

# ACE Game Club Newsletter

## Minutes of the Meeting of March 2, 2003

Game Club President Jim Thorpe took a look at the sparsely populated game room and said "I guess we'll go ahead and get started." He yielded the floor to TJ, who told the members that he will be running a Warhammer 40,000 tournament the following Saturday, March 8, at 12 noon. He requested that the members approve \$100 from the treasury for prize support, to be added to the \$5 entry fee. The members strongly suggested that it was important that the tournament sponsor/game master not play with such a lot of cash riding on the game. TJ agreed that it would be prudent not to play in his own tournament in this case. Scheduling was also discussed because of possible conflicts with the Saturday MechWarrior tournaments that begin at 2:00. TJ proposed to run the tournament in 1 1/2 hour rounds, with four rounds being sufficient to accommodate ten players. He also proposed that a prize be awarded for the best conversion. Jim Destromp suggested that such a prize be judged and awarded at a game club meeting. Jim recommended that the tournament have a minimum of eight players in order to run. Noel More said that it will be tight in the game room accommodating this many 1500 point games, and that small playing areas can wipe out certain armies before the game even starts. Dave Peterson proposed that the club provide \$10 per player prize support and table space for this event. The proposal was accepted by voice vote. TJ said that army lists for this event will be due to him by Sunday, March 9, and that the event will be Saturday, March 15 at noon. Additional tournament rules were provided on a handout.

Steve Shelly announced that Luke will be running Warhammer 40,000 campaign games on March 8. Sign up's for this game were put on the white board. The first week of play will be free, with each additional week having a \$2 fee. Prizes will be awarded at the end of the campaign or March 8, whichever comes later.

Jim Destromp conducted the locker review. Those present to pay were Noel, Noe, Jerry, Tony (four months), Walt, Johnny (paid four months in arrears). Doug paid for Danny for two months. Jessie was not present to pay. Lockers 90 and 91 were checked. Walt paid for a second locker, so all lockers were occupied.

Jim told the members that Lewis Rich started painting the ceiling of the game room. It looked nice, but will look nicer when it is finished. The members voted to reimburse Rich for the paint.

Jim Thorpe conducted the calendar review. Mondays are currently open. Tuesdays are Jim's Hackmaster campaign (there is one opening and the group sure could use a decent thief). Wednesdays are the Magic CCG Arena League

and Dave Saunders' Third Edition D&D campaign. Thursdays are Rich's BattleTech campaign. Fridays are Magic The Gathering, Noel More's Hackmaster campaign. (Jim was shot in the rear by a poison arrow and then died in the resulting fall. Some members of the party took damage with the magic user tried to take out three kobolds with a fireball and got caught in his own 40-foot blast radius.) Saturdays are the Magic CCG Arena league, Mechwarrior Dark Age sanctioned tournaments, and Walt Kassell's Third Edition D&D campaign (soon to be based on an elaborate "Survivor" system). Sundays are Warhammer 40,000 and Warhammer Fantasy open gaming, and Yu-Gi-Oh CCG. Doug has stopped running Dragonball Z CCG on Sundays, and Walt is taking a break from his Sunday D&D campaign.

Walt proposed that his "Survivor" D&D campaign would have the players vote in a Dungeonmaster each week. All players and monsters would be created by the players at the beginning of the campaign and put in a hopper, from which they would be pulled as needed each week.

Tracy Johnson updated the members on his on-going game of Fifth Fleet. He is running the game by e-mail with club members in the role of the U.S. The game board is

mounted on the wall and the pieces are magnetic. Tracy was sending out Chinese satellite photos to the e-mail players. The Americans are expected to land in Ceylon because the Indians and Chinese are doing ethnic cleansing. Tracy asked if the game could please be covered with plastic during the painting of the game room ceiling.

Jim Destromp asked everyone to make a point of escorting non-members out of the game room. There has been no theft in the game room for a long while and we would like to keep it that way. It makes ACE a great place to play. Even when people leave there stuff all over (and we wish they would do this a little less), the members watch out for each other's stuff.

Jens Knudsen II asked for the members to put their e-mail addresses on a yellow sheet for him.

Enio Lopez reported that he received demo packages of the new Mage Knight Dungeons product. He said that it is really nice, and D&D players will probably want it. He added that Wizkids has announced a new game for younger players and a Shadowrun combat dial-based game using six-inch McFarlan-style figures. Wizkids has also announced a live-action Mechwarrior movie, and Crimson Skies is on the way.

Jim Destromp told the members that Games Workshop is promoting the new Warhammer Fantasy card game and will be coming out with a clicks-based Lord of the Rings game. Jim added that 40K miniatures are currently available by



The first series of action figures for Wizkids' new Shadowrun Duels game includes The Street Deacon (human street samurai), Lothan the Wise (troll combat mage), Silver Max (dwarf rigger), Kyushi (female human yakuza assassin), Liada (female elf street mage), and G-Dogg (ork bouncer).

## ACE Game Club Newsletter - April 2003

special order only. His support has gotten so bad from Games Workshop that he decided to stop ordering for a while.

Jim reported that YRC, the new owners of the Riverdale theatre, are really anxious to work with the club. They are ready to deal. Unfortunately, there are no movies worth organizing a club night for in March. In May you can expect a club movie night for *The Matrix Reloaded* and perhaps one more movie. These will be on our standard club rate of \$2 per member and \$4 per guest. Enio added that he has been invited to play demo games of *HeroClix* at the theatre to promote the new *X-men* movie.



**Wizkids' new Crimson Skies game is preparing for take-off! It will include both character and plane figures for a unique blend of action and heroism.**

Jim Destromp asked all the members to check the expiration dates on their membership cards.

Dave Peterson conducted the meeting attendance drawing. You must be present to win, and the drawing is based on the previous month's attendance roster. In other words, you must be present at two consecutive meetings to qualify. Ray Cote won the gift certificate. He was not wearing his club T-shirt, so his \$10 gift certificate was not doubled.

Dave asked the members for submissions for the club newsletter. It is much better when people send information about their games. Dave asked for reports and winners for TJ's 40K tournament and the Arena league. He also asked Tracy to send updates on the Fifth Fleet game.

Jim Thorp, seeing no further business, declared the meeting adjourned.

### **BattleFleet Gothic Battle Report, by Jens Knudsen II**

I finally managed to get a *BattleFleet Gothic* game in with the boys Sunday night. Eric and I versus Jens III. Jens deployed his 3 Firestorm escorts on our right flank (Eric's side) and his fighters to our left (my side) with his four Imperial cruisers (CA's) in the center (two were hybrid carriers (CVs)). Eric had three Space Marine Cruisers (SM CA's) and three SM escorts. I had 12 Eldar escorts (nine Torpedo boats {Nightshades - 'Shades for short} and three lance boats {Hemlocks}).

Turn 1 went well for us - Jens didn't have any Nova cannons in his fleet! Eric deployed his Thunderhawks and the 'Shades fired a spread of 18 torpedoes in groups of two while the Hemlocks accelerated to go round Jens' flank. Jens ended up having to pull his fighter screen off to nullify Eric's assault shuttles, which left nothing between my torp's and his CA's. So he was forced to increase speed on Turn 2 so the torp's would pass harmlessly behind.

On Turn 2 Eric closed to gun and bombardment cannon range and forced Jens to 'brace for impact' and succeeded in collapsing shields and scored several hits telling hits on a CV (starting a fire which scored another point of damage on Turn 3) and a few on the CA. As the Hemlocks continued on course to come up behind Jens' ships my 'Shades darted into weapons battery range and actually scored a few hits and again let fly a salvo 12 torp's (one squadron failed it's leadership test and was unable to reload). Several torp's made it through the fighter screen and combined turret fire to score on one of the CV hybrids and damaging another CA. Then with my superior movement I darted out of weapons range (or as Bob would say to readjusted the Eldar's tights) and into his rear quadrant to rendezvous with the Hemlocks.

For Turn 3 Jens needed to pass his leadership test to ready his flight bays in case he was able to launch but failed the initial and Admiral's re-roll. Unable to bring my ships under fire, Jens locked on to (doubling his gunnery attack) and flew three of the CA's directly at Eric's SM Strike Cruisers and brought them under concentrated fire. The other CA veered slightly to starboard on its attack run and its starboard lance fire summarily destroyed the SM escorts. Eric's CA's were able to successfully brace for impact but still suffered grievously with one SM CA crippled and another taking two damage points. Fortunately Jens' Escort fire wasn't as effective and failed to penetrate the thick armored hides of the SM CA's. Eric closed to point-blank gun range and targeted the CVs. Jens braced and though he shrugged off most of the hits, still saw his shields collapse and enough hits scored to bring the damaged CV and a CA to the verge bring crippled and the destruction of one escort. As the three 'Shade squadrons wheeled about and attacked from behind in concert with the Hemlocks, two of the 'Shade squadrons failed to reload torp's and were forced to use their minimal gun batteries to inflict damage. The gun batteries were amazingly effective and crippled the CV and brought it to within one point of destruction. The Hemlocks targeted the CA that wiped out the SM escorts and scored 5 hits out of 9 possible, collapsing it's shields and bring it to within 1 pt of being crippled. With all fighter cover gone, the one reloaded 'Shades squadron fired a spread of 6 torp's at the crippled CV. But first they passed through the escorts and destroyed one and four continued on into the crippled CV. Two missed but two hit (and weren't saved by bracing), finishing her and causing a critical warp reactor overload. The resulting explosion crippled the CA pummeled by the Hemlocks and crippled the other CV that had suffered one hit from the two remaining torp's. The 'Shades and Hemlocks then fell back out of range and formed up for the final assault.

Turn 4, it was still possible for Jens to snatch the victory laurels if he could destroy both of Eric's damaged SM CA's (hopefully by making one explode), crippling or destroying the other and then disengaging. He still had one fully operational CA but he needed to pass his CV leadership so he could launch fighters for the CAP he'd need to break-up the soon to be arriving Eldar torpedoes. But he failed his leadership test and was unable to launch more fighters that turn. In an act of defiance, the sole surviving Firestorm followed the regrouping 'Shades and fired on the nearest squadron. They didn't brace because I wanted all torp's available for the next turn and were forced to endure the vengeful fire. The lance shot went wide to one of the false sensor images but the gun battery, as always, was unaffected by the holofields false target images and destroyed the trailing Nightshade. Jens brought his ships into a left turn to bring his weapons batteries and lances to bear on Eric's SM CA's and fired. The barrage was withering, with over 75% of the shots striking home! But, in an equally dazzling display of bracing all but two shots were shrugged off and all three CA's survived! As Eric's CA's prepared to open fire, Jens discovered to his horror my 8 surviving Nightshades all passed their leadership tests and successfully reloaded their torp's and with the Hemlocks closed to gun and torp range. He gambled that he'd destroy Eric enough to be able to survive my attack but knew he couldn't survive both. So, before a shot was fired, he capitulated.

### **Lord of the Rings CCG Update, by Thomas Auler**

Don't forget that Saturdays at 6:30 pm estimated time, there is a league being run at Atomic Comics. This one is less formal and uses a home kit, but foils are still awarded. Jess Gamez is running that one in my absence, but I am sure he could use more attendees.

I want to do a Fellowship Booster Draft at Atomic Comics before I leave April 25th. It will be counted towards league points at that league. It will cost the price of three boosters (draft packs would be free) and we will use Mines Of Moria, Fellowship, and the third pack based on what Jim has at Atomic Comics. Fellowship sites and Frodo and ring only. This one is meant for fun. These two events will be among my last before I leave the area. I move on April 25th to Michigan.

Some of you may have already heard or seen this, but for those of you on my list that have not, here is some vital news... today (March 12) is the release date of the BOHD expansion. Decipher has announced that they are sold out and that they have no more inventory at their warehouse. This did not initially worry me, as it simply meant that the distributors placed larger orders and that all of the inventory is now in the hands of distributors. However, Brian Catalino has



reported that Alliance is stating that they are also sold out. There have been other reports of other distributors being already sold out.

Now I don't want to see a panic, but this may mean a limited supply of this set. There are no plans to reprint the set. Try to get what you can as soon as possible since this is going to be hard to find later.

My experience as a collector tells me that this may be a case of speculation on the part of some distributors somewhere. They may be sitting on inventory and waiting to see how high the demand gets in order to maximize their profit margin. This is not Decipher's fault; if anything this is an indication of how successful and popular the game has become. I have seen this happen with X-Files, Marvel Overpower IQ, Pokemon Base Set (unlimited), and other games, with suppliers claiming limited runs similar to Magic's Legends. Now if you took notice of those titles, you know that as soon as these games became discontinued or, in the case of Pokemon, the market got satiated, whoah and behold! The distributors suddenly had volumes of inventory to unload at greatly reduced prices. This may be what is happening with BOHD. Only the future can tell, and if there really was more demand than supply, it is possible that Decipher will respond to the cries of its customers and do a second printing. In the meanwhile, expect a shortage until things cool off.

Here is the official word from Decipher on how this event happened on their end:

"Decipher always uses the best information available at the time of a print run to determine appropriate quantities for our products. Some of these indicators may be distributor pre-orders, set size, product configuration, potential new markets and anecdotal evidence of consumer energy in the marketplace. This is exactly the kind of information we used to determine the print run for Battle of Helm's Deep. We did not do anything different with this set, nor did we cut any distributor orders. In fact, we met all of the distributor requests completely. We are now sold out of boosters, and the product is in the distribution pipeline. Some retailers are reporting they cannot get more product from their distributor. We believe this may be a result of new players getting into the game after The Two Towers set released. We continue to believe we printed an appropriate amount of product for this set, but we will continue to watch this in the near and distant future to see if there is a necessary demand for additional BOHD boosters. Our Sales and Marketing team will be available at the GAMA Trade Show (GTS) next week to talk directly with retailers and hear their feedback about the availability of BOHD boosters in the marketplace."

So, the problems may be from an unexpected increased player base. That is very good news! If there is an actual need for more boosters to be printed, then Decipher will consider this possibility. That is also very good news. As I have said before, speculators in the market may have targeted our game. This also is an indication of the success of the LOTR TCG. It is frustrating for players, sure, but eventually product turns up as the cost of holding onto product outweighs any artificial market demand prices. But this kind of speculation only happens when a trading card game is considered hot and in demand, so again this is a sign of Decipher's success. LOTR TCG ROCKS!



Creep Freaks is a game of gross monsters from Wizkids, due out fall 2003.

### Stray Bullets, by Dave Peterson

First, the big news. After many delays, the ACE Game Club Newsletter archive is now on-line. You can find every issue of the ACE Game Club Newsletter at <http://www.atomic-comics.com> under the Game Club link. Every issue of the newsletter back to October 1996 is available for your entertainment.

When I heard that the Wizards of the Coast web site has published information on a forth-coming "version 3.5" of the Dungeons and Dragons core rulebooks, I

was sure that it was an April Fool's joke. Alas, this does not appear to be the case as the information was posted back in March. The material claims that the new books will be clarifications of the original systems, such as a shorter and more streamlined presentation of the combat system, together with some changes to reduce the level of cheese in certain dual-classed characters. It suggested that "post-3.5" supplements will be more up-to-date than older d20 supplements, but that third edition core books will also be useable with the newer supplements. Wizards of the Coast is also saying that the 3.5 "upgrade" of the rules should not be taken as any indication that a revision 4.0 will be available any time soon.



The new Shadowrun figures range from five to over seven inches tall!

Game industry pundits are predicting that Wizkids' new Shadowrun Duels game, where six-inch poseable action figures with click bases slug it out, will be the next big thing. Series one will contain six action figures, each with customizable gear, dice, and a ruler.

### Mechwarrior Dark Age Tournament Update, by Jim Destromp

February saw continued Mechwarrior Dark Age campaign games on Saturday afternoons. Jim Destromp was the presiding Battlemaster. The March 1 game was won by Jason Bland. The Fellowship winner was Chris Duffy. The March 8 scenario was won by Ernie Fields, with Jason Bland winning the Fellowship award. The March 15 scenario was won by Jason Bland, with Darcy Moran winning the Fellowship award. The March 22 scenario was won by Frankie Fields, with Dan Gonzalez winning the Fellowship award. We had some really fun and enjoyable games this month. Congratulations to our winners!

Wizkids will not be publishing sanctioned campaign scenarios in April, so I am running my own special customized (heh heh) Mechwarrior tournaments all month. These Mechwarrior events will be held each Saturday in April at 2:00pm. There will be no entry fee, but prizes will be awarded. See you there—and be prepared for anything!



Another of the daring aviators from the forth-coming Crimson Skies game.