing, if not more so, to many parents. What are "hit dice"? What's a "saving throw"? How much gaming is healthy for my kid? The problem is made all the worse by the media. Is this news report on role-playing games really honest and insightful, or is it some ungodly mixture of hype, rumor, innuendo, and paranoia?

What's a parent to do? The easiest thing to do would be to ban all gaming without

addressing the issue further, but this is the lazy parent's way out, and it just spawns rebellion. Why not sit down and look over the game books for a while? I agree that the books can be confusing (some of them confuse me, and I work for a company that makes them), but the time can be instructive. See if your children will explain how the game is played; ask them questions until you get the basic idea of what it's about. (I mean, I watched turtle videos until I would have confessed to any crime that an interrogator would have suggested, and I was satisfied that they were acceptable viewing—not *Jonny Quest*, maybe, but acceptable.)

You might even want to take a big step and ask to listen in on a game that your offspring are playing, which is the best way to learn what they're up to. We've received several letters at DRAGON® Magazine from readers who actually encouraged their parents to sit in on their role-playing sessions, and they report great success in easing their parents' fears about role-playing itself. In fact, some parents *even joined the group*.

We do receive letters now and then from parents who role-play with their children. I played in an AD&D® game in West Germany with a group that included one whole family, and met another family that

role-played together just after arriving in Wisconsin to work for TSR, Inc. The latter family was that of Margaret Weis, one of the original linchpins of TSR's highly popular DRAGONLANCE® saga.

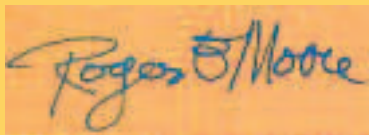
It is heartening to see some of the letters from parents who support their children's interest in role-playing. The father of one young author for DRAGON Magazine told me that publication of his son's work was a major family event. Alan D. Long, a parent in Aurora, Ill., wrote to us concerning the need "to point out the good things about [D&D® game]. . . . It is a good game system, a good family game; it's a vehicle to spend much time with our children, to teach them decision making, problem solving, and courageous behavior." Mr. Long, who noted that he was an active worker in the Christian church as well as a Cub Scout leader, went so far as to defend the D&D game from remarks made in *The Beacon-News*, a newspaper that ran an article expressing some anti-D&D game opinions. And Judy Dietz, a mother of two from Hawaii, said: "I don't particularly like the [AD&D] game myself, but my sons do—so I don't forbid them to play or buy the books, games, or manuals."

Maybe what the role-playing industry needs is what Konami, Inc., a computer-game company, has done. Konami has started Konami Mom, a program in which family issues related to computer gaming are addressed. "So many parents are afraid of computers and other high-tech equipment, it's easy to feel out-of-sync with our kids," says Konami Mom Charlyne Robinson, a Chicago parent and educational psychologist. "This [the Konami Mom program] gives us the opportunity to get up to speed with our kids and relate on their level." A press release from Konami reveals that the Robinson family plays a lot of computer games together. So, in fact, do the Lessers of San Ramon,

Calif.—the people who have been writing "The Role of Computers" column for this magazine.

My son John is too young to be involved in role-playing games, but it's very possible that one of these days he will badger me to bring home a copy of one of TSR's role-playing rules so that he and his friends can start a campaign. And after a few marathon sessions of whining and griping (on my part), I'll do it. I've played role-playing games for over a decade and have worked at TSR, Inc. for seven years now; I think I can tell if TSR's games are good or bad for kids. And I think that they are good enough for my kid.

First, of course, we have to make it through the "Turtle Power" phase, and John has shown an uncomfortable interest in getting a "Tendo" (Nintendo) computer game for his birthday since he was three. Thank God he still likes his Dino Riders. Having loved dinosaurs since I was his age, I can still relate to *those*.



Note: Konami, Inc. offers a free pamphlet called, "Answers to Parents' Most Commonly Asked Questions About Video-games," which has a great amount of information that is applicable to many other entertainments like role-playing games. For your copy, write to: Konami Mom, c/o Konami, Inc., 900 Deerfield Parkway, Buffalo Grove IL 60089, U.S.A. Also ask for any press releases on the Konami Mom program. It's worth it!

Is this the sword in the stone?

Introducing White Wolf Publishing's first Campaign Book

- Save the Dreamers and their creations
- Escape an Inquisition in a foreign land
- Soothe a Merqueen by cleansing her waters
- Help a prince regain his crown in a faerie tale land
- Weed out rebels in an empire full of intrigue
- Explore a new continent and discover its secrets

In the first volume of an exciting new kind of RPG product, you are provided with enough information to play six complete fantasy campaigns. Each campaign offers a new setting, new characters, and new dangers. A detailed overview of the plot helps you tell a saga at least six adventures long (a total of 36 adventures).

Available in July at better game and book stores for only \$6.95. Or order by mail and add \$2 for postage.

For more information and a free gift write:

White Wolf, 1298 Winter Place, Anniston AL 36201



FIND THE HIDDEN STAFF AND SAVE THE KINGDOM



For 2000 years, the High Kings ruled Tagor-Dal. They were mighty, wise and just. They were the Masters of seven magical staves that drove away evil, cured diseases and brought comfort to their people. But the Black Sorcerers of Malokor grew increasingly evil. When they struck, the kingdom fell quickly and the staves were presumed taken, destroyed or lost. **Legends of the Lost Realm** begins after 300 years of the Sorcerers' evil rule. Tagor-Dal endured without hope until a rumor began. Not all the staves had been destroyed! One is believed hidden somewhere deep within the walls of a citadel. Its halls are filled with peril for the unwary. Traps and enemies await your journey through the treacherous maze. Become strong, find the first staff, and save Tagor-Dal.



Legends of the Lost Realm—ready to run on Macintosh computers with 800K drive. For 1 to 6 players! Available wherever computer games are sold, or direct from Avalon Hill, \$39.95. (If ordering direct, add postage: 10% USA; 20% Canada, Mexico; 30% foreign.)

microcomputer games DIVISION



The Avalon Hill Game Company

A MONARCH AVALON, INC. COMPANY

4511 Harford Road, Baltimore, MD 21214

301-264-9200 • For ordering, call Toll Free 1-800-999-3222