

# LETTERS

## Wormy is 100!

Dear Dragon:

Hand me a DRAGON® Magazine, and the first place I'll turn to is the back — to read the comics. And the first comic I'll read is David Trampier's "Wormy." I've been a subscriber since issue #33, and I've watched the good and the mediocre make their way in and out of the ninety-odd issues since then, but "Wormy" has always been outstanding. Mr. Trampier is a master at depicting fast, complex action in a limited number of frames. Considering his many endearing characters, spirited dialogue, clever wit, fantastic artwork, and great attention to detail, I think his strip is often worth the price of the magazine alone! Yet not once can I ever remember reading a letter in DRAGON Magazine commending him. Well, albeit long overdue, I hereby correct this oversight. Long live Tramp, and long live "Wormy"!

Timothy M. Klein  
Wilmington NC

*Readers will be interested to know that this issue of DRAGON Magazine is the 100th one to contain Tramp's "Wormy." I am a long-time fan of Wormy's adventures myself, and it has been a pleasure to have it with us for so long.*

*We have a spectral surprise Planned for the next issue of the magazine to celebrate this 100th anniversary — and Wormy's fans will find their knowledge of the series comes in handy! Get ready for it. — RM*

## Christian games

Dear Dragon:

I've just finished reading Matthew Hamilton's letter in the "Forum" of issue #121, and I feel that a generic role-playing game (such as the AD&D® game) should not have any "set" religion. If a DM wants characters to be Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Taoist, Shinto, or any other religion, it should be up to the DM and the players — *not* the game. If one wants a Christian campaign, get the DRAGONRAID™ game. It has an excellent set of rules, and you learn a lot about the Bible. I have played in successful campaigns without any specific religions for five years. It's not the game that has the religion; it's the players.

Bill Rae  
Timnath CO

*A number of people wrote in response to Matthew's letter, some favoring his ideas and some opposing them. In general, it is the policy of DRAGON Magazine to avoid publishing material that specifically translates a modern and commonly accepted religion in to game-specific terms. We might use an article on monotheistic campaigns, or publish an article on medieval life that includes information on religious beliefs at the time, or even publish game statistics for*

*ancient Roman deities, but (as Bill Rae notes above) we feel that giving a campaign a specific religious background taken directly from real-world religions is the province of the DM and players involved.*

*On a related topic, some readers have written to say that their parents won't allow them to play certain role-playing games. A compromise solution to this problem would be to try different types of games. Super-powered hero games are often quite acceptable to parents, as are science-fiction and espionage role-playing games. They're certainly worth a try!*

*Bill also mentions the DRAGONRAID game, which is produced by Adventure Learning Systems. This role-playing system was created to teach Christian principles and ethics through a gaming medium. Interested gamers should contact Adventure Learning Systems, Inc., P.O. Box 25909, Colorado Springs CO 80936, or call (303) 590-7818 for more information. The boxed DRAGONRAID game costs \$29.95. — RM*

## A Finieous fan

Dear Dragon:

I am writing to you as an avid fan of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games, DRAGON Magazine, and "Finieous Fingers" — not necessarily in that order. The end objective of this is to replace my lost copy of *The Finieous Treasury*, and to supply me with any other "Finieous" anthologies.

I realize that you cannot supply me with a copy of *The Finieous Treasury*. However, I am thinking that perhaps the author of the "Finieous" strips would have a few copies lying around he would be willing to part with. So, if you would, please give me the name of the author of the "Finieous" series. I would be one step closer to replacing the best comic-strip anthology I have ever read.

James L. Mailloux  
Milton, Fla.

*We were not able to contact J.D. Webster, whom we understand teaches flight school in the U.S. Navy in Florida, and the Mail Order Hobby Shop has no copies left of The Finieous Treasury (published in 1981). The adventures of Finieous and his friends were continued in a short-lived magazine called Adventure Gaming, then in The Space Gamer for a time. We wish you the best in finding copies of The Finieous Treasury; it was wonderful. — RM*

## Myths

It was the summer of 1964, and we were at my grandparents' home in the Kentucky hills. I was waiting for a train to come by (the tracks ran right past the front yard) when my dad walked in from town with one of the new half-dollars.

Everyone crowded around to look. I could tell by the way they were peering at the coin that there was something unusual about it. Everyone seemed to be bothered by something.

"I can't make it out," said my aunt. "It looks like it might be, but I can't tell."

"What?" I walked over, train forgotten. After a pause, someone handed the coin to me.

"A hammer and sickle," someone said. "Below his collar, right there — it looks like a hammer and sickle."

I looked down at the odd symbol under John F. Kennedy's profile. I couldn't tell what it was. I wondered what a hammer and sickle were supposed to mean. They didn't sound good.

Years later, I learned that the symbol was just the artist's signature, which — if you were liberal in the ways in which you interpreted your visual data — might be said to look like a hammer and sickle. I never did figure out what it was supposed to have meant had it actually been a hammer and sickle. Guess it doesn't matter now.

My cousin Joe knew everything. He knew about flying saucers especially, since a few of them had flown around Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near his home. He told me that one night the Air Force chased flying balls of light around a hill near the base but failed to catch any of them. I was in awe. Joe was 14, but I was 12, and he knew everything.

"They caught one of those saucers," he said. "It crashed, and the Air Force took it back to one of their hangars at the base. It's frozen there with the aliens inside it."

I nodded, eyes full of wonder. Real aliens. I could understand why the Air Force kept it a secret; this was big news. I wondered what the aliens were like and what they wanted here. They were scary but neat. I wished aliens would come around Louisville sometime. I really wanted to see a UFO.

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Game Poster Inside

work, and this is what the new alignment system will do.) We have included a simple chart to make it easy for the DM to keep track of characters' alignments and how their actions affect their alignments.

### Off to the races

Next come discussions of the unique races of the DRAGONLANCE saga. The history of Krynn's races is discussed in detail, including the role of the Greystone of Gargath in transforming Krynn's few original races into the myriad creatures of present-day Ansalon. Each race is addressed in its own section. The special characteristics and foibles of elves, tinker gnomes, the various dwarven races, and kender are described along with their game statistics. Also included here is a section on special proficiencies designed especially for characters in the world of the DRAGONLANCE saga. Following this are descriptions and game statistics for the creatures that are native only to the world of Krynn: draconians, fetch, gully dwarves, shadowpeople, dreamwraiths, spectral minions, and thanoi.

### The history of Krynn

The explanation of how the world came to be is covered in this book as well. The Timeline of Krynn covers the major events in the world's past, from its creation through the War of the Lance. The history of the War of the Lance is given in great detail, with all the battles and political machinations of that world-shaping conflict. Pre-Cataclysmic maps of the political boundaries and climate of Ansalon are given here in case players wish to adventure in the early days of Krynn.

Against the backdrop of the history of Krynn, the major personalities who dominated that history are presented with game statistics and personal backgrounds. The most important NPCs of the past, present, and future of Krynn are described here, along with the player characters of the War of the Lance.

Lavish descriptions of post-war Krynn are given so players can experience further adventures in the turmoil of the war-torn continent of Ansalon. Post-war maps of the politics and climate of Ansalon are included in this section.

No source book on Krynn would be complete without discussing the many unique magical items that the world of the DRAGONLANCE saga has brought to the AD&D game. The *dragonlance*, the *orbs of dragonkind*, the *frostreavers*, the *glasses of Arcanist*, and many more arcane devices are detailed in this book.

This is just a brief listing of the Krynnish lore and game information available in *DRAGONLANCE Adventures*. For all those gamers who wrote us saying that they wanted info on how to take their own characters adventuring in Krynn (or to take the characters of the DRAGONLANCE saga on further adventures), this book's

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I still loved Joe's stories years later, because we had both shared so deeply in the wonder of the moment, the excitement and the thrill of it all. I'm aware that now tales of flying saucers in secret hangars qualify as modern mythology, and the thrill found in UFO stories has faded for me over the years to the point where I look at them with unabashed skepticism, but UFOs were once special things to a kid. They were to me, anyway, though they seem to be out of fashion these days.

The Pope Lick Monster lived in the woods by the old railroad trestle that crossed over Pope Lick and ran parallel to Taylorsville Road, heading east out of Jeffersontown, Kentucky. Lots of stories circulated through my high school when I was in 7th grade about the depredations of the monster, which included jumping down from the trestle onto the roofs of cars that drove beneath it on a twisting highway that intersected Taylorsville Road.

The Pope Lick Monster wasn't a harmless prankster, though. One teenager drove beneath the trestle in an open-top convertible. His body was found the next day, slumped over the steering wheel of his wrecked car. His neck was broken. I knew any number of students who had heard the story and swore it was the truth.

"He's a crazy man," said Paul. Paul wasn't the most pleasant kid to know in 7th grade, but he seemed to know a lot, even if he wanted to beat me up once. "He killed his wife and kids and lives in the woods now, all wild and hairy. You can't kill 'im."

Later, one of my cousins was riding around with a carload of girlfriends when they drove under the trestle toward the main highway. All of them were acutely aware of the legend of the monster. My devilish cousin reached out of an open window and rapped hard on the roof of the car as they went under the trestle. Everyone scream-

ed and the driver nearly drove into a ditch, flooring the accelerator to 70 MPH.

I had occasion to drive past the Pope Lick trestle in later years and can attest to the eerie atmosphere of the area, out in the hilly country along a particularly lonely stretch of highway. The trestle itself seems to grow out of the earth like an old living thing from the past. I could easily believe that a monster lived there, even if I knew that one didn't. I sometimes wonder if anyone believes in that monster anymore.

The booklet arrived in the mail along with a dozen other things: manuscripts, game rules questions, letters to the editor, sample copies of new games, and all the other things that show up in a game magazine's mailbox. I sorted out the mail and noted the envelope with no return address. I thumbed it open and found the booklet.

It was called "Dark Dungeons" and told how playing role-playing games initiated people into secret cults which taught mind control and un-Christian behavior. Neither was true, though I regretted the absence of mind-control powers; they would have come in handy the next time I asked for a raise. Whoever wrote that booklet had some pretty bizarre ideas about role-playing games in general. Lots of drama and darkest paranoia, but no truth.

I wondered how anyone could believe that role-playing games gave you mind-control powers or inducted you into secret cults or did anything else to you. Then, of course, I remembered the hammer and sickle, the UFO in the hangar, the Pope Lick Monster, the Proctor & Gamble moon-and-stars logo, the missing thirteenth floor in certain skyscrapers, and all the other irrational beliefs of our modern age." Dark Dungeons" had simply joined their ranks. It needed no reason to exist; it just was. And someday it, too, would fade away, as all myths do.

I sighed and threw the booklet out. I'm getting too old for myths.

