Editorial
The Adventure Begins

"You can't keep old copies of *Dragon* magazine forever," my wife has told me any number of times, referring collectively to my two-decades-worth of that publication, along with vintage copies of *Wargamer's Digest*, *White Dwarf*, and any number of similar journals dating back to the early 1970s.

On the face of it, her statement could not be more true and has a certain sublime elegance to it. Even if I were to achieve some form of physical immortality, my old gaming publications most assuredly would not last forever. Eventually, maybe after decades — or centuries if they were exceptionally well-taken-care-of — the pages of these magazines would become brittle, break apart, eventually disintegrate, their atoms becoming dispersed. Even if they were preserved in some electronic format, perhaps for millennia, all things eventually come to an end, and they could not be expected to survive the inevitable destruction of our world, the death-throes of our sun, the collapse of our universe. (Although sometimes I suspect my wife is not being nearly the physicist or philosopher I give her credit for and is really just saying that she doesn't want me to keep this stuff around any longer.)

No, you certainly can't keep old copies of *Dragon* magazine forever … But why is it that so many of us want to keep our favorite gaming magazines as long as we can? I think it is because of the positive feelings we got when we opened up those classic magazines, often during our young and formative years as gamers.

When I opened new issues of some of the classic magazines I used to read back in the 1980s, I used to find useful articles that supported the games that I played; fun articles that tied in with games I didn't play but that inspired me to try them or to adapt the articles to the ones I did; self-standing games of various sorts; and universal resources that could be enjoyed on their own or applied to many sorts of games. Those publications had many voices, many games, and many companies represented, and that is what made them fun an useful. When they disappeared and became or were replaced by one-company, one-game magazines, many of us simply stopped buying such publications.

Creating something that evoked similar positive feelings in the gamers of today, something that would be as broadly useful and enjoyable to them, has been the primary goal behind the development of d∞/*d-Infinity* (and, if you immediately "get" the title, then you can be sure that this publication was created for you!). With that in mind, each volume of this publication will include exclusive material, much of it bonus or preview content tying in with other publications. Examples include:

∞ A self-standing game that can be played and enjoyed independently of any external rules system, using components included in the publication or which are readily available. This volume includes a revised, updated, and expanded version of *PowerLunch*™, a game that can be played using nothing but standard business cards.

∞ Universal material that can be applied to all or many sorts of games, to include our great Digital Dice technology column and the ongoing City Builder series of writeups on places that characters might visit during an adventure.

∞ "Basic system" stats and rules, compatible with retroclone systems inspired by the original role-playing games of the 1970s and which can be quickly and easily adapted for use with almost any other RPGs.

∞ Stats, rules, and material tying in with numerous game systems, which can be used as-is with them or readily adapted to others of your choice (you will note that, while we wanted everything in this publication to be polished and immediately usable to our readers, we also like to encourage gamers to adapt them as needed and to make the games they play, and this publication, their own).

∞ Support for miniatures and models, to include tips on how to create, customize, or paint them, pictures of some of great and inspirational examples, and samples of cardstock miniatures that can be cut out and used to shake up almost any table-top game.

∞ Material in support of live-action role-playing games, to include detailed articles on prop creation, LARP scenarios, and reports on live-action events that tie in with gaming (e.g., the post-apocalyptic AirSoft event described in this volume).

∞ Interviews with the leaders and luminaries of the game industry, to include authors, artists, and developers. This issue includes an exclusive interview with the executive director of the Game Manufacturer's Association that reveals some interesting things about the industry and his organization's role in it.

We have also decided to emphasize the resilient and durable nature of this quarterly publication and its contents by not putting any dates on it and instead giving each issue a theme that loosely encompasses most of the included material in some way. The theme of Volume #1 is "The Adventure Begins," which should not require much explanation.

So no, you can't keep old copies of publications forever … But, we have created this one so that it would make people feel the way they did when they read those old gaming magazines in decades past. And, despite the impossibility of keeping it forever, we hope you will at least want to do so. If you do, we hope you will subscribe to it so that you can be sure to receive every volume!

Michael J. Varhola, Editor-in-Chief, d∞

PowerLunch

The Collectible Trading Business Card Game (CTBCG)

By Geoffrey Weber and the
Skirmisher Game Development Group

*A*ll those business cards that people hand you can finally be put to good use! PowerLunch™ is a two- to four-player game in which these cards can be used to battle each other for the one thing they are best suited to attain: a free lunch.

The object of the game is to eliminate all of the other players' cards by strategically using the phone numbers and other contact information present on the various cards. A number of options are included throughout the rules. In any given game, the person who lost the previous game — or the one who lost first, in a multi-player game — can decide to add an option to the game (or remove one that has been added).

BUSINESS CARD TYPES

Each business card can be classified as one of the following types:

Bosses: Any card with a job title of an executive or leadership role (e.g., CEO, President, Executive Director, Editor-in-Chief).

Underlings: Anybody whose primary function is dictated by someone else (i.e., most jobs).

Free Agents: people who are self-employed or freelance.

Businesses: Cards that name an organization but do not reference any specific person. Businesses can only move, attack, or retreat if they were attacked sometime since their player's last turn (although they can retreat if linked to a Boss card, as described below).

A player must decide how a particular card will function if it could be categorized as more than one type. Likewise, if a card has information on more than one side, the player must decide which side he wants to use.

BUSINESS CARD STATS

In this day and age, everyone has a wide variety of contact information beyond the basic phone number. Cards with no contact information are as worthless in the game as they are in real life and cannot be used in play.

Phone numbers: These are the primary means of attacking opponents and defending against them, as described under "Attack," below. In the most basic form of this game, if a business card has multiple phone numbers listed, use only one, in the following order of availability: main/landline, cell phone, fax, any other. If there are multiple types of applicable number, the player can choose which to use.

Option — Multiple Phone Numbers: All of the phone numbers on a business card can be used, including those for cell phones and fax lines. The numbers are applied normally and the player may choose which number in a particular defensive slot to use on any given turn; you are obligated to stay within the same place on any of the available phone numbers (e.g., if you are on the first attack for a card, you have your choice of any of the numbers' first attack digit).

Email addresses: Email addresses that are from the same domain/provider share an affinity and provide +1 to combined attacks by linked cards if they are allies or -1 to attacks if they are opponents.

Twitter addresses: Cards with a twitter address have the option of a kamikaze attack. If you choose to do a kamikaze attack, your attack number is equal to the number of letters in the twitter address. The card must be dropped from the air at a height of no less than one arm's-length above the playing surface. Additionally you may choose to rip your card into any number of pieces, with the attack points being equally divided amongst the pieces (rounded down.) The pieces must all be dropped simultaneously. At the conclusion of a kamikaze attack, the attacking card is removed from the game.

SETUP

To get a fairly randomized card pool from which to draw, each player will need a deck consisting of at least 20 standard, 3.5-inch by 2-inch business cards. The play area is ideally a table, approximately 5'x5', but, obviously you will need to work with what you have got. It might be necessary to mark the boundaries if you are playing on the floor or a really long table.

Option: A deck must contain 20 different cards and duplicates are only allowed if they are in addition to this minimum number, and even then there cannot be more than two of any particular card in a deck. An exception to this is one's own card, of which a 20-card deck can

AirSoft
Battle for the Wasteland

By Robert "Mac" McLaughlin

The Wastelander took a measured drink of purified water and squinted down the trail. His shotgun was scant protection against the gang of raiders operating between the Fairfax Ruins and the town of Megaton but the western road was an unknown. A cotton sack on his belt, half-full of bottle-caps, clinked softly as he hefted their weight. Combined with the pre-war relics in his pack, it should almost be enough to buy an assault rifle from Craterside Supply. In hindsight, he probably should not have ambushed that party of slavers. The two slaves he freed promised him help in the future, but the slavers put a bounty on his head for his trouble. Slavers and those ruthless Talon Company mercenaries were now looking to bring him to the slave pits at Paradise Falls. It was a day like any other in the Capitol Wastes.

Welcome to the *Wasteland*! MindGame Productions organized this live-action role-playing airsoft event in November of 2009, with a sequel scheduled for November 2010. Based on the successful *Fallout* computer games published by Interplay, Black Isle Studios, and Bethesda Softworks, the *Wasteland* is set in the post-nuclear war ruins surrounding Washington, D.C., as presented in Bethesda's *Fallout 3*. The event was organized at Wayne's World of Paintball in Ocala, Florida, a sce-

Aquesha Ritzie/MindGame Productions

nario field featuring multiple towns, firebases, and ruins scattered over nearly 70 acres of woods and trails.

MindGame Productions started operations in 2005 and is now the largest airsoft events company on the east coast. Based in Florida, MGP runs an average of eight to 12 events a year, ranging in size from 100 to 400 participants. Most of its events are military simulation games, but MGP has built a reputation of also hosting airsoft events that feature science fiction or horror elements and a greater role-play interaction than usually seen in airsoft games.

For the first *Wasteland* event in 2009, more than 220 players came from Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, and Missouri, hanging up their military uniforms and donning their best wasteland garb. Players represented gangs of raiders, slavers, the Brotherhood of Steel, the Enclave, Reilly's Rangers, Church of the Children of Atom, Talon Company, and individual wastelanders trying to survive in the unforgiving ruins of the Capitol Wastes.

Most players started the game with only gas pistols, springer shotguns, and rifles. Automatic weapons have to be purchased in the *Wasteland*. Pre-war paper money is no good here, bottle-caps are the only currency accepted, and MGP accumulated the literally thousands of metal bottle-caps that drove the *Wasteland* economy. Bottle-caps could be used to hire bodyguards or mercenaries, buy protection and safe-passage through checkpoints, post bounties on players that crossed you, and purchase the ability to use automatic airsoft weapons. Players scrounged for caps and relics to upgrade their arsenal, doing jobs for merchants and larger factions or going to the dark-side and capturing other players to sell

Aquesha Ritzie/MindGame Productions

Interview
GAMA Executive Director John Ward

By Michael J. Varhola

d-Infinity sat down and talked with Game Manufacturing Association Executive Director John Ward at the GAMA Trade Show (GTS) in Las Vegas in March 2010, 13 months after he came on board with the association. He replaced Anthony Gallela, who had been with GAMA in various capacities for seven years.

Ward holds a bachelor's degree in criminology and a master's degree in public administration, both from Ohio University. He is a retired U.S. Army officer with experience in the military police and engineer corps who has served in Europe, Central America, Korea, and the Persian Gulf during the first Gulf War.

"It's been really interesting," Ward said of his first year on the job. "I come from a military background, and also from a criminal justice background, so although I've been a gamer my whole life, the actual industry piece of that is new. I'd never been to GTS until last year, never even knew it existed. I'm a gamer, I'm a role-playing guy, so I went to Origins and GMed there for years. But I didn't know about … the Alliance open house, and I'd never been down to Dragon Con. This year was a lot of me sort of getting a feel of the landscape a little bit, in addition to getting indoctrinated and learning my job. So, it's been a really interesting first year."

Game Manufacturing Association Executive Director John Ward shares a humorous moment with some of the convention staff at the 2010 GAMA Trade Show in Las Vegas.

Michael J. Varhola

d-Infinity: So what prompted you to come to GAMA?

Ward: That's a strange story … I'd been a deputy director in our criminal justice system in Ohio, [where] I was responsible for the juvenile parole system for 12 small prisons. So, there was a lot of stress involved in that, and I probably had another 10 years or so to go until retirement. I have a wife, an 18-year-old daughter, and a 3-year-old son at home … and what typically happens with those levels of responsibility is you're constantly getting called at every holiday, [or] there's some horrific event in the community … and those sort of things tend to take their toll on you after a period of time.

Well, I'm on the GM list for Origins, and my wife was pulling email, and she said, "Hey, there's this job opening. You love doing this stuff. Why don't you take a look at this?" So, finally I put my resume in, and got an interview on the phone by Mike Stackpole, and the next sort of thing I know I'm interviewing with the board and I'm working at GAMA!

I've got a lot of experience in my former job managing boards — those 12 small prisons all had governing boards of judges, so I had 12 boards to manage rather than one — and, although we've got some really strong personalities on our board with differing opinions, judges are pretty

diverse in their opinions as well. So, it's very similar to a lot of the things I've done in the past. I was responsible for revenue generation for the state, non-general revenue funds, non-tax oriented. So, a lot of things that I've done with my professional education in public administration fit in line with running a non-profit association. And if we look at GAMA more as a service provider, as a non-profit, more … like an entity of government than as a business, we are still going to apply those business practices, which are service-oriented. We exist because of the membership.

d-Infinity: How have your 23 years in the military and 16 years in state government played a role in the way you approach your job with GAMA?

Ward: Well, GAMA [has] a much smaller staff than I'm used to, and we obviously don't have the kind of resources that I had in state government, but it's a very good fit with a lot of the experiences I've had in the past. Developing [and] implementing new programs … It's the same sort of thing when you're trying to implement new programs in communities, and things of that nature. … I've been doing educational research on kids and criminogenics for 15 years. Doing educational research about how gaming affects kids and their development is very

Digital Dice
Electronic Game Boards

By Brendan Cass

Video games bring the convenience of on-the-spot game play coupled with sexy visual effects and preparation-free automation. Wouldn't it be great if tabletop games could be just as sexy and convenient?

The Digitally Integrated Tabletop project (Digital Tabletop for short) aims to do just that. The project, currently in development by this author, is being designed to deliver a tabletop gaming experience that is both more visually appealing and more convenient. I hope to make tabletop gaming a more accessible and enjoyable experience for all varieties of players, without hindering the creativity that is at the heart of tabletop gaming's greatness.

Now, there are already a whole slew of applications out there whose entire purpose is to streamline and manage some of the more cumbersome aspects of tabletop gaming. The problem I have always had with them as a GM is that it is very easy to get lost in all of your trackers and generators to the point where you are spending more time staring at a computer screen than interacting with your players.

The Digital Tabletop differs in that it is designed to be just as convenient and useful to players as it is to GMs. The Digital Tabletop will track the location of miniatures and place status information such as health points, spell effects, or temporary bonuses next to a miniature so that GM and players alike know exactly what is going on. Game mechanics with an area-of-effect will be visually represented so that everyone knows exactly what is going to be affected. Lingering spell effects will show up as visual effects, so when your player casts that *Wall of Fire* spell you do not have to break out that red pencil to represent it, you can represent it with an honest-to-goodness wall of fire!

And when miniatures are moved, their paths will be shown on the map and information on how far they can be moved will be displayed. No more breaking out rulers or counting grid squares!

So enough about what the Digital Tabletop does and more about how it is going to do it. If you are thinking that with a name like "Digital Tabletop" the project *must* involve some expensive and obscure hardware, you are in for a pleasant surprise. The Digitally Integrated Tabletop project will only use hardware that you probably already have! All you will need to get it going is a comput-

Pictured on the author's electronic gameboard is Peeslag the obese Antipaladin, from Armorcast's line of Nuisances miniatures, as painted by Enrico Nardini.

Brendan Cass

er running the windows operating system, an USB webcam, and a computer monitor.

The original plan for the Digital Tabletop has the monitor lying on its back on the table and the miniatures sitting on top of the screen, with the webcam positioned so that it can watch the monitor and miniatures from above. If you are concerned that the miniatures will scratch up your screen, a piece of Plexiglas can be placed over it to protect it, and should not hinder the functionality at all.

If you have not guessed already, the Digital Tabletop functions by tracking pieces via the webcam, and the effects and automations are handled by an intuitive map program. The program keeps track of the locations of all your miniatures in terms of coordinate points, because each miniature has an unique set of coordinates the program is able to tell the difference between miniatures. When it notices a miniature is missing from its original spot, it knows it must have been moved, it then locates the errant miniature and assigns it a new unique coordinate point. The project is written in Python and is completely open source.

If you are a programmer and would like to contribute to this project or just want a copy of the code, feel free to email the author at brendan.cass@skirmisher.com or to look for him on the Skirmisher Publishing LLC Forum, at www.skirmisher.com/forum.

City Builder: A Guide to Designing Communities

The Smuggler's Tunnel

By Jim Clunie

Smugglers transport various valuable goods secretly across borders — whether described only by custom, or barred by fortifications, bodies of water, or other geographical barriers — where otherwise the ruling powers forbid them or subject them to heavy taxes. Sometimes they must bypass other physical dangers, as with a city under siege. Hidden underground tunnels and chambers serve the smugglers' purposes either as routes of entry across the border, as temporary storage for consignments of goods until the smugglers can arrange to deliver or sell them to other distributors, or as safe places for the gang to meet, hide, and plan their exploits.

Despite the practical difficulties of excavating and disposing of a significant volume of rock, the level of profits that a smuggling ring can maintain once established — often combined with a sense of injustice against a distant government's taxes and ordinances that sometimes threaten trades that the inhabitants have carried on by right for generations — may spur a remarkable level of effort and ingenuity.

A tunnel network may include natural caves, active or disused mine-shafts, underground routes built for legitimate commerce (e.g., the transport tunnels of Portland, Oregon), and the cellars, basements, or crypts of existing buildings, as well as new tunnels or improvements built for the purpose of smuggling. A lucky band of smugglers might even find and make use of a pre-existing magical effect, created in past ages, which could grant them a considerable advantage as a means of passage between two points that law-enforcers might never think to cover.

A tunnel's exits may be covered or concealed (perhaps with an elaborate secret mechanism, or under a location that discourages or hinders search, such as a fireplace in current use or a dung-heap), appear as a natural cave or some legitimate underground working, or debouch in an isolated area screened from view. Often, a tunnel connects to a well-known building, such as an inn, a noble's manor, a temple whose priests might either be complicit or ignorant of the trade, a mill, or a ruin that can serve as a landmark.

Inside, smugglers' tunnels must provide a level, well-paved path for porters (known as tub-men), light carts, or beasts of burden to carry heavy loads. The specific location may require props similar to those of a mine to prevent collapse, some means of keeping out water (as the route is naturally likely to run close to the level of any local sea or watercourse on which the smugglers transport their wares) such as drainage trenches — even supplemented by pumps connected to legitimate mills along the route — and lighting, such as brackets for torches or lanterns, beyond the point where it would show to the outside.

Liquor and other intoxicants are in constant demand and generally taxed as luxuries (if not prohibited as vices), and are thus likely to turn a profit for almost any smuggling trade. A wide variety of other commodities become attractive to smuggle when high duties enable illegal imports to undercut legitimate sales, ranging from

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"The Smuggler's Tunnel" is a rules-free description of a specific sort of place that might be found in many different sorts of communities and cultures. It is formatted like the more than 70 places found in the Skirmisher Publishing LLC book City Builder: A Guide to Designing Communities *and intended to stand by itself or serve as bonus content to that volume.*

Both this article and City Builder *overall are intended to be compatible with the needs of almost any ancient, Dark Ages, Middle Ages, Renaissance, fantasy, or other role-playing milieu. It was developed by Jim Clunie, Michael J. Varhola, and the Skirmisher Game Development Group.*

City Builder *is available both in hardcopy ($27.95; 174 pages; SKP 1001) and as a PDF download ($19.99; 174 pages; SKP E 0925) from online sales venues that include DriveThruRPG and the Skirmisher Game Store; hardcopy versions are also available through game stores and Amazon.com.*

This comprehensive, fully-illustrated manual is specifically designed to help guide Game Masters through the process of creating exciting and compelling urban areas and other sorts of communities and places within them for their campaigns.

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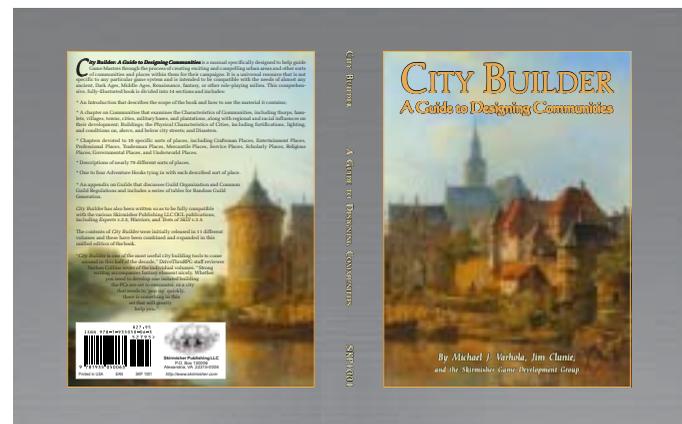
The Prop Room
How to Properly Age a Document

By Michael Sorensen

So, you've run out of 500 year-old parchment, your suppliers don't have paper manufactured before 2008, and you absolutely must have the clues for this weekend's adventure done before Thursday so you can work on your costume. What's a Game Master supposed to do? Time to enter the Prop Room at *d-Infinity* and learn how to age your documents properly …

There are lots of different techniques for aging paper, so I am just going to give a quick description of those I have used before.

First off, determine what paper you are going to use for the project. There are dozens of types out there, all which have different properties, including how much dye they will absorb. Newsprint, for example, is more fragile than everyday typing paper. Make sure you experiment with a blank page first before soaking that hand-drawn sketch of a spell with the codes needed to end the adventure. Also, always make a backup copy of your original.

To lightly age a document of most paper types, I like to fold it several times, use fine sandpaper or some steel wool on the edges, and maybe crumple it up and smooth it back down. If it has too many creases, wet it down slightly with a water mister and use an iron on its lowest setting to flatten. You can also put them in the back window of your car for several days, where the sun will dry out the paper and give it that "aged" feel.

Sometimes, I'll also tear the document in half and then tape it back together. Using a hair dryer or heat gun will age the tape and make it slightly brittle.

To do some major aging, it's time to pull out the tea-kettle and clear off your kitchen table. When dyeing paper, I have found that having a clear workspace is critical to keeping the mess down. I put down an old towel on a table, then set a disposable aluminum baking pan on top (these are typically available for about $2 for a set of four at the local grocery store). This keeps spills to a minimum.

The best dye medium I have used with the most consistent results is black tea. Simply brew a cup or two with two teabags, let it cool to lukewarm, and then pour it over the paper. It does not take a whole lot (remember, you want to wet the paper, not totally soak it; if the paper falls apart on your trial run, you used far too much.) I use a sponge to mop up the excess, but make sure to leave some dye around the edges. I also use the wet tea bags to add a bit of blotchiness. I like to squeeze them out about a foot above the paper, which adds a nice texture.

To do multiple sheets, transfer the dyed documents to a cookie sheet and repeat. Then, let dry overnight in the garage. Some people like to bake them at 250 degrees for 10-15 minutes until mostly dry, but I live in Arizona, so I just put it out on my porch and come back in an hour.

Walnut ink crystals dissolved in water work well for aging, too. Walnut ink crystals can be found on eBay, or sometimes your local craft store will have them available. Mix up about half a teaspoon of crystals in a cup water (more or less, depending on how dark your want it), pour it onto the paper, and use a rough sea sponge to mop it up. And wear rubber gloves, because it will stain your hands.

For a different look, I like to use watercolors to custom dye special documents. You will be amazed how a bit of yellow in the center and brown on the edges will really

Left: Setup showing cookie sheet, disposable roasting pan, sponge, and tea solution. **Right:** Documents in tea solution drying.

Cthulhu Live 3rd Edition

THE RETURN OF CYRIS CRANE

BY WILLIAM T. THRASHER

The Return of Cyris Crane is a LARP scenario designed to be played with minimal staff and a small number of players. The only staff required are the Keeper and, if possible, a Stage Manager. The Keeper should familiarize himself with each character in this script as certain important details are integrated into their backgrounds.

Setting
Crane Manor, Arkham Massachusetts, 1917

Dramatis Personae
Cyris Crane – Wealthy eccentric
Eleanor Dewitt – Crane's devoted daughter
Arthur Dewitt – Eleanor's husband and once master of Crane Manor
Claypool – Cyris Crane's former butler
Oliver Fontaine – Student of the occult and friendly rival of Cyris Crane
Phineas Theodore Riley – The Crane family lawyer
Otm Raj Kubar – Assistant to Mr. Riley
Professor Ogden Leftbridge – Miskatonic University professor
Howard West – Crane family physician
Walter Page – Reporter for the *Arkham Examiner*

Player's Introduction
Cyris Crane is one of the wealthiest and most respected men in Arkham. A brilliant businessman, loving father, and world traveler, Cyris was the New England ideal. Sadly, this past autumn, misfortune befell Cyris Crane and his health took a turn for the worse.

Venturing into the Arkham hill country following another of his archaeological fancies, the aging Crane became lost in a sudden blizzard. Searches were conducted but Cyris was never found. As the harsh winter continued, Cyris was declared dead. His daughter and son-in-law mourned as they took up management of the Crane estate. However, with the spring thaw came a miracle.

With the first blossoms of spring, Cyris Crane returned to Crane Manor. Family and friends were overjoyed. As it happened, Cyris had been caught in the unseasonable snowstorm while hiking in the Arkham hills. Overcome by hypothermia, he was found by a pair of trappers and nursed back to health in the hospital of the small mountain town of Ipswich. Cut off from the outside world for the duration of the winter, the simple doctors did what they could to sustain Cyris, who was also suffering from temporary amnesia. With the coming of warmer weather, Cyris' recovered enough both physically and mentally that he could set back for home.

Unfortunately, Cyris' health is failing, due in part to his advancing age and substandard treatment at the hands of simple country doctors. At Cyris Crane's request, his daughter Eleanor has sent out invitations to some of the old man's closest companions to celebrate his return. It is Eleanor's hope that the sign of so many familiar faces will bolster her father's spirits and aide in his eventual recovery.

Keeper's Introduction
The part of Cyris Crane should be played by an experienced role-player. Give the player portraying Cyris a special briefing before the game in order to explain his full character background, motivation, and relationships with the Investigators. This can include everything in the Keeper's Introduction except the identity and motivation of Crane's assassin, which should be kept secret.

Publicly, Cyris Crane was an upstanding man of power and privilege. Born from modest New England stock, Cyris parlayed his family's meager landholdings into a sizable fortune in the span of a few years. Renowned as both a keen businessman and academic, Cyris made the Crane name the most well-respected in Arkham. Unbe-

Basic System
Spontaneous Generation Monsters

By Derek Holland, with Illustrations by Andy Hopp

Spontaneous generation, the idea that life can arise from non-living matter, is one of several obsolete biological concepts that can be used in fantasy games to provide a Game Master more options in monster and setting design. This concept can include living creatures that, by modern definition, are not biological, such as those made of glass or metal.

In general, spontaneous generation allows the GM to have creatures appear just about anywhere without the need for an ecology. That is not to say that a GM should place generated monsters willy-nilly all over the map, or else the players may legitimately question the existence of these hordes of monsters. Spontaneous generationalso does not produce creatures quickly for the most part.

Furthermore, the existence of a number of monsters may inhibit the generation of others of their kind.

There are at least three forms of spontaneous generation.

Happenstance due to magical laws is the first and the most similar to the historical definition of spontaneous generation. Creatures form from non-living matter under very specific circumstances. Of the examples that appear in this article, the Blizzard Troll, a monster that appears only in snow storms and dies when the storm passes, is the best example. Other circumstances that might create creatures are moonlight penetrating the canopy of an ancient forest and reaching a fairy ring, saltwater sprayed onto a mountain top, mold and dust untouched for a century, or demonic blood spilt on a graveyard. Artifacts and powerful monsters such as dragons and angels may also cause creatures to generate from specific materials in their presence.

OGL System
Cooper's Corrected *Summon Monster I*

By John Cooper, with monster Illustrations by William T. Thrasher

Welcome to this preview of the *Summon Monster* series of PDFs! This series came about for several reasons.

I had just finished up the *Cooper's Compendium of Corrected Creatures* line for Skirmisher Publishing LLC and was looking about for a similar project to work on, when it suddenly struck me how much of a pain it was using the various *summon monster* spells, especially as so many of the summoned creatures are the products of the celestial and fiendish templates. I can't count the number of times when I was running an adventure and the action came to a screeching halt when one of my players had his character summon a creature; suddenly, I was jotting down the creature's relevant characteristics on a piece of scratch paper, hurriedly applying the appropriate template so we could get back to the action. Wouldn't it be great, I thought, if there were a product that had corrected stats for all of the summonable creatures in one place, with the templates already applied where necessary?

Having conceptualized a series of creature stats, modified as necessary by the application of a template, which were taken directly from the SRD listings of the nine *summon monster* spells, I quickly realized that this was really only half of the required product, thanks to a simple feat called "Augment Sum-

moning." This handy little feat means that every time your character summons a creature via a *summon monster* spell, he gets an exemplary specimen of that creature type to respond — specifically, one with a +4 to its Strength and Constitution scores. This, of course, means more stat-block tweaking mid-game. Or at least it did, before this product line.

The *Summon Monster* series has taken all of the drudge work out of using the *summon monster* spells, as I've done all of the stat-block modifications necessary to ensure the summoned monsters are ready for play as-is. Each creature has two sets of stat blocks: a "standard" set and one that shows the "augmented" creature that results from using the Augment Summoning feat.

As a result of this project, one of my players created a summoner wizard specialist character, and even selected Augment Summoning as one of his feats — something, I might add, that I had never personally seen done before in my many years of playing this edition of the game.

So, whether you're a player with a spellcasting PC, a Game Master wanting to easily run summoner NPCs, or even a publisher wanting to ensure that the summoned monster stats you use in your game products are up to snuff, I hope you get a lot of use out of this preview and the associated product line. I know I had a lot of fun going through the stats — especially the templated vermin, where I got to make skill and feat selections that seemed appropriate to those giant insects and arachnids suddenly finding themselves possessing an Intelligence score!

Summon Monster I
Conjuration (Summoning) [see text]
Level: Brd 1, Clr 1, Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S, F/DF
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: One summoned creature
Duration: 1 round/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

This spell summons an extraplanar creature (typically an outsider, elemental, or magical beast native to another plane). It appears where you designate and acts immediately, on your turn. It attacks your opponents to the best of its ability. If you can communicate with the creature, you can direct it not to attack, to attack particular enemies, or to perform other actions.

The spell conjures one of the creatures from the accompanying *Summon Monster* table (see below). You choose which kind of creature to summon, and you can change that choice each time you cast the spell.

A summoned monster cannot summon or otherwise conjure another creature, nor can it use any teleportation or planar travel abilities. Creatures cannot be summoned into an environment that cannot support them.

When you use a summoning spell to summon an air, chaotic, earth, evil, fire, good, lawful, or water creature,

Races of Bakegoku: the Kitsune

by Alejandro Melchor

The woman cries, a mix of joy and exhaustion. I can tell she had been running for days, until she stumbled upon my shrine. The bodies of the Ryumaru soldiers pollute the stream with their blood, but I had little choice but to kill them. They were pursuing her, and she prayed to Inari as she passed by the small niche in the canyon where my shrine, the entrance to my palace in the Makai, is hidden. As one of Inari's Foxes, I had to answer.

"This child you stole from the Ryumaru." I say as I hold up the little crying bundle the woman had been carrying.

"They would kill her! My lady bade me take her to safety!" The woman sobs as she kow-tows despite the wound on her leg. "Please, my lord Inari-sama, take her! Save her!"

She confuses me with my lord, but I don't mind. I bask in her adoration. I have no idea why this child would be so important to the clan of tyrants but, if this gives me a chance to vex them and frustrate them, I am more than happy to do my duty and grant this woman's wish.

"I will raise her as my own." I say, and the woman kow-tows again. I use this chance to disappear. My six tails twist in anticipation.

I am a myobu kitsune; I am justice and mischief. Oh! The chaos I will sow upon the dragon bastards of the Ryumaru!

Kitsune

Incorrigible tricksters and irrepressible troublemakers, these fox shapeshifters are the laughter of Heaven and the terror of the powerful.

RACIAL TRAITS

Average Height: 5'3"–5'5"
Average Weight: 130–170 lb.
Ability Scores: +2 Charisma, +2 Dexterity
Size: Medium
Speed: 6 squares
Vision: Low-light
Languages: Common, Kami-go
Skill Bonuses: +2 Arcana, +2 Bluff
Entrancing Beauty: You are incredibly attractive in your human form. You may re-roll any Bluff or Diplomacy check, but you must keep the second result even if it is lower.
Fox Form: You can use *fox form* as an at-will power.
Fox Magic: You can learn different powers known collectively as *fox magic* by choosing the corresponding feats listed in the Character Options section. Regardless of how many *fox magic* powers you know, you can only use *fox magic* once per encounter. Daily *fox magic* powers can only be used again after an extended rest, as normal.

Yokai Origin: You are one of the yokai, so you are considered a yokai for the purpose of effects that relate to creature origin. In some settings you are also considered fey.

Tails: As an intelligent fox, you start with two tails, and gain additional ones at 4th, 8th, 14th, 18th, 24th, and 28th levels, as well as when taking certain feats and paragon paths. As a free action, you can show none, one, or all of your tails and gain a bonus to Bluff and Intimidate against fey, kami, immortals, and yokai equal to half your displayed tails.