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Scrollworks

The Scrollworks Press Journal



Scrollworks Press

Scrollworks #7
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Scrollworks is a free publication of
Scrollworks Press TM.

Our Mission: Identify, develop, and promote innovative writers and artists in the science-fiction/fantasy community.

To accomplish this mission we will:

- 1) Act as a publisher of inexpensive role-playing game material.
- 2) Conduct research, host contests, and accept submissions to provide our content.
- 3) Increase awareness of the role-play industry by publicizing the beneficial social and academic aspects of the hobby.
- 4) Create an industry network of gaming professionals.

On Point

A new year, another issue of Scrollworks! We here at Scrollworks Press hope the holidays treated everyone well and that the year to come brings health, prosperity, and much joy.

This issue marks yet another evolutionary step in the development of Scrollworks. This project began with the simple goal of having fun by occasionally spamming friends with game news. Along the way I have sold one of the random tables, made some valuable contacts, seen the circulation increase, and learned a bit about publishing. I am now proud to announce that Scrollworks is now part of Scrollworks Press, a small business created to offer exposure to aspiring writers and artists.

Scrollworks will make it a policy to only carry conversion notes for game companies who provide us with written permission. This will help to avoid any accidental Trademark infringements. Microtactix, producers of the excellent Plain Label Game System™, have given consent to reference their mechanics here. I am grateful for their support and I encourage you to visit them at www.microtactix.com. Also, I'd like to thank S. John Ross for his continued advice. He has given permission to use the rules for Risus, The Anything System for conversions as well. Be sure to check his web page, The Blue Room, at www.io.com/~sjohn/blueroom.htm for some excellent gaming content, including fonts, SPARKS, and Risus.

A submission was sent to me a while back, but it was so long that it would have taken up the entire issue. If you'd like to submit material, please do so! That's what Scrollworks is here for. My only request is

that you e-mail me beforehand with your submission idea. This is very important. Do not send your completed article without warning.

Be sure to read the "In the Spotlight" section to learn more about this issue's contributors.

Enjoy, tell a friend, and drop me a line with any comments at christian.denise@gte.net

This, That, and the Other Thing: Not Your Average Lass

By Christian Walker

The scene is a familiar one. Our intrepid heroes are seated around a dingy table in some back alley dive. With some time to kill they begin to look for some role-playing opportunities. Serving maidens are a likely choice, but how many buxom, flirtatious lasses can you really expect to run into? Not Your Average Lass provides a d6 worth of tavern workers outside the standard, worn-out fare.

1) Bianca - Rail thin with long, spindly limbs. She struggles mightily with her tray and is red faced from physical effort. She struggles to carry a tray holding only a few tankards. The tray rocks back and forth, spilling the precious amber liquid everywhere. By the time the tankards arrive at the table their cups are half empty, if that full. If the characters complain her clumsiness only increases as she becomes even more flustered.

2) Miriam - Another fine specimen. She seems to be afflicted by some ailment that involves a great

deal of coughing, especially on the tray carrying the party's order. If questioned about her health, she will look confused as if such behavior was normal. Perceptive characters may notice that other patrons carefully wipe any tankard Miriam has touched with a handkerchief.

3) Venus - Her service is decent and she is even mildly attractive, but the squalling toddler attached to her leg is a bit distracting. The tot refuses to let go and is literally dragged around the main room, deaf to her mother's pleas to let go. The more the child is ignored the louder it bawls until the characters' temples begin to throb. Brownie points may be scored if a character elects to placate the child by bouncing it on their knee or singing a lullaby.

4) Evelyn - Middle aged, with a sour expression. This woman, whose beauty has long since faded, is rude to the point of being vicious. She has no respect for anyone (or anything) and will share her disdain for others loudly and eagerly. Patrons of the tavern will gauge the character of newcomers by how well they suffer Evelyn's barbs. Respect can be earned by calm, clever retorts to her savage attacks.

5) Kathryn - A plain, tallish sort of serving girl on the verge of tears. Its all she can do to keep from sobbing openly as she tends to the customers. If pressed for details she will begin a trail of woe, but will break down completely after, "It all started when...Waaaaaah!" She will remain inconsolable for some time after. Her cause for concern may be an adventure hook of some sort.

6) Amber - Where the cliché bar maiden in a fantasy tavern is buxom and openly seductive, this young lady is withdrawn, quiet, and seemingly afraid of any kind of interpersonal contact. She appears out of nowhere to take orders, silently creeping her way from table to table. Amber responds in barely audible one or two word answers and often trails off in mid sentence. It is quite possible she is a font of knowledge since few pay her much mind and she overhears a great deal as a result.

Gamer's Toolbox: Carrying Equipment by J. Scott



Try what I'm adopting: I'm giving my players a bunch of cards and a few envelopes. Each envelope will be a place/container their stuff could be in, and the cards will be each individual thing. This makes it easy for you to give an item to a player and have him place it quickly, and also for having thieves steal things in secret from a PC. It's a nice arrangement, and you know without a doubt where everything is at any given time.

To elaborate the system for more details, make sure that item weights, sizes, combat stats, etc. are written on each item card or envelope. Container envelopes should have capacity and current weight with contents noted on the outside for quick reference. ("I drop my backpack, losing 20 pounds so I can run faster.")

Mounts are envelopes like containers, as is the PC's person. GMs can keep similar cards themselves with special details on certain items (magical bonuses, etc.). It's also a great system for surprising the players: "Hey, there's a slit in my saddlebags envelope...where's the money I had in here?" or "Ack! There's a 6" centipede in my backpack! How'd that get in there?"

Interplanar Swapmeet and Astral Bargain Bin: Onager's Literary Companion, a silly little spell for Risus©



When cast on any non-magical text, the spell will "read" from the book in a male or female voice for up to one hour per casting. This voice is pleasant, non-descript, and easy to listen to. The Literary Companion is most useful for doing transcription, research, relaxation, or even as a diversionary tactic:

Onager's spell has a few simple restrictions: The book must be written in a language that the caster speaks fluently. Prior to casting, the book to be enchanted must be flipped through and the left open for the duration of the spell. If used as a diversionary tactic, the spell's voice can only be heard within 15 yards and will be muffled like a normal voice if heard through closed doors, etc.

To use this spell in Risus© the Sorcerer Cliché would be most useful for its Spellcasting ability. Occasionally, Onager's Literary Companion can go a bit haywire. Instead of a pleasant voice reading from a designated text, a raspy voice often recites off color limericks about the spell caster's relatives. (and people say old Onager doesn't have a sense of humor)

Because of this, the Sorcerer should roll his number of Sorcerer dice against a target number of 5 for the spell to function properly.

Note: Onager was the quiet wizard mentor Madelyn Rhys, a rather manipulative sorceress. See Scrollworks 3 and 5 for a write up of Madelyn as well as a spell, Summon Slime, she is experimenting with.

The Lure of Herbs, Intro - Herbal Uses in Plain Label™

By Christian Walker

Many fantasy role-playing systems make use of medicinal herbs with remarkable restorative powers. After the application of the generic "salve", wounds close with amazing speed, leaving nary a scar. Or, a search of the countryside will reveal such dire plants as, "Widowmaker Moss" and "Breathstealer Ivy", all of which can be put to nefarious application. While a necessary and entertaining staple of fantasy literature, there is another, seldom used approach for herbs.

Continues next page.....

A trip to the grocery store's tea aisle will reveal a bewildering array of herbal teas to hasten sleep, stave off colds, and reinforce the immune system. Furthermore, dietary supplements and lotions are available that allegedly provide numerous health benefits. Surely, there must be something to this, so why not take this premise and slightly embellish it a bit?

Many players enjoy running characters who are in close harmony with nature. Understandable, given the morbid urban confines many of us inhabit. Be they Celtic mystics, rangers, or divine healers, all characters could benefit from a simple rule system that rewards consistent use of medicinal, culinary, or decorative herbs. Next month's issue will detail the skills required to create such ability.

In the Spotlight

Cover Art: Castle Nev'eer by Josh Bowers

"Elegant Simplicity," is one way my boss, er wife, described Josh's work. I agree.

"Soldier" by Antonin M.T.

Antonin is hoping to acquire additional experience in sci-fi art and would appreciate any constructive advice.

"Carrying Equipment" by John Scott.

An avid GM, John is a student at the University of Washington, in Seattle, WA. His writing goals include the founding of a company to produce D&D 3E© compatible materials, such as a fantasy campaign setting.

Please e-mail to learn more about these innovative talents.

Industry Connection

Cumberland Games

The creative mind of S. John Ross has developed some excellent products in cooperation with other industry professionals. On the web at: www.io.com/~sjohn/cumberland.htm

Microtactix Games

Producers of the Plainlabel Game System™ and Cardstock Creations™. Please visit at: www.microtactix.com

Gamecove

North San Diego County's finest game store... and a source for great dice bags! On the web at: www.gamecove.com

Writing Contest: Design an NPC!

Below is an image titled soldier, which has been provided by the capable Antonin M.T. Despite the ample imagery, one cannot help but ask questions such as, "Who is he, or even, she?" "Why the need for a sword AND a high-tech weapon?" "What is that insignia on the armor?" "Are they a soldier, bandit, or adventurer?"

In 350 words or less create a biographical sketch for this NPC. Mechanics are not required. The winner will receive a hand-sewn dice bag from Carlsbad CA's very own Gamecove and have their entry published in the next issue. Good Luck!

Rules

Enter as often as you'd like!

Please, no vulgarity or graphic depictions of sex or violence.

All submissions become the property of Scrollworks Press.

If you are under 18, please e-mail to receive a consent form.

Entries will be judged on creativity by a panel of 4 judges.



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Catch The Wave Of Adventure!