

ACE Game Club Newsletter

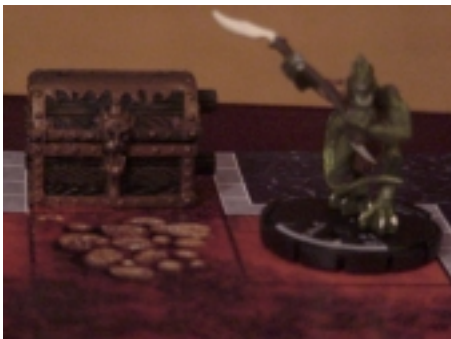
Minutes of the Meeting of December 2, 2001

Club President Charlie Brown saw that the game room was packed and said "guess we will begin the meeting." Dave requested comments or changes to the minutes of the November meeting. Seeing none, the members voted to approve the minutes as published. Dave went on to deliver a notice from the Game Club Chaplain's office: please conduct the meeting and the discussions in a positive and cheerful way.

Jim Destromp reviewed the roster of people signed up to go the opening of The Lord of the Rings on December 19. Members can attend by paying \$2; they can bring guests for \$5 each. Ticket sales will be closed after the present club meeting. Jim said that he will pick up the tickets on Monday, and that members can drop by and get them from then on.

Jim conducted the locker review. Jim Thorpe, Dour, and Eric paid. Noel called.

Jim reminded everyone that the ACE 15th Anniversary Sale comes to ACE III in Denbigh next weekend. There will be savings of up to 50% off on a variety of items. Imagine ... all those years without EverQuest. Jim added that he is expecting a massive order from Games Workshop next week. There will be Mage Knight Tournaments every Sunday in December. Preparations are being made for the release of the new Mage Knight Dungeons game (something like Warhammer Quest). Packages will include starter sets, booster sets (new figures of heroes and mage spawn), and builder sets (doors, boards, and pogs).



Visit the Mage Spawn infested corridors of Wizkids new Mage Knight Dungeons game, new this month!

Jim said that he is running First Edition D&D using some neat modules provided by Zane. He is interested in setting up a two-day RPG tournament. This could be really neat. Jim reminded everyone about the sign-up board for the all-nighter. However, the store will not stay open all night if only four members are signed up to bring food! The end of today is the cut-off for signups for events and food. A couple of people have called in to make sure that they got signed up in time. Jim requested that members vote to set a minimum number of participants needed to hold this event. Usually 30 to 50 people show up. The members voted that a minimum of 15 people need to sign up in order to hold the event. Otherwise it will be scrubbed.

Chris DeGalla asked the group how many people play EverQuest. Three members were willing to admit playing. Chris said that he was in favor of creating an ACE guild on EverQuest. This would give club members the opportunity to help each other on-line. Ten members expressed an interest in participating. With Peter's help this might be enough accounts to start the guild. Nobody like the name "Charlie's Angels" though.

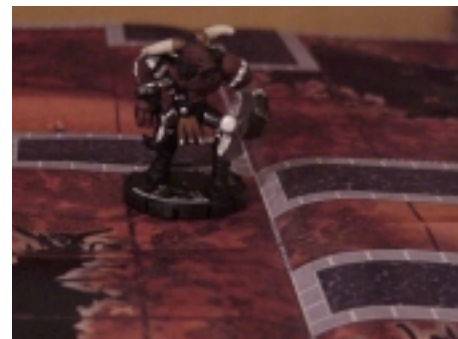
Frank Duval conducted the calendar review. Sundays are Pokemon League and Mage Knight tournaments. The third weekend in January will be a big Mage knight tournament. Also on Sundays are 40K open gaming, Dragonball Z (on the edge of breaking down), and Third Edition D&D. It was suggested that Warhammer Fantasy might be resurrected as well. There is no longer a Sunday Hackmaster campaign. The next game club meeting will be January 6. Mondays are currently nothing. Charlie agreed to start running Fairy Meat on Mondays

with MK figures. Tuesdays are Jim D's Hackmaster campaign. Wednesdays are Dave Saunders' Third Edition D&D campaign. Thursdays are Rich's Third Edition D&D campaign. Fridays are Noel More's First Edition D&D. Scot Alsop's Hackmaster in Denbigh (that's the place, not the module). Mage has ended. Saturdays are 40K 1200-600, Pokemon League, open Warhammer Fantasy, open 40K, Third Edition D&D in Denbigh and Jim D's First Edition D&D (new campaign). A movie night is scheduled for December 19 and an all-nighter will be December 29.

Jim said that he bought a new printer for \$40 (less than a toner cartridge) that may be available for printing army lists. It will only be available for club use if the club kicks in for ink cartridges.

Jim announced the winners of the Mage Knight Whirlwind events that qualified to attend the invitation-only championship at Origins 2002 in Columbus. Randy won on Friday night in Denbigh. Damon won on Saturday. Sunday's winner was a non-member. So Randy and Damon, if they go to Origins, qualify to have the club pay their bus fare or half their air fare. If they go by other means they are out of luck.

Charlie asked everyone attending the movie night to arrive more than 15 minutes early so that Jim and Masako will have time to lock up and get to the theatre. The tickets can be picked up starting Monday December 17. Charlie also asked for a show of hands from those interested in playing a large-scale campaign using Games Workshop's new Lord of the Rings miniatures rules. Eight members said they were interested, and Charlie agreed to kick this off at the all-nighter.



What is that? I don't know but I think it's headed this way!

Dave Peterson asked the members to vote to double the amount of the attendance gift certificate if the winner is wearing a Game Club shirt. The members voted in favor of this. Scot Alsop was the attendance drawing winner, and received \$20 from the club, as he was wearing his shirt.

Dave Peterson recommended that members individually attend Marscon 2002 on January 11-13. Enio Lopez is running a Mage Knight Dungeon demo on Friday, and Randy Dilday is running Mage Knight tournaments all weekend. Dave said that it is a good weekend to kick back and game. Charlie agreed to contact the Con staff and see if a game club discount could be had.

Jim reported that he had spoken with vendors about having ACE hats made. The cheapest rate he could come up with was \$25. Last time he got hats for \$15 each. The vendors were also unable to match the old price on long-sleeved T-shirts. Jim will look for another vendor.

Jim said that the HackMaster GameMaster's Guide is out and it is awesome. It includes a d10,000 critical table, a d10,000 mis-cast chart, and a summary list of all the Hackopedia monsters. Check it out.

Seeing no further business Charlie declared the meeting adjourned.

Mage Knight Tournaments, by Randy Dilday

In January we have three MK Dungeons Marquee tournaments on Friday Jan 18th at 5:30 PM, Saturday at 12 noon, and Sunday at 12 noon.

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For the first place winner we have Brimbidus Grimm. He is 56-point Minotaur who has 8 ram, 11 weapons master, 16 toughness, and 3 damage with battle fury to start with. After he loses weapons master he has sweep for his attack special ability. This is one tough Mage Spawn and I am sure most Heroes do not want to face him.

For the second place winner we have a random LE 3. Our Second place winner will get Dead-eye. He has stealth and a 12 in range attack all for 13 points and that's not bad.

Our Fellowship winner will get Headstone the Gargoyle. Headstone has plenty of flight and toughness to help him weather the heroes' wrath.

Our prize support also includes Murrk the Lizard Man for the Warlord that runs the event. Murrk has sweep to attack those nasty heroes and pole arm to help to keep them at bay. All of this for just 21 points!

Wizkid's new tournament rules become effective on January 1. The new Mage Knight tournament format allows armies from 200 up to 500 points in 50 minutes rounds. Then there is the large scale Conquest format for tournaments up to 3000 points. Rounds in the Conquest format are 2 hours. Here is a description of Conquest from Wizkids:

Bring your dragons, tanks, and chariots to the battlefield: this format can take it! This large-scale battles tournament offers you the chance to play with all your favorite Mage Knight figures. Compare your victories with the new Conquest ratings and rankings! The Conquest tournament format is available in January, and you can read all about it now! NOTE: Conquest tournaments also require the use of the "Conquest game rules" and "Castle game rules," which can be found on our web site in the Game Rules section. You get 1 action for every 400 points in Conquest games. See Mage Knight's web site under Approved Play for the full set of rules.

So you can see things are getting interesting in the Mage Knight realm. Then MK Dungeons comes out this Friday just before the Game Club meeting. Look for the Campaign and Large Scale Battles supplement book and Mage Knight Castles (for campaigns and Conquest) to come out in March.

On February 4th we have the Mage Knight Challenge. Don't bring your figures. Come out and try your hand at random armies. You will draw a random army before each round. The event starts at 600 PM.

Siren's Prize, 48 pages, Adventure Module, \$11.99, by Chai Gallahun

Because of the excellent design work put into the 3rd Edition D&D materials available, roleplaying has once again become extremely popular. Further, the Open Gaming License has allowed the free use of the d20 gaming system, which has led to a literal FLOOD of d20 System adventures and supplements published by dozens of companies. With all of the selections out there, it is sometimes difficult to tell what is truly great material and what is mediocre (and there's no small amount of mediocre material). "Siren's Prize" was a pleasant surprise, and here's why.



Like any good, epic yarn, this tale opens with a rich background. It is the fifth voyage of a pirate ship that would eventually be named "The Siren's Prize," by its captain. Blown off course, Captain Corvel and his crew fought the ravages of a hellish storm, eventually coming across a strange, uncharted island. There is a terrible struggle with sirens, and half of his men don't survive. They explore the island and he gains possession of the sirens' treasure, a mesmerizingly beautiful pearl that he names "The Siren's Prize." He covets this treasure and years later the pearl eventually leads to his mysterious, murderous, and maddened demise. Keep in mind that this is only the set-up for the real adventure yet to come.

There are several story hooks that can bring your intrepid adventuring party to the sleepy, seaside city of Dralven, which is richly detailed for the Dungeon Master. Soon, your characters are embroiled in investigation and intrigue by a local merchant who seeks answers about a darkened lighthouse. But dismay not-soon, it's an all-out struggle to survive in a damp, dirty and dangerous dungeon crawl! Don't delve deeper unless you think your characters can withstand the challenges ahead: traps, tricks, and a collection of murky, malevolent beasts. In fact, a nautical theme runs throughout this land-based adventure. I won't give away the creatures that you might face, but suffice it to say that players (and characters) should be on top of their game when venturing into the struggles of

"Siren's Prize." And, just when you think it's over, the writers include a very cinematic, and potentially deadly, ending.

The writing is concise, clear, and filled with imaginative imagery. Speaking of imagery, pictures are worth a thousand words. The designers of this adventure took that saying to heart, including sixteen detailed, ink-wash illustrations to help "set the stage" and present the true atmosphere of key locations, events, and dramatis personae. Just reading through this wonderful adventure was fun and now I personally can't wait until a group of audacious characters (levels 5-8) attempt to uncover the secrets of the Siren's Prize. Whatever you do, if you wish to play through this adventure, certainly don't spoil your enjoyment by reading all of the surprises. A person should never learn the ending of a good movie before they see it, and that applies to role-playing adventures as well. Let your Dungeon Master guide you into this surprise-filled adventure, and let your characters (as well as yourselves) relish the horrific encounters and wondrous treasures located within the wonderfully written pages of "Siren's Prize."

This adventure gets high marks on the crown scale (from 1-10). Siren's Prize earns eight crowns for: good, solid writing; excellent mood-setting illustrations; rich, NEW magic items; and diverse, colorful scenarios that can serve to continue your adventures in Dralven and beyond. If you so choose, Siren's Prize serves as the launching point for many adventures to come, and possibly a rich campaign set in the world of Kalamar. Even if you don't intend to play in -or Dungeon Master- this adventure, it's worth owning because it serves as an excellent source of reference material (tactical situations, rich background and plot development, new magic items). So, the question is "dare you attempt to gain the treasure known as the Siren's Prize?" If so, grab your swords and spells, muster your courage and audacity, pack your stalwart steed and sojourn towards the sleepy, seaside city of Dralven!

Deathright, 80 pages, Adventure Module, \$15.99, by Dave Saunders



This module is placed in the campaign setting of Kalamar. But, for all those people who don't use the setting it will easily fit into any campaign setting. It has very few ties to the Kingdoms of Kalamar game setting.

Deathright is another great product from Kenzer and Company. They have gone into great detail with all the encounters. Each encounter has a narrative description that can be paraphrased and told to the players. Included are a host of maps for many locations the players will adventure. Characters of 8th or 9th level are recommended mostly for the end game encounters. I believe they will be needed in the end. This is not a typical hack-and-slay adventure. The players should be forced into thinking about things closely.

The flow of the adventure is left up to the characters to follow, and may need a guiding hand from the DM when they stray too far. The timeline in the module gives the players only 4 days to complete the quest. Can they do it? It's up to the DM to nudge them along the right way.

I personally would use this module. I have been thinking about including it in my campaign except that it would be many months after the current setting my group is in. There are two added prestige classes that I am still looking at as well. They are well balanced and look like they would fit in to my world.

Warhammer 40,000 CCG: Battle for Pandora Prime, by Charlie Brown

Okay, those who know me know that I love to play everything and I have an uncanny knack for finding fun in some of the least popular games. But I am also the first to declare the big winners on the game front and I think I have found a winner.



I was a bit skeptical of the new Warhammer 40K card game, not seeing how you could combine the strategy and maneuvering of a miniatures game with the quick thinking and easy handling of a card game. I sat down and read the rules and then I was even further unimpressed because I couldn't conceptualize how it would work. I got a friend and we played a game. I was Chaos and he was Eldar and I discovered that the play field sets it up like an army-style set up. The objective is to take three

sites out of a total of five or to hold the highest victory total at the end of the four turns. It sounds complicated but this game was super-easy to learn. As someone who has been playing games for years, I think that easy to learn is the way to go. I have been so addicted to this game since my first game that I blew a pay check on it.

The races include Orks, which have an ability to sacrifice themselves to destroy the larger units. Then there is Chaos which moves more quickly to assault as many times as possible before the other guy gets his first turn. The Eldar are more sneaky because they can move from one location to another, locking up units to limit your options. Last but not least the Space Marines' armor is generally high and they are excellent in gun fights but are versatile enough to assault. I find Marines to be the most difficult to play against with my Chaos deck because I cannot focus on one thing and move in on it. The Marines are diverse enough to keep shifting their weight.

For the most part this game seems to be impossible to master but again is simple to learn. With Tyranids and Imperial Guard both being released in February the game play is going to expand over the next few months

The decks are pre-constructed and you have to buy one because it is the only way to get a wave card, which gives your race an ability and an attack rating to make their first deployment. You can register through Sabertooth's web site and gain rank for beating guys you hang out with as long as you are all registered. You can also register venues and then get twice as many points for slaughtering each other in front of a live audience. You can't beat getting a permanent record of how many times you killed that loud-mouth who swears he is the best.

This game takes about an hour to play or maybe less if you are pretty good. The art leaves a little to be desired but all-in-all the card game is original and well-planned. I hope to see more of this level of game from Sabertooth. *[On January 3 Games Workshop announced that it bought 85% of Sabertooth for U.S. \$3 million. There was a big party at Sabertooth. -Ed.]*

Notes from the Proprietor, by Jim Destromp

A 3000-point Warhammer Fantasy battle was fought on December 29. The players were Zane, leading the Bones, Bob Watts, also leading Bones, and Jim Destromp, leading the mighty Rats. The cunning and fierce Skaven hoards prevailed.

Mage Knight Dungeons was released on January 4 and is selling like hotcakes. If you did not get your Fist of Tesla or Steam Behemoth from Santa, be sure to pick up these extra-large Mage Knight models while they are still available. Be on the lookout for a new series of Mage Knight castle pieces in the next few months.

Warren Holland, the CEO of Decipher, announced that his company has lost the Star Wars license as of December 31, 2001. Decipher will be allowed to sell off its existing stock of Star Wars/Young Jedi/et al CCG products through April 30, 2002. This situation is largely due to a souring of relations between Lucasfilm and Decipher after Hasbro, the master toy licensee for Star Wars (in which George Lucas himself owns a 10% stake), bought Wizards of the Coast. Hasbro apparently convinced the execs at Lucasfilm that it could create a Pokemon-like craze for Star Wars cards if given the CCG license. To the end Decipher claims it tried to play nice with Lucasfilm, and even offered more money than the original Star Wars movie cost to make in order to retain the license.

Dan Conley's Quickfire 2 universal miniatures game has been under continued development. You can catch Dan and a bloody Quickfire engagement at Marscon this month.

MarsCon 2002 is here!

MarsCon 2002 will be held at the Ramada Inn Historic in Williamsburg on January 11-13. Call 800-666-8888 for reservations and ask for the special \$44 per night single/double rate. The Con entrance fee is only \$15 for weekend if you pre-register, or \$25 at the door. MarsCon events will include shopping at a cozy dealers room, partying at the best-stocked Con suite you could ask for, viewing inexplicable Anime in the round-the-clock darkness of the Anime room, and of course a smorgasbord of CCGs, miniatures, and role-playing games in the Gaming room. You can get last-minute info on MarsCon at <http://www.marscon.net> or by e-mailing info@marscon.net. If you miss out, you'll be stuck reading about it in next month's newsletter!



Mage Knight Dungeons First Look, by Dave Peterson

Mage Knight Dungeons is the newest game release from Wizkids. It hit the shelves on January 4 and has been selling well. Like previous Wizkids releases, the first group of figures is available in starter packs, which include the rulebook, Special Abilities Card, dice, map, and counters as well as ten models, and booster packs, which include a hero, a treasure chest, and three monsters. Look for builder packs to be available within a few weeks which will add doors, more counters and maps, and special terrain features to the game.

What makes Mage Knight Dungeons really fun and interesting is the wide range of options and strategies that you have available as a player. You typically use one of your activations to move your hero, and the other to move Mage Spawn closer to your opponent to attack him. Once you get into the thick of your game, things get more interesting. You can skip moving your hero to plague your opponent with two monster moves, or work at surrounding him. You can move monsters away from him if you want to deny him experience. Do you kill the monsters you encounter, or try to lead them toward your opponent? You probably should not soften up monsters and then send them toward your opponent, as he will gladly except the almost free experience points from you. And don't forget about that final run for the exit; be sure to have some nasties waiting there if your opponent is a runner rather than a fighter.

The highest gold total wins the game, so you don't necessarily need to slug it out with every creature you encounter in order to win. It definitely helps to strike first; enabling a monster to strike your opponent first when he is undamaged can give you a game-winning edge. Similarly, a hard knock from a monster can cripple you for the game.

If you move up from single-hero scenarios to playing with warbands, or gather four or more players around the board, real mayhem is sure to ensue. The more mayhem, the more fun for everyone. Between the chaos of a crowded dungeon map and the delicate balance between activating your heroes and the wandering monsters, you will have lots of interesting choices to make. This will ensure that no two games will be quite alike. And this is the mark of a really fun game design.

Mage Knight Dungeons Marquess Tournament

January 18 at 5:30pm; January 19 and 20 at 12:00 noon

Wizkids is proud to announce Mage Knight Marquess Sealed Starter Tournaments, held during the weekend of January 18 - 20. All Champions from each event will receive a Champion certificate and a Limited Edition Brimbidus Grim, the Minotaur Warrior figure that you can not get any other way. Also the Fellowship winner will receive a special Limited Edition figure of Headstone the Gargoyle.

Buy a starter and use the figures from it to build a your army.

Warlord Presiding: Lizzardman