What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you’d like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

Every two weeks?

Dear Dragon:

I am writing in hopes of getting your maga-
azine to go at least bi-monthly. Once a month is
just not enough! I really like your articles,
fiction section, computer and book reviews,
everything about your magazine. But once I
read the month’s issue, I have to wait a whole
three weeks to get more of this great magazine.
I know you have enough on your hands already,
but I just like this magazine too much to get it
just once a month. So please, please, please go
bi-monthly at least.

Jonah S. Ewell
No address given

Yours is exactly the kind of letter we love to receive here, but if we tried to put this magazine out once every two weeks, we would have to be taken to the Great Lakes Home for Self-
Lobotomized Editors within the first two issues (I think you meant bi-weekly or semi-monthly instead of bi-monthly, but I’ve heard the term “bi-monthly” used for either meaning). You should seriously think about subscribing to DUNGEON® Adventures, which would give you more than enough material to keep you going.

See our subscription cards in this issue.

Overseas notes

Dear Dragon:

With the exception of a couple of issues, you’ve done a great job of entertaining and informing us gamers who are overseas serving the military. It hurts to see all the great stuff coming out that we won’t see for another year (e.g., the AD&D® 2nd Edition Player’s Handbook will probably be in the Stars & Stripes book-
store in September 1992). I have a few questions for you:

1. whatever happened to the “Daily Planet” (DCTM HEROES game) Gaming Supplement?
2. Why don’t you have the World Gamers
Sphere’s Island of Kesmai fantasy game (see “Kesmai and Beyond,” in issue #149) and li-
censed SNIPER® World War II computer game (see “The Game Wizards,” in issue #148).

For what it’s worth, TSR, Inc. has no objection if gamers wish to play TSR’s games on-line through BBSs. However, such use cannot be
made for profit; no one can charge other players
fees to play in a TSR game. I recall seeing one BBS system that was completely devoted to the
AD&D® Oriental Adventures system; another—the “Illuminati” BBS—is operated by Steve Jack-
son Games in Austin, Tex. (512-447-4449, 24
hours, 308/1200/2400 baud)

The BBS games that I’ve seen work more like
play-by-mail (PBM) games, but they do introduce interaction with real people. Some on-line
computer services offer real-time role-playing
games, like the CompuServe Information
Service’s Island of Kesmai fantasy game (see
“Kesmai and Beyond,” in issue #149) and li-
censed SNIPER® World War II computer game
(see “The Game Wizards,” in issue #148).

For what it’s worth, TSR, Inc. has no objection
1. The “Daily Planet” supplement was actually an
advertising series from Mayfair Games
supporting its licensed DC HEROES game. There
are no plans at present to start the series again.
2. We discontinued “The World Gamers’ Guide”
feature in DRAGON Magazine with issue #131. The magazine’s increased distribution world-
wide, was responsible; we were simply getting too many entries to publish, and it did not fit to the
feature was not benefiting the majority of our readers. We still encourage gamers the world over to organize gaming
groups, set up conventions, and use the re-
sources of their local game and hobby stores.
3. We made mention in issue #133’s “Letters”
column that an anthology would be released in
early 1989, but the anthology was dropped from
the production schedule. We have no further
anthologies planned for now, though some
anthology types have been discussed. What
would you like to see if we did decide to publish
an anthology of material from DRAGON Maga-
azine? Write now and tell us.
4. We have no plans to reprint the Finieous
Treasury, the collected graphic adventures of
Finieous Fingers the thief and his friends, that
was released by TSR, Inc. in 1981. Finieous left
DRAGON Magazine years ago for another gam-
ing magazine that is no longer published. How-
ever, the new adventures of Finieous, Fred, and
Charly now appear in Space Gamer magazine,
published by 3W, Inc. (4470 West Street, Cam-
bria CA 93428).

Back to BBSs

Dear Dragon:

After reading Roger Moore’s editorial in issue #146 (“R.I.P.: RPGs?), I thought of another use
for computers on the subject of RPGs. For those
with moderms, there is always the option of BBSs
[bulletin board systems]. Many BBSs have ongo-
ing RPGs, usually run by the users. I myself call
a number of BBSs that have RPGs to play, and
one BBS is devoted completely to RPGs.

While computer games are excellent (and
getting better) for the gamer, BBSs provide a
way to play your favorite game and get the
human contact that makes the game fun.

Aaron Goldblatt
Fort Worth TX

The BBS games that I’ve seen work more like
play-by-mail (PBM) games, but they do introduce interaction with real people. Some on-line
computer services offer real-time role-playing
games, like the CompuServe Information
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The BBS games that I’ve seen work more like
play-by-mail (PBM) games, but they do introduce interaction with real people. Some on-line
Editorial
Continued from page 5

woman; his lawyer claimed that the influence of the TV series *Kojak* was responsible. The claim was rejected, and the defendant was found guilty.

You could create a list with any number of similar cases, and you could add to it the few incidents that are claimed to have been spawned by role-playing games. For example, a 19-year-old student in Asheville, Ala., apparently planned a convenience-store robbery with two friends while playing an espionage RPG. A store clerk was shot to death during the actual hold-up in May 1985. The murderer was sentenced to prison for life without parole. Do you believe that the game could be at fault? Do you believe that the student would have been fine if he’d never seen the game?

We’re only scratching the surface of the issue here, of course. Several claims have been made that RPGs cause suicidal behavior, but these claims tend to fall apart under close examination as the evidence is so fragmentary and loose. You could make a great case that good grades are harmful, if you use the same set of standards that anti-RPG people often use in selecting their own evidence. That McKee student was noted in the newspaper to be a “straight-A student” (*Milwaukee Journal*, September 19, 1989: page 5A). The student who shot the store clerk was a “high school honor student” (*Milwaukee Journal*, no date available). At a student-relations meeting I attended in high school, the story was told of a student who shot himself to death on a baseball diamond; in his hand he clutched a letter of acceptance from a university and a copy of his high-school transcript (another all-A student).

You could also make an interesting case that religious beliefs cause antisocial and criminal behavior, but I’ve already done that in a previous editorial, in DRAGON® issue #134. (Besides, we have Jim Bakker, who provides overkill on the issue.)

I think good grades and religious feeling are fine things. But if you play with the statistics and are a little careless about the way in which you select and edit your data, you can “prove” good grades and religion (and RPGs) are as bad as anything else. This kind of “evidence” selection is how all the hoopla over the Bermuda Triangle got underway a few years ago. Most of the ships that were claimed to have been mysteriously lost there actually vanished during major storms at sea—all mention of which was dropped in later accounts of the same incidents.

The vast majority of people reading this editorial are, I assume, gamers who are as angry as I am about the way in which RPGs are treated by a few well-meaning but uninformed people in education, social services, and the media. Games are not alone in this abuse, as movies and records also draw fire at times for their perceived effects on those who enjoy them. Various school boards and libraries across America have gained a certain infamy for banning books like *The Wizard of Oz*, *Huckleberry Finn*, or Anne Franks *Diary of a Young Girl* for being bad influences on students. I’m surprised that more students don’t support such book bannings, as it would certainly reduce the amount of homework that would be assigned.

There will always be incidents like those described in this article. If you eliminated every possible game, book, record, or movie that was connected with a bad incident, none would be left. The presence of these recreations is not the issue. Finding ways to identify and help those people with serious mental and emotional problems is the real issue.

How should you react to accusations that RPGs are bad for you? In my opinion, here are the two best things you can do:

1. Examine the evidence with a critical and discriminating eye. Take time to think about what you read or hear on the news. Does the reporting sound reasonable, or does it leave you wondering if a lot of hype and paranoia are being used? Do you actually believe the rationales given for why certain events took place? Can you find more information on the topic that will let you make an informed decision about the matter? Don’t let others do your thinking for you.

2. Be reasonable. If you are a teenager and live with your parents, you will have to accept their decisions (and your school’s) on whether or not they will let you play RPGs. But if you are given a chance to discuss the issue, make sure you are informed—and be on your best behavior when you discuss it. People are always more impressed when they are confronted with someone who shows all the signs of being mature and responsible as well as being well informed.

If you are looking for material in support of gaming, you might want to read two other articles on this topic: Tracy Hickman’s “The Ethics of Fantasy,” from special edition #1 of GPl’s GATEWAYS™ Magazine; and Frank Mentzer’s “Squeaky Wheels,” from POLYHEDRON™ Newszine #26. Both are worth the trouble to find.

As for me, if I really believed that RPGs were harmful, I would not be writing this editorial. I will do what I can to see that they stick around for a long time to come. Use your head. And enjoy life.

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*Alatus* (a. LA-tus)
A variety of winged leech found primarily in swamps and jungle regions. *Alatus* normally nest in the hollows of rotten trees, flying forth to feed after dark...

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