

RYTHLONDAR

Welcome to Rythlondar. Your first task is to secure food and lodgin during your stay. If your purse is rather light, there are free accomoda tions available. The City Watch will provide free room and board to fighting men who join the Watch, the monastery will provide lodging to tranicent clerics, and the Sorcerer's Guild will house itinorent magic- users. In return for their generosity, however, each establishment requires that you perform services for them for one full week on alternate weeks. That is, one week of work, then one week on your own, then another week of work, and so on. Other lodgings are available in the inns and boarding houses, according to your taste and the weight of your purse. You may even wish to purchase a residence of your own.

The City Council also imposes a tax upon all inhabitants at the start of every week. The tax rate is determined by your status, being at the rate of 1% of your experience points. You must pay the tax even if you are receiving free room and board. Failure to pay the tax when due is a violation of the Bans, and will cause the Watch to arrest you on sight. Trials are generally only held to determine the punishment, and have been reported worse than the punishment on occasion. There is gainful employment available to avoid such a fate, or should one not wish to risk the hazards of treasure-hunting.

Rythlondar is located in the province of Nordale, stretching along the Larguin River to the White Mts. to the east. Due to a strong and vigilant Watch and fortuitous isolation, the lands of Nordale have maintained security and civilization despite the general collapse of the old Empire into anarchy following the Caste Wars.

Across the Larguin Bridge to the north lies the Ryth ferry to the wild lands across the Ryth. The old plank road runs north to murky Fencerch, where few men travel these days. The River Road leads east along the Larguin to the high pass in the White Mts at the foot of Mount Uorn. Overlooking the road lie the ruins of the once-proud Tar Morgard, a fortress built by the Great Kings long ago. Now the ruins hold only the dread Weir burrowed into the mountain by generations of evil beings. Minstrels sing of vast wealth and powerful treasures hidden in the dark depths of the Weir, but few dare venture there, and fewer still return.

24613 Harmon
St. Clair Shores, MI 48080



LEN SCENSNY
734 LAWNVIEW CT.
ROCHESTER, MI 48063

FIRST CLASS MAIL

NOTICE

ALL THOSE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A DRAGONS AND DUNGEONS CAMPAIGN:

An ongoing game using the Dragons and Dungeons rules is being organized in the Detroit area. The rules devised by the game's designers will be followed pretty closely, with only minor changes. They are subject to re-interpretation as the campaign progresses.

At present there are two GM's: John VanDeGraaf and Len Scensny. They are co-operating in designing a large wilderness area, a dual-town, and two completely separate dungeon complexes. The first expedition will take place within two weeks from today, all interested players are welcome. In the future, we plan to hold regular meetings, at least every three weeks. A campaign time-scale is being worked out, and all characters will operate within it. Experience points gained in John's games will carry over to Len's and vice-versa.

In order to get the campaign off to a good start, we are asking that everyone who wants to participate do the necessary dice rolling to determine their player characteristics today. Either John or Len will be available all day long to supervise this operation, and explain it to those who are still in the dark about the game. In this way, the GM's will know how many people are participating, and the players will have time to fill in the vital details of their game characters.

The data that follows is relevant additions and changes in the D&D rules. Players should consult it when making their choices regarding equipment to take on their first dungeon exploration. All players who survived the first expedition in John's dungeons at the last Wilder meeting may keep their characters, but they should see us in order to record their characteristics and straighten out the results of that game.

John and/or Len will be happy to help you with the questions you have about D&D and their campaign.

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT:

Sling- encumbrance value of 10, cost of 2. Has a range of 10", short range of 5", no medium range, fire once per turn. Value in attack of short bow -2, if target is armor class 8 or better, subtract an additional 2 from your roll. missiles are rocks, which fire at additional penalty, or steel balls, cost 10 for bag of 20, silver balls cost 5 ea. Spade: costs 5, weight 50, rates ~~unknown~~ as hand axe as weapon. Pick: costs 10, weight 100, rates as mace as weapon.

WEIGHTS FOR MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT: (Encumbrance limits will be strictly enforced.)

50' rope- 50
10' pole- 75
12 iron spikes- 10
small sack- 1
large sack- 5
leather back pack- 10
torches- 10 apiece
lantern- 20
flask of oil- 5
3 stakes and mallet- 20
steel mirror- 10
silver mirror (small)- 10
wooden cross- 5
silver cross- 10
vial of Holy Water- 5

Wolvesbane- 8-7 1
Belladonna- 1
wineskin & qt. wine- 10
garlic bud- 11-01 1
Iron Rations- 30
Standard Rations- 200

Players will be informed of other rule additions and changes when appropriate. The combat table that follows will be the one used in the campaign. Note that the type of weapon used makes a difference.

COMBAT HIT MATRIX:

Weapon	Defender's armor Class							
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Dagger*	20	20	19	17	15	13	11	9
Spear*	19	18	16	15	13	12	11	10
Hand axe*	18	17	16	15	14	12	11	10
Sword	17	16	14	13	12	11	10	9
Hammer*, Mace	16	15	14	14	13	13	12	11
Flail, M.Star..	15	14	13	13	12	12	11	10
Short bow 10"	20	18	16	14	12	10	8	
Crossbow 12"	19	17	15	13	11	9	8	
Long bow 14"	19	17	15	13	11	10	9	8
MONSTER	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	11

Roll on 20-digit die. Roll may be modified by attacker's degree, magic weapons or armor, etc.. Number equal to or greater than adjusted roll indicates a hit. One or more six-sided dice are rolled to determine damage caused by a hit. Weapon may be thrown during missile fire phase or if charged; add +1 to hit roll when thrown.

Bow ranges are for medium range (maximum possible in dungeons); at 1/2 range, use armor column one class higher.

HIT DIE ROLL ADJUSTMENT FOR DEGREE (LEVEL) OF ATTACKER:

Fighting-man	Magic-user	Cleric	ADD TO DIE ROLL	Monsters (by hit dice)
1-2	1-2	1-2	0	1 or less
1-2	3-4	3	+1	1+1
3	5-6	4-5	+2	2
4	7-8	6	+3	3
5-6	9-10	7-8	+4	4
7	11-12	9	+5	5
8	13-14	10-11	+6	6
9-10	15-16	12	+7	7
11	17-18	13-14	+8	8
12	19-20	15	+9	9
13-14	21-22	16-17	+10	10
15	23-24	18	+11	11
16+	25+	19+	+12	12

This is the first report of the D&D campaign along the Ryth, published as a public service by the Yggrdasill papermill, and compiled by John Van De Graaf from the recent archives of Rythlondar. Please report any omissions or inaccuracies to your friendly referee so that he can feed you to a ravenous purple worm, thereby cleansing his records.

Player activity record:

Game Week

Player:	#1 NovIII	#3 DecI	#5 DecIII	#7 JanI	#9 JanIII	#11 FebI	#13 FebIII	#15 MarI	#17 MarIII	(19)
J. Ansley		--	C:104G 3409E	D:200G 700E	E:975G 2800E	G:251G 1986E	J:315G 1945E	L:died		
A. Burkacki		B:352G 3999E	C:104G 2816E	D:300G 433E	E:975G 2733E	--	H:426G 431E	K: OG 225E	M:360G 140E	
T. Burkacki		B:died	C:died	D:200G 567E	E:died	--	H:426G 526E	K: OG OE	M:360G 360E	
B. Carey		--	--	D:200G 490E	--	--	J:died	K: OG OE	M:360G 430E	
D. DeBol		--	--	D:died	--	--	J:315G 1076E	--	M:360G 430E	
G. Decesare		--	C: 26G 3341E	D:died	E:died	G:251G 1801E	J:315G 1515E	L:446G 2071E		
B. Haas		--	--	--	--	G:251G 1500E	J:315G 2625E	L:446G 2148E		
J. Haas		--	--	--	--	G:251G 1101E	J:315G 1925E	L:died		
C. Hostetler		B:352G 4999E	C: 26G 3012E	D:died	--	G:251G 2161E	H:426G 526E	L:446G 1921E		
T. Kniaz		B:352G 2999E	C: 52G 2764E	D:300G 1032E	E:975G 2241E	G:251G 1365E	H:426G 1872E	K: OG 198E	M:360G 156E	
T. McGraw		--	--	--	--	--	--	K:died	M:360G 483E	
P. Michaud		B:352G 4999E	C: 26G 2738E	D:300G 833E	E:1125 3920E	G:251G 3875E	H:426G 951E	K: oG OE	M:360G 115E	
L. Scensny		B:died	C:died	D:200G 725E	--	266	H:died	K:died	M:360G 378E	
K. Scensny		--	--	--	--	--	J:315G 488E	L:446G 2305E		
B. Somers		B:352G 3999E	--	--	F:200G 275E	--	J:315G 1812E	L:died		
J. Van De Graaf		B:352G 3999E	C:104G 3097E	D:300G 1876E	E:1462 4033E	G:376G 3724E	J:315G 1569E	L:446G 1978E		
L. Van De Graaf		--	C: 52G 2999E	D:died	F:200G 495E	G:died	J:315G 875E	K: OG 300E	M:360G 460E	
B. Thomas		--	--	D:200G 650E	F:200G 1150E	--	--	K: OG OE	M:360G 410E	
S. Walquist		--	--	D:died	F:200G 1045E	--	J:315G 315E	K:OG 315E		
P. Wood		--	--	--	F:200G 495E	G:251G 1222E	H:426G 469E	--	M:360G 253E	
E. Vansteel		B:352G 4999E	--	--	F:200G 380E	--	J:315G 575E	K:died	M:360G 510E	
G. Vansteel		--	--	--	F:200G 655E	--	J:315G 575E	K:died	M:360G 410E	
J. Vansteel								K:died	M:360G 460E	

KEY: First letter denotes expedition, followed by Gold gained (G) and experience gained (E) beneath.

MAJOR RULE CLARIFICATIONS

With profound thanks to Gary Gygax, the following rule clarifications are in effect immediately:

EXPERIENCE POINTS are awarded only for monsters killed and for treasure gained. Sleeping, Charming, or driving off monsters will not gain experience unless the monsters are then killed. It is now considered "lawful" for you to kill sleeping or charmed monsters. Also, the automatic effect of clerics upon the Undead does not gain EP.

The point value of monsters and treasure will be adjusted on the basis of the average character degrees (levels) in the group, rounded up. Thus a group of 2 first level characters and 2 third level characters would have an average group level = 2 which would be used to determine whether the group gains full or partial EP credit for the various monsters and treasure.

The adjusted total EP for monsters and treasure is then divided by the number of characters in the expedition, giving each player's EP gain. Thus experience will be equal for everyone in the group except for their individual prime requisite bonuses or penalties.

MAGIC. The "Spells Table" gives the maximum number of times a magic-user or cleric can cast spells of the indicated levels during an expedition. This means that a third level MU (Conjurer) can cast one second level spell once and three first level spells once (or one first level spell three times). The particular spells need not be selected in advance, but can be chosen during the expedition as circumstances require. This will balance the game more and will make the expeditions even more interesting. The caller will have to select the time and type of spell carefully!

Spells on scrolls disappear after being used once.

Potions can only be duplicated by alchemists if a wizard gives the alchemist the formula.

RYTH NEWS, RUMORS, AND GOSSIP

Mysterious strangers clad in long robes of black and concealing hoods have appeared in the darkened city streets at night inquiring about the identity and whereabouts of some thieves who recently looted a temple and purloined a sacred mask. It is rumored that a reward is being offered for the return of the mask, if the mask is taken to the cemetery at midnight.

Benelux V, latest heir to the growing fortune of the Benelux Sect, has announced a jihad against the evil demon Gragorn. Disciples of Benelux praised the edict with due religious fervor, but Curate Pontifus cautioned the young Acolyte against rashness. The Book Guild immediately expressed its confidence by posting Gragorn a 7,247:1 favorite in the contest (the low odds obviously due to local partisanship). Gravely Deepsix, the renowned mortician of Rythlondar, quickly expressed his support, saying "I've always got room for another Benelux" and has insisted upon remaining at his side.

The House of Healing reports that Waka, veteran of the Watch, has completely recovered from the paralyzation inflicted by ghouls several weeks ago. Curate Pontifus is still undergoing treatment, and the manticore barbs have almost all been extracted. Noto the dwarf and Felsord, his distant cousin, are both reported to be recuperating satisfactorily.

Funeral services for the Bear, Finbar, and Hoas, stalwart fighters who met their fate in dire Castle Morbundus, will be held at Vespers.

D&D PLAYER RECORD

Player: _____ Character name: _____

Abilities: Str= Int= Wis= Con= Dex= Cha=

Creature type: _____ Alignment: _____ Class/degree: _____

Languages: EP adjustment for prime requisite=_____

Possessions: Weapons:

Armor :

Magic items:

Other :

[illegible]

EXPEDITION RECORDS: The following summary of the expeditions gives first the place of the expedition and the lowest level reached, followed by the name of the leader(s), the number of characters in the expedition, the number of characters killed, and lastly a brief account of the things encountered and defeated.

Dungeons: Weir, referee John Van De Graaf, east of River Ryth
Castle Morbundus, referee Len Scensny, west of Ryth
Caves, referee Paul Wood, northern mountains

- A.: Weir, 1st level. Records are missing for this one, but Len Scensny led a group of about 12, losing about 5. They defeated 2 ogres and some lesser creatures, but were chased from dungeons by 2 wraiths after finding some treasure and a demon's mask.
- B.: Morbundus, 1st level. John Van De Graaf led group of 12, lost 3. General exploration; defeated mostly hobgoblins, orcs, ghouls and rats.
- C.: Weir, 1st level. Len Scensny, then Al Burkacki led group of 10; 2 died. Defeated berserkers, a werebear, a giant snake, hobgoblins and skeletons. Their exploration located a Flame Room and a secret entrance to dungeons.
- D.: Morbundus, 2nd level. Chuck Hostetler, then Tony Kniaz, led group of 14, of whom 6 did not return. Found a magic sword +2.
- E.: Morbundus, 2nd level. John Van De Graaf led group of 7 players (losing 2) and 2 charmed swashbucklers (losing 1). Defeated 6 trolls in a fierce battle, plus warriors, gnolls, toads, skeletons, and giant ants. The trolls guarded a main treasure--too much to carry out by the survivors.
- F.: Weir, 1st level. Paul Wood led a group of 7 and brought them all back. Defeated zombies, conjurers; found some treasure and a potion of flying.
- G.: Caves, 1st level. Exact records missing, but had 12 players with 1 death. Two wraiths were defeated and many smaller creatures. Magic carpet found.
- H.: Weir, 1st level. Len Scensny led 7 players, himself the only fatality. They uncovered a major treasure near the Flame Room including a magic axe, and tried to loot Gragorn's Sanctum as well, but they were foiled when the doors could not be opened.
- J.: Morbundus, 2nd level. John Van De Graaf led 15 players, losing 3, in a search for passages to lower depths. They defeated a wyvern, gnolls, toads, zombies, bandits, giant snakes, giant rats, and giant ants. They found a magic toad statue of unknown properties, and cleaned out the remainder of the Troll Room treasure.
- K.: Weir, 2nd level. Paul Michaud led 14, five died, and two high-level characters (a hero and a curate) were at death's doorstep. They defeated 3 giant snakes, but met their match with 2 manticores and left without treasure.
- L.: Morbundus, 2nd level. Jon Ansley led, then Chuck Hostetler and John Van De Graaf, group of 8, of whom 5 survived. Defeated 3 werebears (bearly), 4 gargoyles, an ochre jelly, bandits, kobolds, zombies, giant ants, etc. Found fair treasure, a trick stair to 4th level, and magic potion.
- M.: Weir, 1st level. Len Scensny led 14 players, all surviving, to rip off Gragorn's Sanctum and were successful. Found magic items with treasure, but only fought orcs and centipedes. Wraith guardians of treasure were exorcised by the curate Pontifus.

ADVENTURERS OF THE RYTH:

Player:	Abilities:	Type:	Class/degree:	Character name:
Jon Ansley	10-13- 5-12-13-15			
Al Burkacki ...	12-10-10-13-12-10	Dwarf	FM/4	Noto
Tom Burkacki ..	13-12-10- 8- 9- 8	human ...	FM/1	
Bob Carey	12-10-12-12- 8- 9	Gnome ...	FM/1	Moose Turtleack
Dennis DeBol ..	8- 9-13- 9- 4- 7	human ...	C/1	
Greg DeCesare ..		Elf	FM/1,MU/1	
Bob Haas	11-11-16-13-17-14	human ..	FM/3	
John Haas				
Chuck Hostetler	10-10- 6- 7-11-13	Elf ...	FM/3,MU/1	
Tony Kniaz	12- 7-14- 7-12-12	human ...	C/5	Pontifus
Tim McGraw				
Paul Michaud ...	10-13- 9- 6-15-15	human ...	MU/4	
Len Scensny	11- 9-14-11-12- 9	human ...	C/1	Benelux V
Karen Scensny ..	8-12-15- 6-16-11	human ...	MU/2	Spelmazon
Matt Schaut ...	8- 6-12-15- 4-10	human ...	C/1	Chump
Bill Somers				
Bill Thomas ...	8-12- 8- 7- 9- 6	human ...	FM/2	
John Van De Graaf	17-13-13-16-10- 9	Dwarf ...	FM/5	Felsord
Laurie VanDeGraaf	11-10-11- 7-14-14	human ...	MU/1	Nerdak
Eric Vansteel ..				
Greg Vansteel ..				
Jeff Vansteel ..				
Steve Walquist	14-11-13-10-10- 9	human ...	FM/1	Grobar
Kathy Wood				
Paul Wood	16-18-11- 9- 9- 9	human ...	FM/1	Waka
Jerry Prokopowicz				

These are the latest characteristics we have. Players who have recently died and haven't re-rolled are generally the reason for the blank spots.

All players will receive a PLAYER RECORD sheet to keep track of their character's activities and status. Note that expeditions normally occur every other week, and that game "time" parallels real time. For example, this is the fourth week in March, and in the game it is the week of March IV (week #17). Each week should be listed in sequence even if you don't go on an expedition since maintenance costs must be paid every week. We trust you to keep track of your own Gold and expenses. The weekly maintenance cost is $\frac{1}{2}\%$ (0.005) of your E.P. total, payable at the start of every week. From the information given here, you can calculate your own maintenance costs and expenses to arrive at the present balance.

Some of the items which would be listed under game week activities are:

- dungeon expedition
- equipment purchases
- information attempts
- learning new languages
- healing wounds

MISCELLANEOUS RULES:

You may only try for information once per game week (when you aren't on an expedition only). The cost will be 11-70 GP. Information learned may or may not be reliable, and some risks are involved.

It will take 24 weeks minus your intelligence level to learn a new language and a cost of 10 GP per week spent learning (the linguist must eat!).

It was the time of the Winter Solstice, and the Red Moon had barely set behind the jagged peaks of the White Mountains to the east. The valley of the Ryth was cloaked in darkest night, and the inhabitants huddled fearfully around their feeble fires and prayed to their pagan gods that the Spirits who walk the Urth at such hour might pass them by. From murky Fenmarch in the north and from the River Ryth arose sinuous tendrils of mist, which coiled and spread their strands over the valley, as if to weave a shroud upon the land. In the City of Rythlondar the mist seemed especially thick and ominous, and grew denser as the tendrils drifted in from the furthest reaches of the valley, to cling and join until the fog became an almost physical barrier. In the midst something was slowly taking shape, small at first, but growing larger with each new tendril reaching the city. Then, as the eastern sky began to lighten with the rising of the sun, the bolder of the townspeople dared to peer through their shuttered windows at the city square where the mists had so recently congealed. And there it sat, filled with malice, woe, and death -- a pile of the latest Ryth Chronicles! What Evil Spirits had once again inflicted this Terror upon the hapless people? Pontifus, the Lama of Zela, in his wisdom declared it was the work of the demonic Vang and the dread Wooden who sit in the branches of Yggdrasill, throwing pulp upon the Urth. Thus it was that the third Ryth Chronicle came to pass. Would we, your humble scribes, kid you? Note the Magic Runes at the bottom which guard this manuscript from evil infringers.

This is the third installment of the continuing saga of the Ryth Campaign. For those of you who may not have the second (or first) installment, it is unfortunate, but we have run out of copies of the back issues. This is a joint campaign of D&D adventuring, comprising the dungeons of Castle Morbundus, the Weir, the Caverns of Rythwood, and the Dungeons of Pall (refereed by Len Scensny, John Van De Graaf, Paul Wood, and Paul Michaud, respectively). With this issue, we complete one game year and over one real year of playing. Contributions, especially from the players, are encouraged so that we might have enough material to publish this more often.

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Character listing	p. 2	(Note: Several expeditions have occurred
Chronicle of Adventures	pp 3-8	since the character listing was prepared;
Week of Sept. I & II	p. 3	therefore some changes have occurred. The
Sept. III and Oct I	p. 4	most significant changes were the deaths
Oct II and III	p. 5	of Noto, Zonker, Janus, Balderol, and
Nov. I and II	p. 6	Questor in the eastern wilderness. In
Nov III	p. 7	addition, we have at least 7 new players
Nov IV and Dec I	p. 8	whose characters are not listed. May all
Caverns History continued ..		the new characters rise to prominence in
Rumors and Legends	p. 10	our next player listing!)

Copyright 1976 by John Van De Graaf and Paul Wood. Published infrequently, copies cost 30¢ per issue (except this one which we're only charging 25¢ for to current subscribers). To subscribe, send any amount of \$ to John Van De Graaf, 37343 Glenbrook, Mt. Clemens, MI 48043, and issues will be debited against your account as published.

Printed with care by Yggdrasill itself.

Editor-in-chief: Gragorn of the Lower Depths.

Inspiration credit: the White Toad from Monty Python (What! No Holy Hand Grenade?!)

Art Director: the Invisible Elessar

AN INDEX OF ADVENTURERS ALONG THE RIVER RYTH

Fighting-men:

F-6	Noto (dwf)	....	Al Burkacki	.....	12-10-10-13-12-10	23	hammer+3, shield+1, swd+1
F-6	Barnabas	.....	Tom Burkacki	.....	17-11-10-10-15-14	34	sword+2, armor+1
F-6	Ragner Lodbrok		John Van De Graaf		15-12-16- 7-12- 9	36	swd+2, armor+1, shld+1
F-6	Ben Gon	.....	Steve Walquist	...	14-11-13-10-10- 9	32	spear+3
R-5	Athelfrar	.....	Barry Eynon	.....	16-14-13-16-12- 8	48	swd+1, shld+3, ring
F-3	Zonker IV	.....	Bill Thomas	.....	16-15-15-14- 9-15	9	shield+1
F-3	Ervandra (dwf)		Kathy Wood	.....	17-12- 9-10-10- 9	11	axe+1
F-3	Hagbut	.....	Jon Ansley	.....	14-9 - 8-12-14-14	15	
F-2	Balderol	.....	Bob Archibald	....	16-15-15-11-11-12	8	swd+1, potion heroism
F-2	Ibb (dwf)	.....	Jerry Kniaz	.....	9-11-12-14-11- 8	12	shield+1
F-2	Kassock	.....	Steve Hamilton	...	12-10- 8-13-14-14	7	
F-2	Aviyak	.....	Rick Loomis	.....	15-11- 9-12- 7-12	7	
F-1	Orlok	.....	Drew Neumann	.....	13- 5-11- 6-15-10	8	
F-1	Lancefron	.....	Richard Orbain	...	10-11-10-10- 7-12	7	
F-1	Gamli (dwf)	...	Will Neibling	....	14- 9-11-13-14-12	8	

Combination fighters/magic-users:

F-4/M-4	Elessar(elf)		Greg Decesare		13-11-10-12-1 -9 15		shield+2, potion, swd+3
F-4/M-2	Tinkerbelle(pixie)		Dennis Daughette		9-12-12-11- 9-8 20		potion dragon control
F-1/M-1	Jabbar (elf)		Chuck Hostetler		12-16-10-9-14-8 4		spear+3, elven rope

Thieves:

T-5	Bellabane (hob)		Eric Vansteel	...	10-11-10- 8-15-13 14	
T-3	Catrick	.....	Pat Champion	....	6-12-13-10-14-12 8	
T-3	Alexa (elf)	...	Irene Ulman	.....	10-10- 9-12-15-12 9	

Clerics:

C-7	Pontifus of Zela..		Tony Kniaz	.....	12- 7-14- 7-12-12	28	armor+1
C-6	Benelux V	.....	Len Scensny	.....	11- 9-14-11-12- 9	19	ring of prot.+1
C-5	Horace	.....	Russ Stambaugh	....	11- 9-17- 8- 6-13	17	mace+2, potion, map
C-4	Jarus	.....	Ray Ulman	.....	9- 9-14-11-12- 9	12	shield+3
C-4	Fernando	.....	Barry Bailey	.....	7- 7-18-11-18- 4	17	mace+2(disruption)
C-4	Johns	.....	Jeff Vansteel	....	12- 5-15- 5-12-16	14	
C-4	Ydol the Pius	....	Guy Hostetler	.....	7-10-16-14- 7-16	20	
C-3	Brother Bing	....	Mike Bartnikowski..		9-12-13-10-15-10	12	
C-2	Questor	.....	Greg Vansteel	.....	12- 6-14-11-14- 8	8	
C-2	Sermonet	.....	Sharlotte Neibling		9- 9-14- 7- 8-15	10	
C-2	Great Dod	.....	Al Schlisinger	...	7- 8-12-11-12- 9	11	
C-1	Frequenox IF	.....	Paul Michaud	.....	12- 9-14-14- 8- 3		

Magic-users:

M-7	Fazzlefart	.....	Paul Wood	.....	9-15- 6- 8-11-14	22	Robe of Eyes, dag+1
M-7	Kodiak	.....	Bob Carey	.....	8-13- 6- 9-12-12	18	Scroll
M-6	Sondin	.....	Greg Kniaz	.....	10-16-12- 9-13-10	19	
M-5	Charmen	.....	Laurie VanDeGraaf..		10-16-11-12-16-11	15	wand of cold
M-4	Od	.....	Bob Karasunas	....	16-17- 7- 9-11-17	14	scroll
M-4	Gomus	.....	Dave Clayton	.....	9-13-11- 9- 7- 9	8	
M-3	Clickham	.....	Tim McGraw	.....	12-14-12- 7-12-12	8	potion
M-1	Zap	.....	John Ulman	.....	10-14- 7- 9-15-15	3	

THE CHRONICLE OF ACTIVITIES

September I, 2775

Having rested and reequipped from the 3 month journey into the eastern wilderness, a party of 12 once again visited the Weir to seek their fame and fortune. In the party were the dwarf swashbuckler Noto, warrior Barnabas, heroes Ragnor Lodbrok and Elessar the Elf, Conjuror Sondin, and the holy curate Pontifus of Zela and adept Horace, with others. They descended to the third depth and found the entrance to Labyr's treasure. After entering the portal, they were led by Pontifus through the maze of corridors with scarcely a wrong turn, fighting off the many scavengers frequenting the labyrinth, until they reached the secret treasure room. Therein they came upon two chests containing more gold and silver than they could carry out. With the way they had come barred, they used a secret stairway from the treasure room which took them to the 4th level. There they entered a room in which stood a block of black stone from which a sword hilt protruded. Several fighters tried to withdraw the sword to no avail, until mighty Barnabas drew it forth. As he did so, a basilisk entered the room. Pontifus managed to avoid its evil glance, but in the melee which followed was struck twice and turned to stone! The basilisk itself was slain, and Barnabas discovered that he possessed the fabled Tingel, Sword of Slaying Monsters. The party placed Pontifus's stone body upon the magic carpet, and found their way out of the Weir. Treasure value = 15,000 GP.

Another party of 9 entered the northern end of the Weir and went down to the third level. In this group were theurgist Fazzlefart, ranger-guide Athelfrar, seer Kodiak, dwarf warrioress Ervandra, and others. They met and killed a hydra and some zombies, but almost met their doom in a room filled with gargoyles. Athelfrar found a manual of pilfering, and Fazzle charmed a superhero with a neutral sword of wishes. A shifting block confused their travels when they were chased by a fire-breathing hydra. Treasure was 2310 GP, four died.

The new medium Charmen led a low-level group with many hirelings to the unexplored southwest regions of the 1st level of the Weir. They defeated 4 heroes, 3 magicians, 5 ghouls, 8 orcs, and a giant scorpion. They found 5000 GP, a potion, and a scroll. Five members of the party died.

Elsewhere, brave Benelux, curate of the Order of the Flaming Wheel, together with his loyal comrade Ben Gon, hero, returned into the eastern wilderness. They hoped to find the Wizard Talkien in the hope that he would wish Equinox back to life. They found their way back to the lonely mountain, and the Wizard agreed, if they would perform a hazardous mission to steal a staff from the dread Castle Ghakor on the shores of Skull Lake. The Wizard let his apprentice go with them, and they charmed a thief on their journey. Unfortunately, they lost their way and wandered the northern wastes in search of the castle, until finally they encountered 3 frost giants and could not escape. Benelux and Ben Gon were killed, but the apprentice turned invisible and made his escape back to the Wizard; thus their bodies were recovered and returned to Rythlondar for resurrection. The journey took 3 weeks, and Benlux lost his entire treasure.

September II

Pontifus was restored to flesh by the Sorcerer's Guild (in return for a substantial donation). The High Lama of the Temple of Tynghod welcomed the curate back to his duties, and told him that if the stone-flesh spells ever failed to restore him, he would be welcome to join the statuary on the temple portico. It would certainly be a suitable place for veneration of the worthy Pontifus, and the pigeons would enjoy having a new target.

September III (Week # 41)

An unusual group of 7 adventurers explored the 4th level of the Weir. Leading the group were Athelfrar and Horace. The group included Ragnor, Comus, and 3 adventurers who claimed to be from another world. They killed 4 heroes, a spectre, and defeated the Gnoll King and his lieutenants. They located a treasure room, but were unable to bypass the transporter area guarding the chest, and discovered a secret entrance into the rear of the Gnoll Hall. The King of the gnolls was forced to surrender, but tricked the group into sparing his life for some gems worth 510 GP. They gained a wand of magic detection and 1050 GP.

September was a busy month for the Weir, as yet another group explored its third and fourth levels. This party was led by Fazzle, and contained elf-hero Elessar, curate Pontifus (still a little rocky from his recent experience), Noto the dwarf, Barnabas (now a swordsman), Brother Bung, a new acolyte, and magic-users Sondin and Od. They first went to the Gargoyle Room and killed all 8 of the evil creatures. Then they wandered the corridors and rooms, killing a displacer beast, 7 ratmen, 2 burglars, 6 minotaurs, and 3 harpies. They also encountered 3 stone giants when they went down to the 4th level, but escaped without a battle. The party gained 6260 GP in treasure, and 2 sets of elven boots, which were given to Elessar and Brother Bung.

Far, far away, another party sought out the Isle of Michaud where rumors indicated the existence of the Dungeons of Pall. In the party were medium Charmen, conjurer Kodiak, priest Johns, robber Bellabane, warrior Zonker, and other young adventurers. After entering the first level, the party was captured by the servants of an evil cleric, who sent them on a quest to the second level to retrieve a magic mace. They performed the task, killing 3 ogres, and befriended 2 high level magic-users on their return to the cleric. When they returned, they decided to fight the cleric, routed his forces, and chased him through a transporter. Finding themselves lost on another section of the first level, the party wandered corridors of death until they eventually found the way out by resurrecting a long-dead lawful cleric, the Great Labor, who indicated the route they had to take. They gained 8856 GP, a wand of cold (given to Charmen), the Amulet of Labor, a +2 mace of disruption, and a potion.

October I (Week # 43)

A strong party made its way to the dread confines of Castle Morbundus, long unvisited by the forces of Good. In the group were the heroes Elessar, Ragnor, and Ben Gon, veteran Haslett, bishop Pontifus, priest Johns, adept Ferdinand, theurgist Sondin, conjurer Clickham, seer Charmen, burglar Bellabane, and others. They went immediately down to the unexplored 3rd level areas. There they came upon a prisoner chained to a wall, whom they released as a companion of the party. His name was El Jorrel, from Malden, a small village far to the west. He was captured while seeking the enchanted waterfall and a certain nymph. Further wandering and encounters brought them to a door inscribed with the familiar name of "SLOCUM", the demented magic sculptor. Behind the door was a corridor, in which sat a harmless-appearing white toad. The White Toad proved a worthy foe in a fierce battle (during which Elessar's boots went into a tap dance at a most inopportune moment, trapping wounded Ragnor alone with the Toad). After finally defeating the toad, the group entered the narrow corridor and followed it to a wizard-locked door. Unable to open the door, and ESP-ing several fighting men and magic-users on the other side, the group went on to other areas of the third level. In another room they encountered two basilisks, who both looked right at Pontifus. As he turned to stone once again, old Ponty rued his irresistible charm for basilisk stares. Then they made a brief foray to the 4th level, but were chased away by unkindly ogre magi. Defeated 3 giant snakes, an evil group of men, 5 gargoyles, 2 basilisks, an umber hulk, 4 doppelgangers, and the White Toad, and gained 2000 GP in treasure.

The Caverns of Rythwood attracted another party, this of young adventurers; among the 14 members of the party were Kodiak, Brother Bung, Freebooter, Orlok, Jabber, Zonker, and Tinkerbell. They explored the 1st level, traversing much ground previously explored, and lost 3 of their number. They defeated two gargoyles, seven giant toads, 2 swashbucklers, and four footpads, and gained 2460 GP in treasure.

The Weir was the target of the strongest expedition yet fielded. Curate Benelux, thaumaturgist Fazzlefart, ranger Athelfrar, dwarf-swashbucker Noto, swordsman Barnabas, vicar Horace, medium Od and the veterans Ervandra and Namor composed most of the 14 members of the party. Operating on the fourth level, they fought 5 shadows, 2 wyverns, and a black pudding, after being chased around by 2 determined flesh-golems. They also tried to figure out a means to the treasure in the steel-walled transporter room, to no avail. A magnetic trap and the wyvern attack disillusioned them, and they returned to the 3rd level to drop in on Yldog, the evil cleric nemesis of Cybele. When they did so, however, they found themselves overmatched and were forced to surrender to Yldag! Rather than sacrifice them to Vang, god of Evil Incarnate, as was his usual wont, Yldog healed their wounds so that he could send them upon a Quest against Samarkar, the Evil High Priest of Mu'Tassim, the Evil Twin, whose temple lay in the northern wilderness along the River Templar. Then, with a horrible curse Yldog set them free to perform his devilish scheme....

October II (Week # 44)

Fazzlefart, Athelfrar, and company returned to Rythlondar in woeful anguish. The quest set upon them by beastly Yldog seemed impossible to carry out, and their pride was chagrined at their defeat by evil forces and at their servitude to an evil Will. Quickly they hurried to the dwelling of the neutral fighter who held their sword of wishes. An unknown number of wishes had they left: one wish had been used to determine the nature of the sword, another had been used to raise Fazzlefart from theurgist to thaumaturgist. Was another Wish left to rid them of their Quest? The party spent the night preparing the proper language of the wish, and at dawn the following day, the wish was made that Samarkar be found dead with his amulet at Yldog's doorstep and that the Quest be fulfilled. The sword glowed, and a heavy burden lifted from their hearts. The Quest was done, and they were freed of Yldog's influence! Vowing vengeance upon him, the members of the party retired to their lodgings for needed rest.

October III (Week # 45)

A party of 10 returned to Morbundus determined to explore the 4th level. In the party were swashbucklers Noto and Ragnor, heroes Barnabas and Eleasar, ranger-guide Athelfrar, veteran Void, the holy bishop Pontifus (flesh and bones once again!), good vicar Horace, theurgist Sondin, and conjurer Charman. Using a trick stairway/slide from the second level, they swiftly arrived upon the fourth level. There they explored the many corridors, killing some scavengers and thieves, until they finally came upon a large group of fighters and magic-users. A desperate struggle ensued, chiefly the power of the enemy sleep wands against Charman's wand of cold. At battle's end, Ragnor, Noto, Pontifus and others were sound asleep, but the hostile group was frozen and cut to pieces. A little further exploring, and the thrill of being chased by a ravenous purple worm, led the party to make their exit with 17,500 GP in treasure.

To the north, vicar Johns, conjurer Clickham, warrior Zonker and veteran Haslett were part of a 12 man expedition into the Caverns of Rythwood. They defeated gargoyles, skeletons, thieves, spiders and magic-users in their wanderings, losing only two of their party, and departed with 3311 GP.

A group of 12 entered the Weir, led by Fazzlefart, medium Od, and acolyte Janns, but also included such stalwarts as the noble curate Benelux, hero Ben Gon, pixie-swordsman Tinkerbelle, theurgist Kodiak, adept Ferdinand, and dwarf-veteran Ervandora. They explored a little on the 2nd level, but steadily made their way to the mantichore chamber discovered by a previous expedition. In a well-planned attack, the mantichores were bound by Fazzle's web, then stabbed with spears and blasted by a lightning bolt. As they searched the littered chamber following the destruction of the beasts, they discovered a secret door. Behind the door was a small room with muraled walls and four chests. The chests were identical in form, but were inlaid with iron, copper, silver, and gold from left to right. An inscription was found relating that they had come upon the lesser treasure of Falsicon, and that any attempt to open any chest but the proper one would curse them all. The proper chest could be discovered by answering the riddle "What do a patient assassin and a sleeping glutton have in common?" The group puzzled long hours well into the night in search of the answer to the riddle. At last, they thought they had the answer and opened one of the chests. The room misted and then cleared, revealing a trove of gold and precious gems far beyond their dreams -- a well-earned reward for their labors, amounting in total to 162,170 GP value.

November I (Week # 47)

News of the great treasure spread quickly through the taverns, wharves, and fleshpots of Rythlondar, and other parties formed to seek more fabled wealth beneath the Weir. The first to organize and descend was a 9 man group composed of swashbucklers Noto, Barnabas, and Ben Gon, elf-hero Elessar, bishop Pontifus, Brother Bung, and magic-users Kodiak and Sondin, accompanied by priest Ferdinand. They went to untravelled corridors of the 4th level, there defeating a salamander, 2 cockatrices, and some evil men. Eventually they stumbled upon the lair of a black dragon, which they surprised and surrounded. Barnabas' mighty sword Tingel glowed redly in the presence of the chaotic beast, and struck home on the first swing, paralyzing it and rendering it helpless prey for the men's weapons. Of the dragon's hoard, the group could only carry out 180,720 GP of gold, gems, and jewelry.

Another party followed the well-worn path to the Weir soon after. This group was composed of pathfinder Athelfrar, swashbuckler Ragnor, pixie-hero Tinkerbelle, dwarf-warrior Ervandora, warrior Void, bishop Benelux, vicar Horace, magician Fazzle, theurgist Charman, and conjurer Od, among others. Having heard tales from Athelfrar and Horace of the gnolls' gold on the 3rd level, Fazzle led them to the great anteroom, whence they fought their way with wanton use of the wand of cold to the gnoll treasure, dispatching 45 gnolls who were unwary enough to attempt to stop them. The gnoll treasure being somewhat niggardly for their taste, the group left by the narrow rear stairway to the 4th level. Despite the misfortune of finding the magnetic trap shifted into their corridor, the party continued to explore and defeated a chimera. Their search of the Chimera's chamber was interrupted by the approach of footsteps. An evil group of 2 enchanters and 3 swashbucklers attacked, but were defeated. The group left with 16,570 GP, a ring of protection (given to Benelux), a Robe of Eyes (given to Fazzle), a potion and a scroll.

November II (Week # 48)

Athelfrar returned from his last expedition ready for a needed rest and a visit to the Baths. He hurried through the busy streets of Rythlondar, filled with jostling crowds come on Market Day. Reaching his small apartment, Athelfrar took off his backpack containing all his worldly possessions as well as his share of the expedition's profits. He spread out the contents, and noticed an item missing! The small grey manual of Stealthy Pilfering had been pilfered right off his back! His hand went to his sword hilt, but his anger ebbed as he realized that even his ranger abilities couldn't track the thief in the busy streets. And the manual itself was surely gone now, with a more adept thief.

Ragnor Lodbrok, still seeking to share in some large treasure, organized a strong group to explore the untrod paths of the 5th level of Castle Morbundus. In his party were Noto, Barnabas, Elessar, Ibb, Pontifus, Janus, Sondin, Charmen, Fumblefingers, and a superhero previously charmed by Ragnor's sword, Quicksilver. To the 4th level they went, passing through the room filled with a murky pond (and discovering that a causeway appeared to allow passage at random intervals), to the spiral stairway beyond. On the fifth level, they were attacked by three salamanders, which they promptly dispatched. Further roaming brought them to two stairways down, which they wisely declined to take, and then to a room guarded by a Balrog. The Balrog was overcome with only the death of the charmed superhero. A treasure room was found at the end of a passageway off of the room, wherein Fumblefingers was crushed by a deadfall. The group set off into new corridors, finally coming to a door only passable by lawful persons. In the rooms behind the lawful door was a wizard. While conversing with the wizard, a group of unlawful superheroes came down the corridor outside, so the party attacked and slew them after a long and bloody battle. Inspection of the bodies of the superheroes revealed 4 magic shields and two suits of magic armor. Having received many wounds as well as adequate treasure, the expedition returned to Roilgard with 39,000 GP in treasure and their fine new magic armor.

Meanwhile Fazzle was eager to try out his new robe of eyes, so he gathered Theurgist Od, Athelfrar, BenGon, Ervandra, Ydol the Pious, Jabbar the elf and his charmed superhero, Ivan the Flail, and set off to explore new regions of the Weir. They left the tower staircase at the 4th level and followed a long, twisting corridor until at last they came to a door. Passing through the door, they noticed that it disappeared behind them and that an inscription on the floor said they were now on the fifth level. They tried one corridor to get back to known areas, but a multitude of pits and a staircase down convinced them to abandon that passage. They tried another, but encountered a group of 6 trolls out for a stroll, and so they tried the third corridor.

That path led them into an 8 sided room of huge proportions, in which stood a 30' statue of a nearly naked warrior. As they entered, the statue uttered a strange riddle, which they noted for later examination. Each door in the room was inscribed with a Rune. Fazzle quickly noted the Runes on a sheet of parchment and used a Read Magic, but found the markings not particularly helpful. Two thieves entered the room from another direction, and the statue offered to answer one question for them. The thieves, however, ran at the sight of the party before asking their question. Fazzle decided that maybe if he came in that door, the statue would answer a question for him. Upon trying it, though, the statue merely uttered another strange riddle. Undaunted, Fazzle tried it once more, and swiftly the statue took one step and hit Athelfrar with its great sword. The glancing blow did only 11 points of damage, but Fazzle decided that a hasty retreat was in order. Further wandering brought them face-to-face with a friendly lammasu, who was good enough to give handy directions to get back to the 4th level. Passing once again through the statue's room, they warily passed by a wizard and his minions, then found a stairway up.

As happily they ascended the stairs, their joy was cut short by the sound of monsters in the corridor above. Quickly dousing their lantern, they hoped the beasts would pass by, but hardly had they done so when the monsters turned down the staircase, probably sensing prey near at hand. With loathsome footsteps descending, Od frantically relit the lantern, revealing umber hulks! Confusion! The entire front rank of fighters, Athelfrar, Ervandra, and Ivan turned and started beating on poor Jabbar behind them. Fortunately, Athelfrar and Ivan soon regained their senses and finally killed the loathsome monsters, but their bloody wounds bore witness to the fierceness of the struggle. The party continued to the top of the stairs, went a short distance, and recognized the area as the 3rd level. Some further wandering, they then returned to the fourth level where they had begun and started exploring rooms. Behind a secret door, Ervandra heard the click-click of knitting needles. Grandmothers in the Weir? They knocked on the door, and a sweet old voice bid them enter. They did. The two shawled figures knitting on the far side turned to greet them, dropping their shawls

from their heads to reveal the petrifying visages of 2 Medusae! Instantly, the shock turned Od, Jabbar, Athelfrar, BenGon, and Ydol the Pious to solid stone. The remaining animate members of the group swiftly killed the evil sisters, and located a substantial treasure of gold, gems, and magic. Reduced in number from nine to only 4, the party then left. They had 14,000 GP, 2 scrolls, 2 potions, and a bag of holding.

November IV (Week #50)

A mission of mercy was sent to recover the stone figures so recently renowned adventurers in Rythlondar. With the aid of the flying carpet, they were swiftly returned to the city, and taken to the High Wizard of the Sorcerer's Guild. The price was high, but affordable and willingly paid. Several days of great sorcery followed, as each of them was returned to flesh and survived the ordeal.

December I (Week # 51)

Another expedition to the Weir was organized, this time a low level group which headed for the long-silent halls of the 1st level. In the group were Brother Bung, Balderol, Comus, the Great Dod, Questor, Alexa, Sermonet, and Aviyak (a fierce warrior from the far-off Buffalo tribe), and a few others. The group of 12 explored some uncharted regions, and emerged with only 3 dead, together with a goodly treasure.

At the same time, another group of seasoned adventurers returned to the Weir. Noto and Barnabas led a party of 12, including Tinkerbelle, Elessar, Benelux, Horace, Bellabane, Zonker, Kodiak, Sondin, Kassock, and Johns. They went directly to the stairway from the 4th level to descend to the lower regions. There they found a small cavern with a stream running through it, and noted the stream was wadable and ran through tunnels large enough to permit passage. They then went to other rooms nearby, defeating 7 minotaurs and 2 invisible stalkers. Then they returned to the cavern, and began to wade upstream. The first tunnel branching off led to a large pond, apparently non-magical. Tinkerbelle flew across the pond to scout ahead, and reported a swampy, tree-filled cavern beyond. They decided not to investigate, and returned to the stream. Further upstream they came upon a small beach. As they explored the back rock wall of the beach, noting the passages therefrom, they were alerted by a large splashing sound approaching from downstream. A giant slug appeared, spitting acid erratically, and was promptly sizzled by 2 lightning bolts from the magicians. Having gained adequate treasure already, and having used their most potent spells, the group returned to the surface.

Over in Roilgard, Fazzle, Ragnor, Charmen, and Fernando decided to pool their talents (and especially their flying carpet and bag of holding) for a lightning sortie into Morbundus to loot a large cache of gold found previously. Fazzle trotted down the stairs and corridors while the other 3 rode the carpet. Reaching their destination on the 4th level, they barred the doors with spells and loaded as much gold as they could into their bag of holding and the saddlebags. Fazzle then polymorphed himself into a unicorn and bore the saddlebags. When they reached the slide up to the 2nd level, Charmen cast a Fly spell upon the Fazzle-unicorn and knocked the few portals in their path as they sped to the surface.

This ends the first year of campaigning along the Ryth valley. As the adventurers rejoice the winter solstice in the taverns and bawdyhouses, it is rumored that a large party is forming to venture into the western wilderness. Ragnor has been observed frequenting the lodging of Anjorel, the man he rescued from slavery in the depths of Morbundus, and Zonker has been inquiring at inns and taverns for information on the direction of North Malden. Could it be that they will seek the Enchanted Waterfall and the nymph of mysterious powers? And in Rythlondar, visitors to the shrine of the Flaming Wheel report that Benelux is closing the shrine for February and March, and that he has acquired a light horse and has converted his gold into gems. Can it be true that he plans to ride alone into the wilderness to the east, perhaps to once again seek out the Wizard of the Lonely Mountain?

THE CAVERNS OF RYTHWOOD - HISTORY
-continued-

(Editor's note: Due to the abduction of the person carrying the historical manuscript from the Caverns to our editorial offices, the next installment will not appear in this issue. It may not appear at all unless an organized group ventures to the fourth Cavern level to free our researcher from his captors -- if he is still close to the place of his capture and if he is still alive. What follows is the report of a fellow adventurer who was the only one who managed to escape the trap laid for the ill-fated explorers.)

Report by Jean-Claude Hoofmouth

Having sponsored the successful retrieval of several volumes of historical documents from the lower depths of the Caverns (a very condensed version of which was presented in the previous issue of the Ryth Chronicle), the Caverns of Rythwood Historical Society decided to immediately outfit another excursion into those mysterious caves to seek additional documents of historical value. I was among the first party and, since we had been so successful -- having retrieved several books on the Caverns' early history -- we were all asked to try to repeat our triumphant adventure. Many of the party balked at this prospect. We had just returned, had taken no time for rest yet, and several of the group had no desire or courage left to try to tempt fate another time. The original adventure had been the first time into the caves for many of the scholarly types that had gone along.

As it turned out, the new party wasn't organized for about two weeks anyway, since word had gotten out of the many terrors we had experienced on the first trip and new recruits were hard to find. Of the original group, only Meric Winkelhammer -- a researcher from the Society, and nephew to its President -- and myself were among the 12 selected for the second one. I'm sure Meric was coerced by his uncle, the influential Caskor, but my reasons for going were purely monetary.

We left Rythlondar on a dark and drizzly morning and travelled up the Ryth River by boat to the outpost at its head, where the Rythwood Forest meets the Northern Mountains. The river journey was uneventful, but we could all feel bad vibrations emanating from the outpost even before we docked at the landing. We felt like turning around right there. But since the Society was paying us handsomely, and we would be looked down upon by the city's society if we backed out now, we continued onward.

After we packed our equipment and supplies in our pre-arranged quarters at the outpost, we headed for a little refreshment at the only inn, the Purple Rat -- a not so subtle play on the plague of ratmen that had infested the caves long ago, before the Order of the Red Cross was formed to wipe them out. Even while trying to enjoy our first drink, we heard rumors that our previous adventure into the caves appeared to have stirred up ancient forces of evil, and that the once-thought dead caves were coming to life again. (It was obvious they hadn't been with us before.) News had spread that several local inhabitants had seen large rats -- in the shape and size of men -- in the area. A few locals had even been kidnapped, as had been done in older times, when the ratmen stormed out of the caves and grabbed off farmers and their families for sacrifices. Needless to say, we became even more apprehensive about entering the caves, but we resolved to do our best -- spurred on by more than a few courage-boosting ales.

The next day was even more dreary, but we packed our gear and headed up into the mountains anyway. Since we had several excellent fighters among us, we managed to avoid any serious trouble in the upper levels of the caves. But had we known what was waiting for us, we might never have gone at all. It is still hard to tell how deep we actually were, but I know we walked many miles of underground caverns that day. While crossing the bridge to a wide chasm near our objective, ratmen poured out from behind rocks and crevices and captured our whole party. In the melee, all but Meric (who had picked up a few manuscripts we had left behind on our hasty retreat from the previous expedition) and I were killed or seriously wounded. We were escorted to the 4th level, to the dwelling of an Evil High Priest, where we were subsequently tortured -- and where I accomplished my escape. I fear for poor Meric, but I also fear I have to once again descend to the Caverns to try to find him.

NEWS, RUMORS, LEGENDS, AND OTHER STRANGE THINGS

Puzzle of the Month: When you find in the dungeons a 2' featherduster inscribed with the rune for "fire", to determine its function you should:

- a) Gather your friends around you in a tight circle, sit on top of the featherduster, and yell "FIRE!"
 - b) Convince your worst enemy to do (a).
 - c) Give it to the charwoman for cleaning the hearth.
- (Anyone knowing the answer to this should send his answer to Paul Michaud. Whoever guesses the correct answer gets a free trip in his dungeon!)

Mortimer, noted Master Scribe and Cartographer, is reported to be compiling an accurate and revealing set of maps to the labyrinthine passages of the Weir, so to aid those of the True Faith in their wanderings through the evil depths. He has posted notice that those who send him their maps, with traps and monsters noted, will receive a copy of his extensive map. He can be reached through Barry Eynon, 30 Saw Mill Ct., Mtn. View, CA 94040.

A great multitude of mourners turned out for the funeral of Noto, late dwarf myrmidon. Services were held at the burial site in the White Mountains, near the dwarf city of Kal-Kaban. Lacking Noto's actual body, an effigy had to be placed in his sepulcher. His epitaph reads: "In memory of Noto, dwarven son of the White Mountains; he talked too high." It will long be recalled that the nymph of the enchanted waterfall destroyed him instead of granting his last wish that "there be no limit on how high I can go." His friends speculate that even had his wish been granted, he probably would be on the 4th plane of heaven by now and rapidly ascending to the 5th and higher planes of outer space.

Rumors have reached Rythlondar down the banks of the Ryth that Samarkar, Evil High Priest of Mu-Tassim, has mysteriously disappeared from his temple, and it is said that soon thereafter a new High Priest arrived to assume the evil seat of power. Even more disturbing are the whispers that the temple has been rededicated to the worship of Vang, the god of Evil Incarnate and Father of Demons. High clerics of the Temple of Tynghod suspect that this fell misfortune may have been the work of the Demon himself to augment the strength of his foul worshippers.

John Van De Graaf
37343 Glenbrook
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Ryth Chronicle is the tale of adventures in the many dungeons and wildernesses along the River Ryth. It is published whenever sufficient material is accumulated, and costs 30¢ per issue. All back issues are out of print due to an extraordinary demand, but occasionally there are Xerox copies available. Issue No. V should be published within a month since there was too much to include in this issue.

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The Moot of Evil

- by John Van De Graaf

(It has come to the attention of ye scribes that there be a woeful ignorance concerning the pantheon of ghods who manipulate the Affairs of creatures upon this Urth. Indeed, it is even whispered that some clerics of High Station cannot recite the Compass of the Ghods or the Liturgy of Gigos the Omnipotent. Therefore ye scribes herewith present an exclusive report of the Unholy Moot of Evil recently held at the ghodhome of Tarbnik, the Grey Ghod of Shadows and patron ghod of thieves and assassins. It be hoped that this be instructive of the names of the major ghods and impart some knowledge of the ways of the Evil Ones.)

Tarbnik entered the alcove high on the chamber wall and wrapped himself in Shadows. He peered into the chamber at the tableaux before him, and a faint smile curled the corners of his lips. "A stroke of good fortune," he thought, "that the Evil Lords should hold a moot and that I should be the host... though verily they had no choice since I alone would give them entry, and in mutual distrust some neutral ground was required. Perhaps my ears will now reward my generosity with some clue to gain or profit..." Tarbnik studied the chamber below. In the center were three seated figures, around them were seven flickering braziers half the distance to the sparkling, gem-encrusted walls, and between the braziers and the walls was a fantastic collection of statuary and priceless artifacts dishonestly gathered through the ages. On this occasion, however, Tarbnik took no notice of the beauty of his plunder, for the Evil Ones required his full attention.

Mu-Tassim, the Wicked Twin, base ghod of treachery and deceit, had summoned this moot. His snake-like body was coiled on a velvet cushion, leaving the tip of his sharp tail free to spear the black apples from the basket at his side.

Emulb, Prince of Darkness and Ruler of the Unliving, sat stiffly on the ivory throne to Mu-Tassim's left. Emulb had ridden his Black Steed from his ghodhome on the Pale Moon as it set upon the Urth, methodically leaving a trail of death and pestilence to mark each hoofprint.

Namul the Merciless, the impetuous and often unpredictable ghod of the molten rock, was the first to turn the conversation to the matter at hand. "Enough chatter! You asked us here to discuss a matter of great import, or so you said. Let us hear it and be done -- I like not these drafty dwellings in the air."

"The matter is of great consequence," came the sibilant voice of Mu-Tassim. "Not long ago one of my High Priests was destroyed, an unimportant loss in itself. It is said, however, that the deed was done by the Will of Vang, and the temple has been occupied by those who claim to worship Vang." The mention of the name of the Faceless Ghod of Chaos had a noticeable effect upon his listeners: even Tarbnik hidden above stiffened involuntarily and glanced furtively around. "Could it be that he - it - has returned to this Plane of Urth, or even his Demon offspring in its stead? Has the prophesied time arrived for the Last Battle of the Ghods?"

A short silence ensued, as Emulb pondered and Namul scowled and paced about, then Emulb spoke in sepulchral tones "It seems unlikely that such has come to pass. For the other omens of Vang's return have not occurred. Ur is still bound by the guarding moons and Arn still guards the sun and holds it in its appointed path. Besides, It would care not for the affairs of Urth's creatures. Since Gigos first wrested the

many Planes of Heaven from the Chaos, and gave Order and Substance to the worlds therein before retuning to Aveneg, Vang has bided its time in Darkness awaiting the time to reclaim the Universe. His forces of entropy are still at work, but the time has not yet come for him to emerge. It could be the work of his Demon offspring, so foolishly brought to Urth by men to destroy the old Empire, but the Demon has been silent many centuries. It may have returned to the Void whence it came, but who would dare Summon it merely to inquire as to its whereabouts?"

"Bah!" rumbled Namul, "Tell me the temple's place and I will have done with it, Vang, Demon, or no. The Urth will crack beneath it and its tomb shall be a shroud of cooling lava."

"Wait," said Emulb, "I think we should first learn at whom or what we strike. I do not think it Vang or his Demon, being unlike them to do aught but destroy. It could be one of the lesser ghods, be there one so rash, seeking to augment their power in the vain hope that the name of Vang will stay our interference. It could be one of mankind itself seeking his own ends, and thus no danger to us. Or ... it could be one of us seeking to secretly upset our balance of power."

Namul's eyes burned and his voice reeked of brimstone. "You look at me with your accusations?! May Arn impale you on his golden sword and bore you for Eternity with his pious lectures!" Namul turned to Mu-Tassim, swaying gently sideways as if in agreement with Emulb's conclusion, "And you, you cold-blooded earthworm, you called us here so that the two of you could conspire against me! May Ramitaar descend with his hundred-armed heroes of the Red Moon to flay your immortal scales and leave your undying flesh prey to the winds and vultures of Tynokias!"

Mu-Tassim warmed to the argument, and retorted "If so, let the ghods make a clean sweep and Veluria of the Blue Moon raise the oceans of Enion against you, to smother your feeble fires in steam and wash away your mountains into silt!"

In the alcove high above, Tarbnik turned away and retired to his room as the argument continued unabated. He mused upon what he had learned. Such convoluted trickery was unlike the openly evil Namul. Emulb certainly had the intelligence to lay such a scheme and the means to execute it; if so, then he had cleverly cast suspicion on Namul. Trickery, however, was a specialty of Mu-Tassim, and Tarbnik wondered whether Mu-Tassim had called the moot seeking an answer or revelation as to the guilty hand, or whether the whole affair was part of some nefarious plan of his own. Perhaps the Demon had arisen/returned to bring discord and destruction to the Urth once again. Discord was indeed evident as a result of the strange events, but it was most likely the work of one of the three.

If not the work of the Evil Ones, who else? Tarbnik rejected the idea that any of the good ghods, Arn the Immaculate, Veluria the Huntress of the Blue Moon, Enion of the Five oceans, or Rho-Tassim, could have any part in this. Nor was it conceivable that the neutral ghods would do so. Woomga, ancient font of the powers of Magick recked not the affairs of men or ghods. Ramitaar would hardly leave his Hall of Heroes on the Red Moon except for glorious battle. Emulb had posed the possibility that one of mankind might be responsible. At least that is easily checked, thought Tarbnik, for there be few who would so dare the wrath of the ghods.

Tarbnik pondered long, but saw no profit in it at last. Perhaps blackmail, if the answer be found quickly, or mischief to relieve the boredom of his days. The puzzle did intrigue his crafty mind, and he resolved to have the matter investigated when he awoke.

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND:

With the above tale, the next player-cleric who says he knows nothing of the pantheon of gods (and lacks the imagination to make up his own patron deity) will be summarily punished -- probably by Emulb who enjoys that sort of work.

The referees will be using the Law/Chaos and Good/Evil distinctions pointed out by Gary Gygax in Strategic Review #6. Be prepared to reorient your thinking: Lawful creatures can be good or evil as can Chaotic creatures.

No player/character listing appears this issue due to lack of room. - John

CHRONICLE OF ACTIVITIES

February, 2776:

As the month of January ended, a host of renowned adventurers gathered in the City of Roilgard. Their purpose was to journey into the western wilderness in search of the nymph of the Enchanted Waterfall. At the same time they offered to escort Anjorel, whom they had rescued from slavery in Castle Morbundus, to his remote home in North Malden. The merchants of Roilgard did a profitable business provisioning and equipping the large group, as did the tavern-keepers in whose establishments the adventurers sought any information available about the nymph or the way to North Malden.

At the beginning of February, the expedition was ready to depart. The members were:

myrmidon Barnabas	elf hero/theurgist Elessar	lama Pontifus
myrmidon Ragnar	cutpurse Bellabane	curate Janus
myrmidon Ben Gon	enchanter Fazzle	curate Horace
dwarf myrmidon Noto	enchanter Kodiak	curate Fernando
pathfinder Athelfrar	thaumaturge Charmen	vicar Johns
swordsman Zonker	theurgist Od	adept Questor
warrior Balderol	seer Solstice II	

Accompanying the party was Anjorel, acting as guide. The group set out north from Roilgard, following the road through the mountains beyond Castle Morbundus. As they entered the mountains, scarcely a days journey from town, they met a group of lawful elves. The elves warned them of the evil land of Bjorstrand which lay far to the north along this road. The expedition continued on its way through the mountains and on the fourth day entered the Endless Forest. Undaunted, they continued to follow the road, and at dusk on the fifth day a cleric and his men approached the group. Sensing evil, the groups magic-users loosed their spells upon the cleric and the fighters charged the evil minions. The battle was quickly over and the evil group destroyed, with a small amount of loot gained, plus the horses and armor of the fallen foes. Two days later, the party reached the northern edge of the forest, and met with 15 lawful gnomes, with whom they spoke briefly before continuing their journey.

At noon of the third day, the group espied a gigantic figure resting by the side of the road. Noting that the giant was exceptionally handsome and exceedingly large, they approached cautiously despite the absence of any evil emanations. The figure indeed proved to be one of the Titans. The Titan condescended to converse with the group, telling them of his home in the northern mountains and some knowledge he had of the nymph they sought. Their suggestion that he join their expedition was naturally rejected, so the group bade him farewell and continued their journey.

North Malden was just another day's march. Anjorel was so elated at arriving home that he refused to go further with the group. His days of slavery had cured him of adventuring. The party rested in the village for a day, trading the captured horses and armor for additional provisions, and relaxing in the friendly taverns with open ears for information. The following day they set off due north across the Honeylode River into the open countryside beyond where no roads lay. After two days march, they reached a hilly region and observed mountains looming in the distance to the north.

As they made camp, it was decided that a reconnaissance should be made. Ragnar unrolled the magic carpet, and they held a council to determine who should go. It was decided that Athelfrar was best suited, being both a ranger and being able to take the most damage in the event of mishap. At dawn Athelfrar set off on the carpet. He flew only 20 miles, however, before observing a black, disk-like object speeding towards him from the north. Not desiring an encounter with an enigmatic enemy, Athelfrar tried to evade by flying into dense clouds, but the disk relentlessly followed his every maneuver and slowly closed the distance between them. He then turned and flew directly back to his waiting companions at top speed. The party, meanwhile, seeing Athelfrar returning hotly pursued by the strange and ominous disk, quickly scattered into an open formation. As Athelfrar landed, the magic-users threw 2 fireballs and a lightning bolt at the disk. The mighty spells struck home, but the hovering disk

seemed unaffected as it descended with a slight waver upon the spot occupied by curate Janus. The disk touched down and disappeared, along with Janus and his magic armor! The group was chagrined and puzzled: what evil had befallen them, and what was Janus' fate? Holy Pontifus knelt in meditation and Communed with his ghods, then arose and sadly announced that Janus was dead and could not be recovered, and that he had learned that the disk was not directed by any intelligence against which this loss could be avenged. The party resolved to avoid any further flying, and erected a small cairn to mark the spot where Janus had met his doom.

The next day they set out again, riding to the northeast around the hills, and on the eve of the second day they entered a mountainous area with a stream running to the southwest. Their information indicated that they should follow this upstream, so they followed its twisting course to the northeast. The next day 90 brigands attempted to ambush the party, but Fazzle's robe of eyes revealed their presence along the rocky ridge above the stream. Several arrows fell among the party, but two fireballs and an ice storm destroyed the brigands before the fighters could even reach them. During the following day, the group came upon, and surprised, 7 trolls wading in the river. Again, fireballs dispatched the evil creatures, though they survived long enough for the fighters to at last enjoy a brief combat.

The next day they came upon the small pond whence the stream flowed. The path to the north lay through a narrow defile in the high ridgeline, so narrow and treacherous that the party had to ride single file. Scarcely had they entered the defile, when Athelfrar in the lead encountered 3 basilisks coming towards him. Athelfrar looked away in time, but his sturdy warhorse turned to stone at the sight of them. While Athelfrar then fought the leading basilisk, a magic-user mounted the carpet and ascended enough to use his lightning bolt upon the other two basilisks. With the aid of Barnabas and his sword Tingel, the basilisks were defeated without the loss or petrification of any fighters. Continuing on, the defile soon broadened into a valley. On the western slopes loomed a large castle. As the group approached, a man in robes with many fell followers accosted them and demanded a magic item as a toll for passage. It was decided that the situation was unfavorable to attempt to force passage, so the robe of eyes was reluctantly handed over. The robed man seemed pleased, and became quite talkative (though wary) and stated that the nymph lay just a few miles north of the valley, and that he was one of her friends guarding the approaches to her pool. He said she had the power of infinite wishes, but that she was fickle. Half the time the wish would be granted, the other half of the time she would utterly and irrevocably destroy the person making the wish. The highest members of the party realized that the risk was too great for them to chance, but it was decided to continue for the benefit of the lower members of the group. Besides, the toll for passage had already been paid.

The nymph was reached the following day, and she greeted them and offered to let anyone make a Wish. Only five members of the group elected to try a wish. First to try was Zonker, who wished for a rod of lordly might. The nymph went into her trance, blinked once, and Zonker disappeared. Unintimidated, Solstice next wished that his ancestor Equinox were alive again, and Solstice also vanished. Next Questor wished to be a patriarch, and found that his wish was partially granted and that he was now a priest. Balderol then wished for 10 points to apply to his abilities, and then was dismayed to learn it would require another wish to apply the points to specific abilities. Balderol tried to apply the points and vanished. Finally Noto succumbed to temptation, being grieved of heart that he had progressed to the limits of a dwarf, and Wished that there be no limit to how high he could go. Speculation on the possible results of the wish's wording proved moot as poor Noto disappeared with a last wave to his companions of many long adventures. Lastly, Questor, having tasted the only success thus far, could not resist another wish, and asked that the bag of holding be filled with gems. Questor's luck had run out, though, and he too vanished. By now the score was 5 persons wishing and five persons gone, with no net wishes granted, so the remaining members decided to leave. As they left, the nymph muttered that the odds were too good, and that she thought that one wish in three would be more reasonable!

The luckless expedition returned to Roilgard, briefly stopping to defeat a chaotic wizard and his umber hulks and loot his castle of the measly 10,000 GP treasure. They encountered little else of note on their return journey, and reached the city near the end of March. Few desired to seek out the nymph again, and all looked forward to a few days rest before once again descending into the more familiar dungeon areas.

Over in Rythlondar in the early days of February, bishop Benelux saddled his light horse, closed his chapel, and set off alone into the eastern wilderness. It is rumored that a roc observed his journey, and related that Benelux traveled swiftly to the Lonely Mountain where dwells the wizard Talkien and his faithful blue dragon Griselda. Benelux returned to Rythlondar, alive and well, at the end of February. What transpired during his journey is not known, but it is said that Benelux's fortune is considerably smaller and that the worthy cleric now readily senses the presence of evil.

March, 2776:

With most of the experienced adventurers still off in the western wilderness, a group of young adventurers banded together for a visit to the Weir. In the group were the new paladin Magnus, swordsman Hagbut, dwarf-warrior Ibb, Poindexter (another paladin), warrior Adolph Aviyak, elf Xertel, the priest Bung, vicar Ydol, theurgists Clickham and Comus, and medium Kondrus. They explored the second depth of the Weir, killing goblins, kobolds, and 2 wereboars. All returned safely, but with only 961 GP.

April, 2776:

Upon their return from the western wilderness, Athelfrar, Fazzle, and Fernando organized a group to explore more of the fifth depth of the Weir. With them went dwarf-heroess Elvandra, stalwart Grobar, bishop Horace, new acolyte Yaino, pixie hero Tinkerbelle, and thaumaturges Od and Charmen. Upon reaching the fifth level, they entered an unexplored passage off of the statue's central chamber. A gas-filled corridor thwarted them, so they tried another corridor. Reaching a door at the end, they sensed a mischievous presence beyond and prepared for battle. Upon opening the door, they found a room containing only another door, but as they entered the door behind them disappeared and the other door began conversing with them. They shortly discovered that the door wanted a small fee to pass through, promising treasure beyond. Finding no other exit, and the fee being nominal, they paid and passed through the talking door to an identical room beyond. They realized that they had been tricked when they saw no exit from this room either, and that the talking door (now chuckling behind them) also faced into this room. The door offered them an exit from this room, but the fee was no longer nominal. They reluctantly paid the gems demanded, and a section of the wall opened to a passage beyond. The party was given directions by the door to the treasure it had promised, and invited them back for a long talk sometime. They did vow later to return, but not with kindness in their hearts.

Following the door's directions they proceeded down the corridors. Suddenly a door was seen in the gloom and behind them a metal portcullis fell into place, barring the path they had come. With little choice they opened the door, and entered a huge room with many doors and an enclosed platform to one side. A lordly fighter stood on the stand with longbowmen on either side, and he announced that they had trespassed into his Arena. Being a sporting man, however, he offered to spare their lives and to give them a choice of a dangerous path to freedom or a wager on combat between their champion against his. Should they win the combat, he offered to double their treasure and to reveal the door to safety. He ended with a prohibition on spells as being a cowardly way to fight, and promised dire consequences should spells be attempted. The party then discussed the matter among themselves, deciding that electing a champion to do battle was less risky than an outright attack on their captor, and accepted his terms. Myrmidon Grobar was selected with his greater experience and strength, and he was given the best armor and Athelfrar's +3 shield; he carried his own +3 spear and borrowed Athelfrar's magic sword. He strode to the center of the Arena, at which the lordly Karnak revealed his champions: 3 cockatrices! Grobar slew one with his spear

as they charged, then drew the sword in mortal combat with the remaining two. Grobar held the advantage in his ability to inflict grievous wounds upon them, but they had the offsetting ability to turn him to solid stone with a single hit. Grobar's sword ran red, but still they attacked from both sides, and one finally smote him from behind where the shield could not protect him. But the creature's blow did not turn his flesh to stone, and he was able to slay the other and turn to face the one behind. Swiftly then he slew the last creature, to the relief of his worried companions, without receiving another wound. The battle over, Karnak kept his promise and loaded them with 9000 GP fairly won and released them.

Now realizing where they were, the group returned to the fifth level to try yet one more passage. There they defeated a giant, 4-armed gargoyle, then came upon a room containing some fighters and magic-users. Webbing the fighters and killing the magic-users with a blast from the cold wand, they were surprised to note the fighters were not struggling to break free of the web. Suddenly thinking that this was going too easily, Fazzle began to mumble incoherently. Charmen and Od recognized the symptoms of a Feeblemind spell which they were unable to break. Lacking Fazzle's spells and recognizing that a powerful wizard must be nearby, they took Fazzle's hand and led him away. They tarried not for further exploring and ascended to the surface.

In the early days of April, elf Xertel and young paladin Anrad Datun (also called Magnus) met at the Rampant Lion to discuss the poor results of their last expedition into the Weir over a tankard of ale. As they commiserated in a dark corner of the tavern, a stranger took an empty table next to them, carefully placing the wall to his back and casting furtive glances of terror at anyone approaching his vicinity. After observing the stranger's demeanor for some time, Anrad decided that perhaps the fellow was in need of help, and Xertel was plainly curious about any prospect for adventure. Therefore they turned to the stranger and engaged him in conversation, and ordered a copious amount of ale from the tavern-keeper. With Anrad's noticeable charisma, it proved easy to win the stranger's confidence, and the ale loosed his tongue. They quickly learned that he had escaped from a sinister dungeon on the island of Taru, located at the mouth of the Ryth River. On the island were the Ruins of Thon, long thought to be of no importance. But, the stranger said, the tunnels beneath the ruins had been occupied several years ago by a female civilization, who had since deepened and extended the labyrinthine passages. The female organization was ruled by Kattahha Wurusema, whom he never encountered. The female warrior scouts had captured him on a raiding party, and had taken him to Thon in slave chains. In those dire depths he was tortured for information, with a strange emphasis upon information about the demon Gragorn and the strength of his followers. He had finally managed to escape, but they had pursued him to the very borders of Rythlond.

After extracting what information they could before the stranger lapsed into a drunken stupor, Anrad and Xertel departed the tavern. It sounded like a promising place for plunder or for striking a blow against evil, and they assured each other that they would mount a joint expedition there within the week.

Xertel was the first to hire a boat and gather his close friends to make the journey to Taru and the Ruins of Thon. With Anrad standing on the dock shouting the few curses permitted paladins, Xertel set sail downstream with his 11 companions: dwarf Balin, dwarf Golong, paladin Poindexter, swordsman Addph Aviyak, warrior Tai Pan, veteran Achilles, hobbit thief Umbar, Dod the adept and Sermonet, theurgist Comus, and seer Harad with the wand of fireballs.

Upon reaching the Ruins, they quickly uncovered the entrance and descended to the first depth. Their explorations revealed a tax center guarded by 2 ogres, and they came upon and killed 4 bugbears and 3 robbers. The paladin Poindexter had been acting rather strangely, for a paladin, in suggesting ambushes and other devious mischief. Then they came upon a band of neutral sharpers, whom they killed except for one sharper who surrendered when his fellow thieves were slain. After questioning him, Poindexter urged that he be slain. The others protested, but Poindexter drew his sword and struck

the unarmed thief from behind. Instantly Poindexter felt his paladin status slip away as the angered gods of Good withdrew their favors for such evil acts. Even further misfortune befell Poindexter, for the thief picked up the sword he had dropped and began to defend himself. Though wounded twice, the sharper was a dangerous foe as Poindexter learned when he soon found himself transfixd on the sharper's sword. Thus Poindexter died, unrepentant of his evil ways.

The rest of the party decided to return to the tax center to loot whatever treasures lay within. They stopped a distance away from the chamber where the ogres guarded the doors to the tax center. A straight corridor before them opened into the chamber. They entered a side room and found it empty, so Harad leaned through the doorway and aimed his wand down the corridor and cast a fireball. The gloom was pierced by a blinding flash as the fireball struck. Almost instantly the chamber was filled with a fiery ball which expanded to fill the chamber and then billowed back down the corridor, reaching poor Harad where he stood before he could withdraw to safety. When the flames were spent, the rest of the party emerged into the smoke-filled corridor. There lay Harad's charred body, and nearby a pile of ash marked the remains of his potent wand. Down the corridor, they heard the angry noises of two very scorched, but very alive ogres. They ran to the chamber to finish the creatures off, but in the melee the ogres fought fiercely, killing Golong, and fighting men came through the tax center doors to see what the commotion was. The group decided that a strategic retreat was now in order, and withdrew all the way to the surface. They had gained 13,500 GP, a potion, and a rope of entanglement.

Anrad Datun's expedition arrived at the Ruins two days later. With him were swordsman Hagbut, dwarf Gamli, elf Lennox, elf Jabbar, vicar Johns, vicar Bung, acolyte Scion, theurgist Clickham, and mediums Kondrus and Benzene. They also explored the first level, killing bugbears and shadows in their wandering. They then met a drunken peasant, who told them of a bordello on the second level, so they descended deeper and eventually found the entrance. While waiting to be admitted to the bordello, they were attacked by 6 giant snakes and Scion died in the battle. They then entered and tarried several hours with the girls, or gambling if they preferred.

After sating their pleasures, they returned to the first level to explore further, and killed more bugbears and some kobolds. They left with 2,624 GP.

Rumors of the newly discovered dungeons on Taru spread through Rythlondar. Ragnar Lodbrok had been organizing a highly experienced group to explore the Caverns of Rythwood, but hearing of the Ruins and having a boat ready to depart, they changed their destination to the island of Taru. With Ragnar went mighty myrmidon Barnabas, dwarf swordsman Ibb, elf hero/thaumaturge Ellessar with his sword of cold, lama Pontifus, bishop Benelux, enchanter Kodiak, magician Sondin, and outpurse Bellabane. They learned from Anrad Datun of a spiral staircase leading past the second depth, and this they descended to the fifth level.

They traveled far through the many corridors following Pontifus's intuition that their goal should lie far to the southwest. One such corridor ended in a door, so they decided to begin searching rooms. Entering a hexagonal room, they found 3 doors and located 3 secret doors, a door on each wall. In the center of the floor was a circle inscribed with a triangle. Runes on the doors provided some clues. They opened one door and Benelux cast a handful of sticks into the short passage beyond, then turned them into snakes. The snakes performed their mission well, killing the 2 medusae lurking in the chamber at the end of the passage. Continuing on their journey, they came upon 2 wyverns, charming one of them and killing the other. The next room contained a 9-headed fire-breathing hydra which was defeated, but the hydra managed to finish off the wyvern first. More wandering and discoveries, then they entered a room containing a dread gorgon, which breathed its petrifying breath upon the group and turned Ibb, Sondin, and of course Pontifus. One breath was all it got, for Barnabas struck with Tingel and paralyzed the creature. A scroll was found, with a stone-flesh spell used on Ponty, and a map and treasure. They then made their return, fighting 8 myrmidons, of whom 3 were charmed and the rest slain. A profitable expedition.

May, 2776

With the coming of May, lama Benelux sought out elf Elessar and thaumaturge Charmen to accompany him into the depths of the Weir, there to seek a treasure indicated by the ancient map which Benelux had gained. Down to the sixth depth they went, into a swiftly flowing stream which led them past dark pools and through swampy narrow passages. Following the map's directions, they finally reached a painted chamber without mishap.

They searched the chamber long and thoroughly. A rust monster came upon them, but they cast a web into the narrow passageway and caught the creature in the sticky strands. At last, in the mucky floor their probing struck something solid. Uncovering the object, they found it to be a large chest. They loaded the huge treasure swiftly, while one stood guard at the passageway. Before the loading was completed, however, the splashing feet of a Lich wandered into the passageway. Fortunately Elessar and Charmen managed to cast their potent spells first, wounding the Lich so badly that it fled. Their treasure gained was 65,000 GP, a magic sword, a brazier, a bean bag containing 1 bean, and a ring of protection. A group of manticores tried to catch them as they fled the dungeons with their treasure, but with the speed of the flying carpet and some knock spells they managed to stay out of the manticores' reach and eventually to lose them.

Benelux, Elessar, and Charmen returned to Rythlondar with their new-found loot, and proceeded to Benelux's chapel outside the South Gate to divide the treasure. Part of Benelux's share was the bean bag, and, being the inquisitive sort, he decided to plant the bean along the road to the Weir. Elessar and Charmen agreed to accompany him just in case the bean turned out to be dangerous.

Coming to a clear and uninhabited area about halfway to the Weir, they made camp for the day. Charmen set up the brazier and with intense concentration, she Summoned from the flames a Fire Elemental, which paced frenetically as other preparations were completed. Elessar drew his sword of cold, and Benelux prayed and Blessed his small group. Then Benelux carefully planted the bean in the fertile soil. They waited expectantly, but nothing happened.

The sun gradually dropped to the horizon, and Charmen had to release the Elemental in her fatigue, returning it to the brazier. Twilight came, and Benelux gathered wood and they made a campfire. Obviously this was a slow magic bean. As the stars appeared, they settled down to a long vigil, and took turns standing watch over the bean. But as night deepened, large grey clouds began to cover the sky, and soon a thunderstorm erupted to make their night uncomfortable and to obscure all vision of the place where the bean had been planted.

As the dawn sky turned grey and the storm slackened, they saw an incredible beanstalk (what else did they expect from a bean?) which grew skywards until lost in misty clouds above. The three adventurers discussed the situation, and concluded that further investigation should be conducted by a fully prepared expedition. They therefore returned to Rythlondar to gather their companions and make their preparations.

In early May a group of young adventurers led by Anrad Datun made their way to the Weir. With Anrad were strider Achilles, dwarf veteran Pieron, veteran Thedmire, elf Xertel, veteran Lennox, vicars Bung and Tydol, priestess Sermonet, theurgist Clickham, seer Harad, and medium Kondrus.

They wandered the corridors of the second level until they came upon 3 wereboars which they speedily dispatched. While looting the wereboars' treasure, 2 unfriendly fighters of great prowess entered the room. In the melee, the rope of entanglement was cast upon the fighters, but they quickly destroyed the rope with a single blow! The rope had distracted them, however, and many blows were struck by the group. Thus, with the rope gone, the fighters were sorely wounded and they withdrew to safety.

Anrad and his party continued to another room, in which they had to fight 15 skeletons plus 2 clad in suits of armor. The armored skeletons were unaffected by the vicars and killed several of the group before they were destroyed. After the battle, they discovered the armor was magical, and located a secret niche containing a goodly treasure. Continuing their exploration, they killed 2 giant weasles and a myrmidon.

With a respectable amount of loot, they made their way to the exit from the dungeons, but as they climbed the last flight of stairs, they saw 3 robed figures silhouetted in the entranceway above. One of the figures raised a horn to his lips and blew loudly. The group charged, but were intercepted by a group of berserk swordsmen and had to fight their way to safety with several losses.

They gained 4200 GP, 5 magic arrows and the magic armor.

Ragnar and his companions, meanwhile, had decided to venture once again into the Ruins of Thon. The group was strong: myrmidon Ragnar and the 2 myrmidons charmed by his sword Quicksilver, myrmidon Barnabas with his sword Tingel, a myrmidon charmed by Sondin, Jabbar the elf, Alexa the Thief, lama Pontifus and bishop Fernando, and enchanters Sondin and Kodiak. No sooner had they reached the fifth level than they were attacked by 5 evil wights. The presence of Pontifus caused only 2 wights to run away. A battle ensued, during which poor Jabbar was touched and suffered transformation into one of the evil creatures himself. His companions reluctantly put Jabbar out of his undead misery. They then continued to the hexagonal room they had located last time, and explored several more doors. One room held a machine that occupied their attention for awhile (and on which they spent some gold pieces). Behind another door lay a corridor, which they tried. One chamber off the corridor held 8 giant snakes, which they webbed and killed, but suffered some damage in the process that proved their undoing later on. In a larger cavern further along, they came upon 3 fire lizards, which inflicted yet more damage on the party in a fierce fight. The lizards were destroyed and some treasure found, but the spells of healing had been mostly used after the giant snake battle.

They continued despite their wounds, trying a side corridor which led to a small chamber with only one door, but behind them came 3 balrogs. The evil beings laughed at the lightning bolt cast by Kodiak and attacked. The subsequent melee was a slaughter, unfortunately not of Balrogs. Barnabas, Fernando, and all 3 charmed myrmidons died, and still 2 of the balrogs fought with undiminished vigor. Pontifus was forced to try a desperate gamble and put his entire Will behind a great spell to Dispell Evil. The balrogs were not dispelled, but they were induced to leave. The stricken group mourned their losses and used Sondin's scroll to Teleport Barnabas and his sword back to Rythlondar. Suddenly 3 minotaurs leaped out of the dark corridor, and the last lightning bolt was used to destroy them. The group entered the chamber and listened at the one door while searching for others. Eight ogres next came down the corridor, making the wounded party wonder why they were cursed with such attention. Fortunately the sleep spells could be used while Ragnar and Pontifus held the opening. After the ogres were slain, the group hastily departed lest some other evil befall them.

Gained by the 5 survivors was 18,600 GP and a number of magic items.

Fazzlefart and Athelfrar returned to the Weir to continue their exploration of the fifth depth. With them were Grobar, Elvandra, Aviyak, Tinkerbelle the pixie, clerics Horace and Johns, and mages Od and Comus. They first tried to solve the puzzle of the sword-guarded chest (after Fazzle first dispatched some minotaurs with a bolt), but they were unable to obtain the chest despite many clever attempts. Frustrated, they continued to the central statue room to explore new doors. In a series of rooms they found a secret room and defeated an invisible stalker and gained the treasure it guarded. They also looted an elf's room, found a zealous lammasu, killed a chimera, almost lost Athelfrar in a psychedelic room, and found a slot machine. On their way out, Od acquired, to his surprise, a Deck of Many Things, and in 3 draws pulled the Ace of diamonds, a Joker, and the Queen of Hearts! They gained 29,600 GP.

It came to pass in the Early Days of Urth that an island was raised from the Great Ocean near the mouth of the mighty River Ryth. It was called Taru, and the ghods rejoiced in their work.

And the isle, with all its lands and waters, was left in the trust of Thon, beloved of the ghods and a King of men, that he might prove himself worthy of the ghods' favors. For untold years he watched and ruled the land from the topmost tower of his castle perched on the rocky tor overlooking both the isle and the waters of the Ocean and the Ryth.

It is said that King Thon ordered a great wall be built dividing the lands such that every creature should have its appointed place. And he directed the brothers and sisters Warusema that they should walk amongst his peoples and wander the lands maintaining his Laws and imposing his Sanction.

For a time the isle and all its divers beings flourished in harmony and peace. But the King began to place worldly wares and carnal pleasures before the Law of his lands and peoples, and as the years passed, he grew decadent in his desires and negligent in his duties and rulership. And so it came to pass that the ghods in their anger brought down a great holocaust upon the island of Taru, and the inhabitants and their guardians no longer lived in harmony, but were pitted against one another in a struggle for survival in a chaotic land.

It is not written what became of King Thon, but his castle fell in ruins to the hordes and beasties ravaging the isle. The battle-scarred remains still stand atop the lofty crag. It is rumored that all manner of men and other beings havedholed, carved, and burrowed deep abodes beneath the once regal ruins. It is not known what may lurk in the lands beyond the castle ruins, for none from Rythlondar have ever ventured into those forbidding regions, but it is rumored that the Great Wall, age-worn and marred by the holocaust, still stands, dividing the lands as once the powerful King Thon had decreed it should. No longer does the Wall bring order to the lands, for through the broken gaps great beasts and fell creatures do fearlessly roam, and chaos reigns supreme.

John Van De Graaf
37343 Glenbrook
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Ryth Chronicle is a summary of adventures along the River Ryth, published for the amusement of the players in our D&D campaign and anyone else who may be interested. We try to publish whenever sufficient material has accumulated, but occasionally the material outpaces the magazine, as is true this issue. Thus there is no player listing, for it would not be current with the present character levels.

Copyright 1976 by John Van De Graaf and Paul Wood. Issues can be obtained from John Van De Graaf, 373/43 Glenbrook, Mt. Clemens, MI 48043, for 30¢ per mimeo copy. The subscription rate is simply the number of issues you want multiplied by 30¢ per copy. Back issues are now available by photocopy for No. I (50¢), and No.s II and III (75¢ each). There are still some mimeo copies of No. IV available for 30¢ each.

This issue was written by John Van De Graaf and Laurie Van De Graaf, except where otherwise noted. Players are encouraged to submit items about the game or about their characters, religious orders, erotic art, or other relevant subjects.

(Editor's Note: The following item is an extract from Lord Umberay's Guide to Urthly Wonders, a traveler's handbook long thought to have been happily lost in antiquity. Unfortunately, a dung-collector rummaging in a privy near murky Fenmarch uncovered the ancient tome and brought it forth to light of day. It is believed that this entry is the only one of any value for adventurers since the island is reported to actually exist, unlike the preceding entry concerning the mythical Harum-Scarum Land and the entry following which purports to describe the Jelly-Worship of Petroleus. The extract faithfully quotes from the original source, and the Editor apologizes to the worshippers of Mu-Tassim, Namul, Emulb, Vang and the other evil gods for the author's obvious bias in favor of Dla-atan.)

ILE-MOT SZANDER

(by Ray Ulman)

Far to the south in the Great Southern Ocean, hundreds of leagues from the City of Rythlondar and beyond the island of Taru, lies the island of Ile-Mot Szander, the Isle of Shadow Mountains.

On this island the great river Floe-varatan courses through the land of Dla-atan to the ocean. At the mouth of the river stands the city of Lumar-atan, home of the great god Atan, the Good, Great Lord of the Eternal Flame and Protector of the Spring of Everlasting Life.

Also on the island, to the north of Lumar-atan, lies the dungeons of Apo Kalyps, the home of the Four Riders. Further to the north and east of the Floe-varatan, lies the realm of the unmentionable Tri-Spawn in the land of Za-atan, who rule the Shadow Mountains.

Thus it is that the Dla-atani are always on guard against the forces of darkness. Mot Sencar, the Mountain of Vigil, is always garrisoned and Lumar-atan stands ever ready to fight the hordes of evil.

(In the interest of fair play, we present the following except from a brochure published by the Za-atan Chamber of Commercial Horrors):

Visit scenic Za-atan where volcanic spumes add delight to every footstep! Be a front-row guest at a human sacrifice! Watch the splendor of the Shadow Mountains casting their vivid grey pall across the land! Cheap accommodations available at any one of the many idyllic dungeons burrowed around the landscape, with cuisine for the most exotic palates and undreamed of entertainment to provide you with thrills for the rest of your lifetime! No reservations necessary: come as you are.

Subscriber: you have \$ _____ left in your account.

_____ this is a trade.

_____ this is a sample copy.

_____ the devil made me send it.

June, 2776

Benelux, Charmen, and Ellessar spent a week gathering a small group of adventurers in Rythlondar and equipping themselves for an expedition up the Beanstalk which they had planted by the roadside from the Weir. . From the Guard barracks they brought Grobar BenGon, the grim and silent champion, and Ervandra, dwarf swashbuckler. From the Temple of Tyngnod, Benelux recruited vicar Idol the Pious, and Charmen combed the dim recesses of the Guild to recruit enchanter FazzleFart and young acolyte Solstice III. The party set out in the first week of June and quickly reached the Beanstalk. Naturally the unusual sight of the gigantic beanstalk coiling skyward until disappearing in the clouds had attracted a large group of curious peasants.

With a final prayer by Benelux, the group began to climb the beanstalk to the waves and cheers of the peasants. The ascent was not too difficult, but they didn't reach the misty clouds until the following day. The peasants, having planted their crops and having nothing better to do, settled down to await the groups return. On the third day, a rider approached along the road from Rythlondar with the startling news that myrmidon Barnabas, slain by Balrogs of Thon and since lying in state awaiting burial after the utmost efforts of the High Lama had failed to ressurect him, had suddenly groaned and sat up in his coffin yesterday, with his wounds beginning to bleed freshly. The peasants marvelled at this miracle, and continued their vigil as the rider continued down the road.

On the fourth day a sharp-eyed lad spotted the small specks descending the beanstalk. Late in the afternoon the party of explorers reached earth to the cheers of the peasants. None of the explorers would relate the adventures which had befallen them, but it was noticed that Solstice III was not among them; instead another magic-user who looked remarkably like old Equinox, a cousin of Solstice's who had died almost a year ago. And grey-cloaked Ellessar was not among them, but glimpsed in the bag of holding was a silver statue of identical likeness. Grobar's magic spear was also missing, and it was noted that he often glanced wistfully at Charmen, who returned his glances with scorn and brandished her cold wand in warning. They had gained 21,000 GP in treasure, and later it was noticed that they had acquired several new magic items.

Far to the South in the Great Ocean, a group of young adventurers arrived at the island of Taru to investigate the Ruins of Thon. Leading the group was paladin-warrrior Anrad Datan, who had been to the dungeons before. His group was composed of dwarf veteran Pieron, young elf Jabbar, dwarf swordsman Ibb, dwarf veteran Gamli, priest Dod, vicar Bung, priestess Sermonet, theurgist Clickham, seer Kondrus, and others. They explored the second level, with a stop at Ishahara's bordello, and killed 11 berserkers, an invisible stalker, 13 goblins, 3 harpies, 8 kobolds, a group of thieves, and 2 giant weasels. Their bloody path cost them the life of vicar Bung, who was later ressurected by lama Benelux, and gained them over 12,000 GP.

Pilferer Bellabane assembled a small group in the third week of June for an expedition to the second depth of the Weir. With Bellabane went 2 half-elves, curates Fernando and Johns, and theurgist Comus. Bellabane led his group to the secret rear entrance to Cybele's old quarters on the second depth, most recently found to be inhabited by ogres. On their way, the group encountered and killed some were-rats and a 7-headed hydra, and they charmed 2 myrmidons to help them against the ogres.

When they reached their destination, they burst open the door and surprised 6 ogres munching on their grisly meals. Comus quickly cast a web upon them before they could react, and the fighters began to slay the trapped ogres with their spears. As they did so, more ogres rushed into the room and a furious melee ensued. In the battle, they managed to slay the ogres, but lost one of the myrmidons, a half-elf, and Comus. The death of Comus freed the other myrmidon from his enchantment, which the party noticed in time to kill him. They then searched the many side rooms and chambers, now strewn with wreckage and debris from the ogres' conception of good housekeeping, and came upon yet one more ogre in the former swine pen of Cybele's, which they slept

with their last remaining spell and killed. Groping beneath the mud and filth on the floor, they discovered the ogres' cache of treasure, which they quickly loaded into their copious sacks. As they prepared to leave, however, 2 wyverns burst into the main hall room where they were assembled. The wyverns were distracted by the fresh ogre corpses in the hall, so the group managed to flee safely to the surface. They gained a magic sword and some magic arrows in addition to their treasure.

At the Ruins of Thon an experienced group gathered to seek out a treasure on the sixth depth. Enchanter Kodiak was the caretaker of the map which they had found in a previous descent, and with him were pathfinder Athelfrar, myrmidon Ragnar, swordsman Hagbut, thief Alexa, lama Pontifus, bishop Horace, and enchanter Sondin.

The cryptic markings on the map indicated that they must find a 20' wide section of corridor at the foot of a stairway somewhere on the sixth level. They descended the spiral staircase to the sixth level, and promptly encountered 8 mummies. Lama Pontifus made known his holy presence, and 5 of the loathsome creatures fled. The remaining 3 mummies were dispatched to eternal rest by the fighters, though Hagbut had to be cured of some rotting flesh where one of the mummies had touched him. The group continued on for a long period through the dire passageways, mapping a large portion of the unexplored regions, but the starting place for the map could not be found. Realizing that they could conceivably spend the remainder of the day in fruitless searching (well aware that no sane person would care to stay in the dungeons at night), they decided to seek divine assistance. Pontifus knelt in prayer to Commune with his gods while the rest of the party rested, then arose to announce that they were indeed headed in the wrong direction. With guidance from Pontifus, the group retraced their path to the proper corridor, encountering only a giant slug on the way (which they webbed and hastened their steps).

After a long journey in this new direction, they came upon the starting point for the map. They followed the directions on the map, finally coming into a chamber at the end of a corridor, and fervently hoped that they had correctly interpreted the ambiguous glyphs on the aged parchment. Their hopes were rewarded when a little digging uncovered a chest buried in the floor of the chamber. As they did so, 9 ogres came upon them. Sondin cast a sticky web upon them and Kodiak charmed one of the creatures. After releasing the charmed ogre, they dispatched the remainder with a lightning bolt. The sound of fighting and the final thunderclap echoed down the dark corridors, and quickly the party heard heavy footsteps approaching. They again deployed for battle: around the corner of the corridor came 3 umber hulks with their baleful eyes gleaming wickedly from the darkness. Kodiak swiftly loosed a bolt of lightning at them but failed to kill them. Athelfrar, Ragnar, and Horace were confused by their horrible visages and struck haphazardly at anything near them (poor Pontifus was standing behind Ragnar and took 20 points of damage from two of Ragnar's blows -- fortunately Quicksilver did not charm Pontifus either time). Eventually, the creatures were slain in the confused and bloody battle. Pontifus and Horace tended to those most seriously wounded, as the others searched the chest and emptied its gold and gems into their sacks. Athelfrar, with his magically enhanced strength, lifted the chest out of the hole, and Alexa noticed another chest beneath the first one. At this point 3 basilisks came round the bend, petrifying Ragnar at first glance. Sondin used his lightning bolt, the last remaining bolt, and destroyed all three basilisks.

The second chest was inspected, but seemed harmless. As Alexa then picked the strong lock and opened the chest, she scratched herself on a small needle ... dying almost immediately before Pontifus could reach her to neutralize the poison in her veins. This chest contained more gold, plus platinum and jewelry. As this chest was being emptied, 7 spectres flew out of the darkness. The presence of Horace and Pontifus did not deter their attack, and a deadly hand-to-hand fight ensued. Ragnar was almost relieved to be a stone statue, observing the fray in relative safety. Athelfrar was struck and badly drained, Horace was struck twice and died, and Hagbut was struck once and died before the evil beings were driven off. The survivors then made

sure that their late comrades would not rise to haunt them, and finished loading the treasure. They quickly made their way to the surface, then returned for the bodies of the dead and for the Ragnar-statue. They gained over 100,000 GP in treasure. Ragnar died later when the Guild attempted to turn him back to flesh, but Pontifus ressurected him as well as Hagbut and Aloxa. Horace, however, could not be revived.

Late in June, enchanter Od gathered a young fellowship to explore the Caverns of Rythwood. In the group were hero Adolph Aviyak, ranger-scout Achilles, swordsman Tai Pan, dwarf warrior Balin, pixie hero Tinkerbelle, acolyte Golong, conjurer Harad, medium Tur Key, and thieves Catrick and Umbar.

They were the first ever to explore the second depth of the Caverns, overcoming the obstacles which often make the Caverns inaccessible to mortals. They killed gnolls, bugbears, crcs, thieves and a wight, and Od charmed 3 hobgoblins. Harad, Golong, Tur Key, and Umbar died in the battles. The group gained 8913 GP in treasure, plus a magic dagger, bow, armor, and shields.

July, 2776:

Paladin Anrad, now a swordsman, sought out worthy Behelux and gathered information on some of his earlier adventures on the upper levels of the Weir. With maps and information, Anrad gathered a party to explore the 2nd depth; with him went:

dwarf warrior Pieron	$\frac{1}{2}$ elf Knomix	conjurer Knondrus
veteran Orlok	$\frac{1}{2}$ elf Jabbar	theurgist Clickham
veteran Lancefron	vicar Dod	medium Benzene
warrior Hagbut	vicar Bung	

After wandering the dire corridors, meeting only 2 shadows and an ogre which they quickly slew, they finally came to a room containing 10 bugbears. Benelux had told Anrad the tale of how he, Fazzle, and Athelfrar had almost met their doom therein, and how only the use of the Wish spell from Cybele's scroll had saved them from destruction. Anrad was careful, and his half-elves reported hearing soft shuffling behind the locked door. Bursting open the door, the group attacked the bugbears, and finally killed them all with scant damage to their party. A secret door was found, which led to the bugbears treasure. Continuing down the corridor behind the secret door, they passed several doors until they saw up ahead an open door! Intrigued, they began to advance to the door, when they were stopped by 4 armored fighters who emerged from a door on the opposite side of the corridor. The hostile fighters gave the group a nasty surprise when the charm spells and sleep spells failed to have any effect, and in the subsequent melee they inflicted so many wounds upon the group that Anrad gave up hope of getting past them and began to worry about surviving the battle. Gaining the initiative as the hostile fighters hesitated, Anrad led his group through a side corridor and found that they had no way to return as the door disappeared behind them. They found a stairway back to the surface shortly afterwards, and returned to Rythlondar with 15,850 GP in treasure.

Over in Roilgard, lama Benelux, superhero Ragnar, enchantress Charmen, and ranger-guide Athelfrar commiserated in a local tavern over the high cost of living in the cities. Clearly, at the rate their expenses were increasing, they would always just be one jump ahead of debtor's prison. "I'm paying enough to build a castle!" exclaimed Ragnar, then adding "Why don't we get a castle for ourselves with the gold we're spending?" The others agreed this would be an excellent idea, and they decided to set out into the wilderness to the west of Roilgard to find a castle site.

A week was spent gathering supplies and making arrangements with the masons and engineers to start work as soon as the site had been selected and cleared of any creatures. The four adventurers then set out westwards along the causeway road through the swamp until they came to the open fields beyond the swamp. Locating the stream flowing into the swamp, they followed upstream for 7 miles until they located a hill in the bend of the stream which overlooked the surrounding countryside. They

Having supplies for several weeks, they decided to explore further upstream. A day's march brought them to the hills whence flowed the stream. They briefly scouted the hills, finding a small band of evil kobolds, and then returned to the road to Roilgard to summon the workers.

As they made their way back through the swamp, however, they were set upon by 6 mummies who lurched out of the misty tangles into the roadway before them. The mummies quickly sensed the holy presence of Benelux, and all fled back into the swamp. Not ones to pass up an adventure, the group followed the fleeing mummies using Athelfrar's uncanny tracking ability. The mummies had fled to their lair in an ancient tomb, and they again fled at Benelux's approach, but 2 of the creatures were slain before they could get away. A search of the tomb uncovered 1000 GP. No sooner had this been loaded into their packs than they heard something splashing through the swamps. It was an evil High Priest with 5 men-at-arms come to rescue his subject mummies. Charmen used her cold wand on the evil group, killing 3 of the fighters, while Benelux cast a Hold Person upon the High Priest, which succeeded in paralyzing him, but not before his own Blade Barrier spell had been cast. Ragnar and Athelfrar advanced and slew the remaining 2 fighters in brief battles, but were understandably reluctant to enter the blade barrier to slay the High Priest. So Charmen used her cold wand once more upon the immobile High Priest. The Blade Barrier eventually disappeared from around the dead priest, and Benelux gained his magic hammer and Ragnar gained his magic shield. The four then returned to the road to Roilgard and quickly reached the city to send their workmen to the castle site. It would be several months before the four-towered stronghold would be finished, but now they had a place to reside beyond the taxes and extravagance of the city.

Holy Pontifus, now enjoying his status as full Patriarch, had long desired to found his own community in the wilderness. Elf hero/magician Elessar, myrmidon Barnabas, swordsman Ibb, curate Johns, and warlock Sondin with his charmed Ogre ("Fang") offered to accompany him in exchange for a place to live in his castle. They set out along the old South Road from Rythlondar along the east bank of the Ryth River. Passing the Elven Forest, they were stopped for a toll by a party of knights from Arnhold Castle. They paid the toll, and continued down the road until they met a paladin who tried to convince them to join his crusade against an evil Lord nearby. They declined the invitation, since it was clearly suicidal, and began to explore the fields south of the Elven Forest. They located and marked a good castle site beside a very small stream. In clearing the area around the castle, they came upon a cave in which were 3 very hostile balrogs. Elessar found that his cold wand acquired on the beanstalk worked quite well, and Barnabas fought with especial valor, no doubt recalling the unfortunate result of his last encounter with balrogs. In the excitement, Sondin forgot all about Fang, who stood behind the group cheering both sides on. Numbers finally overwhelmed the balrogs, though both Johns and Ibb required considerable healing to be fit to travel again.

With the area cleared, they returned to Rythlondar, then returned with the workmen to begin construction. It was noticed that on the return trip, a great throng of peasants gathered to follow Pontifus to his new Holy Domain.

Fazzlefart decided to return to the depths of the Weir for another foray onto the fifth depth. He took with him enchanter Od, pixie Tinkerbelle, champion Grobar, hero Aviyak, curate Ydol the Pious, vicaress Sermonet, theurgist Comus, and Od's 3 charmed hobgoblins. They descended the well-known path and went directly to the chamber of the strange chest of the Five Swords. Fazzle cast a Dispell Magic upon the swords, and Od ordered one of his hobgoblins to open the chest. The poor creature did so, only to be struck dead by the center sword. Fazzle cast another Dispell Magic, and this time the second hobgoblin touched the chest without any reaction by the swords. Opening the chest was deceptively easy as a poisoned latch felled this hobgoblin. The cost

(in hobgoblins) and previous frustrations were rewarded when they extracted from the chest a huge treasure, along with a magic mace and a helm of brilliance.

Flushed with their early success, the group decided to explore further around the fifth depth. They made their way finally to a room in which they sensed a fire giant with his pets. They confidently burst down the tall door, but the giant and his two evil hellhounds were not surprised by the intrusion. One hellhound breathed as they tried to flee from the giant. The fiery breath killed Od, Sermonet, Comus, and the last hobgoblin, and the rest of the party were severely wounded. Fortunately, the giant and his pets were content to let them go with the warm farewell and did not pursue. The survivors made their way to the surface with over 78,000 GP in treasure.

August, 2776:

The Shrine of the Flaming Wheel lies just outside the southern gates of Rythlondar, a wooden building purchased by Benelux and converted into a place of worship and meditation. Here Benelux assembled a group of adventurers early in August to discuss with them an expedition into the wilderness. Invited to the meeting were the mighty fighters Barnabas, Athelfrar, and paladin Anrad, magic-users Fazzle, Kodiak, and Charmen, and Elessar the elf and Pieron the dwarf. When the group had assembled, Benelux explained his intentions.

"I have dedicated my life to the destruction of Evil," Benelux began. "The forces of Evil are strong, and the struggle is hard. We do not always prevail in the struggle, as it misfortuned us to be defeated by the evil Yldog beneath the Weir many months ago. Let the bitterness of that lesson prevent the sin of Pride in our other achievements from blinding us to the dangers we often face.

"Many of you were with me on that expedition, and the rest have heard tell of our capture by Yldog. It seemed the gods of Good were smiling that day when we learned that Yldog would not use us as life-blood victims for his next unholy sacrifice; instead he spared our lives and released us under quest to carry out a mission for him. The mission was to slay Samarkar, high priest of Mu'Tassim, for his refusal to obey the Summons to the gathering forces of evil. You will recall that we used two Wishes from a magic sword to fulfill the quest, and went our ways, joyful of the ease with which we had avoided further danger and extricated ourselves from Yldog's power.

"I have since made a long and solitary journey to the good wizard of the Lonely Mountain, to confer with him about the struggle to overcome evil. The wizard imparted a good deal of wisdom and revealed that we erred grievously in so lightly carrying out Yldog's evil will with no regard for the consequences of our actions. In destroying Samarkar, we had removed an impediment to the mustering of evil. Samarkar's temple was handed to the control of the worshippers of Vang, the Faceless, a more dire threat than ever Samarkar posed to the forces of Good. We have furthered the goals of Evil in our reckless action, and made no attempt to consider the consequences. The time has come for us to mend our past mistakes. We have all gained much needed experience in the months since our capture. I propose we seek out the evil temple and destroy the evil therein."

When Benelux had finished, the adventurers began to discuss the merits of his proposal, and to weigh the risks involved. One by one, they resolved to go with Benelux, until only Fazzle, a warlock, was left uncommitted.

"A group of ten to defeat a High Priest and the evil guardians of his temple?" said Fazzle, "The prospect of success is not yet assured, I believe, and I say we would likely meet only more misfortune. Remember, Yldog was a lama, and he defeated us. I will not accompany you to your deaths if you insist on going. More profit becons in the dungeon depths, where we at least have some knowledge of the passages and dangers." With that, Fazzle left the meeting, but the others remained to plan their expedition.

They spent the following two days procuring supplies, sharpening swords, memorizing spells, and rented a small boat to take them to the mouth of the Tomplar River.

With them went young Equinox, a modium. The full party thus composed the lama Benelux, warlock Kodiak, Charmen the enchantress, Equinox, champion Barnabas with Tingel, Athelfrar the ranger, once again a pathfinder, paladin-swordsman Anrad, and now veteran-dwarf Pieron. Completing the group was elf hero/magician Elessar with his sword of cold.

The boat took them several days up the Ryth River to its confluence with the Templar, where the boatman let them ashore and promised to await their return. They followed the rivercourse to the east, and then as it curved to the north. The gently rolling fields through which they passed seemed devoid of life until they came upon a trail following the course of the river. They followed the trail, finally coming upon a small village. At the crossroads in the village sat a small shrine.

The villagers refused to talk to the strangers, and the fearful faces indicated that little could be gained from them. The party then cautiously approached the shrine, and Benelux sensed an evil presence inside. At that moment a single cowed and robed figure emerged from the shrine. Taking no chances, Kodiak cast a Charm Person spell at the figure and the rest stood ready to strike. The figure stopped, then invited them forward and welcomed them. A search of the simple interior of the building revealed that the one figure was all in the shrine, so they entered to talk with the priest, who seemed entirely friendly and very talkative. He said he was a border-priest of Samarkar, and a worshipper of MuTassim, and lamented the mysterious disappearance of Samarkar and the subsequent arrival of a High Priest of Vang. The temple, he said, was being converted to the demon worship and the peasants forced to obey the new clerical powers of the realm. The priest offered to help overthrow the Vang worshippers, and said he knew a secret entrance into the temple.

The scars of many battles made the adventurers wary of such evil promises, especially when too easily gained. Charmen cast an ESP spell, as they made the priest repeat his story. They discovered that a good deal of his story was true, but that his expressions of friendship (especially for Kodiak) were probably false. The Charm had apparently not worked, so Charmen tried a Charm. The priest's eyes turned fondly upon her as the spell was completed, and she asked if he was charmed, to which he replied, with enthusiasm, that he was. The ESP indicated that he lied. Even his answers to his own station in life were a confused mixture of truth and falsehood. He said he was not really a priest, but only a "lay priest" having no spell abilities.

Unable to separate truth from fiction, and charm spells being strangely ineffective against him, despite the lack of any discernable magical protection, they decided to take him with them to show them the location of the secret entrance. They also set a guard upon him, and bound him to the horse for the journey, to which he submitted peaceably. They then followed the road across the Templar and made camp for the night when they reached a nearby wood. They were surprised to find in the wood a small gypsy wagon; searching revealed nothing of value, but Benelux noticed that he had seen it before. It was the wagon of Torm the Peddler, whom he had met several months before on his abortive attempt to obtain a Wish to resurrect Equinox. Torm was nowhere to be found, so they posted guards and rested the night. Torm was an accomplished high-level thief, and Benelux pondered the meaning of his presence in this area.

They set out well before dawn the next day. The "priest" told them the temple was but a few miles distant, and they had no desire to be observed approaching down the road. By the time the dawn lightened the sky, they had reached a grove of trees alongside the massive gray stone wall of the temple. The priest led them to a chapel in the center of the grove, and showed them a secret door behind the altar, which he said led into the temple itself. Elessar took the priest back into the grove to tie him securely, and after tying him, raised his sword and struck off his head, a base act which did not go unnoticed by the gods.

After some whispered confusion, the group arranged a marching order through the very narrow passage behind the secret door. Elessar and Benelux led the way, with Pieron and Equinox the last two in line. They decided a light would be too risky,

and so descended into the black corridor with only the elven eyes of Elessar to scan the passageway ahead. After travelling 60 feet, they heard a small scuffling behind them. They called back to Pieron, the dwarf who was last in line, what the noise was. Pieron muttered a few oaths about his own clumsiness causing him to trip, and the group continued a short way further. A muffled sound came from behind them, and again they stopped. This time they lit a torch, but Equinox reported that it seemed clear in the corridor behind. They resumed their march. Suddenly Athelfrar shouted that he was under attack and had been struck. Athelfrar spun around, only to see himself standing with a bloody upraised sword! A grim battle followed between Athelfrar and his double, the rest of the party unable to help in the confining passageway. At last, one of the combatants fell dead to the floor. Benelux detected no evil from the Athelfrar still standing, but ordered the group to go back to the chapel. In their passage, they came upon the bodies of Pieron and Equinox, both slain by a lethal thrust in the back. The other Athelfrar was examined in the daylight, and death gradually turned the body to the amorphous mass of a fiendish doppelganger. Elessar returned to the place where he had left the priest's body, and saw the empty ropes and the small mass he had severed from the creature.

The smaller group then reformed their ranks and returned into the secret passageway. The corridor led to a stairway which ended in a door. They cautiously listened at the door and probed behind the door with their spells. Beyond the door was a room containing several trolls, so they swiftly laid their plans and burst open the door. Charmen's cold wand and a lightning bolt from Kodiak slew several of the loathsome trolls at the outset, and wounded the other two, but around a corner came another four trolls to join in the fray. A furious melee ensued in which the clerics and fighters killed the trolls one by one, while the magic-users set the troll bodies afire with oil before they could regenerate. When the room was cleared of the creatures they rested to cure some of their wounds and to probe beyond the only other doorway in the door. In the corridor outside the door, they sensed a bustle of activity by temple guards coming to investigate the source of the reverberating thunder which had shaken the temple. The party hurried to take the offensive before the temple guard realized that the trolls had been slain. They opened the door, and Charmen froze the lowly guards in the corridor.

Off the corridor were several doors and side passages. As they made their way cautiously down the corridor, bowmen entered from a side corridor out of range of Charmen's wand. The arrows did no serious damage, but the group realized that they were being surrounded. An ESP spell revealed an empty room to one side. They entered, posted guards at the two doors in the room, and surveyed their situation. They were in a small chapel. The ESP revealed a multitude of guards taking positions around their room. The area beyond the other door in the room was the main sanctuary of the temple, in which the High Priest had gathered his strongest forces. To offer battle there would expose them to missile fire from all sides, as they discovered in a brief sortie. They were trapped.

Benelux realized that desperate measures were called for if they were ever to escape. He therefore offered to parley with the High Priest, and suggested to the High Priest a duel by champions to decide the issue. He recognized the High Priest to be Yldog, and Benelux had more reason to desire trial by combat. Yldog accepted the challenge because of the highlevel magic-users in the party, which he knew would destroy many of his followers before they could be slain, and thus the force with which he maintained his precarious hold on the area would be grievously weakened.

The combat was agreed to be hand-to-hand combat between Benelux and Yldog and between 2 other champions. Athelfrar was chosen to be the party's champion; Yldog brought forward a huge, grim fighter of great experience, a battle-scarred myrmidon who had slain many in his service of the Evil Gods. The four combatants met in the center of the sanctuary area, with their forces watching for treachery on either side. Benelux and Yldog struck first, while the fighters circled looking for an opening to strike at each other. Benelux's magic mace landed upon Yldog's shield, and Yldog's

staff also failed to strike. The clerics continued trading blows, until at last Yldog hit Benelux's armor and suddenly assumed the writhing shape of a giant snake and entwined itself about Benelux. Immobilized, Benelux watched in horror as Yldog drew out a heavy spiked mace with which to crush his helmet. The fighters meanwhile had begun to strike each other, with considerable success, and both fighters suffered many wounds. Athelfrar's exceptional endurance sustained him past the point at which a normal man would have died, until finally he saw his opponent stagger and delivered a vicious blow to the myrmidon's neck, which cleaved through his helmet and beheaded him. Athelfrar turned in time to see Yldog drawing his mace. In five swift strides, Athelfrar was beside Benelux and blocked Yldog's blow, then struck with his bloody sword before Yldog could recover. Sorely beset by Athelfrar, Yldog had no opportunity to utter the treacherous spell Yldog had planned to use for their destruction. Thus Yldog died beneath Athelfrar's blade, and the rest of the party was extremely relieved to see their champions prevail. The snake returned to the form of a staff at Yldog's death, and Benelux picked it up after finding it not to be evil itself. The rest of Yldog's forces had fled out of the temple at his death, and only a few bold peasants remained to see who their new masters would be.

The group posted guards, and began to search the temple. A treasure room was located, and the contents were confiscated in the name of Goodness. Another strange door into a central area of the temple was located, which the peasants whispered must contain the unspeakable Unholy of Unholies. They decided to open the door when their spells could detect nothing beyond. The double portals swung open at a touch, and disappeared into the inky blackness within. The strange darkness ended abruptly at the edge of the room, and even Benelux's Continual Light could not penetrate the black wall of nothingness or illuminate the area within the room. Objects thrust into the blackness could be withdrawn without apparent harm, but the unknown dangers were considered too great to risk entering without light. It was then they realized that someone would have to enter, if only to close again the doors, so that whatever lay within would not be unleashed upon the world. Benelux knew his duty, and with a Blessing entered the darkness with only a rope prudently tied about his waist to pull him to his companions if need arose. Benelux entered and felt his mind wrench, but managed to reach the doors and start them closing before total insanity overcame him. His scream and the sound of the doors caused his friends to pull him out before the doors swung shut. A remove curse and dispell magic were enough to restore him to his senses.

Their mission done, the party returned to Rythlondar with 82,000 GP in treasure and a number of magic items. For poor Pieron, his constitution could not endure the attempted resurrection spell by Benelux, so Kodiak used a Reincarnation spell from a scroll found in the temple. Pieron's soul came to rest in a nearby Pegasus.

Charmen, Benelux, and Athelfrar returned to their castle Esmigard, still under construction, after their encounter with Yldog. Waiting for them was Ragnar, the other joint owner of Esmigard, an a wheezing, doddering old man clad in robes. As Charmen approached, the old man stood up shakily and handed her a small parchment roll impressed with the Guild Rune Seal. She broke the seal and read the message with a sense of dread.

It was indeed a message from the Mages' Guild. She learned that Igburff the Illustrious, the youngest and ablest protege of the Guild, had been captured by pirates and sold to the priestesses of Shartis. The Guild feared that the priestesses intended to include him among their sacrifices on the day of the Feast of the Writhing Waters, just two months hence. The Guild naturally felt this to be an ill way to treat their protege, and requested Charmen to rescue him, offering various lame excuses that the high-level Guild members had previous commitments which prevented them from attending to the matter themselves.

"Oh no!" Charmen thought, "Damn them, why me? If Igburff got himself into the

mess, and is as bright as they say, why doesn't he get himself out of the mess? Ah well, I suppose I might as well agree to do it. Sometimes I wish I'd never gotten into this Women's Lib thing! I could have married a handsome prince and lived happily ever after (by turning the prince into a frog if he gave me any trouble). As it is, men are always making me prove my capabilities. Maybe if I can free this kid the rest of the Guild will realize we women can think and perform as well as the rest of them."

With that decision, Charmen turned to the old man, who was busy trying to insert his dentures into his mouth sideways, and said, "Tell the Guild that I'm honored and pleased to have this opportunity to serve the Guild. Also I expect that they recognize the hazards I will face, and that they will gladly prepare some simple scrolls to aid me in my mission." The old man nodded, and began to totter down the road to Roilgard. Charmen hoped he'd make it back to town with her message.

Charmen's thoughts turned to the task itself. It would surely take careful thought and planning, especially on the non-existent budget the Guild had given her. She hadn't heard of anyone ever returning from the island of Kerwylon who had sought the Temple of Shartis -- on the other hand, she hadn't heard of anyone who had tried to reach the temple, either. Since an army to invade in force was out of the question, a small band of high-level adventurers might just succeed. Naturally the first candidates who came to mind were her fellow castle-owners Benelux, Ragnar, and their guest Athelfrar. Benelux, Patriarch of the Flaming Wheel, would surely not pass up such an opportunity to combat an evil temple, for his goodness and nobility were well-known. Ragnar would probably agree to go too, not that he was particularly noble or good, but he was always game for new adventures, especially the dangerous ones. The grey-eyed ranger Athelfrar was a loyal companion and a grim fighter against evil, and his uncanny tracking skills could prove useful. With 2 fighters chosen, Charmen felt a group of six would be sufficient. Perhaps Benelux could persuade one of his lesser cleric bretheren to accompany them: Ydol the Pious would be a valuable addition. And, she thought, I'd better recruit another magic-user, preferably one of the itinerant members of the Guild with higher level spells that I have; I'll try Kodiak the sorcerer. He won't be too thrilled, especially when I tell him why we're going.

With a tentative group in mind, Charmen set off to persuade and cajole them into helping her on her mission. She hoped that they didn't wind up as more victims for the Feast of the Writhing Waters, and put that thought resolutely from her mind. They must succeed, for the price of failure would be too horrible to contemplate. She paused in her plans for the assault on the island temple. "Oh no ... we have to go to the blasted island by boat ... and me prone to seasickness!"

John Van De Graaf
37343 Glenbrook
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The astrologers of Rythlondar, by dint of their occult divination of the wanderings of the etherial bodies, predicted that there would soon occur two miracles which would cause men to wonder. The first such "miracle" has just occurred, causing men to wonder what the miracle really was. The miracle is, of course, the fact that this issue of the Ryth Chronicle is being published within a month of the previous issue, an unheard of event in the lives of men or any other creatures. The second miracle is that this issue brings the tale of the noble, and not so noble, deeds along the River Ryth almost current with the campaign, and a character listing is included.

Normally, the Ryth Chronicle is published irregularly whenever enough material has accumulated and when I get a chance to type it up. Issues cost 30¢ each, and subscriptions can be obtained for 30¢ times the number of issues you want to receive or to inflict on your former friends. Back issues are available by photocopy as follows: No. I (50¢), No. II & III (75¢), and No. IV & V (30¢). All are available from John Van De Graaf, 37343 Glenbrook, Mt. Clemens, MI 48043.

Issue No. VII, being a mystic number of arcane power, will be a special issue with an overall map to locate some of the places mentioned in these Chronicles, at least one other map of the City of Rythlondar, a long-overdue explanation from Benelux on the theology of the Order of the Flaming Wheel, myths, legends, rumors, and possibly some more of the adventures if space permits.

This campaign is composed of a number of dungeons DMed by John Van De Graaf (Weir), Len Scensny (Morbundus), Paul Wood (Caverns), Laurie Van De Graaf (Taru and the Ruins of Thon), Ray Ulman (Ile-Mot Sznader and Apo Kalyps), and Greg DeCesare (Kerwylon). The geas to write this Chronicle was laid on John Van De Graaf, as usual, except where otherwise noted. Copyright 1976 by John Van De Graaf and Paul Wood.

(Editor's Note: One day not long ago a storm-driven ship sailed past the island of Taru into the vast ocean beyond. The terrified sailors found, much to their surprise, that the edge of the world must be further south than they believed, for the ship promptly ran aground on a well-known uncharted island, which is now, of course, well charted but not very well known. When the ship finally returned to Rythlondar, news of the island spread rapidly along the wharves, and even reached a few ears who cared anything about the news. Here is a summary of the reports about the island gleaned from available sources who ought to know.)

KERWYLON

by Greg DeCesare

A three day voyage south from Rythlondar will bring you to the offshore waters of the rugose (?sic) holm (double sic) of Kerwylon. The island is well known to lords and high nobles of the continent. For from the tiny island come the horse-like stegions, highest prized mounts on Urth.

Brys, the largest city on the isle, is open to all travelers and many merchants go there from all corners of the known lands.

The southern portion of Kerwylon is under the watchful eye of the High Priestess of Shartis, the evil goddess of aquatic creatures, while the northern portion is guarded by the last descendants of the royal house of Kerwylon who reside high atop Mount Elthar in the fortress of Hawksroost. But it is rumored that somewhere deep in the interior lies an Izanian monastery where plans are being laid for the final takeover of the island by the evil forces.

From time to time a traveler will hear one of the legends about the Kings of the Dawn and depart in search of adventure and the chance of locating a portion of the ancient Kings' timeworn treasures.

John Van De Graaf and Paul Wood are the authors of this Chronicle. They are also the authors of the other Chronicles. They are also the authors of the other Chronicles. They are also the authors of the other Chronicles.

August, 2776

Fazzle and Od departed their plush lodgings in Rythlondar, crossed the Ryth by ferry to Roilgard, and took the road to Esmigard, Ragnar's castle in the western wilderness. They proposed to Ragnar a joint venture into dire Castle Morbundus only a few miles distant. Ragnar was willing, but hesitated because his fellow castle dwellers (Benelux, Charman, and Athelfrar) had not yet returned from their mission against the evil temple. Faz and Od said they would gather a party and return for Ragnar. By the time Faz and Od returned, Benelux and his party had returned, thus freeing Ragnar from his castle duties.

The party gathered for the venture was composed of superhero Ragnar, champion Grobar BenGon, myrmidon dwarfess Ervandra, swashbuckler Aviyak, patriarch Pontifus, bishop Ydol the Pious, Great Dod the vicar, warlock Faz, and enchanter Od. They descended known paths to the fifth depth, then took a long stairway down to the unexplored nether regions of what they hoped was the sixth depth. The stairway ended in a corridor running directly away from them. Less than a hundred paces down the corridor, it turned to the right and a door was observed on the left. In the corridor a hellhound turned the corner. Faz shouted "I always wanted one of these for a pet!" and quickly cast a Charm Monster spell at the beast. The spell worked, just as the hound was inhaling for a fiery breath, and Faz was pleased to have his own portable fireplace on four legs. The party continued down the corridor, and went through the first door on their right, which led to another corridor. Ervandra warned the rest of a trap door hidden in the floor, and they proceeded to a door at the end of the corridor. Behind the door they found two gargoyles (dispatched swiftly and safely) and 2 chests containing a total of 10,000 GP, which was stuffed into the bag of holding. As they loaded the loot, a very secret door opened in one wall and in came another hell hound. The new hound was surprised, the party wasn't, and the hound didn't have a chance.

Leaving the room, they returned to the main corridor which they followed to the next door. Inside was a huge room, diamond-shaped, 160' x 120' at the apexes. Along each wall were 5 cages with a wide variety of immobile animals, monsters, and undead creatures. In the center of the room was a pedestal holding a 20-faceted gem-like object with a number on each facet. The experienced explorers didn't have to commune with Holy Gigos to recognize that object! Inscribed on the pedestal were the words: "I am Slocum's. I am a controller of great power and a bringer of great danger," followed by the toad rune for "right". The group explored the area and discussed the possibilities before deciding that more information should be sought before attempting to deal with the strange room. Continuing through the room, they exited by a door at the other end into a short corridor. Ervandra stepped ahead, and suddenly disappeared. The others decided to send a scout when it was found to be a 2-way transporter, and the Great Dod volunteered. With a rope around him, and instructions on signals whether to follow by tugs on the rope being given, Dod stepped through and vanished. A single tug was felt, meaning "don't follow", and soon after signs of struggling and then the tattered end of the severed rope. The party deduced that it was the work of something intelligent, and sent a note through the transport that ransom would be offered for their comrades and suggested Benelux as intermediary.

The adventurers returned to the main corridor and followed it to its end, passing by several other doors and another side passage. At the end of the corridor was a chamber to the left, in which they discovered a large hydra with smoke wafting from its nostrils. The creature was slow to react, as the group's luck continued to hold, and Od charmed the creature. A wand was removed from around one of the hydra's 9 necks, and a search of the chamber revealed nothing else. Meanwhile, the hydra and hound had been stationed in the corridor to guard the party. Suddenly the corridor glowed with the heat of many fires as a chimera approached and attacked. The guards killed the chimera, but the hound died in the battle and the hydra was wounded.

They returned down the main corridor, visiting several places they had passed by before, until they reached the first door they had seen near the stairway. Pontifus

detected an evil presence lurking behind the door. Faz therefore cast a wizard eye to explore the regions beyond the door, and as he did so, 3 vampires came upon the group. The result was a confused battle, as the vampires hid from the bolts cast by Od and summoned giant wolves to their aid. The wolves posed no threat, and were easily slept and killed. The vampires' charm spells didn't work, and they finally left in frustration. Faz explained what he had seen while the others were busy with the vampires, and cast a Haste spell upon the group. Crashing through the door, they confronted the Frost Giant and his 9-headed frost-breathing hydra inside the room. Again they struck first with spells and missiles, severely damaging the hydra before it could breathe, but when the hydra did breathe, the icy exhalation finished off the charmed fire-breathing hydra. Ragnar, Grobar, Aviyak, and the clerics then attacked and slew the monsters in hand-to-hand combat and suffered only light wounds. Five chests were found which contained much treasure. The examination of the chests was interrupted by the intrusion of 3 salamanders into the room. The salamanders were also slain by combat, but inflicted a good deal of damage on the fighters.

The group decided to depart the dungeons, having used most of their potent spells and mostly whole of limb, and took with them 76,000 GP in treasure. They later arranged the ransom of their companions for 4,000 GP (in addition to the loss of the magic items they had been carrying).

In the Great Southern Ocean, a small group of explorers travelled to the island of Taru to take some uninitiated adventurers into the well explored upper depths of the Ruins of Thon. Bishop Johns, warrior Orlok, and pilferer Bellabane led the expedition; with them went curate Bung, theurgist Clickham, and 3 veterans, an acolyte, and a seer.

On the first level of the Ruins, they demonstrated to the newcomers the standard procedures of dungeon exploring -- listening at a door, forcing the door open quickly, and surprising the occupants with a little luck. In this case, the inhabitants were 9 orcs, which were speedily dispatched but did manage to seriously wound Brother Bung. Later when they encountered a group of 11 ghouls, bishop Johns showed the usefulness of a strong religious aura in dealing with loathsome undead.

Proceeding to the second level, they wandered through various rooms which had obviously been ransacked before until they stumbled upon a pair of trolls. Luckily the trolls failed to hear the clanking of the groups' weapons and armor over the sound of their own munching, enabling the group to surprise, web, and kill the creatures with minimal damage. More wandering brought them into contact with 3 wights. The wights were also slain, but Bellabane was hit in the fray and felt his life force ebb slightly.

Entering another room, they came upon a group of fierce fighting-men. The seer tried his first spell, a sleep spell, but only one of the fighters fell unconscious; meanwhile a robed figure with the fighters gestured and all of the group's own low level people swooned to the dungeon floor. Clickham tried to Charm the robed figure, but failed, and then himself fell victim to a Charm. The few remaining members of the group wisely decided to lay down their weapons and throw themselves to the mercy of the neutral party. The man in robes said he was the Keeper of the Second Depth in the service of H.E.R., ruler of Thon. He asked why his room had been invaded, and much stammering was heard from the group. The man, however, generously allowed them to depart after "requesting" half of their treasure as a fine for their trespass.

Wandering further without much success, the younger members, except for the bard, decided to leave the group and try their own luck. The rest of the group continued on, finally defeating four armored fighters for needed treasure and experience, then ascended to the surface and returned to Rythlondar. Sad to report, none of the brash youngsters has ever been seen since, and they are presumed dead. One wonders what lessons they learned, and at what cost

September, 2776

As September arrived, a group of ten experienced adventurers gathered for a visit to the Ruins of Thon: superhero Ragnar, pathfinder Athelfrar, paladin-hero Anrad, elf hero/magician Elessar, bishop Johns, bishop Fernando, lama Benelux, sorcerer Kodiak, warlock Sondin, and hobbit pilferer Bellabane.

Descending to the 6th depth, they placed strength spells upon the fighters and began their exploration. The first door opened into an art gallery of no worth. Behind the second door they heard the scraping of a heavy body, so they broke down the door and saw a 9-headed hydra before them. Kodiak cast a Charm Monster, and the hydra almost crushed him in adoration of its new master. Ragnar's sword Quicksilver detected a secret door in the room, which led to a treasure chest. As they returned to the hydra's room with the small loot, they encountered 3 chimerae. The battle was joined before the magic-users could use their spells. Pilferer Bellabane hid in the shadows and worked his way behind one of the creatures while 2 clerics occupied the monster's attention, then struck the creature a deadly blow and killed it with the help of the clerics. The fighters meanwhile fought the other 2 chimerae. Datan delivered the mortal blow to one, and Elessar's sword of cold struck the other's death blow. The group paused to rest and let the clerics perform their healing arts.

The next door led to a passageway, but as they tried to proceed, a fierce wind blew them back. With strength, perseverance, and ropes, they made their way to a sheltered spot at the far end of the passageway. Finding another secret door, they entered a room containing a hydra with 8 sinuous necks and a head belching flames at the end of each neck. The entire party was badly seared by the creature's flames, but the fighters closed and slew the hydra in a long battle. Quicksilver did its work well, and severed several heads, including the last. A modest treasure was found buried in the floor, which they collected before resuming their march to new areas.

The next door they listened to after traveling several corridors revealed human voices on the other side. The group entered and surprised 2 fighters and 2 magic-users in their quarters. Everyone attacked to subdue rather than to injure. Ragnar was near one of the robed figures, whom he struck with the flat of his sword and Quicksilver charmed the man into submission. The other magic-user and a fighter surrendered, but the other fighter disappeared. Ragnar quickly told Athelfrar to guard the door and hold it closed, and began to make a sweep of the room with locked arms, cursing their lack of a detect invisible spell. At last the fighter reappeared as they reached the far end of the room and surrendered. After questioning the captives, they tied 3 of them up securely and departed with the fourth, an enchanter, charmed by Quicksilver. He led them to a tiled room containing a chest. Bellabane tried the chest first, and went blind, Elessar fell asleep, and Ragnar also lost his vision while emptying the chest of its valuable contents.

They continued on, passing by Keshi's Beauty Botique, through a room of wine barrels, into a room containing 6 wyverns. A bolt from Sondin felled one, and an icy blast from Elessar's cold wand felled 2 others. Kodiak held yet another. The rest had to be slain in combat, but the charmed hydra died from a poisonous sting.

The next room was only 20' square, with mirrors paneling one wall. It seemed empty, with no other doors. The strange room puzzled them, but they were unwilling to break the mirrors. Anrad therefore used the special clairvoyant ability of his sword and envisioned a huge hydra beyond the mirrors, and the fact that he could see the group as well meant that the mirrors were one-way glass. Using another doorway, they then surprised the hydra, hit it with a lightning bolt and a charge of the cold wand, and Ragnar then killed it with a cast of his spear into the last head.

Using a wizard eye, they scanned a portion of the vicinity, and decided to attack a group of 6 balrogs. With a haste spell on themselves (and a Slow on the balrogs, though only one was affected), they burst in and used the cold wand. Bellabane smuck around again, and attacked the slowed one from behind and killed it. Anrad was not so lucky, and fell unconscious. Elessar slew yet another as Fernando took a

mortal blow. Behind Fernando stood the charmed enchanter, who had to fight for his life in a hopeless effort and was cut down in one fiery blow by the balrog. Athelrar then killed the one he was fighting, and turned to help Elessar kill another one. Bellabane, however, fared not as well against his second, as it turned and almost slew him. Ragnar struck and killed the last balrog. Fernando healed Anrad and Bellabane back to consciousness, as the rest of the party gathered the treasures. They then left the dungeons, bearing the scars of their battles but far richer.

A party of younger adventurers gathered on the wharves of Rythlondar, resolved to investigate the rumored dungeons of Apo Kalyps on the island of Ile-Mot Szander. In the group were dwarf swordsman Balin, scout Achilles, warriors Orlok and Lancefron, hero/theurgist pixie Tinkerbelle, half-elf Knomix, curate Bung, vicaress Sermonet, seer Gedenbil, Baldur the bard, and another seer, along with a hero charmed by Knomix. Boarding a ship, they reached the island in a few days travel and they soon located the dungeons on the western coast.

They entered cautiously. Reaching the first door on the corridor, they broke it down and entered a room. The only occupant was an old man in rags lost in meditation. They interrupted his meditation to question him, paid him for the damage to his door, and for more gold he told them the location of several treasures in the dungeon. As they left, they heard a strange, cackling laugh from the old man.

They then headed west down the corridor, pausing to kill 4 giant ants in a brief battle, then continuing to the next door. Inside the room were 6 goblins, 2 of whom fled out different doors before the party could stop them, the remaining 4 were easily slain. The goblins had very little gold, but Knomix found and opened a secret door. In the corridor beyond stood 15 goblins and 10 hobgoblins. Knomix cast a Sleep which felled the hobgoblins while the rest of the group attacked the goblins. As they fought, however, more goblins and hobgoblins suddenly came through the door behind them! With more Sleep spells and swordplay they evened the odds, but the goblin king shouted over the din of battle that they should leave his city. They ignored the command, then heard the sound of more goblins approaching, and their wounds and weariness made their courage fail and they fled the battle. Fortunately, the goblins had had enough, and did not pursue. The party wandered the corridors and smashed down occasional doors, disposing of 5 stirges, a ghoul, an ochre jelly, and 3 centipedes, while gaining a modest sum of gold and some magical items.

After evading several groups of fighters and magic-users more powerful than themselves, they entered a room containing 6 skeletons which were dispelled by Bung's holy aura. This led to a second room, in which 5 zombies were similarly dispelled, and then a third room from which 4 ghouls fled in terror. They entered the next room, and were confronted by 3 evil priests and 3 wights. The wights fled, and Sermonet fled one of the priests, but the other 2 priests disappeared and the room was plunged into darkness. After a time, their illumination returned and they searched the room. A chest contained some gold, a gem was found in the hand of a statue, and a closet contained a scroll and a broom. After much experimenting, they discovered that the broom would fly given the proper command, but controlling the broom was difficult until they had discovered the various commands necessary.

Returning to the surface, they killed 5 berserkers and 4 giant snakes, and acquired a powerful neutral sword, which they sold to a group of dwarves. Only one person was lost -- a seer who foolishly tried to fight the berserkers in hand-to-hand combat.

Morbelux, a young acolyte seeking adventure, recruited a party to accompany him to the Ruins of Thon with much cajoling the lure of riches. Thus he gathered from the Watch dwarf-hero Ibb, swordsman Tai Pan, warriors Gamli and Kassock, and elf Jabbar, from the temple of Tynghod bishop Ydol the Pious, and from the Guild thaumaturgist Clickham and conjurer Kondrus. Filling out the group was outpurse Alexa, who promised to behave herself in the company of such lawful and good companions.

Reaching the Ruins, they descended to the unexplored third depth. The first room contained 3 ogres, whom they dealt with easily. Flushed with their initial success,

they searched the untidy room for treasure, but to no avail. They were about to depart when Alexa remembered to search the monsters' bodies, which yielded gold and a gem. The party then moved on, passing through several doors, until they came upon a large room, empty save for a chest in the center. Reaching the chest proved to be a problem for they discovered an invisible maze thwarting their efforts. After cautiously negotiating the maze, despite several dead ends, they looted the chest of its precious contents and prepared to quickly retrace their path to the door -- only to discover that the maze had changed behind them! Once again they had to feel their way in and out of blind alleys until they found their way out, breathing a sigh of relief that no monsters had come upon them while lost in the maze.

The next room seemed silent, but when the door was opened they saw a group of balrogs. Luckily, the balrogs were surprised and the group had time to beat a hasty retreat. In another room, Kondrus Slept 10 gnomes, but they found no treasure. Jabbar located a secret door, behind which was a tiled floor with a circle in the center. One of the brave souls stepped on the circle, causing a net to fall upon him. His companions released him unharmed, and the room seemed to contain nothing else.

Their next room contained 2 displacer beasts, and the fight was on. Tai Pan, Ibb, and Gamli were wounded, but the beasts were killed and a small treasure was found. They crossed the room to an opposite door, and went into a seemingly empty room. As they reached the center of the room, however, an invisible stalker struck. Kondrus eventually managed to web the creatures so they could be "seen" and slain, but not before Ibb, Gamli, and Kassock had taken more wounds. In other rooms they found a small black box with a lever, which Alexa reluctantly opened with the rest cowering near the farthest wall (it turned out to be a jack-in-the-box, making them feel rather foolish), some giant snakes which the fighters slew, and some undead dispelled by the clerics. Returning to the hallway, they heard ponderous footsteps coming behind them and decided the better part of valor was to flee. They ran down the twisting corridor, in the vain hope of eluding the monsters behind them, when they heard more footsteps in front of them around the next corner. Not wanting to be caught in the middle, they ducked through a side door and found themselves on a stairway down! Jabbar listened at the door and reported that the groups outside were ogres and bugbears, who went off to a feast together. They were relieved that they weren't to be the feast.

Feeling a bit frayed, they decided to try one last room. The attempt was not very profitable, for the room contained 2 rather unfriendly giants, and the group shouted profuse apologies for disturbing them as they closed the door and prepared to run. The giants didn't pursue, but 5 huge boars came charging down the dark corridor. The fighters had time to set their spears as the boars charged, and Tai Pan impaled one. A furious battle followed in which Ibb, Gamli, Jabbar, and Kassock fell and Ydol, Tai Pan, Alexa, and Morbelux were wounded. Finally they seized an opportunity to escape the wereboars, ran to the staircase, had an inconclusive running encounter with a gargoyle, and reached the surface without further harm carrying 10,000 GP.

Back in Rythlondar in late September, a group of experienced adventurers banded together for a visit to the unexplored 7th depth of the Weir. Leading the group were holy patriarch Pontifus, sorcerer Fazzlefart, enchanters Od and Charmen, and mighty champion Barnabas. They took with them champion Grobar BenGon, myrmidons Aviyak and Ervandra the dwarfess, and vicar Dod.

Arriving at the 7th depth, the first room was found to be an elevator, which finally redeposited them back on the level they sought. They found a huge corridor 50' wide stretching into darkness, with doors along the sides at regular intervals. In traversing the length of the corridor, they fought and killed a 7-headed fire breathing hydra, which scorched them slightly, a common 7-headed hydra, 2 rust monsters, and a wandering gorgon, spotted before it was within the range of its fearsome breath.

At the end of the corridor, they entered a large anteroom to a Demon Temple of Gragorn. Using Faz's wizard eye, they observed an unholy rite taking place within the temple itself, and wisely decided not to interrupt the ceremony. They then turned

to a side room off the corridor, and surprised and slew 4 manticores lurking inside.

The next door down the corridor led to a square room with five slimy steps leading to a small level area in the center. They were too wary to be caught easily, and threw a silver piece into the center area. The coin vanished through the floor, and they cautiously made their way around the steps to the opposite wall, where they discovered a secret door. Beyond lay another room containing 2 basilisks, but their luck held and the basilisks were surprised and died before they could turn their baleful glances upon the group. After loading the modest treasure, they passed through an empty room to a cavernous room containing an 11-headed fire-breathing hydra, which they didn't surprise. They defeated the monster, but suffered grievously from its fiery breath and bites. Among its treasure were many gems and some jewelry, so they decided their gains sufficient for the day's efforts, and began the long trek to the surface. On their way up they defeated an invisible stalker and 2 salamanders which attempted to prevent their departure. They had gained 86,000 GP as well as a suit of armor 2 (given to Grobar who lacked any magic armor) and a crossbow of accuracy (given to Ervandra).

October, 2776:

The first expedition to be organized in October was gathered together by paladin-swashbuckler Anrad Datan in his feverish quest to root out Evil, with an occasional detour for plunder to finance his warlike enterprises. With him went pixie hero/theurgist Tinkerbell, hero Tai Pan, $\frac{1}{2}$ elf swordsman/seer Knomix, dwarf warrior Gamli, warrior Lancefron, curate Bung, vicarress Sermonet, adept Morbelux (co-leader despite his tender years), conjurer Kondrus, and seer Benzene. Tagging along was hobbit-footpad Umbar, whom Datan tolerated for his obedience to lawful precepts.

Their goal lay in the Weir, upon the 3rd depth. Datan desired to learn who now occupied the old quarters of the evil Yldog, recently defeated in the wilderness. In reaching Yldog's sanctum, they killed an evil party of fighters, clerics, and magic-users with less ability and experience than themselves. Reaching Yldog's quarters, they found 4 trolls who put up a good fight and inflicted many wounds before being subdued. From there they wandered the corridors until they came upon the door to the Treasure of Labyr ((see R.C.#3 for a previous expedition under Pontifus)). Undaunted by the warning above the door, Datan led his group into the labyrinth. Those wishing a map of the numerous dead-ends should contact Datan, for he found most of them, along with a plethora of scavengers who frequent the passages. One gelatinous cube was found to contain a ring, which Datan put on. Datan refused to test the ring, then refused to follow the group, seeming rather determined to explore a dead-end from whence they had just come. It dawned on his companions that he was being very contrary, so they ordered him not to follow them, which, of course, he disobeyed with a surly countenance. A short while later they encountered an ochre jelly, and, being exasperated by Datan's predicament, they shouted for Datan not to touch the ochre jelly. Datan elbowed the others aside and thrust his left hand into the jelly, and howled in pain — the jelly had consumed the 3 small fingers on his hand, and with the center finger had gone the ring. "gee, I'm sorry Datan" said Brother Bung, "I thought it was Black pudding and would only eat the ring...." It was fortunate the ring was on Datan's left hand rather than his sword hand, and that he chanced to plunge the left hand into the jelly. Cured of his curse, Datan resumed leadership, muttering his feeble Paladin curses at the loss of his fingers. They eventually found the central treasure room, and the chests filled with silver left behind by the earlier group. Datan was by now ready to utter some awesome curses, when Knomix discovered a false bottom on one of the chests, and inside were 64 gems overlooked by the earlier party. Thus they made their way back to town with a goodly treasure.

By October, Charmen was ready to undertake the mission to rescue Igburff from the evil Temple of Shar's. In her small band were only superhero Ragnar, with Quicksilver and his mighty spear, ranger-warrior Athelfrar bearing Magecutter, patriarch Benelux with his snake staff won from Yldog, bishop Ydol, sorcerer Kodiak with a potent scroll, Alexa the feminine sharper, and Charmen herself with a wand of cold and a scroll. She had spent the previous week casting Invisibility spells upon the small ship she had purchased for the journey to the island of Kerwylon.

The small group returned 2 weeks later with Igburff and a charmed priestess of the temple and a small amount of treasure. They related the tale of their landing on the eastern shore unseen, then ambushing and capturing a temple patrol along the road to gain needed information. With the female warriors charmed by Quicksilver, it fell to Ragnar to conduct the questioning, which he seemed to do with relish and a noted demand to question them alone in secluded places, much to Charmen's disgust. Then Benelux inscribed the symbol of the flaming wheel in the roadway to lure out the defenses, a tactic which was partly successful.

Using the magic carpet and another invisibility spell, they flew unseen to an unused shrine near the temple, managed to free Igburff and charm the female bishop in charge of the prisoners, and then attempted to enter the Temple itself in stealthy fashion. In the endeavor, however, they unwisely attacked 2 guards and the sound of fighting alarmed the temple. They tried to push on to the chambers below the temple, but a defender with a Fear wand panicked half their party and the remainder had to follow their comrades in flight. Thus they returned, but felt their task unfinished.

A larger high-level party traveled to the Island of Taru to further explore the Ruins of Thon: patriarch Pontifus, lama Fernando, bishop Johns, sorcerer Sondin, elven hero/enchanter Elessar, hobbit pilferer Bellabane, superhero Grobar the silent, and champion Barnabas with his mighty sword Tingel. They first went to the "Lady Luck" room on the 5th level and spent over an hour gambling. They gained many items, most of them worthless, then returned to the surface to bury all the items for safe-keeping. They decided to mark the spot by burning a (green!) bush on top -- luckily there weren't any monsters near at hand to spot the beacon of smoke that resulted!

They then returned to the 6th depth, encountering 2 gargoyles on their descent which were slain by Grobar and Barnabas in the front rank with only slight wounds. Reaching the desired level they proceeded about 100' down the corridor when they heard man-type footsteps close behind them. Barnabas turned, saw men in plate armor and one robed figure, and shouted for Sondin to hit them with a lightning bolt. As the brilliant flash died and their eyes readjusted to the gloom, they saw 2 of the fighters still standing and one very angry robed man pointing his finger back at them. The corridor air was rent with an even more powerful bolt of lightning, and this time it was their own party with only 3 badly-hurt people standing: Grobar, Barnabas, and lama Fernando. The opposing pairs of fighters closed for combat, while Fernando and the magic-user tried to hold and charm each other unsuccessfully. In the melee, the fighters were almost evenly matched in strength and wounds, but Grobar was the first to fall when struck for the second time, and Fernando was forced to go to Barnabas' side to prevent his opponents from surrounding him. Meanwhile the magic-user was scratching his head and cursing his lack of more offensive spells (lawful MU's aren't the only ones who use up their spells in previous actions), then awaited the outcome of the melee. Barnabas struck down his opponent, but he was too late to save Fernando who took a mortal sword slash and fell to the floor. The combat between Barnabas and the last opponent waxed long, but Barnabas' strength prevailed with Tingel's power, and he struck down the opponent with a last mighty blow. The magic-user saw the last of his fighters die, and ran into the darkness much faster than Barnabas could hope to pursue. After resting, Barnabas dragged his comrades' bodies into an empty side room without any other doors, then sealed the door and spiked it shut. Having done his best to preserve their bodies for resurrection, he returned to Rythlondar and sought out Benelux and new lama Ydol. They returned to the Ruins to attempt to raise them, but Pontifus and Johns could not be Raised despite their efforts.

THE LIST OF ADVENTURERS ALONG THE RIVER RYTH, AND ELSEWHERE (End of October, 2776)

Lvl	Character	Player	Abilities	HP	Magic
F-8	Ragnar Lodbrok	John Van De Graaf	15-12-16-7-12-11	49	Sword+2, A&S, carpet
F-8	Grobar BenGon	Steve Walquist	14-11-13-10-10-9	40	Armor+2, potion
F-7	Barnabas	Tom Burkacki	18-11-16-10-15-14	39	Swd+2, A&S, potions
R-6	Athelfrar	Barry Lynon	16-14-13-16-12-8	55	Swd+1, S+3, potions
P-6	Anrad Datan	Ray Ulman	14-9-17-12-14-18	24	Swd+1, A&S, amulet
F-6	Adolph Aviyak	Rick Loomis	15-11-9-12-7-12	34	Armor+2, potion
F-6	Ervandra(Dwf)	Kathy Wood	17-12-9-10-10-9	26	Axe+2, x-bow, scroll
F-4	Tai Pan	Jeff Shaw	11-11-8-16-9-10	27	Armor+1
F-4	Hagbut	Jon Ansley	14-9-8-12-14-14	21	Axe+1
F-4	Ibb (Dwf)	Jerry Kniaz	9-11-12-14-8-11	26	Shield+1
F-3	Gamli (Dwf)	Will Neibling	14-9-11-13-14-12	17	
F-3	Balin (Dwf)	Sid T.	14-10-10-13-8-16	18	Spear+3, Shield+1
F-3	Lancefron	Rich Orbain	10-11-10-10-7-12	19	
F-3	Orlok	Drew Neumann	13-5-11-6-15-10	13	Arrow Ogre-Slaying
R-3	Achilles	Dave McCormick	14-12-14-15-5-16	17	Shield+3, 5 Arrows+1
F-2	Kassock	Steve Hamilton	12-10-8-13-14-14	8	
F-1	Carandeer (Dwf)	Jim O'Dowd	17-9-15-11-13-10	4	
F-1	Khrest (Elf)	John Downing	15-8-9-8-12-7	3	
F-1	Xertar	Ted Kordus	16-12-10-11-10-10	2	
F4/M7	Elessar(Elf)	Greg DeCesare	13-11-10-18-13-9	24	Swd+1, A, Wand, etc
F4/M4	Tinkerbelle(Px)	Dennis Daughetee	9-12-12-11-9-8	20	Bow, potion, scroll
F3/M3	Knomix (1/2 Elf)	Greg Vansteel	16-13-13-14-9-13	19	5 Arrows+1
F1/M1	Xenodink (Elf)	Matt Schaut	12-15-13-10-12-11	7	
M-9	Kodiak	Bob Carey	8-13-6-9-12-12	22	Ring+1, Scrolls, Wand
M-9	Sondin	Greg Kniaz	10-17-12-9-13-10	24	(wiped out)
M-9	Fazzlefart	Paul Wood	9-15-6-8-11-14	25	Bracers, Helm, Bag, etc
M-8	Charmen	Laurie VanDeGraaf	10-16-11-13-16-13	25	Ring+1, Wand, Scrolls
M-8	Oi	Bob Karalunas	16-17-8-18-11-17	23	Dagger+1, Scrolls
M-5	Clickham	Tim McGraw	12-14-12-7-12-12	14	Potion
M-3	Harad	Roger Meyers	10-12-11-12-9-11	17	
M-1	Tur Key	Bob Green	6-12-9-14-16-11	3	
M-4	Kondrus	John Ulman	11-14-7-9-15-15	11	
M-3	Benzene	Bill Thomas	13-15-8-7-11-10	10	
M-1	Gedenbry	Kurt Vansteel	9-16-7-11-13-8	1	
M-1	Iskar	Al Burkacki	13-18-8-11-11-10	3	
C-8	Benelux V	Len Scensny	11-9-14-11-12-9	29	Staff, Ring+1, etc
C-7	Fernando	Barry Bailey	7-7-18-11-18-4	30	Mace Disr., A+1, Scrls
C-7	Ydol the Pius	Guy Hostetler	7-10-16-14-7-16	28	Mace+2, Shield+3, Stf
C-5	Sermonet	Sharlotte Neibling	9-9-14-7-8-15	19	Broom
C-5	Great Dod	Al Schlisinger	7-8-12-11-12-9	20	
C-5	Brother Bung	Mike Bartnikowski	9-12-13-10-15-10	18	Potion, Elven Boots
C-3	Morbelux	Paul Michaud	10-10-15-7-16-8	13	Potion
C-1		Glenn Brooks	11-8-13-10-9-8	6	
(C-8)	Pontifus	Tony Kniaz	12-7-14-7-12-14	34	Armor+1 - dead)
T-7	Bellabane (Hob)	Eric Vansteel	10-11-10-8-15-13	21	(wiped out)
T-6	Alexa (1/2 Elf)	Irene Ulman	10-10-9-12-15-12	17	Scroll, Boots
T-4	Catrick	Pat Champion	6-12-13-10-14-12	12	
T-3	Umbar (Hob)	Pete Shaw	7-8-11-12-11-11	8	
T-1	Donalbane (Hob)	Jeff Vansteel	11-8-10-11-14-8	3	
Bard-2	Baldur	Bob Archibald	16-14-8-15-7-14	10	Elven boots

(October, 2776 continued).

Back in Rythlondar's Golden Froth tavern, Fazzlebart and Od discussed their possible plans for their free time near the end of the month. After agreeing that they had no business going down to the 7th depth of the Weir in the previous month, they recalled that they had a score to settle with a certain fire giant dwelling on the 5th depth, who had crisped their party badly back in July. Enthused with the prospect of teaching the giant not to be so rude to intruders (and of making off with his expected treasure hoard), they gathered the other tavern patrons who had missed going on other adventures in October.

It was a small band of six in all: sorcerer Faz, warlock Od, dwarf-myrmidon Ervandora, myrmidon Aviyak, dwarf-hero Ibb, and Great Dod the vicar. They quickly made their way through the twisting corridors and stairways of the Weir to the 5th depth, having travelled the path often in the past, and got through the central statue room with only slight delays obeying the imperious gestures and commands of the statue. Finally they reached the giant's door. Faz cast his wizard eye, and Od ESP'ed. They detected the giant and his two hell hounds, alerted by the party's scent or sound in the hall. They cursed the ill fortune that surprise was now impossible, and decided to go ahead with their planned attack. Aviyak burst open the door with Ervandora ready to fire her magic crossbow and Ibb ready to throw his hammer. Behind them stood Faz and Od, who each aimed a lightning bolt at one of the hell hounds. The bolts discharged, killing both hounds. Unfortunately Ibb and Aviyak were also standing in the path of the bolts and very nearly died themselves.

The giant was a little upset at all this, and two more bolts which hit him as he crossed the room did nothing to improve his disposition. He reached the magic-users and struck Od with his huge sword, doing 26 of 28 points damage. The mages dropped back, and the wounded fighters stepped forward to ward off the giant. The giant then hit Aviyak as the mages frantically cast both a Fear and a Charm Monster at the brute. The spells seemed to be taking effect, but Ervandora struck the staggering giant and killed it.

They then rested, cured what wounds they could, and proceeded to begin a search of the room. The giant had 1,000 GP in his large purse, and 17 gems intact in a smoldering chest hit by one of the bolts. The search was interrupted by 4 giant scorpions who blundered into the room. With everyone searching for treasure, they were taken by surprise and the scorpions charged to the attack. A large pincer caught Ervandora and crushed her badly, while another did slight damage to Aviyak. Several stings were delivered, but the poison did little damage. Meanwhile the party recovered and struck back effectively, finally killing the scorpions and having one charmed. With the three fighters down to 10 hit points between them, they decided to leave the dungeons immediately and returned to Rythlondar with what treasure they had gained.

John Van De Graaf
37343 Glenbrook
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL

As was foretold, this, the seventh Chronicle to be wrested from the mighty limbs of Yggdrasill itself, contains various quaint maps, obscure legends, improbable tales, and even an esoteric discourse on theology (or perhaps philosophy?). The painstaking compilation of such an opus has led to an unfortunate result: the reproduction of the maps by the unfathomable mysteries of electrostencil has caused the cost of this issue to double. This issue therefore costs 60¢, and subscribers will be charged for 2 issues. All other issues, except for those before #4, cost 30¢ each.

Chief Scribe and Slavedriver: John Van De Graaf, 37343 Glenbrook, Mt. Clemens, MI 48043. Other authors/artists/demons are credited for their contributions where appropriate.

(Editor's Note: Soon after Benolux V departed from Esmigard to establish his castle-temple in the eastern wilderness, a curious scroll was found in the Great Hall of Esmigard by a scullery maid. The masters of the castle being absent, the maid delivered the scroll to the Steward, who was unable to decipher the hieroglyphs and so in turn delivered the scroll to Patriarch Pontifus of the Nameless Ghods. Pontifus perused the scroll quickly, shook his head sadly, muttered something about rampant ghodlessness, then sank into meditation and refused to say more. The Steward, being a rather intelligent person, immediately recognized that the scroll must have been the work of holy Benolux himself, and took the scroll to the Shrine of the Flaming Wheel in Rythlendar, where, for a slight reward, he deposited it in the hands of one of the disciples tending the Wheel. Benolux rejoiced to find the scroll when he returned from the wilderness, and its contents did not remain a mystery for long. Forsooth, the scroll was the text of Benolux's next sermon, and explains much about his actions.)

Some Notes On the ORDER OF THE FLAMING WHEEL, As
Put Down by BENELUX, Patriarch, Fifth in the line
of Champions of the Order (by Len Scensry)

The Order of the Flaming Wheel naturally traces its beginnings to the dawn of creation, the beginning of time, when all was Chaos (as distinguished from the modern chaos, which is really of a minor variety). There were no men, gods, or any kinds of creatures, nor worlds, nor stars, nor anything which we today could recognize. Neither were there laws, nor reason, nor feeling.

At some point, Chaos took on some form of order. There was no reason for this; it just happened, and may unhappen at any time. Thus the universe we live in came into being. The universe has the shape of a tremendous wheel of fire. We live at the wheel's center, and its motion protects us from the flames of the rim.

One of the ruling forces of our universe (not forgetting that all came from nothing and will return to nothing) is the power of will and choice. These are what keep the flaming wheel in balance and constantly spinning. The will to law is countered by the will to chaos, the will to good by the will to evil. All make their choice as to where they stand on these issues, even the lowest worm or unthinking plant -- it is part of the nature of all life.

It is the job of the Order to make this choice clear. Since the members of the Order also must choose, we have picked Good as our expression of will, and seek conflict with all that is evil -- this will keep the universe in balance. We could have chosen Evil with the same results.

We have been accused of having an amoral theology which takes no account of the true meaning of life. This is not true. Our theology holds that the true meaning of life comes from the principle of will and choice -- it is whatever we make it, by deciding

(Notes on the Order of the Flaming Wheel, continued):

so. For the Order, the meaning of life is to fight evil, asking no quarter, and giving none.

The Order itself was founded a short time ago by the first Benelux, now called "the Wise", who was the first to see clearly the structure of the universe. Alas, he was slain by orcs soon afterwards, but he had by then gathered a group of followers, who chose another champion by lot. This has continued until the present Benelux was selected, and will continue in the future should he perish. The Order is now well established, and there is little chance that the Rythlondar-Roiligard region will be without a Benelux.

Amen.

A BRIEF, BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EASTERN LANDS

- by John Van De Graaf

We shall not speak of the Early Days when Urth came into being and the many creatures were set upon its surface. Even the clerics cannot agree on those ancient events lost to the memory of men. The ghods, of course, tend to claim the credit for creating the world, thus claim the right to rule over the world. In view of the almost omnipotent powers possessed by the ghods, it would not be prudent for any mortal to dispute either claim. For us in this history, it is sufficient to say that many Ages came and went before the earliest event of any significance to our present Age, which was the founding of the city of Midris on the southern shore of the continent, and which begins the calendar we now use.

Before Midris was founded, all the lands which we know were sparsely settled with men, elves, dwarves, orcs, giants, and other species. Constant rivalry kept their domains and populations small. Among the human settlements, there was a powerful and influential priesthood, which preferred to keep the human factions competing among themselves. By preventing any single human king from uniting mankind, the Priesthood assured themselves of a dominant influence since they alone exercised sovereignty in each of the human lands.

In the year 0 by our present calendar, a cataclysm struck the continent of Eromon in the Southern Ocean and it vanished beneath the sea. Some say those on Eromon had defied the ghods themselves, thus causing their own destruction from the vengeance of the deities. Others, however, say that Ramitaar inadvertently stepped on that land during a celestial sport. Whatever the reason for the extinction of the land, there were some survivors.

One small band of survivors were aboard ship with Prince Othgrar when the disaster struck, and made their way in a perilous voyage to the southern shore of our continent. His voyage is recounted at great length and detail in the Saga of the Divine Wind, sung by the bards in the five day ceremony of Newyear, and need not be repeated here. Prince Othgrar and his band established the city of Midris near where they landed, and for the next five centuries the city-state of Midris struggled for survival. Midris did survive, however, and prospered as much as the Priesthood would allow.

In the middle of the sixth century, the legendary Alocer ascended the throne of Midris. A great warrior, Alocer managed to bring a measure of peace to Midris by building a small but powerful army and by winning spectacular victories over some of his more powerful rivals. In 565 King Alocer defeated the mighty Corsairs of Tartos and rid the seas of that menace. Several years of peace followed this victory, and Alocer grew restless and discontent. He turned scholar to occupy his time, frequenting ancient libraries and remote monasteries of learning, and collecting books and writings of every description. It was a harmless pastime, and his kingdom ran

smoothly without much active participation by Alocer.

In the year 472, Alocer gathered a group of his his best warriors, sages, and scribes and set sail for places unknown. Exactly one year later Alocer returned; with him was only one of his original company, a young scholar named Morlock whose frail strength and sickly constitution had made many deem him the least likely to survive any journey. Alocer related a tale of adventure, now set out in the bardic song of the Voyage of the Swan, but the true account of the journey will probably never be known. Alocer also had built a tall tower for Morlock, who formed a nameless Guild into which were drawn the brightest youths.

Two years passed before Alocer set out on his first campaign accompanied by Morlock and the Midran army. Alocer defeated the mighty Elemari in a display of his old skill in fighting, then incorporated the lands of the Elemari into his own kingdom. Morlock was sent as ambassador to the wealthy merchants of Hothven, and two months later Hothven formed an alliance with Midris which reduced Hothven to a vassal state. The Midran Empire was beginning. Further campaigns in the following years extended Alocer's rule and each enemy was added to the Empire, a rare event in those days when the victor usually contented himself with plundering the vanquished.

The Priesthood grew concerned at this rapid rise of one small city-state. They were not unduly alarmed at the possibility that Alocer could build an empire to rival their own, since it seemed unlikely that his success could continue indefinitely, but they did note that some of Alocer's stranger victories came when Morlock was with his army. In the midst of battle, Alocer's enemies would grow unusually weary, or flee in needless panic, or find a field inexplicably turned to mud in the path of their attack. They also worried that Alocer no longer paid the Priesthood adequately for the customary prayers for victory (which the Priesthood traditionally collected from both sides before and after battle), nor did he seek their benevolent advice and counsel. When Midran troops reached the Vaal River, the Priesthood decided to end the problem. They called upon the barbaric hordes of the Nyangs, roused them to a frenzy, and gathered them near the river. When the Midran army crossed in 481, the Nyangs attacked in overwhelming numbers. Alocer was slain despite the valiant defense of his army pushed to the water's edge. Morlock's rage at the death of Alocer and at the sight of Priests leading the Nyangs caused him to climb a large rock and openly use his powers of Magick. With intricate gestures and strange syllables Morlock dealt death to the Nyangs and the Priests by fire, lightning, and conjured monsters.

Magick was not unknown, but it had been limited to the recluse elves and other magical creatures. Magick in the hands of men was a clear threat to the Priesthood and the Priests placed a Ban upon the use of Magick and declared a Holy War against Midris. The Holy War lasted nine years, culminating in the final establishment of the Midran Empire under Alocer's son Califrar, and the defeat of the Priesthood.

The Midran Empire extended its borders north to the mountains and east to the sea. The Ryth River marked the western border of the Empire, and Rythlondar was founded on the site of a fishing village in 737 to guard that waterway. The Guild established by Morlock spread with the Empire, and innumerable small religions and cults followed the overthrow of the power of the Priesthood.

The Empire grew old, however, and the later Kings were little more than tyrants. The invasion of the Ringols in 1167 resulted in the death of the last adult heir to the throne, and the Grand Vizier usurped the vacant throne from the infant heir. Even though the Vizier was the leader of the Guild, many magic-users remained loyal to the throne. The ensuing struggle lasted almost 90 years, a civil war that ripped the empire apart and ended only when an even greater menace appeared. The Ringols returned, overrunning the Empire from the north to the White and Amber Mts. before Patriarch Tynghod united the warring factions in the Great Concord with the Crystal Grail. The Ringols were repulsed, and a great Citadel was built to rule the lands of the old Empire under the Concord. The Concord lasted until the Grail was broken by the demon Gragorn in 1446, followed by the Black Age until the banishment of Gragorn in 2112.

Thus came about the present age, still plagued by monsters of the Black Age and small, scattered communities spread throughout the extent of the old Empire.



A MAP OF THE KNOWN LANDS OF URTH

(Map drawn by Greg DeCesare; scale approx. 1 inch = 60 miles)

Castles:

- Esmigard - home of Ragnar and Charmon
- Orcsbane - built by Patriarch Pontifus and Elessar south of the Forest of Arn, in which lies the elf-city of Elpernon.
- Castle of the Flaming Wheel - new stronghold of Benelux now being constructed between the Weir and the Umber Woods (not shown on map)
- Castle Ghakor - located somewhere near Skull Lake, it is reportedly occupied by a very powerful, and evil, lord.
- Blackwulf Castle - home of a neutral lord fond of jousting, located north of the White Mts. (not shown on map). Visited only once by adventurers.
- Gryfus Castle - the Barony of an evil lord, who was defeated by Benelux & company recently and promised to mend his ways hereafter.
- Krung Thep - (not shown on map) rumored to lie in the delta of the Vaal River near Zagres and occupied by an evil wizard and his fell creatures.
- Temple of Mu'Tassim - (not shown) lies along the Templar River, last occupied by the unfortunate Yldog, an evil priest of Vang, slain by Benelux.

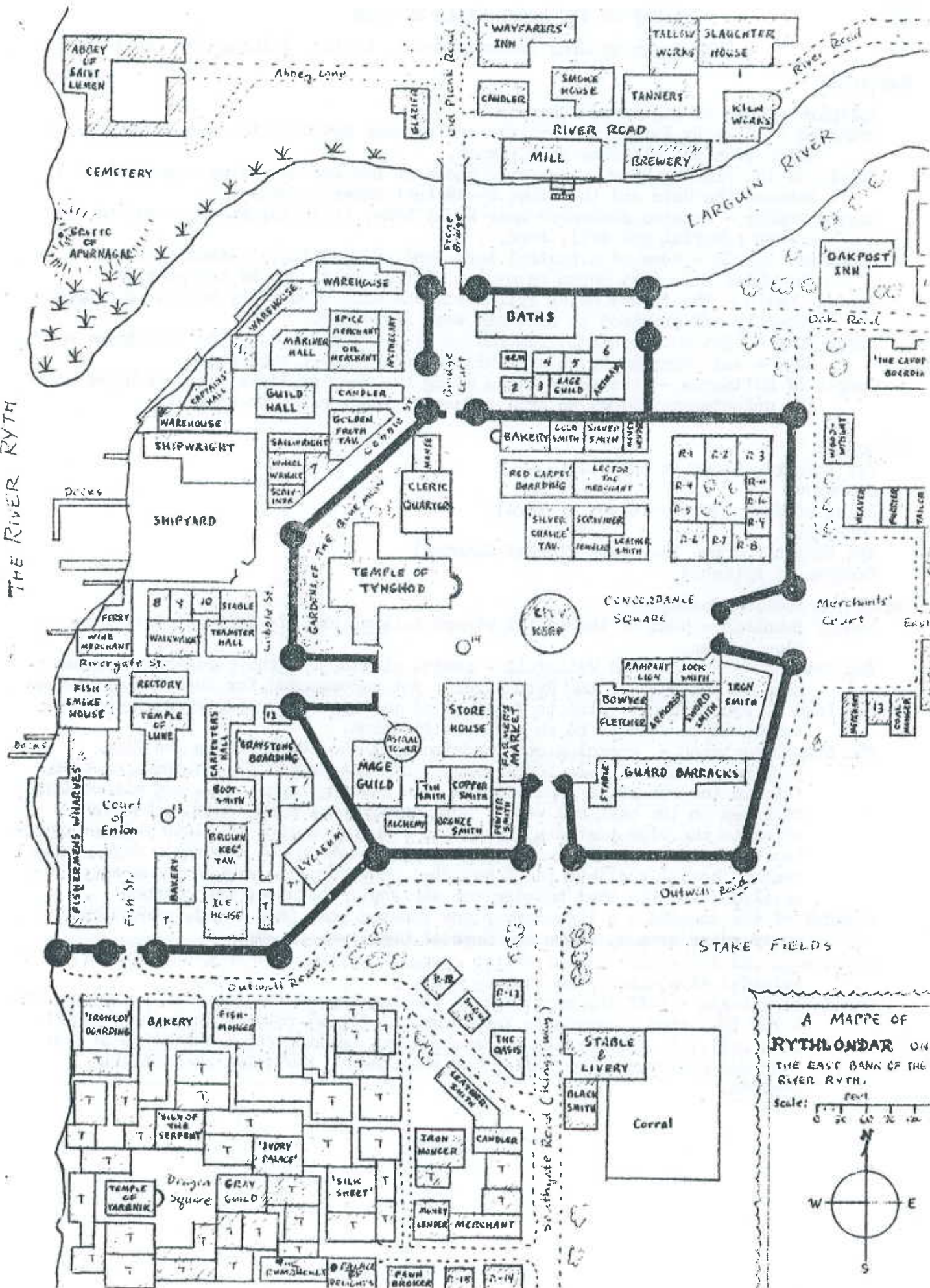
Dungeons:

- Tar Norgard, known as the Weir
- Morbundus
- Ruins of Thon (on the island of Taru)
- Kerwylon
- Apo Kalyps (on the island of Ile-Mot Szander)
- Caverns of Rythwood

Other interesting features:

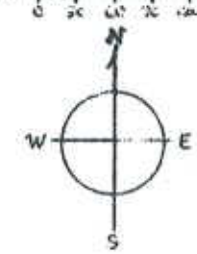
- Lonely Mountain - home of the lawful wizard Talkien and his faithful Griselda, a blue dragon
- The Nymph of the Enchanted Waterfall - awaits visitors in the northernmost mountains to the west of the Ryth River. Not recommended for the faint of heart.
- The Land of Bjornstrand - also to the west of the Ryth and reportedly in the far north, it is said to be an evil civilization.
- The Snowy Mountains - cosmologists theorize that the sky rests on the five prominent peaks of this lofty range, and that as the sky balances on this fulcrum the sun rolls from side to side causing night, day, and alternating sunrises on the east and west. More traditional cosmologists, however, cling to the view that Arn drives his flaming chariot to visit Veluria every two days and returns to his palace in the east on the alternate days. Until someone actually climbs the Snowy Mts., however, the argument may never be settled. We hope that bumping the sky would not upset the balance
- Citadel of the Concord - a legendary place located near Lake Oread, undoubtedly dusty ruins by now, where the Crystal Grail was broken.
- Rythlondar and Roilgard - sister cities along the Ryth where an unusual number of suicidal adventurers are running amok.
- The Burning Lands - (off the east edge of the map beyond the Rim Mts) a vast desert never traversed to anyone's knowledge. A legend relates that the fourth moon fell into the Burning Lands cons ago, causing the devastation of the land and destroying the Pillars of the Ghods. Now makes an excellent sandbox.

THE RIVER RYTH



A MAP OF
RYTHLONDAR ON
THE EAST BANK OF THE
RIVER RYTH.

Scale: 0 20 40 60 80 100 Feet



GUIDE TO THE MAP OF RYTHLONDAR

Abbreviations:

- R - indicates a residence; usually constructed of stone or brick.
- T - indicates a tenement or apartment house, mostly of wood construction.

Taverns - serve food and drink, sometimes offer other entertainment

- The Rampant Lion: Usually filled with rowdy off-duty guards of the City Watch and other adventurous fighters. Garth, the tavernkeeper, seems to enjoy the brawls and often joins in.
- The Silver Chalice: A frequent place of meditation by thirsty clerics. The wine is good, but the company is rather sedate and pompous.
- The Golden Froth: Does a good luncheon business with the artisans and merchants, serves only the best at prices to match.
- The Brown Keg: Thrives on the prodigious drinking habits of the fishermen and mariners. Reasonable prices if you like to listen to fish tales.
- The Cake & Ale: A mixed crowd, often frequented by adventurers and by dwarves from Kal-Kaban bringing their coal and ores to town.
- The Oasis: Another watering spot for travelers and adventurers, being on the main road south and last tavern until the Forest of Arn, where the elves brew their own strange concoctions.
- The Sign of the Serpent: Located in the tenement district, and beyond the normal patrols of the Watch, it is not a wise place to visit without specific business there, and then only with powerful friends.
- The Rumbucket: Cheapest prices make it best place for serious drinkers.

Boarding Houses - provide room and meals on monthly basis

- Red Carpet
- The Canopy
- The Graystone
- Ironcot

Inns - overnight rooms and food and drink to anyone stopping in

- Wayfarers
- Oakpost
- Silk Sheet

Numbered buildings:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. empty | 9. Lantern Shop |
| 2. Building Contractor | 10. Fortuneteller |
| 3. Engineer Guild | 11. The College of Mingora |
| 4. Pawnbroker | 12. empty |
| 5. Linguist | 13. empty building; |
| 6. Pewtersmith | Merman statue (origin unknown) |
| 7. Ropemaker | 14. Alabaster Fountain |
| 8. Glassblower | 15. Shrine of the Flaming Wheel |

Other places:

- The Ivory Palace: a notorious gambling den
- The Palace of Delights: No place for anyone looking for unicorns
- The Abbey of Saint Lumen: a cloistered priesthood under vows of silence.
- The Gray Guild: If you have to ask, you don't belong there.
- The Grotto of Apurnagal: abode of the Oracle of Tassim, if you believe her.

MELÉE PROCEDURE FOR MINIATURES

We incorporated miniatures into our D&D campaign very early. Not only do the figures add considerable color and focus to an adventure, but they also minimize arbitrariness and guesswork in resolving combat situations by depicting exactly who can do what to whom. The following is an outline of the tactical rules which we have evolved over the past two years of experimentation. We use a square grid surface with each square 1". Realists may prefer a hexagonal grid or alternating off-set square grid, but we find the simple square grid satisfactory for most dungeon situations. Our scale is 1 square equals 3', with distances rounded to the nearest 3' (thus a 20'x20' room is 7x7 squares). Only one figure may occupy a square at a time except in crry situations. Remember that this is a short outline, and the DM will have to resolve arguments and add any extra rules for the desired degree of realism; on the other hand, it is a game and excessive attention to minutiae will slow the game. We have not striven for perfect realism, only for playable balance.

Set-up and Deployment

We keep the players' figures set up in their normal marching order in a corridor sized area (3 squares wide usually). When hostile men or creatures are encountered, the physical layout of the area or room must be represented on the board. Moveable walls are quick and easy for this purpose. When the player figures are all deployed, the Dungeonmaster must determine surprise and deploy the hostile forces appropriately:

If either party is Surprised: deploy hostile figures D8 plus 2 squares away

If neither party is surprised: deploy hostile figures D20 plus 6 squares

These distances in squares are based on standard D&D encounter distances -- they often won't be appropriate for smaller dungeon rooms.

Melee Turns

Ignore the "ten melee rounds per Game Turn" rule. Instead, combat situations are simply divided into arbitrarily short periods of "real" time, which we call melee turns. Each turn simply represents the few seconds it takes for an unencumbered man to walk 12' (4 squares).

The procedure for melee begins after the DM has secretly decided what the hostile group will do. The Leader of the player group may issue a brief instruction to his group, then each player announces what his own character will be doing. The Leader may announce the action for any unplayed character in his group. Many actions require several melee turns to complete and will therefore continue in the following turns until completion unless the player decides to abort or change his action.

It is assumed that all actions occur simultaneously on a given melee turn.

Surprise prevents any action by the surprised party for 2 melee turns.

Melee Movement

A figure may move if not engaged in some other action on that turn. Movement is at the rate of 1 square per 3" of normal dungeon movement rate. Since the movement rate of most D&D creatures is a multiple of 3, it is easy to compute movement rates in melee:

Normal movement rate:	3"	6"	9"	12"	15"	18"	21"	24"	30"	36"
Squares per melee turn:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	12

- a) A figure must face in the last direction it moved at the end of the melee turn
- b) A figure may move backwards at $\frac{1}{2}$ normal speed (and can thus face backwards)
- c) A figure may charge at twice normal speed if:
 - 1. On the preceding turn it moved forwards at normal or charge rate, and
 - 2. The figure does not change direction during the charge move

Hand to Hand Combat

Figures must stop if they enter a square adjacent to a hostile figure. Combat occurs after movement each melee turn, but before missile fire and spell effects. A figure may strike at any hostile figure adjacent. It is recommended that an initiative system be used to determine the sequence of strikes in combat.

Melee actions and Turn Costs

- A. Throw weapon: 1 melee turn to throw a weapon in hand; max. range 10 squares.
- B. Rearm: 1 melee turn to rearm, and if dexterity is 11 or better may move at normal melee rate when not in combat. The DM may require additional turns or prohibit movement if the character is doing anything more complex than drawing a sword.
- C. Load or unload items: variable
- D. Fire missile weapon: 1 turn if weapon is ready. Note that bows are not carried around with arrows nocked without some risk or handicap (since "ready" includes drawing the bowstring too).
- E. Readying missile weapon: time depends on character's dexterity and encumbrance

<u>weapon</u>	<u>Dexterity</u>				
	<u>3-5</u>	<u>6-8</u>	<u>9-12</u>	<u>13-15</u>	<u>16 plus</u>
short bow, sling	5	3	2	1	1
long or comp. bow	6	4	3	2	1
light crossbow	6	4	4	4	3
heavy crossbow	8	6	6	6	5

Encumbrance effects: over 750 wt. - dexterity reduced one column
over 1000 wt - dexterity reduced two columns
1500 to 2000 - dexterity reduced three columns
no missile fire allowed if encumbrance over 2000 or if adjusted dexterity is less than 3.

- F. Spell casting & magic: time depends on spell or item, dexterity, and encumbrance

<u>Magic item or Spell Level</u>	<u>Dexterity</u>					
	<u>3-5</u>	<u>6-8</u>	<u>9-12</u>	<u>13-15</u>	<u>16 plus</u>	
wand, staff, potion						
1st & 2nd spells	4	3	2	1	1	(also Symbols & Power Word)
3rd & 4th spells	5	4	3	2	1	
5th & 6th spells	6	5	4	3	2	(also scroll spells)
7th & 8th spells	8	6	5	4	3	
9th	10	8	7	6	5	

Encumbrance effects are same as for missile weapons

1. To cast a spell, the character must have one hand free and may not move.
2. A spell may be aborted before completion and is not expended unless completed.
3. The casting of a spell is interrupted if the mage is struck by hand-held weapon.
4. The casting may be interrupted by missile hits: % is damage + total hit points
5. Spells are completed in the movement phase of the last melee turn of casting, but spells take effect at the same time as missile fire after combat.

Comments: This system tends to limit the usefulness of higher level spells in emergency situations because of the time required to cast them. A simple lightning bolt cast by a magic-user with average dexterity takes 3 turns; a fighter moving at Armored Foot rate of 6"/turn can move 10 squares (30') in 3 melee turns if he charges on the 2nd and 3rd turns. If a fighter can close with a magic-user, he is likely to prevent completion of any spells while hacking him to pieces. Thus the magic-user must get his spells off early and successfully, or else be ready to run away to fight another day.

The system also places a premium on dexterity. Encumbrance effects are included to limit the usefulness of missile firers clad in full plate armor, and to limit the use of magic-users as handy pack animals.

Proposed initiative die roll: each combatant rolls a 10-sided die, adding 1 for each point of dexterity over 10 plus 1 for each normal movement point more than his opponent. Highest die roll strikes first; equal die rolls strike simultaneously.

The Ryth Chronicle is published irregularly by John Van De Graaf, 37343 Glenbrook, Mt. Clemens, MI 48043. This issue continues the saga of the adventures along the River Ryth from where issue No. 6 left off. Back issues are available as follow: No. 1 (50¢), No. 2 & 3 (75¢), No. 4, 5 & 6 (30¢), and No. 7 (60¢). Most issues cost 30¢ each, except for special (and expensive) issues like #7, and subscriptions can be obtained by merely sending enough \$ to cover the number of issues desired. All are available from John Van De Graaf.

The Ryth Campaign is composed of a number of areas and dungeons and referees:

The Weir and lands east of the Ryth: John Van De Graaf, DM (and the Gardens)

Morbundus and lands west of the Ryth: Len Scensny, DM

The Caverns of Rythwood: Paul Wood, DM.

The island of Taru and the Ruins of Thon: Laurie Van De Graaf, DM

The island of Korwylon: Greg DeCesare, DM

The island of Ile-Mot Szander and the dungeons of Apo Kalyps: Ray Ulman, DM

plus occasional others

These tales are written by the patient scribe, John Van De Graaf, from the actual, honest-to-Gragorn records of the expeditions, with only slight embellishments.

Late October 2776: "ELESSAR RETURNETH", or "HOW THE WISH TWAS WON"

As the small ship landed at Rythlondar's docks, Elessar paced the deck in anger and frustration at the abortive descent into the Ruins of Thon. He hadn't even cast a spell or swung his sword before being zapped by the evil mage, along with most of his companions. Fortunately it had been that the tough champion Barnabas had survived to summon Benolux to raise the many dead. Elessar's resurrection was the only redeeming aspect of the whole trip -- he had lost his +3 shield and his fellow castle-dweller, the worthy patriarch Pontifus, had failed to return from Death's shadowland, and lay in state in the Temple of Tynghod awaiting burial.

Perhaps, he thought, he might salvage something of the month by paying a short visit to the nearby elf community in the forest of Arn. Although they were said to little contact with outsiders, Elessar felt sure they would welcome a visit by an adventurous elfen hero/enchanter. Besides, Elessar's own castle lay just on the other side of the forest of Arn, so it was not out of his way.

After two days travel, Elessar reached the center of the forest and stood before the swift river which circled the elfen city of Elpernon. A narrow wooden bridge spanned the water, but he observed no guards. Not wishing to innocently intrude, even on fellow elves, he hailed the woods beyond the river and requested to be taken to the elfen king. A small group of elves emerged from the far forest, and bid him enter after inspecting him closely. They then escorted him to the elfen king's residence in the center of the forest-city.

The king and Elessar spent several hours conversing of his adventures and misfortunes, and Elessar found the king's daughters to be fair and winsome. Elessar suggested that perhaps the king would like him to help guard the elf kingdom, but the king declined when Elessar asked in return that he be allowed to take a group of young elves with him to guard his own castle. As the sun neared the horizon, and the wine was taking its usual effect, the king said: "That looks like an excellent sword you have in your scabbard, Elessar, would you allow me the honor of examining it?" Elessar was proud of the lawful sword of cold which he had gained through a Wish, and drew it out for the King. "Why," said the king, "it looks just like my own Snostriko that vanished six months ago. In fact, it is Snostriko! Witness the same missing gem on the hilt and my mark on the blade!" Elessar reacted quickly to this unexpected situation, explaining how he had Wished for the sword and did not know whose sword it was, then offered to give it back to the king (concealing his reluctance rather well).

After returning the sword, Elessar pointed out that he was now without a magic weapon, which would put him in grave danger in his future battles with evil, and that he had taken good care of Snostrike and his battles had enhanced its noble reputation. The king agreed, and offered to let him pick another sword from his collection. A chest was brought in which contained several carefully wrapped swords. The king apologized that the best swords were need by the kingdom's own fighters, but perhaps one of these would lessen his loss. He offered them one at a time to Elessar, who rejected each for lack of special qualities or for excessive obsessions. Finally one sword was left, and the king handed it to him saying its qualities were unknown and the sword unused, for it was given to the elves long ago with the curious instruction that they should keep it until one came to claim it. In any event, it was Elessar's now, and he departed soon after to his own castle.

Examination and practice with his new sword soon revealed that it lacked any power of communication, thus having minimal intelligence, and was of the lowest order of enchantment for increasing his hit probability. The following day Elessar rode back to Rythlondar, and stopped to tell his sad tale to Benelux over a generous sacramental libation. After listening to Elessar, Benelux asked if he had tested the sword for Wishes. He hadn't. Together they went to the Temple of Tyngnod for Pontifus's funeral service, and Elessar put his hand on the hilt of his sword and Wished that Pontifus were alive again. From the coffin came a faint tapping, which spoiled the rest of the elegant services that had been planned for the burial.

November, 2776:

Champion Barnabas, lone survivor of the ill-fated expedition to Thon, was soon fit for an expedition the following month. After talking to Charmen, and then running into Elessar (who held him accountable for the disaster despite the fact that, but for Barnabas, none would have returned), Barnabas decided to journey to the nearby Beanstalk which was reportedly stranger, but less deadly. He gathered for the trip sorcerer Kodiak, with his ring of protection and potent scrolls, half-elf Knemix, a swordsman/conjurer, lama Fernando with his mace of disruption and magic armor, and sorcerer Sondin. The latter two had just recovered from their resurrections, and Barnabas hoped to make amends with treasure and magic. Barnabas took his sword Tingel, Slayer of Monsters, and his adamantite shield.

They found the climbing easy up the spiraling Beanstalk, finally entering the thick mist at the top until they came upon a bright landscape beside the beanstalk. Bravely stepping off the beanstalk, they found themselves in a courtyard, surrounded by a thick hedge broken by pathways leading off in different directions, and containing flowers and trees. An inscription on a sundial informed them that they were in the Gardens of Jacour, which meant nothing to them. They took the pathway to the right, which led them on to various other courtyards and garden areas. In one garden, they overcame the weird effects of the purple passion plants to salvage the magic spear previously dropped by Grobar. In another, they fought for their lives against a gigantic cobra lily which engulfed its prey in a single snap. In another they discovered a pair tree, and learned the true meaning of "a parsnip in a pair tree".

As they gave up hope of finding anyone or anything besides the horticultural splendors and monstrosities, they came upon a girl tending an empty garden, but she was of little help in understanding the nature of the Gardens for she refused to answer truthfully most of the time.

They finally descended with everyone still alive, though wounded, with over 40,000 GP in treasure, plus some useful scrolls.

Far to the south in the Ocean, a group of explorers came upon a strange, round island. Intrigued, they dropped anchor and set out to explore the small isle. They found that the only structure on the island was a Tomb of unknown, ancient origins.

In the group were:	Tinkerbell F5/M4	Sermonet C5	Clickham M5
	Tai Pan F4	Morbelux C3	Benzene M3
	Gamli F3	Baldur Bard2	Gedenburg M1
	Klarest Fl	Carandeer Fl	Id M1

In their exploration, they escaped from a pursuing iron golem, then entered an octagonal room where they killed a giant hog and gained a small treasure. In a 30' corridor, they encountered a party of evil men, killing the magic user and 9 fighters and Charming the cleric. The corridor led to a room guarded by 4 gargoyles, which were defeated in a fierce battle, and gained a substantial treasure. They decided to leave, and were chased by a group of fighters and killed a fire ant before reaching the exit. They gained 9,738 GP and several magical items.

Sorcerer Fazzle and Warlock Od decided to make yet another journey to the 5th depth of the Weir. With them went Ervandra, female dwarf myrmidon with her magic mace and crossbow, Ibb, a dwarf hero with a magic shield, ranger-scout Achilles, patriarch Pontifus, hoping the expedition will be less disastrous this month, lama Ydol the Pius with his magic mace, shield, and staff, and new acolyte Magister.

The group decided to go after the Coven of the Umber Stone, where last time they had been forced to leave when Faz had been Feeble-minded. Passing through the octagonal room with its unpredictable statue, they passed through the rune inscribed door into the corridor north. They decided to listen at the door at the end, even though they had killed the 4-armed gargoyle last time, and they heard clawed footsteps and leathery wingbeats. Thus forewarned that the creature had been ressurected, they deployed for battle, burst open the door, and slew the creature before it could land more than a single blow on Ervandra. They continued past the door to the known area of the Umber Stone Coven, and listened at the door at the end of the corridor. Hearing a heavy scraping sound, Faz and Od readied their bolt spells and Ervandra opened the door. They surprised the 11-headed fire breathing hydra and the two powerful bolts of lightning quickly dispatched the monster. A search of the room disclosed a very small treasure and no doors other than the one they had entered through. Back into the corridor they went, just in time to run into some fighters standing at the door to the Coven. A brief conversation ensued, with noticeable suspicion on both sides, until the fighters left through the door to the coven. Upon noticing that 2 of the fighters remained just on the other side of the door, the group decided that surprise would be impossible and that it would be best to go elsewhere.

On their way back to the main statue room, they tried another door, finding an empty room, but diligent and meticulous searching uncovered some gems. They returned to the main room, and chose the door marked with the rune of Joy. They followed one of the corridors to a strange room with a series of blinking lights and some buttons, which when pushed changed the light patterns but nothing else seemed to happen. In this room, Faz decided to try a wizard eye to scout the Coven, which he did quite thoroughly, and learned that surprise indeed had been lost on this trip, and that the head mage appeared to be rather impressive. They then left the Weir, pausing only to slay 3 neutral werebears who attacked them on their way out.

A brave group took ship for the island of Taru to descend to the 3rd depth of the Ruins of Then despite news of the disastrous result of the last party to enter those dread depths. The group was led by paladin-myrmidon Anrad Datan, armed with his enchanted sword, armor and shield, and was composed of swordsman Orlok with his magic bow, warrior Kassock, veteran Xertar, a half-elf whose name is lost, Vicar Bung, acolyte 'Oliman, theurgist Kondrus, medium Tur Key, and hobbitt-pilferer Bellabane. In their wandering, they stumbled into a fierce fight in an ogre den. As they fought 4 ogres, 2 more rushed in through a secret door at their side, placing them in a precarious

situation, but they eventually prevailed. They then found two mother ogres with two cubs. The mothers attacked in a frenzy to protect their cubs, and had to be killed. Anrad refused to slay the cubs and took them with the party, even though the cubs kept trying to bite their ankles. They continued on, killing a wraith, 5 hobgoblins, a hell hound, and a displacer beast. The hell hound breathed its fire upon them, which killed the ogre cubs along with Kassoek, Xertar, the half-elf, Tur Key, and 'Oliman. They gained a total treasure worth 11,250 GP and a set of magic bracers.

In early November, Benelux announced to his fellow residents of Esmigard that the time had come for him to journey into the eastern wilderness to begin construction of his own fortified temple to further the objectives of the Order of the Flaming Wheel. Athelfrar, Charmen, and Ragnar offered their assistance in the enterprise, and with them went Elessar, Aviyak, and Balin. They took the road past the Weir into a clear area between the White Mts. and the UMBERWOODS, where Benelux found a suitable site for his edifice. In the next few days, they cleared the land within 8 miles of any monsters, which were: 8 ogres, quickly killed with a fireball and lances; 12 gargoyles who tried bravely to overcome the powerful group of humans; and a number of sabertooth tigers hidden in a forested valley, with whom Benelux talked and did not slay (since it was clear that they were not evil and would not leave the valley).

With business done, and little treasure or experience gained, the group decided to explore the wilderness further looking for adventure. They had confidence in their strength and power. Benelux was a full patriarch, with the snake staff won from Yldog, his ring of protection, and a gold pearl gained on Kerwylon. Superhero Ragnar carried Quicksilver, which could Charm Person, his great spear, and his magic armor. Sorceress Charmen still had her wand of cold and ring of protection, and carried as well the brazier commanding fire elementals. She also took along her books of spells on a spare horse (being too heavy to carry otherwise). Elessar the elf, a hero/enchanter, carried his magic sword and armor, and a potion of giant strength. Ranger-wanderer Athelfrar could take even more wounds than Ragnar and was magically armed and armored. Myrmidon Adolph Aviyak and dwarf swordsman Balin also were well armed. They soon came upon a copper dragon, which, being neutral and not particularly hungry, ignored them and flew away. When they continued south to the foothills of the White Mts., they met a man in shining armor bearing a white shield upon which was a red cross.

They hailed the stranger, who would only converse in the lawful tongue, and learned that he was a paladin-lord on a quest to destroy the evil tyranny of the lord of Gryfus Castle to the south. When asked why he was so far from his quest, he admitted in an embarrassed voice that he was lost, and that he was having little luck recruiting volunteers to aid him in his mission. The party conferred, and decided that this was a worthy adventure to attempt. Thus they told him to lead them to the evil lands.

After a few days' journey, and a brief skirmish with 3 manticores, they reached a village of the evil barony. Most of the inhabitants were simple peasants and fishermen, but two were clearly overseers of the Baron although armed only with whips. The group struck quickly, subduing one overseer and charming the other. After questioning them for information, they instructed the charmed overseer to go to the Baron and report a riot in the village. As the overseer rode off, Benelux set his trap on the outskirts of the village. Several hours later, the hidden party observed a huge giant approaching along the road -- it was one of the Baron's 3 giants. Charmen and Elessar cast their deadly fireballs on target, and the giant vanished! Knowing that the fireballs weren't that powerful, they realized they must have destroyed a phantasm or illusion, though they hadn't seen any mage nearby. They decided that it would not be wise to spend the night in the village, so they departed to a nearby woods to make camp. Around the campfire, they discussed a plan of action and decided to raid the outlying villages to draw the Baron and his troops out of the castle and city where the party might hope to defeat him. As the conference ended, they heard a twig break

in the forest shadows. Benelux cast a Continual Light, but no one could be seen. They searched, and Athelfrar found footprints nearby. The captured overseer had warned that the Baron's wizard seemed to know everything happening in the lands, and it appeared that their invisible eavesdropper could have been the wizard. That night Charmen and Elessar took turns standing guard with Detect Invisible spells.

The next day, they put their plan into action. Circling the city area, they visited the villages in the western portion, capturing the overseers and occasional weak guards, until they had twelve of the baron's minions Charmed by Charmen or Quick-silver. Still they had no sign that the baron had left his castle, nor did they detect further visits by the invisible mage. With invisibility spells of their own, they sent Ragnar's flying carpet into the city with Benelux, Elessar, and Athelfrar. In the town, they visited the merchant, a distant relative of the baron, who told them a quarter of the baron's troops had marched out of the city during the previous night. The merchant, who stood to inherit the kingdom should the baron and his son be killed, told them of the strained relations between baron and the clerics of the Temple of Emulb in the city; on the other hand, Listrius was reluctant to help them since he had a monopoly on foreign trade, at which he profited more than he cared to risk. They left, and flew over the countryside looking for the baron's troops. The force seemed to have vanished from even their detect invisible spells -- they saw only empty roads and small groves of trees, no place where a sizeable force could hide. They returned to the rest of the party to inform them of the result of all this.

The next day they returned to the first village, where they again scouted the countryside and the castle. Gryfus Castle was built in the middle of a lake. The only approach being a long causeway from the city, and a frost giant guarding the roof of the castle, they still felt the castle could not be taken unless the baron and his giants could be slain first. But how to lure him out? Defeating a sizeable portion of his army might do so, but they couldn't even find the forces. The only thing left was to openly pose a threat by advancing boldly toward the city walls to draw someone out to do battle with. So they marched south, Elessar still invisible riding the carpet, with the twelve Charmed fighters making their group look a bit more impressive, in numbers if not in strength.

Halfway to the city, they came upon a severed head atop a pole in the road. At their approach, they recognized it as the head of the first Charmed overseer whom they had sent to the baron, and the head spoke to them, saying "Now you will share my doom!" at which the grove of trees on the west side of the road turned into a force of fifty mounted knights with leveled lances beginning a charge, of which half were bowmen whose long arrows began to rain upon them. The party turned to meet the attack, and Benelux began to summon an Insect Plague while Charmen began a Fear incantation. The real threat, however, was behind them on the other side of the road, where the baron's wizard (actually only a sorcerer) negated his invisibility and cast a Fireball into the midst of the unsuspecting party. The Fireball burst with 24 points of damage, killing all of the party's horses and Charmed fighters, and severely wounding the entire party. Elessar turned visible and cast a lightning bolt at the mage, and Charmen cast a Charm. Unfortunately for the baron, the sorcerer failed to dodge the full effect of the bolt and died. Charmen and Benelux's spells, meanwhile, had gone off just as the Fireball hit, and most of the knights (or their horses) and bowmen had fled in panic. Elessar chased and slew a large number of the troops from the carpet.

The action was visible from the castle ramparts, several miles away, and Baron Mandrul was incensed at the loss of fifty troops and his highest magic-user. He paced the battlements in anger and frustration at the sight of the entire enemy party still standing. Finally he called his son, a swashbuckler, and instructed him to guard the castle, for he had decided to take the giants and his personal guards out to destroy the invaders. The prince could not dissuade him from such rashness, and he gathered his guards and giants for the coming battle and marched out of the city.

Meanwhile, Benelux and his companions were tending to their wounds on the battlefield, thankful that the baron's mage had not been quite strong enough to destroy them in his ambush. They had little rest, however, for they soon observed the baron's giants and the dust of his mounted party approaching from the south. They barely had time to deploy into an open formation when great boulders hurled by the giants began to fall in their midst. The boulders were easy to dodge at that distance, but one did land upon the luckless paladin, killing him instantly. The baron was at a severe disadvantage since his only magic-user was a mere thaumaturge, whereas the party still had two fireball spells and Charmen's cold wand, which took a deadly toll as the baron tried to close the distance. In addition, Charmen succeeded in charming one of the frost giants. Only one of the other frost giants and baron Mandrul himself managed to get within striking distance. The giant was slain by Athelfrar and Gamli, and Charmen got off a successful Charm spell just as Mandrul neared her. The fight was brief, and very one-sided.

The party still wanted to get into the castle, especially since Charmen's books had gone up in flames in the ambush and she hoped to gain the sorcerer's books to replace her own. With the castle still guarded by the prince and over 100 regular troops, it was decided that ransom for the king would probably be refused by the evil son. So they decided upon a ruse to gain entry. With Mandrul and his giant under Charmen's control, they explained what he had to do: pretend that he and the giant had defeated and captured the party, and thus take them into his castle as his "prisoners". The ruse worked because the party was truly a sorry sight with their wounds and scraps of burned clothing. Once inside the castle, Mandrul took his son aside enabling Ragnar to strike him with the flat of his sword, and Quicksilver Charmed him. They proceeded to quietly loot the castle, with the help of Mandrul, his son, and the giant. News of unusual happenings in the castle had gotten out, the Temple of Emult had closed its doors and Lystrias the merchant had left town with his valuables and a small but powerful band. The adventurers had no desire to stay any longer than necessary. They instructed Mandrul to hereafter rule his domain with justice and mercy, which he of course promised to do, and departed with their wealth. Unfortunately one of the lower magic-users had made off with several of the sorcerer's magic books when he escaped to tell Lystrias, so Charmen could not replace all of her own lost books, and her companions all contributed to the purchase of replacement books.

They then returned to Rythlondar along the road with 121,000 GP worth of treasure.

December 2776:

Benelux returned to his castle site briefly to lay the cornerstone of his castle, then returned to Rythlondar to join an expedition about to descend into the Weir. In the group were superhero Grobar BenGon, myrmidon Aviyak, pixie swashbuckler/theurgist Tinkerbelle, dwarf hero Gamli, elf swashbuckler Elessar, sorceress Charmen, theurgist Benzene, vicar Morbelux, and burglar Catrick. The group descended to the seventh depth, where they explored various rooms and killed a harpie, 3 umber hulks, 4 bugbears, and two hellhounds. Passing through a corridor filled with fear gas, they came upon a troll lair where they slew the 12 trolls and gained a goodly treasure.

As they left the seventh level, they encountered the spectral form of a lich. Elessar swiftly grabbed the hilt of his sword and Wished that the lich were totally obedient to him. The lich ceased its incantation and gazed obediently at Elessar, who approached the lich and instructed it to be friendly to him and his companions. "Yes, master," said the lich, fondly patting Elessar on the head. Unfortunately the touch of the friendly lich paralyzed poor Elessar so he could not countermand his order and the lich turned to be friendly to the rest of the party. Benelux was forced to use his rod of cancellation to unknit the mighty spells holding the lich together, as both the rod and the lich turned to fine dust. They also met a vampire, upon which Charmen cast a Hold Monster enabling the fighters to easily drive a stake through its undead heart. Benzene and Aviyak died, but Benelux raised Aviyak.

Soon afterwards another party descended into the Weir to explore the 4th level. The members of the party were ranger-guide Achilles, hero Hagbut, dwarf hero Balin, elf hero/theurgist Knomix, bard Baldur, lama Fernando, curate Dod, a young acolyte, thaumaturge Clickham, conjurer Harad, medium Desmerg, and hobbitt-robber Umbar.

The first room they came to on the fourth level contained 3 giant beetles. The group heard the beetles, opened the door, and rushed into melee with the mages throwing a sleep spell. The spell had no effect, and in the ensuing battle the beetles proved to be mighty foes, for they killed Hagbut, Balin, Knomix, Baldur, Dod, Fernando, Umbar and the acolyte before being slain themselves. With only 4 of the original 12 in the party still alive, they searched the room, finding no treasure much to their chagrin, and left after a brief encounter with 2 wandering mages. The survivors summoned Benelux and Pontifus to the scene of the disaster, finding the bodies still there, and all but the acolyte survived the resurrection spells.

Ragnar decided to visit the unexplored 7th depth of the deadly ruins of Thon in the month of December, so he gathered a very strong group for the venture: Ragnar himself carried Quicksilver and a javelin of lightning gained from Mandrul, champion Barnabas bore Tingel along with his mighty spear and adamantite shield, ranger-warrior Athelfrar also carried a javelin of lightning and wore excellent armor, patriarch Pontifus had only his magic armor but hoped to acquire some new items, curate Bung had only elven boots and a potion, sorcerer Kodiak had 3 good spells on his 2 scrolls and a ring of protection, and sorcerer Sondin relied upon his spells alone.

From the circular staircase the first room contained 6 giant apes, which fought well. In the next room they found a rust monster which they defeated with magic. Then came a smaller 20' square room with a star in the tile floor and an eagle statue on the wall. They were unable to determine the significance of the room, but suspected bicentennial fireworks. The opposite door led to yet another room, this one with a lever on the wall. After listening to the other doors, Ragnar pulled the lever, causing an unknown door to open through which 2 robots emerged. Rather than fight these enigmatic metallic creatures, they fled through one of the other doors and found themselves in a cockatrice den/roost. The five cockatrices charged the party, but the javelins and bolts killed four of them. The last one ran straight at Ragnar, and he had to kill it in combat. His friends noticed an unusual amount of perspiration on the superhero's brow after the creature was slain.

As they rested and searched the nests, 4 chimerae burst into the room. The party was not surprised, but the evil chimerae inflicted many wounds upon the three fighters and two clerics before being defeated. Pontifus and Bung tended the wounds, especially those on Pontifus himself before continuing. While thus resting again, Kodiak cast a Wizard Eye to scout the nearby areas, and the party chose a door leading to an umber hulk. The hulk was surprised with its back to the door, and was slain before it could even turn around. A good treasure being gained, the party next assaulted a room with 4 mantichorae. The mantichorae were defeated with magic to conserve the fighters' strength. The next room contained 8 spectres, Pontifus turning 7 of them and the last survived the javelins to die in hand-to-hand combat with 3 nervous fighters. They then tried one last room, and killed the 2 8-headed hydras inside, then decided to leave and not press their luck further. No one died, and they had gained over 67,000 GP in coins, gems and jewelry.

Back in Rythlondar, Fazzle felt ready to tackle the 6th depth of the Weir. The group he formed consisted of himself, a sorcerer with bracers of defense, a helm of brilliance, and a bag of holding, warlock Od with 2 scrolls, dwarfess-myrmidon Ervandora with her crossbow of accuracy, dwarf-swashbuckler Ibb and his magic shield, swordsman Lancefron, lama Ydol the Pius with magic mace, shield, and staff, curate Sermonet, adept Magister Ludi, and acolyte Bede. On the 6th level, they entered a large cavern containing 2 black dragons. Two lightning bolts killed the larger dragon before it

could spit its corrosive acid, but the smaller dragon managed to strike back, inflicting 18 points of damage on Ol, Ervundra, and Ibb plus lesser wounds on some others. The young black dragon did not survive the next two lightning bolts, however, and the party began to search the lair for treasure. As they loaded the treasure into their bags, 3 giant beetles emerged from one of the narrow passages out of the chamber and attacked the group. The beetles were beaten, but the wounds they inflicted convinced the group to leave the Weir with the treasure already gained (over 61,000 GP).

January, 2777:

The new year began with an expedition to the 3rd depth of the Weir. In the group were dwarf-hero Gamli, hero Hagbut, elf-swordsman Khrest, a veteran, Baldur, vicars Dod and Sermonet, thaumaturge Clickham with a robe of protection and a potion of gaseous form, conjurer Harad, seer Gedenbry, and apprentice thief Donalbane. They made their way to the third level and entered the first room they came to. In the room was another door, above which was the inscription "The treasure of Labyr lies within, but those who enter shall not pass this way again." The significance of the inscription eluded them and they entered the door. As the door closed behind them, they discovered no way to open it from the other side -- a one-way door. It didn't take them very long wandering the narrow passages to realize that they were trapped in a maze filled with scavengers. The ochre jellies, yellow molds, green slimes, carrion crawlers and other scavengers were easily dealt with, but their supply of torches and flasks of oil steadily diminished and the occasional wounds began to reach significant proportions. With only 2 torches and a single flask of oil left, they despaired of finding the exit and returned to the one-way door where Clickham used his potion to slip through the door and open it from the other side. They had found 5,000 GP in treasure in the scavengers and Donalbane had died, so they decided to leave the dungeon and returned to Rythlondar.

Paladin-myrmidon Anrad Datan decided to investigate the strange Beanstalk planted by Benelux, Charmen and Elessar. With him went dwarf-swashbuckler Ibb, swashbuckler Tai Pan, ranger-guide Achilles, veteran Parsifal, lama Ydol with his magic mace and staff, bishop Bung, sorcerer Kodiak with his ring of protection and 2 scrolls, and theurgist Kondrus with his broom of flying.

The walk was short to the Beanstalk growing beside the road to the Weir, and the gentle spiral of the thick stem allowed them to climb easily into the mists high above the landscape. Entering the courtyard of the Gardens, they decided to explore the dense foliage of the tall tree to their right, heedless of the ominous black shapes which glided overhead. Kondrus with his flying broom was selected to fly above the hedges to scout the upper branches of the tree and survey the area. As Kondrus rose above the hedges on his broom, the huge black shapes converged on him. He tried to dive, but the great falcons reached him in a flurry of wings and talons before the party could cast any spells. Then one of the falcons flew off bearing his lifeless body and the broom in its talons. Anrad recovered from the shock of this sudden disaster, and instructed Kodiak to summon a silver dragon with one of his scroll spells. Kodiak read the spell, and in a few minutes a silver dragon appeared out of the misty entrance and asked why he was Summoned. Kodiak explained what had happened to Kondrus, then Anrad asked the dragon to help them recover Kondrus' body. The dragon rose up and peered above the hedge tops. "Where did the birds carry the body?" it asked. The party admitted they had no idea where the body had been taken. "There are many birds and many trees" said the dragon, "Even with my help, is it likely that we would not find the body and that most of you would perish in the attempt. It would be wiser for me to accompany you always; perhaps you will chance upon a less risky means of recovering your mage's body."

Thus they set off one of the pathways into the Gardens with a silver dragon instead

of the unfortunate Kondrus. The path took them to a garden of purple passion plants, where veteran Parsifal became hopelessly enamored with a lovely lilac bush and had to be carried away by the silver dragon. A short distance later, Anrad turned the group around and led them back into the same garden, instructing them to close their eyes. The intoxicating scent of the passionate blooms affected Tai Pan this time, and later Kodiak had to use his dispel magic spell (with some trepidation since the entire place emanated magic and Kodiak had no desire to unknot everything, it being a long way to solid ground beneath).

They next came into a large garden of barren soil, where they conversed with the only human they were to meet in the Gardens. She said she could not tell them where any treasures were, nor where Kondrus' body might have been taken by the falcons, but she did provide some information about the nature of the Gardens. She also gave them a seed from her small bag in exchange for a gem. They next came to a plant with 5 small blossoms. Anrad picked two of the blossoms, but both wilted as soon as he passed them to someone else. They shrugged and continued on.

After much wandering, they found some golden berries, which they picked. Next they gazed upon an oak tree in a heavy underbrush of short bushes with 3 lobed leaflets and clusters of white berries. A small wooden structure hung from one of the lower branches of the oak tree, so Anrad, Achilles, and Ydol strode through the undergrowth to examine the birdhouse. Finding only a nest, an egg, and an upset sparrow inside the birdhouse, they picked some of the white berries and passed them around. It was a short while later that the painful blisters on their hands and legs enabled them to figure out that poison oak should not be handled. In yet another garden, Achilles picked a flower from a stately 6' bush, which immediately Fireballed in wrath, almost killing Achilles, and then proceeded to deliver a long, stern lecture on piety and reverence. In another garden was an ancient plant with small black berries. This time Anrad tasted one, and slowly began to age at the rate of 10 years per hour. Elsewhere they tasted the nectar of a honeysuckle vine, some finding it of great benefit, but Anrad and Kodiak swallowed bees which stung them and Achilles was polymorphed into a butterfly. Brother Bung with his great dexterity caught the fluttering Achilles in Kodiak's tall pointed hat where he was carried for the rest of the expedition. The silver dragon had remained with them during all of this, not because he had to but because he found it quite humorous -- a party led by a rapidly aging paladin scarcely able to talk with his swollen throat and unable to use either hand because of his painful blisters. Anrad, for some reason, failed to share the dragon's view of the situation. Parsifal, not quite right after his passion for the lilac, kept muttering that "We have to get to the root of this problem," and "We should leaf this alone," and "I think we needed a better plant of action."

After more experiences with a gigantic cobra lily, venus man-trap and other odd delights, the group descended the Beanstalk with over 30,000 in treasure. Anrad was relieved to note that the aging process was beginning to reverse and Achilles survived his polymorph back into normal ranger-shape.

Far to the south, a shipload of adventurers headed for the dungeons of Apo Kalyps on the remote Ile Mot Szander. On the ship were warrior Carandeer, warrior Kasseck, swordsman Lancefron, elf-veteran Xertar, warrior Khrest, seer Iskar, medium Benzene, medium Desmerg, adept 'Oliman, curate Morbelux, pixie swashbuckler/theurgist Tinkerbelle, and burglar Catrick. In their foray into the dungeons, they defeated a band of orcs, 4 different groups of fighters, some giant rats and giant spiders, and ten goblins. Everyone emerged alive with over 11,000 GP in treasure.

On the island of Taru to the north, a strong group returned to the 7th level of the Ruins of Thon. The party contained superhero Barnabas, superhero Ragnar, dwarf hero Balin, elf swashbuckler/enchanter Ellessar, $\frac{1}{2}$ elf hero/theurgist Knomix, sorceress Charmen, patriarch Pontifus, lama Fernando, and $\frac{1}{2}$ elf sharper Alexa.

Passing through the room previously emptied of its giant ape occupants, they found and slew 10 giant snakes, and in the next room they killed 8 wyverns. The next room contained 3 umber hulks whom the party surprised and killed without suffering much confusion. A room beyond this contained 8 statues in which, by moving the statues into a particular pattern, they uncovered a respectable treasure. An unoccupied room was found to contain a well-hidden key, more properly half of a key, which was given to Elessar for safekeeping until the other half could be found. In a brief encounter with 6 thieves, the group decided not to attack and moved on into a tiled room containing a large chest. Touching the chest produced a gas cloud doing modest damage to everyone and a voice warned them not to touch the chest. They were not deterred, but opened the chest anyway, finding a smaller chest inside, and the warning grew more emphatic as they touched it and opened it. An even smaller case lay inside, and the voice almost begged them not to open it. Being either brave or stupid, Ragnar opened the case despite the warnings and found a metal head inside. They found they could converse with the head, whose name was "En" (short for **entity**), and it explained that it had been imprisoned inside the metal head and would lead them to a treasure. For some reason it had taken a liking to Ragnar despite the improbability of any character matching the necessary characteristics for this to occur (in fact Ragnar's charisma had been raised 2 points previously, otherwise he would not have matched either). The group decided not to tackle this quest for the treasure at the present, and Ragnar promised to take the same companions to seek out the treasure in February. Thus they departed the Ruins with the 43,000 GP already gained.

There remained one final expedition in January which space does not permit relating this issue. In the final expedition, Fazzle, Od, Benclux, Athelfrar and company descend to the sixth, seventh, and finally eighth level of the Weir, where they meet the Old One guarding the richest treasure of the eighth level.

You have _____ left in your account.

John Van De Graaf
37343 Glenbrook
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Ryth Chronicle relates the D&D adventures along the River Ryth. It is intended mainly to keep the large number of players current with what's happening to others in the campaign, and is published irregularly whenever sufficient material accumulates. It is currently being published about bi-monthly (6 issues in the past year). This issue brings the campaign current except for one expedition in the game month of May.

Issues of the Ryth Chronicle cost 30¢ each as long as they are in print, after which we will photocopy back issues for those interested. The prices for back issues are: #1 (50¢), #2, 3 and 4 (75¢), #5 and 6 (30¢ as long as they last), #7 (60¢, contains campaign maps, history, etc.), and #8 (30¢). All subscriptions and requests for back issues should be sent to John Van De Graaf, 37343 Glenbrook, Mt. Clemens, MI 48043.

The campaign contains a number of dungeon areas and referees:

The Weir, eastern wilderness, and Gardens - John Van De Graaf

The Caverns of Rythwood - Paul Wood

Morbundus and the western wilderness - Len Scensny

The island of Taru and the Ruins of Thon - Laurie Van De Graaf

The island of Kerwylon - Greg DeCesare

the island of Ile Mot Szander and Apo-Kalyps - Ray Ulman

Credits: Editor-in-chief - John Van De Graaf

Expedition scribes - Nameless Souls

Enforcer of the Rules - Gragorn

Publisher - Yggdrasill Press, in whose branches lurks Paul Wood

Cover Drawing - Elessar the Invisible

ISKAR OF WITKA

(Excerpted from "Directory of the Rythlond Mage Guild")

by Al Burkacki

The mage Iskar has a veiled past, yet enough has been revealed through hearsay to part the screen a whit.

He was born in the archipelego on the island of Witka to parents of humble birth. Early on he showed promise in the magick arts and thus was placed under the tutelage of Gumoo, the Archipelego's adroit tenant wizard. The wise mage taught his prentice the balance of living things and of the elements as well as the honored scrolls of Morlock. Iskar learned well.

When Iskar came of age he left the islands, taking a fast ship for this fabled city of Rythlondar. On his arrival, he joined the Mage Guild and searched out the numerous brash adventurers which flock here.

Iskar is said to be a silent, but genial, man, stern in his efforts but rash (at times) in his actions. His philosophy is a bit odd, stressing individual existence and freedom of action, even above the wishes of government! But he has said he has no objection to government, so he doesn't seem too subversive. He appears exceptionally bright and should bare watching.

((Editor's note: The above translation is adequate, but loses some of the flavor of the actual language of the Directory, written in Lower Khurdish dialect. In the original, the "veiled past" of Iskar refers to his days as a veiled dancer under Gumoo who convinced the lad he was a wizard by teaching him the only spell he knew. Iskar later exercised some freedom of action and escaped Witka just ahead of the civil authorities bearing a Warrant. It is unclear in the original whether he should be watched unless bare or whether he likes to watch bares himself.))

January, 2777:

Fizzle and Benelux gathered a high-level group of seasoned adventurers for a descent into the nether regions of the Weir. In the party were sorcerer Od bearing potent scrolls, sorcerer Faz with his helm of brilliance, bracers of defense, and other items, Patriarch Benelux armed with his snake staff and ring of protection, priest Magister Ludi, adept Bede, ranger-champion Athelfrar with magic sword and armor and several potions, superhero Grobar, dwarf-myrmidon Ervandra with her magic axe and crossbow, and elf sharper Alexa clad in boots of travelling and leaping.

They first descended to the chamber on the 6th depth wherein they had slain the two black dragons several months ago and completed their search (interrupted last time) of the area. The search revealed nothing in the swampy cavern, but a boulder was found to conceal a tunnel. A very large copper dragon wandered down the tunnel, detected their presence, but did nothing -- except block the path. Another open tunnel was followed, leading to the labyrinthine passages of the watery 6th depth. In their wandering, Athelfrar was attacked by a giant leech, and a flesh golem was killed even though unrecognized.

Growing weary of the foul swamps, and finding very little treasure, they descended to the 7th depth and crossed to the opposite side, dispatching 2 wyverns met in a corridor, then ascended to the 5th depth where they ventured into the salamander lair and quickly slew the four fiery creatures gathered around the pool of lava. The thief Alexa carefully crept around the lava pool on a narrow ledge and found a goodly treasure, and a magic spear, potion and scroll.

They then returned to explore the 7th depth, killing 3 owl bears but then met an evil party whose mages' employed a wand of lightning with great effect. The group was forced to retreat, losing Athelfrar's javelin of lightning which he had cast, killing a hero guarding the evil wizards. Badly wounded, they paused to debate their alternatives. They possessed a piece of parchment on which was scrawled the words: "On the 8th depth follow the familiar path to the Old One guarding the greatest treasures of the level". In their condition, few felt like fighting a strong foe, but Athelfrar had long been searching for the rumored Old One and the group agreed to find the place, if only for future expeditions.

They thus walked to a known stairway down, and were the first known adventurers to trod the corridors of the 8th depth. After a few turns, they passed through a door and were surprised to find themselves in a 50' wide corridor of gleaming ebon inlaid with a 10' golden pathway -- identical in all respects with a corridor on the 7th depth (directly above if their maps were correct). A familiar path it was, but on the 7th depth they knew it led directly to the Temple of Gragorn, and they therefore began to make their way down the corridor with considerable apprehension. Scarcely had they gone 50', however, than the illusion of length disappeared and they found themselves before a huge metal door guarded by two gigantic stone statues. One of the guardians immediately struck a great bronze gong and a voice asked them what they sought. They timidly replied that they sought the Old One, and the Voice commanded them to "ENTER" and the doors swung open. The group cast nervous glances at the now immobile statues as they passed between them and entered the room beyond the door.

The doors swung shut behind them. In the cavernous room they observed a narrow stairway in the center of the room which rose to an opening across the far wall over 30' from the floor. A bright, flickering light from the opening outlined the robed and hooded figure at the top of the staircase. Around the other walls they noted other narrower openings, some dark and others luminously shimmering, at various heights from the floor. The worthy Benelux whispered to his companions that he did not detect the figure to be evil, and advised caution. The Old One studied them for several moments of silence, then addressed Fizzle, asking "What do you seek here?"

"We come seeking the largest treasure of the 8th depth," said Fizzle.

"Then you have come to the proper place," replied the Old One, "for I possess the greatest treasures of this depth. Do you wish to attempt to take them from me by

force?" Fazzle and the others shook their heads. "Your company displays a measure of wisdom, for indeed, gold and gems are baubles of mortal fancy. Tell me why you seek such tokens of worldly wealth."

"We seek such treasure" said wise Benelux "for the experience it gives us to improve our ability to fight against evil."

"Wisely said, holy Patriarch," said the Old One. Then the Old One spoke to each adventurer in turn, asking what each sought personally. When all had answered, he said: "Fazzle, you seek a staff of wizardry and should therefore seek out the castle Ghakor on the shore of Skull Lake, but speak first to the wizard Talkien of the Lonely Mountain before undertaking such a perilous venture to regain his lost item.

"Patriarch Benelux, since you seek knowledge of how best to fight against Evil, search the ruins of the Citadel in Lake Oread and seek to mend the Grail that was broken long ago.

"Athelfrar of Ranger descent, seeking the legendary Amulet of Ydtheril, know you now that if such an item exists you must go to the island of Taru -- seek H.E.R., out and you may find an answer.

"Sorcerer Od, your heart is filled with treasure-lust. You ask for the greatest treasure on the 8th depth of the Weir, but you have found it here, for surely knowledge is the greatest treasure of all. But unsatisfied, you ask where lies the second greatest treasure. Therefore I lay upon you this geas: that you defeat those who guard the evil Temple of Gragorn, where you will find the second greatest treasure on this level if you are successful. In view of your meager experience, being not even a low-ranking wizard, I give you six months in which to accomplish this task.

"The dwarf Ervandra asks how to defeat the monsters lurking in the Pool of Terror, to which I answer the creatures can be defeated by strength of arms and spells of magic, of course.

"Magister Ludi, you have asked where you can obtain a Ring of Protection, a bauble of magic. Return here again when you have decided upon your proper purpose and function in the never-ending struggle against Evil.

"Cleric Bede, seeking to increase your dexterity might come to fruition in the Gardens of Jacour.

"Thief Alexa, those who wish to increase their thieving abilities should seek out the lord of thieves, Tarbnik the Cunning, whom one might find through his earthly minions such as Torm "The Peddler".

"Lastly, Grobar, who seeks to increase his strength. If you can find the Well at World's End, mighty Grobar, you may there destroy an evil monster and increase your strength."

The Old One finished his answers, but the party respectfully sought more general information. The Old One said he would converse awhile longer, and in reply to the multitude of questions addressed to him, said:

"No, I am not human, nor ever was. I obey the greatest law, that of the balance of the cosmos, and I cannot interfere in the affairs of the world. My function is to help other creatures fulfill their destinies according to their purposes in life. At present the balance shifts to the side of evil, which has long held the Urth in chaos and now Summons its forces to overthrow the last vestiges of civilization. I cannot predict the future, but it is said that the Demon will return from his banishment in the year 2778, and therefore the Evil Ones muster their forces in anticipation of his return. Those who banished the demon in ages past are gone, and none now exist who can defeat him. There is one item, it is also said, which the demon feared above all else and destroyed: the Grail That Was Broken, fashioned by holy Tynghod himself to ward off evil. The shards of the broken grail were scattered and lost, however, and the demon was banished without it, though only with the aid of a strange and deadly ally now buried in the earth.

"Now go, for we have conversed long enough, and I have other matters to attend to. Return here only after your searches are done, and then only for a worthy purpose."

The party then left the Old One and the Weir, weighted with more wisdom than treasure.

February, 2777:

Paladin-myrmidon Anrad Datan set sail across the sea to the island of Thon in February. With him went swordsman Baldur (formerly a tuneless bard), dwarf-swordsman Carandeer, warrior Parsifal, dwarf-veteran Bimbo, elf veteran/medium Elldain, curate Sermonet, priest "Oliman, acolyte Noname, thaumaturgist Clickham, conjurer Iskar, and medium Ozlo. The group entered the Ruins of Thon and descended to the third depth without mishap. As they explored the corridors of the third depth, they came upon a room guarded by 3 bugbears. Iskar used a Sleep spell to fell two of the creatures, and Anrad and Carandeer slew the other one. As the fighting ended, Anrad's clairvoyant sword detected the presence of a hydra in the corridor outside. Anrad quickly laid a daring plan to surround the creature by sending half of the party out the main door in front of the monster while the rest of the party crept out behind the creature through another door. The flaw in the plan was only that the hydra was of the fire-breathing variety and promptly felled three of the advance force who ventured into the corridor. A furious struggle ensued as the rest of the group (except for the mages) emerged in the corridor behind the hydra until at last the hydra was slain. The survivors then returned into the room to complete their search, finding some gold and gems.

They continued on through several other rooms until they came to one containing 5 trolls. Clickham hurled a lightning bolt which felled one troll, and the remainder of the trolls were dispatched in a furious battle which cost the life of Carandeer. The creatures guarded a goodly treasure, so the wounded group decided to leave the Ruins. On their way out they encountered and slew 9 wererats without losing anyone else.

end of chapter ***

The unlikely combination of pixie swashbuckler/thaumaturgist Tinkerbelle and hobbit master pilferer Bellabane decided to set out beyond the Weir into the eastern wilderness to build a castle. They took with them myrmidon Aviyak, bearing his magic armor and javelin of lightning, hero Orlok, ranger-guide Achilles, veteran Goldwing, sorcerer Kodiak with a ring of protection and a scroll of 2 spells, conjurer Gedenbry, lama Ydol the Pius, bearing his magic mace, armor, and staff, and curate Morbelux.

Not wanting to be too far from civilization, they selected a site near the mountain pass to Rythlondar in the eastern foothills of the White Mts, and near the Holy Lands of the Flaming Wheel (the domain of patriarch Benelux). After clearing the site for the workmen and engineers to follow, they explored the surrounding area to eliminate any nearby hostile creatures. On a nearby crest they came upon 2 chimera in their lair, then in a valley they killed 3 manticores, and last they slew a band of 60 berserkers. Their final encounter was with a fearsome Balrog, from whom the entire group fled in fear, except for the one charmed berserker who charged into the black nimbus around the Balrog and disappeared into oblivion.

As he had promised in January, Ragnar returned to the Ruins of Thon with the same companions to seek the treasure known to "En", the metal head containing an alien spirit. The group was thus composed of:

- superhero Barnabas with Tingel, a magic spear, magic armor and adamantite shield
- superhero Ragnar with Quicksilver, a javelin of lightning, mithril armor, and his magic carpet and potion of protection from undead
- dwarf swashbuckler Balin with a magic spear, armor and shield
- elf swashbuckler/theurgist Knomix with 5 magic arrows and a scroll of 2 spells
- elf swashbuckler/enchanter Elessar with a magic sword, javelin, armor and shield, cold wand
- sorceress Charman, having a ring of protection, cold wand, and a ring of invis.
- sharpshooter Alexa wearing boots of traveling and leaping
- patriarch Pontifus, bearing his magic mace and armor
- lama Fernando with his mace of disruption, magic armor, and a scroll of 2 spells

The group returned to the 7th depth to the room where En had been found, then

followed En's directions from room to room (there being no corridors on the 7th depth.) In the course of their wandering, they slew 4 hellhounds, 9 owl bears, 9 wereboars, and charmed 1 hill giant. They also encountered 12 mummies, 10 of which fled from the holy presence of Pontifus, 1 slain, and 1 disrupted by Fernando's mace but not before it had struck Fernando and inflicting its dread rotting disease upon him.

Though wounded and tired by their battles, the group finally entered the room in which En said the treasure lay hidden. The room appeared empty, so they began to search the walls and the wooden floor. Balin announced that he had discovered a trap door in the wooden flooring, so Ragnar and Barnabas helped him open the trap. The pit underneath also appeared empty, but Barnabas asked Tingel to see if there was any invisible object in the pit, and Tingel informed him that there was an invisible chest in the bottom. Although the treasure was located, extracting it proved to be quite difficult, for various things happened to those who touched the chest, none of them pleasant. Perseverance and luck paid off, however, as they finally managed to unload the chest of 30 gems, 42 jewelry, and 2000 platinum. Unfortunately most of the group was also blind, unconscious, demented or otherwise incapacitated -- Fortune smiled upon them that no evil creatures wandered upon them as they gradually recovered from the effects of the chest. Pleased to be rich (and alive), they left the dungeons.

Fazzle and company felt compelled to return to the Weir to increase their experience before helping Od tackle the Temple of Gragorn on the 7th depth. They thus explored the 5th and 6th depths for previously overlooked treasure troves. They met and slew 4 displacer beasts, 3 salamanders, a lich, 5 shadows, 10 ogres, 3 trolls. The group was essentially the same as in January, but with the addition of 2 new adventurers. No one died despite considerable wounds they suffered, but they found only 1,200 GP value of treasure before they returned to civilization.

March:

A large party set out into the eastern wilderness to clear land for the future castle of Fernando. In the group were hobbit master-pilferer Bellabane, thaumaturgist Clickham, sorcerer Kodiak, half-elf swashbuckler/thaumaturge Knomix, pixie Tinkerbell, veteran D'wit, hero Baldur, superhero Barnabas, ranger-guide Achilles, lama Ydol, lama Fernando, and paladin-myrmidon Anrad Datan.

They left the Rythlond valley through the mountain pass and followed the eastern slopes of the White Mountains north. In a week of travel, they encountered only a group of three Brass Dragons without serious incident. At the end of the week they came upon a valley at the northern tip of the mountains and arrived at Blackwulf Castle. The lord of the castle challenged their champion to a joust. Barnabas offered to joust as the party's champion. In the first pass, both knights were unhorsed, but barnabas was slightly wounded and his horse was killed. In the second pass, neither was unhorsed, and in the third pass Barnabas unhorsed the lord. The lord gave them food and lodging for the night, and provisions for their journey.

After bidding farewell to the lord, the group continued north into the forest of Yithion, where they met a wandering wizard, and then northwest to the North Templar River. They followed the river upstream to the north, killing 12 werewolves easily and looting their nearby lair. At the end of the second week, they were attacked by four giant lizards which they slew with a Cloudkill spell.

Two days later they happened upon 8 hill giants. Clickham hit one with a lightning bolt as the giants quickly closed upon them. The battle was long and furious, but the group's superior numbers won the victory without a loss of life.

They found a suitable site for a castle several days later and a search of the area disclosed that no hostile creatures inhabited the region. They returned to the Ryth River by following the Templar downstream, avoiding the area of Yldog's Temple, and slew 10 wolverines and routed a large band of bandits with an insect plague.

Fazzle and his ~~followers~~ returned again to the Weir for another attempt at fame and fortune. The group contained:

dwarfess champion Ervandra bearing a magic axe and crossbow, plus a scroll
superhero Barnabas with Tingel and his other items, plus 3 vials
superhero Grobar armed with a magic spear, magic armor, and potions of strength
sorcerer Fazzle wearing magic bracers, helm of brilliance, with a wand of illusion
sorcerer Od bearing a magic dagger and two scrolls with a total of 4 high spells
patriarch Pontifus with magic armor

curate Dod

curate Magister

village priest Bede

hobbit master-pilferer Bellabane, bracers of chain & shield and magic sword

This powerful collection of adventurers descended directly to the 6th depth and went to one of the openings into the cavern called the Pool of Terror. Fazzle magic-jarred himself into an amulet while the rest guarded his uninhabited body. He felt out one of the giant crabs lurking in the pool and possessed its body. In the crab's body, Faz attacked another crab until the body died, then possessed another and another until at last all the crabs were slain. The rest of the group then entered the cavern in safety to view the wreckage of crabmeat littering the cavern.

Using water-breathing spells, they were able to obtain the bulk of the rubbish covering the floor of the pond and found a good deal of treasure among the remains of previous victims of the crabs (a trap door on the second depth led down directly to the center of the pond, giving the crabs a steady fare of unfortunate adventurers). Further scouting revealed a cave behind the waterfall, in which they found more treasure and several magic items. The group did have to kill 2 manticorae while looting this treasure. They gained over 100 gems, 4 pieces of jewelry, a great deal of gold, some magic arrows, a magic sword (given to Ervandra), magic armor (given to Magistar), a scroll of 2 spells (given to Od), a curse scroll (causing Dod to disappear), and a black, metallic sphere (given to Faz, but of unknown worth).

A party of 13 took ship to Ile Mot Szander to destroy an orc city in the dungeons of Apo Kalyps. The members were: Iskar, Noname, Carandeer, Oliman, Goldwing, Parsifal, Elldain, Ozlo, Namlu, Friar Tuck, Bimbo, Kassock, and Gedenbry.

Passing through the 1st level brought them to the recreation center. Noname, one of the leaders of the group and a very pious priest, did his best to steer the party clear of the sinful temptations, but an ensorcelled trap caused Noname and the rest to find themselves cavorting in the arms of female companions. Noname found the experience rather stimulating, and some of the others in the group were able to gain useful information from the girls.

Continuing on toward the orc village, they met a roving band of orcs which fled and warned the village of their approach. The orcs (estimated to number 200 or more) were so shocked at the audacity of such a small group that, instead of attacking, they bolted the doors and hid. Even strong Parsifal could not open the doors to the village, so they tried other doors at the end of the corridor, and fought their way through 3 rooms, each of which contained 4 trolls. The next room was a meeting room for an evil wizard. The wizard himself was not in, but his 2 followers were charmed.

They left the wizard's room lest he find them there in their weakened condition. They browsed through some shops in another area of the dungeon, killed 4 berserkers, 4 giant toads, and 8 skeletons, and returned to the surface with gold and magic.

The last group in the month of March was organized by Elessar for a rescue mission on Ile Mot Szander. Elessar had rescued a villager named Oni from Apo Kalyps several

months previously, and Oni had begged Elessar to help him rescue his brother who was imprisoned in an evil temple complex. Oni had now recovered from the ill effects of his own imprisonment and was ready for Elessar to attempt the rescue.

With Elessar and Oni went superhero Ragnar, ranger-guardian Athelfrar, sorceress Charmen, patriarch Benelux, and lama Ydol, and dwarf-myrmidon Ibb. They landed on a remote northern bay of the island, where they almost immediately were beset by a pair of white dragons. One dragon was quickly slain and the other flew off to the north. The small group headed south to the mountain where the evil tower built of metal was located. Oni led them well, and the party approached the tower from the opposite side of the mountain. Using the flying carpet and an invisibility spell, Ragnar, Elessar and Charmen flew unseen to a high rampart, followed by the rest with shuttles of the carpet. As the last arrived, a door opened and the fight was on. It was a one-sided affair since the low-level guards could hardly hope to overcome the powerful fighters and mages invading, but one of the guards did get away. The group pursued the fleeing guard after hacking their way through the other guards, but soon they heard the alarm gongs sounding. The pursuit, however, led them to another guard room containing the alarm gong. Ragnar's sword Quicksilver struck and Charmed one of the guards, and ordered him to sound the all clear signal, which the guard did.

The group continued through a bridged walkway into the mountain itself, killing or charming the hapless low-level guards who got in their way, rampaging through the rooms and looting anything that could be moved. A favorite tactic was to have Elessar leap through a door and use his cold wand on the occupants, reminding some of Clint Elesswood starring in "A Fistful of Snow". Gradually they worked their way down through the living quarters to the temple area below, leaving no survivors to raise new alarms of their presence. At last one fighter escaped, this time with Elessar in hot pursuit while the others stayed to dispatch the guards. Elessar chased the evil guard silently and invisibly right into the middle of the main sanctuary of the temple where a human sacrifice had just been completed. As the doors of the temple closed behind Elessar, he heard a voice behind him say "I detect the presence of Good!" He turned and made ready to fight to the death, but the guards walked by him and arrested the man he had been chasing! Naturally the guards couldn't see or hear Elessar, and thought the poor guard was radiating those Good vibrations. Elessar pondered this turn of events, wondering if possibly he could now make a surprise attack while waiting for the rest of the group to show up. Fortunately he debated this for several minutes and decided against the wisdom of such brashness. Unbeknownst to him the rest of the party had indeed followed his trail with Athelfrar's tracking abilities, but had run into a large group of guards right at a bend in the stairway. Unable to employ spells in the cramped quarters, the group was held up for many minutes while disposing of them. Elessar decided to leave the cavernous sanctuary and its host of evil worshippers, and rejoined the group as they finished off the last of the guards on the staircase.

With the aid of a Charmed evil cleric, the group went down to an underground passage back into the metal tower. They located Oni's brother and several other prisoners and freed them. They also killed some of the monsters lurking in other rooms, including 8 mummies, 3 wraiths, 2 chimerae, a 9-headed hydra, and 21 ogres.

Eventually they fled the confusion of the temple and returned safely to their ship laden with over 60,000 GP in gems and other treasure. They also gained a Cure scroll given to Ydol, a potion of extra healing given to Charmen, a scroll of lightning bolt and a wand of metal detection given to Elessar, a rod of cancellation given to Athelfrar, gauntlets of ogre power given to Benelux (along with a ring of water-walking), a flask of fire resistance given to Ragnar, and a protection scroll given to Ibb. The acquisitions were not without peril, however, for as Elessar examined an unusual gem it exploded and killed him. The strong-elf survived the prompt resurrection by Benelux. Ragnar examined a sceptre won from the mummies, but as he held it strange yearnings for power and villainy beclouded his mind. He dropped the sceptre, but it had accomplished its purpose -- the new Lord was beginning to turn evil.

April, 2777:

Once again Faz, Od, Barnabas, Grobar, Ervandra, Pontifus, Magister, and Bede went back to the Weir. The magic jar attack on the crabs had been as easy as it had been effective. One other probable treasure remained on the watery 6th level: the metallic tritons' tower in the center of a deep pool.

Outside the cavern containing the triton's tower, Faz once again magic jarred himself into an amulet, and this time sought out the body of one of the tritons inside the tower. As he did so, however, 3 ogre magi wandered into the far end of the corridor where the group guarded Faz's own lifeless body. A blast of cold from one of the magi sent the party running with heavy damage, dragging Faz's body over the rough stone floor behind them. They finally eluded the ogre magi, and tended to their many frozen wounds.

Faz in the triton's body, meanwhile, was finding that intelligent, magic-using creatures were not as easy to deal with as stupid crabs. The triton guards detected the alien thoughts with ESP, and simply grabbed the possessed triton until one very large triton came over with a dispel magic spell to send Faz out of the triton body. Faz kept trying nonetheless, possessing tritons in the hope that they would eventually run out of dispel magic spells. The triton leader was finally forced to use one of his protection from magic spells from a scroll to block Faz entirely.

What now? Faz pondered. He had noticed that water flowed into the pool through only one opening in the cavern's walls, and drained out through a hole in the floor of the cavern. He possessed one of his companions' bodies to plot their strategy. They would use a wall of stone spell to block the water inflow, and all the water would drain out, leaving the tritons helpless prey. It was a good plan, and they succeeded in blocking off the river flowing in. When they returned to the cavern, they saw that the water level was dropping, but at a decreasing rate. More significant was that they also noticed a trickle of water emerging from one of the other openings in the cavern wall. Not only were the tritons busily trying to plug the drain hole, but the wall was backing up water throughout the 6th level and forcing it to reach the (only) drain out of the level through other paths.

They had to act quickly, or their efforts would be wasted as water refilled the cavern. Faz had returned to his body by this time, so he and Pontifus walked to the water's edge. Faz drew out his wand and cast the illusion that the drainage hole had burst open and that the water was draining out quickly. Of the 18 tritons working on plugging the hole, 8 believed the illusion and raced into the tower. The other 10 were rather upset at all of this, and saw their enemies exposed on the beach. They swam to the surface and cast charm person spells. Alas, neither Pontifus nor Faz made their saving throw against 5 charm spells and both dove into the water to join their new friends -- though Pontifus found swimming difficult in plate armor.

The rest of the party, bravely hiding around a corner at the back of the beach, heard the spells and splashes, peeked out, and saw that Faz and Ponty were gone into the depths. Od tried a magic jar to contact them and found himself in a triton's body. Other tritons grabbed him immediately, and the leader spoke to him.

"You are undoubtedly one of those who so sorely beset us", he said. "You see your friends bound to the raft here within our tower so they may enjoy, for the moment, the air to which they are accustomed. You have not killed, nor have we. You may even have your friends returned, alive, if payment is made for the trouble you have caused."

The ransom was high -- scrolls with 6 spells of at least 6th level. Od returned to his body and explained the situation. They pooled their scrolls and found they had scrolls with Symbol, Mass Invisibility, Monster Summoning VII, Stone-Flesh, Dimension Door (all belonging to Od), and a Protection Lycanthropes. They decided to try to meet the ransom, and the tritons decided to accept the offered scrolls after careful inspection. Faz and Ponty were released by the tritons alive as promised, but stark naked. The expedition thus departed in defeat, having lost the majority of their magic items. It is said that the tritons now have one of the richest treasures in the Weir, but of course the entire 6th level is now filled with water.

Athelfrar was intrigued by the mysterious Gardens of Jacour atop the Beanstalk, so he asked Ragnar, newly honored to become a Lord, and sorceress Charmen to accompany him on an expedition. They gathered with them patriarch Fernando, and young ranger-runner Horafal and elf LiFnim. Suffice to say they met many of the novelties encountered by previous groups and gained reasonable riches, fighting only a huge dragon plant. Athelfrar came upon a brass whistle in his wanderings, which summoned the largest of the great black falcons guarding overhead. Fernando spoke to the falcon and learned that its master was Alleman, Grand Master Flowers of the ancient Order of Jacour. Later, Athelfrar cleverly used two limited wishes gained to wish, first that the impenetrable hedges would part when the party was adjacent to Alleman's courtyard, and second, that Alleman himself would be extremely friendly to them.

So it came to pass that a path suddenly opened in the hedges later in their journey and they entered the pavillion of Alleman, who emerged from behind one of the great trees and greeted them. It became clear in the conversation that Alleman was slightly paranoid and feared assassins behind every tree. He told them, in bits and pieces, that he feared the lower masters of the Order and had used a Wish that he be safe forever from other members of his Order, but all that happened was a graduallmisting in the sky over the Gardens behind the Temple. When Athelfrar asked him what year this was, Alleman answered "Why today, in the year 1524, of course."

It took some time for Athelfrar to convince Alleman that over 1200 years had elapsed outside the Gardens, that the Temple no longer existed, and that the Brotherhood had died out completely. Athelfrar also noticed that Alleman had lived during the first appearance of the Demon and the breaking of the Crystal Grail, and his inquiries produced a good deal of information. Most importantly, he discovered that the Grail was broken into five pieces, one piece was given to the Church of Tynghod, another to the Wizard's Guild, one disappeared, and one was stolen by the demon-possessed Falsicon. The fifth piece was given to the Order of Jacour for safekeeping, and Alleman still had the shard.

Thanking Alleman, and promising to try to release him from his own imprisonment, Athelfrar and his expedition descended the Beanstalk and returned home.

Noname, the adventuresome village priest, gathered yet another expedition for the dungeons of Apo-Kalyps. With him went hero Parsifal, dwarf hero Carandeer, swordsman Goldwing, $\frac{1}{2}$ elf medium/veteran Namlu, elf warrior Elldain, theurgist Iskar, seer Ozlo, and vicor 'Oliman. They returned to the shops and entertainment center, then tried again to enter the orc city but failed. On they went to another room where they fought and killed 4 ogres.

After running into a gelatinous cube and disposing of it, eight of their number succumbed to the dulcet lure of 3 harpies. Noname and 'Oliman cast silence spells to end the harpies' song, then Iskar slept the three evil creatures. In the next room a conjurer used a Fear spell to chase them away into a room containing 8 wights which fled the holy presence of 'Oliman. They found a goodly treasure hidden in the wights' room. They wandered a little longer, killing 5 berserkers and 3 beetles before exiting the dungeons with their magic and treasure. Ozlo had the misfortune to try on a girdle which caused his beard to fall off and made noticeable alterations in his figure -- she now calls herself Ozla.

Anrad Datan, the paladin-myrmidon, decided to lead the last expedition of April to explore the 5th level of the Ruins of Thon on the island of Taru. He assembled a strong band of adventurers to accompany him to such a deep level: ranger-pathfinder Achilles with a magic shield and 5 magic arrows, dwarf-myrmidon Balin wearing magic armor and carrying a magic spear, hero Baldur tiptoeing in his elven boots, elf-swordsman Khrest, lama Ydol with magic mace, shield, and staff, curate Sermonet wielding a magic mace and armor & shield, bishop Bung swinging a magic hammer, pixie

swashbuckler/thaumaturgist Tinkerbelle armed with magic sword and bow, $\frac{1}{2}$ elf swashbuckler/thaumaturgist Knomix with magic sword and elven boots, thaumaturgist Clickham, and theurgist Gedenbry.

The group descended the spiral staircase directly to the 5th depth. They wandered the corridors without encountering anything of evil mien until at last they came to a hexagonal room. They saw therein 3 rune-inscribed doors, and located another 3 secret doors. One door led to Lady Luck -- a gambling parlor where they spent a good deal of gold. Another door led to a cavern area in which something began shrieking at their approach. They paused to figure out what was causing the commotion, and soon were set upon by a rust monster, 9 wights, 2 salamanders, and 2 umber hulks in rapid succession, obviously attracted by the noise. They dispatched the creatures with some damage but no loss of life and continued elsewhere. They passed through a room of living stalactites which inflicted more damage on them and entered a room containing a chest. Khrest the elf attempted to open the chest and fell dead from a poisoned needle on the latch, but the survivors found a large treasure inside.

Walking down a hallway, they came upon a sign in common saying "Unauthorized Persons Turn Back!" They ignored the warning and continued on to a large machine. Pulling levers on the machine caused blindness, traps opening beneath them, and daggers propelled at them. In frustration, they demolished the machine with their hammers. Further down the hallway, the whole group was captured without a fight by 4 female guards who emerged in the hallway behind them. They were put in cells but left with their weapons. The guards did take their potions and scrolls, which were later destroyed by the guards. They met the leader of the guards, a man named Sciemer, who talked with them and showed them his laboratories. Fortunately he was not experimenting with humans at the time, so he eventually released the group and gave them some vitamin concentrates.

They returned to the hexagonal room and went through another door, and met some female fighters who challenged their champion to a wrestling match. The group chose Anrad, who won the match and thus acquired the services of Charlat for 3 months.

Later they fought some cockatrices, which turned Tinkerbelle to stone, dissolved some spectres and wandered their way out of the Ruins. They gained 46,000 GP, a helm of reading magic, bracers of defense, a scroll, a magic hammer, and the vitamin concentrates.

John Van De Graaf
37343 Glenbrook
Mt. Clemens, MI 48043

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