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THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE

**COMPLETE GAME
IN THIS ISSUE:**

NECROMANCER

ORIGINS REPORT
GRAV ARMOR: REVIEW AND DESIGNER'S NOTES
ADVANCED CAMPAIGNING: F&SF RPG ADVICE
MAGIC IN CAR WARS RESULTS
AND 6 PAGES OF REVIEWS

D. MARTIN
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Publisher:
Steve Jackson

Editor:
Aaron Allston

Art Director:
Denis Loubet

Contributing Editors:
W.G. Armintrout
William A. Barton
David Bolduc
Ronald Pehr
Lewis Pulsipher
Nick Schuessler
Bruce F. Webster

Business Manager:
Elton Fewell

Circulation Manager:
Chris Smith

Utility Infielders:
Elisabeth B. Zakes
Bernice Fewell
J. David George

Utility Outfielder:
Chris Zakes

ART IN THIS ISSUE

Cover: Dave Martin

Bob Barger: 8. John Borkowski: 19, 20, 21, 22, 28. Steve Crompton: 2, 16, 17. J. David George: 14. Paul Jaquays: 44. Denis Loubet: 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 31, 32, 33. George Webber: 38. Mel White: mailer cartoon.



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NUMBER 55 — SEPTEMBER, 1982

IN THIS ISSUE

Just like last issue, I have good news and bad news for you. The good news is that we made 48 pages again, and will probably be able to do it for next issue. More good news appears all through Steve's *Where We're Going*. The bad news is that I can't seem to get my Next Issue boxes right — two articles promised for this issue ("The Splat Gun" and Steve's piece on converting D&D critters to TFT) didn't make it because of space and time considerations. I'm taking steps in this issue's Next Issue box to keep from embarrassing myself further.

This issue, we have for you *Necromancer*, a complete pull-out game starting on page 19. SF boardgamers should look over our featured review and designer's notes for *Grav Armor*, which begin on page 6, and role-playing GMs should check out our two-part "Advanced Campaigning" advice article, which starts on page 13. And there's more for gamers of every orientation — so have fun.
—Aaron Allston

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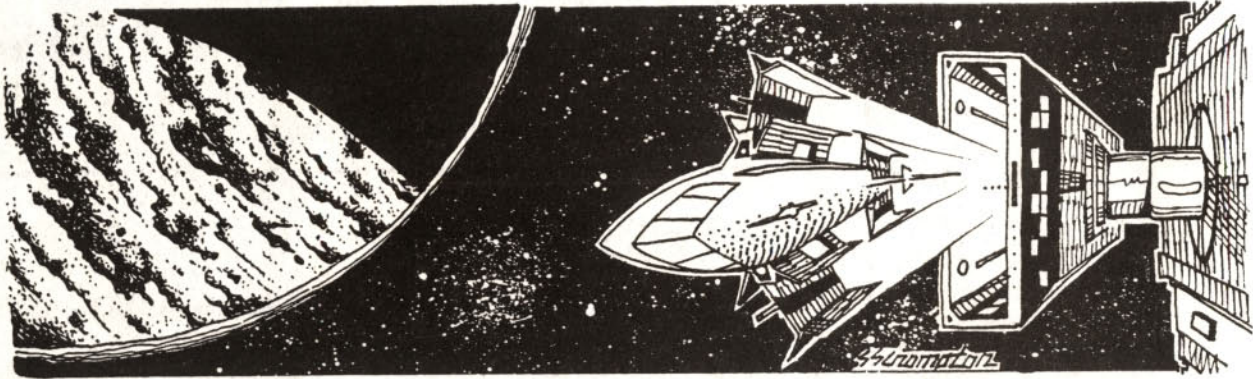
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WHERE WE'RE GOING



This issue is special; it's got a game in it. But it's not as special as you think. We've decided to make games a regular part of TSG.

No, not in every issue; we're not S&T. We'll be running four games a year. The next one, *Iron Men*, will appear in the January, 1983 issue. After that, we'll run one game every three months... for as long as you like them. The issues that don't have games will include complete supplements (adventures, scenarios, or whatever you want to call them) for ex-

isting games. Already on schedule are adventures for *Space Opera*, *Morrow Project*, *Car Wars*, *Champions*, and more.

Please let us know what you think of this issue's game, *Necromancer*, and of the game-plus-supplement format in general. It's your magazine.

Origins Report

First, I've got to get the really great part off my chest. *We won!* Actually, we won twice. *Car Wars* took the Charles

Roberts Award for Best Science Fiction Boardgame, and *Fire & Movement* won (for the fourth year in a row) as Best Magazine Covering Boardgaming. (There's a complete list of the winners in this month's Scanner, p. 47). Yea, verily, the whole SJ Games staff was walking on air after the award ceremony. Those plaques are going straight up on the wall, where we can look at them and grin every morning — and we all know whom we have to thank for them. So *thanks!*

It was an interesting convention in other ways, too. All hype to the contrary, Origins is the number-one gaming event of the year. A company's showing at Origins has a lot to say... not necessarily about its financial solidity, but about the amount and quality of the creative work it's doing. Origins releases are important; Origins is the place where a company puts its best foot forward.

So we all spent time walking the show this year, to see who was looking good and who not-so-good. First, a few of the booths that really impressed us:

Chaosium continues to make a strong showing; this is a company on the way up. Greg Stafford's crew not only got more award nominations than anyone else, they also got more awards than anyone else (three, in widely varying categories, and congratulations!). Their 1983 line promises to be interesting.

Flying Buffalo seems to be on the upswing. Their long-awaited *Berserker* game made it to Origins. I haven't played it yet, but it looks good. (Also looks a little like *Ogre*, eh, Rick? Nudge, nudge, wink wink.) And the new *City Book*, second in their "Catalyst" series, seems every bit as good as *Grimtooth's Traps*. If FBI hangs in there business-wise, they'll have some good stuff for us.

Iron Crown Enterprises is another rising star. They've scored quite a coup by getting the fantasy role-playing rights to

NEXT ISSUE

In our October issue, we'll probably be able to give you:

"Unnight," a planetary adventure for SPACE OPERA (this time for sure!);

A featured review of Yaquinto's PIRATES & PLUNDER (if all goes well);

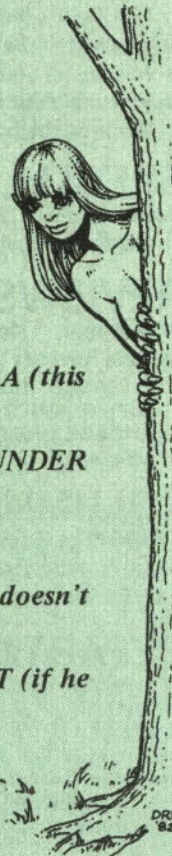
"The Splat Gun" (we hope);

Foreign Report: Gaming in Australia (if the dog doesn't eat the article);

Steve Jackson on changing D&D monsters to TFT (if he remembers);

"Submitting Your Game Design" (fingers crossed);

And a trip to Mars. Maybe.



the Tolkien "Middle Earth" mythos, and they had their first Middle Earth product — a beautiful full-color map — on display. I suspect that, while the market for new role-playing systems is very limited, the market for well-worked-out "universal" supplements is not.

FASA probably heads the "they were nobody last year and look at them now!" list. From a minor producer of *Traveller* supplements, they've grown into a full-fledged game company. They released *Behind Enemy Lines*, a World War II (!) role-playing game, at Origins. Coming soon is a licensed *Guns of Navarone* supplement. Good going! Another bit of news gleaned, not from the FASA people, but from author Harry Harrison: Apparently, FASA has bought the rights to do a game based on Harrison's popular *Deathworld* novels. Harrison expects the *Deathworld* game to compete directly with *Traveller*. Very interesting!

As for the big guys: *Avalon Hill* and *GDW* weren't making any big waves this year, but they had well-staffed booths, ran tournaments, and generally behaved the way you expect the "senior partners" in the game business to act: nice, solid reference points. There were rumors floating around about big new acquisitions by both companies — but nothing solid to date. *Avalon Hill's* new little brother, *Victory Games*, had a booth, but had only "work in progress" to show as yet.

Now a few of the disappointments . . . *TSR* didn't have a booth at all; they've dropped out of the Game Manufacturer's Association, which sponsors Origins, and they're concentrating support on their own privately-owned GenCon® conventions. In fact, there wasn't even a *Dungeons & Dragons* tournament. We understand that the Origins planning committee got a three-page letter from *TSR's* lawyers, explaining some of the things

that *TSR* might do if such tournaments were held . . . and the planning committee, which had enough problems already, simply gave in and cancelled the D&D events. Possibly because of this, the rank-and-file gamers' attitude toward *TSR* seemed to hit a new low at Origins. (By the time you read this, though, *TSR's* own convention will have come and gone, and their GenCon releases will have a lot to say about their new directions.)

Mayfair Games doesn't look too strong. There were no new Origins releases, and their vaunted Falklands Islands game isn't going over well. One distributor told us that he had bought the games at a 70% discount, and was still returning them . . . Looks like there's a need for more development before the next releases.

Gameforms may not be long for this world, which is a pity. Roger Damon's operation produced one good game and seemed to have a lot of promise. From what he said at the show, it's that old devil cash flow claiming another victim. Starting a new game company is a risky business, no question about it.

Metagaming had one almost-new release — a TFT supplement — and that was it. No new games, no tournaments being run, and no company personnel in sight (the booth was being run by a fellow on loan from *Martian Metals*). Better luck next year!

Judges Guild didn't have a booth this year. The persistent rumors of their upcoming demise (like within the week) seem to have been exaggerated . . . but they are definitely cutting back quite a bit.

Hobby Merchandiser is a magazine most of you have never seen. Retail store operators receive *HM*, and a couple of other publications like it, for free. They're supposed to be "industry" magazines, supplying unbiased news and advice to the retailers who need advice on game and hobby lines. At any rate, *HM* set some kind of new record with their Origins issue: *TSR* bought the front cover for an ad, and coincidentally, the lead gaming article was a GenCon writeup (third in a series of three!) by Mr. Gyax. However, there's hope; they did review one gaming product produced by a non-advertiser . . . if *HM* intends to stay in business, they need to work on their credibility. The hobby needs industry magazines, but it needs *believable* ones.

* * *

On the whole, Origins was a good convention — far from perfect, but much better than last year. Any "floating" convention, moving from city to city each year,

The Editor's Box

Not all of the convention news was product-oriented, nor was all of it normal. Some of it was . . . well, odd.

SJ Games and FBI Merge — Sort Of

The SJ Games staff and the people from Flying Buffalo, Inc., convoyed from Little Rock, AR to Baltimore. Several miles out of Knoxville, TN, a semi carrying a bulldozer abruptly pulled across two lanes of traffic, causing the Buffaloes' van to make an emergency stop and consequently causing the SJ Games car to run into the van. A third vehicle was also involved in the collision. Fortunately, no one was hurt, and all three vehicles still operated, but whiplash jokes were in vogue for the next several days.

Naked Elf Women Update

It had to happen — a stack of xeroxes of page 42 of the "Spaced Gamer" appeared mysteriously on our booth during the con. The page featured one elf woman perched atop a giant mushroom; there was also a half-page ad for Ground Zero Games, publishers of *Cults of Antioch*, *Attack of the Baby Harp Seals*, and High Velocity Dice (coming soon in Mag-

num, hollow-point, and dum-dum models). Our staffers had noticed the recent presence of Hero Games personnel where the page first appeared, and Hero's Steve Peterson, when confronted, admitted their cover was blown. The story has a happy (?) ending, though: SJ Games' manic alter ego, Good Taste Games, and Ground Zero Games may be collaborating on future items under the mutual auspices of Zero Taste Games.

New Groups

Our John Rankin, FBI's Mike Stackpole, and Heritage's Ed Andrews have formed the Manly Association of Wargamers (MAW), which appears to exist to introduce manliness to the industry. In response, SJ Games head typesetter Elisabeth Barrington seems to be recruiting for the Womanly Organization of Wargamers . . . The Association of Several Steves (Jackson, Peterson, and Crompton; Perrin will probably be contacted for membership) discussed creating themselves but will first probably work up another acronym, and the Secret Masters of Gaming would have met if they had figured out who they really were. All in all, it was a fairly normal event . . .

Aaron Allston