

SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT #1/1

A tribute APA to Lee Gold
and nearly 50 years of the
community she built.

Compiled by: Lisa Padol
Contributors: Various, see within
One Issue Only

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And Now, For Something Completely Different

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Lisa Padol, 39-20 52nd Street, Apt. GD, Woodside, NY 11377, 718-937-8919. I am currently seeking employment.

email: drcpunk@labcats.org or drcpunk@gmail.com

It isn't that I didn't understand that Alarums & Excursions couldn't run forever. Indeed, I'd expected that Issue 600 might be the final one, but as it turned out, I overestimated a bit.

Lee was very clear that she would stop publishing the apa when she no longer felt up to it, and she has always known herself and what she was and was not up to. As Josh put it, "It sucks, but it makes sense."

In an ideal world, we would have all had a heads up and an opportunity to make the last issue an informal farewell. As the world persisted in being less than ideal, I decided to organize an apa where we could do this, an apa that is **not** Alarums & Excursions.

I moved very slowly on this, and while I was still getting metaphorical ducks in something resembling a metaphorical line, others were planning for something beyond a farewell and closure apa. This was something I knew I did not have the werewithal to organize, and I am glad that they did. There are two apas in which the guests from the decades-long party that was Alarums & Excursions can continue to talk, and which new guests can join. Those are A Gentle Stroll and Ever and Anon. You should definitely check them out if you haven't already done so. This apa is neither of those.

Welcome to Something Completely Different.

I think I first met Lee and Barry in person at the 1989 Worldcon, Noreascon 3. I'd just graduated from college with a simultaneous BA and MA, due to a combination of special programs and taking enough college level classes in my senior year of high school and the summer in between that I walked in with nearly a year's worth of college credits under my belt. I shared a hotel room with several other women, bringing the cost down, and my mother had given me a considerable amount of spending money, by my standards then, as a graduation present, and I had a wonderful time spending it all. I bought a lot of filk tapes, and spent a lot of time at the filk circles.

Over the years, I met Lee and Barry again and again, often at Worldcon, sometimes at filking conventions, and occasionally at the bigger northeast general science fiction conventions. If I'm keeping my years in order, at one Worldcon, Josh and I met Lee and Barry when they spotted us from their car as they pulled into convention space. The following year, they were in a small eatery talking about how that couldn't happen this time when Josh and I walked into that same eatery.

We've kept in touch via email for many years. Lee's helped when I hit a wall doing internet research, helped keep me sane(r) and on track when dealing with parental health issues,

recommended many stories and books and films, and made my life so much richer than it would otherwise have been.

Alarums & Excursions introduced me to many people who have become friends. I've been fortunate enough to meet several in person. Some I've lost track of -- Chris Murray, Craig Shackleton, Simon Reeve, Tony Lee, among others. It got my name sufficiently well known that I did reviews for many years (and am still willing to do them).

I learned about Over the Edge through Alarums & Excursions, and its system, WaRP (Wanton Role-Playing System) was my go-to for many years. It blew my mind! I could actually make the character I wanted -- say, a Starfleet officer -- and not have to worry about running out of points for all the skills such a character would logically have. I got to see and playtest Feng Shui because of Alarums & Excursions. I got to playtest a variety of cool games, and am still playtesting.

Indeed, the reason my zine, and hence this apa, is so late is that, as of when I'm typing this sentence, 4:20 am on 16 September (!), I have finally finished my playtest resport for the first 4 (of 5) scenarios in Pelgrane's campaign *Pillars of Sand*, due on the 15th, and sent out at a point where it was still the 15th in Lee's part of the world.

My playtest report is 57 pages long, and by word count, as Josh correctly estimated, novella length. And I do want to run the final scenario when I can. And I now need to read through and playtest Evil Hat's *Streets of Jade*, set in the world of Fonda Lee's Green Bone Saga, written by her and James Mendez Hodes.

I am also editing the new edition of the Cthulhu Invictus campaign *The Legacy of Arrius Lurco*, expanded, revised, and updated for the 7th edition Call of Cthulhu rules.

[10 October (!!) update: I have also sent Pelgrane an additional 18 pages of thoughts on that final scenario, which I hope to begin running at the end of next week. I have just let Arc Dream know that I finished editing the scenario they sent me. I have sent the bulk of *The Legacy of Arrius Lurco* (everything except the front matter and table of contents) to layout. I have attended the larp convention Time Bubble, and finished my second journaling game, My Late Father's Correspondence, an endeavor made much easier by Storybrewers' decision to set up a Discord server for people to post their playthroughs. I have literally nearly filled a notebook with this playthrough.]

The world of tabletop rpgs has greatly expanded since the 1990s, since the 2010s, heck, since the 2020s, and this is wonderful. I do not think there is any way one can keep up with all of it. I game in person and online. I do journaling games. And that's before we get into larps.

And so much of this is because of Lee and because of Alarums & Excursions. We have online forums and platforms like Discord, and I am glad. But I am also glad that the apa continued for as long as it did, and that many of us have chosen to stay in touch in other apas, apas that would not have existed without the good ship Alarums & Excursions and Lee's firm hand on the tiller.

A Lee Gold Tribute Zine

Lee loves Norse mythology. The residue of Norse mythology is present in all the places we visited in Norway. It ranged anywhere from troll statues to relic armor and weapons.

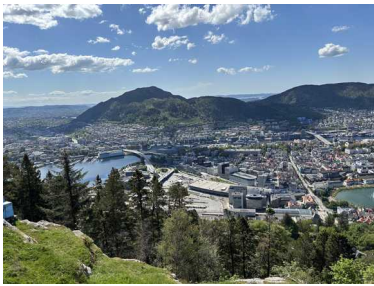
We traveled on our small cruise ship for eleven days. It launched from Bergen and returned there eleven days later. Initially it wasn't apparent, the ship was performing three basic functions. Sailing through fjords with tourists is the most obvious. Then the ship stops at all the small ports with towns. Locals would enter and exit the ship. Being a commuter ship is its second function. But the ship stops many times, even during the wee hours of the night. It is delivering and picking up the mail. That is the ship's third function.

The continuing itinerary, took us on a ferry to Flam. From Flam we took a visually amazing train trip to Myrdal and on to Oslo.

As we sailed through the fjords, I was amazed at how many sharp little rock-spears protruded out the water. These days, many of them have little light houses to warn the ships. Viking sailors must have had an amazing mapping, memory or vision skill to navigate these waters.

Images from Norway

Burgenhus



Kistefos



Burgenhus



Jevnaker



Burgenhus



Oslo



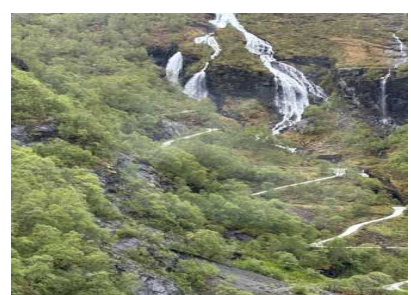
Myrdal



Myrdal



Myrdal



Bergenhus



Flam



Flam



Geiranger



Aurlandsvangen



Myrdal



Saebo



Silsand



Gudvangen



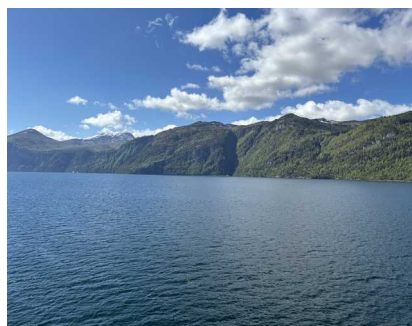
Reipa



Saebo



Stordal



Eric Golf's Suicide Sheet

Sid Ramage

On the 9th of August 2010 Debbie and I completed The Munros (hills over 3000') and Corbetts (hills between 2500 and 3000') all thanks to Lee. As some of you will remember several of the British contributors as well as being role players were hill walkers. When the school I taught at took a 10 year lease on an outdoor centre near Glencoe I invited my local gaming friends and a group of people whom I had only ever met on paper to a long weekend of gaming and walking. This was in 1992 when 14 of us turned up including Simon Cornelius, Nick Larter, Daniel James and Colin Ingham. The weekend was such a success that Debbie and I took up hill walking and the long weekend is still being repeated but now a week, with numbers up to the mid-twenties. Thank-you Lee for giving me a whole group of new friends, a gaming and walking experience and a new and very healthy hobby. I toast you now as I toasted you in 2010.

—Sid

Anima

Colin Ingham

I'm not quite sure how I got onto A&E, but was a contributor to a number of UK zines and it seemed natural to get involved. I wrote about the Fusion City, a science fantasy RPG background. Another subject, the zine title, was Anima. Anima was a spirit-based fantasy designed to fix Runequest's problems, at least as I saw them. But I didn't know any of the contributors back then, except Chris Jaggard. Others will tell the story better, but a lot of the UK contributors banded together under the leadership of Sid (Andrew) Ramage, another contributor. This led to a hugely enjoyable and enduring series of (largely) Scottish gaming and hill walking weeks, usually in the Highlands. Forest Lodge has lasted over 30 years, expanded, diversified and has spawned all sorts of spin-offs including many role playing games that continue year to year.

So, thanks to Lee, particularly for that. I only met Lee Gold briefly, at Glasgow Worldcon. A&E is a fine and influential achievement in terms of RPGs and human friendship.

The Albatross is finally arbalested!

I was an A&E contributor from, I believe, no. 87 and managed just over 20 issues of the Alabaster Albatross, including in the British Takeover of issue 101. Many of my zines were in conjunction with either Pete Clarke or Nick Larter. My output was mediocre in quality and so I feel privileged to have been involved alongside many names that became famous in the hobby. I still roleplay regularly though have not contributed to A&E for 25+ years. Currently I am running Runequest and occasionally Ars Magica. A&E introduced me to Sid Ramage, Colin Ingham and Chris Jaggard amongst others (the Forest Lodge crowd), friends now for more than 30 years. All that was possible through the hard work of Lee and Barry: how did they manage it for so long? Carol and I had the great privilege of hosting Lee and Barry here in London for a few days around 1985 and they were delightful guests. Thanks again to them both for running a unique RPG institution and best wishes to everyone.

— Simon Cornelius

TO LEE FROM ALL OF US

Lee, thank you for your contributions to this hobby and all the others you touched, and thank you for giving me a chance to share and connect with so many others. Your contribution is Gygaxian and your impact is personal to many of us. Thank you. --Nick Parenti

In the shadowy corridors of my formative youth, *Alarums & Excursions* was a torch in the dark—an unruly, passionate, ever-burning archive of minds like mine, reaching out across the silence of pre-internet nights. Reading *A&E* in the '80s and early '90s shaped me profoundly; it was my first true schooling in the art and possibility of roleplaying. Each issue was a revelation—raw theory, wild invention, fierce debates on the soul of gaming—all stitched together by the indomitable Lee Gold, whose work made that scattered fellowship feel like a living conversation. Without *A&E*, there would be no *Ars Magica*, no *Vampire: The Masquerade*, and perhaps no *World of Darkness* at all—just the long, unspoken hunger of a generation of storytellers, unconnected. For me, *A&E* was not just an inspiration; it was an initiation into torch-lit chambers. – Mark Rein-Hagen (“Lion’s Rampage”)

Ever since I learned about Lee, I've been singing (to myself) "You Bash the Balrog" these past couple of days.

I remember the room party she ran at LA Con in 1984. It was for RPG'ers, and one random con-goer came it and established their RPG credentials. When Lee introduced herself, the kid said "You're the one who wrote the 'House of the Rising Sun' RPG!". There was a beat, then someone said "It was *Land of the Rising Sun*." much to kid's embarrassment. - Terry O'Brien (“Alone In The Wilderness”)

I don't think I would have had a career of making games if not for *A&E*, which is where I met collaborators like Robin Laws and Rob Heinsoo. – David Dunham, “Quark’s Communique”

I'm sorry to see this. Lee is one of my favorite game designers. Her samurai Japan books (*Land of the Rising Sun 1&2* and *GURPS Japan*) are some of my favorites. – Brett Slocum

Dear Lee, Thanks for running *Alarums & Excursions* all these years. Recently I have given away most of my game collection, but I kept an issue of *A&E* for old times' sake. Participating in *A&E* changed my career for the better. In those pages, I made important industry connections and established enduring friendships. Thanks so much. Yours truly -- Jonathan Tweet (“Nothing Really”)

I am so proud that we were able to publish *Land of the Rising Sun 2nd ed* for Lee. – Stephen A. Turner, Britannia Game Designs

Sic transit Gloria mundi, and thanks for the memories of a legendary run! – Jason Eric Nelson

In 1989 or so, me and my rowdy *D&D* teen table stole snowracers from a neighbour in Umea, Sweden. When the American accented bearded family father, who's pulkor we had crashed, quickly sleuthed us out, we told him we were playing "Combat Cars" (The local name for Games Workshops *Battle Cars*). He replied that *Car Wars* was the superior game and thus I met my second TRPG mentor. He was an Ent. His shelves were brimming with *A&E*.
As a *Basic Roleplaying* / *RQ* / *Stormbringer* / *CoC* GM there was. So. Much. Stuff.
No streaming service, no internet forum or YouTube rabbit hole has given me that same dizzying feeling of vastness of content and strange sense of belonging. To 16 year old me those shelves of *A&E* represented more printed RPG material than I had seen in my life. I felt small. Insignificant. Bewildered. Sometimes (like when I started using the "detailed skill options" and a D1000 granular resolution mechanic) bamboozled. I can still faintly recall the texture of the colored paper. The smell of the print. The typewriter fonts. The emotions present in the arguments.
I've never picked up an issue or read one after 1992. When I moved away from Umea my tastes had changed and me and my mentor had drifted apart. I was goth and growing up and planning *Vampire* LARPs in Uppsala. I had no time to get lost.
But I do now. And perhaps I will let myself adrift on the seas of thin thin sheets thick with love, obsession and imagination. – Martin Ericcson

I have such fond memories of this. – Simeon Beresford

Lee Gold's contribution to the roleplaying community is nothing short of heroic. Without *Alarums & Excursions* I wouldn't be engaged in this career, and I'm not the only one. All the best to Lee! - Robin D. Laws ("Polished Plate")

Lee Gold may not be a national treasure, but she's the role-playing game hobby's treasure. What a service she's performed, and what an extra-ordinary run. – Eric Goldberg

Thank you for everything. I have been in this hobby since 1977 and so many of my friends did something (or other) in this publication. - Craig Dixon

I wrote for it in the 80s (and arranged the "great British Takeover" for issue 99...). It opened my eyes to a lot of different styles of gaming. – Mike Lewis

In the UK I was able to snag one issue from the late 70s/early 80s and it opened up vistas of possibility for houseruling and creativity. I'll have to see if I've still got that issue stored somewhere! – Alex White

An absolutely astounding heritage. I cannot think of role-playing without remembering the importance of *A&E* to the hobby. – Johnny Wilson

I will be eternally grateful to Golds for having found a space for my publications that didn't exist in my country (Brazil). At *A&E* I was able to share my impressions of the production of Brazilian and Portuguese gamebooks, interactive films, gamecomic books and so many other hybrid products, and I learnt that there is a lot of interest from abroad in what is produced here, even if it hasn't been translated yet. Finally, it's been an honour to have been part of this zine since 2017, to have met so many interesting people and, of course, to have learned a lot from Anglophone interactive reading. But now it's time to move on to [Ever & Anon]. – Pedro Silva (“Back To Brazilian Gamebooks”)

It was also, as far as I know, the only APA that produced extra copies for sale. Which was how I found it. - Matthew Smith

As tribute to Lee Gold and *Alarums and Excursions*, I give you this bit of anecdotal blather. It's just a couple of degrees of separation which result in opening a world of talent and inspiration. By virtue of a high-school friend of a friend getting knocked up by a guy from the wrong side of town, I had the good fortune of meeting Spike Y Jones. To be clear, Spike was not the knocker-upper in this story. My friend's friend married Spike's friend and moved to the East End of the city. I attended the newlyweds' frequent parties where I met Spike. He invited me to play *D&D* and other TTRPGs with his group; Further, he introduced me to *A&E*, which exposed me to a whole network of players and game designers, which elevated role playing games from hack-and-slash to genuine role play. I subscribed to *A&E* for a while and even submitted a couple of Zines in the late 80s /early 90s. Attending Boskone with Spike (in Springfield, Massachusetts) I had the privilege of meeting Lee Gold and having a memorable meal at a hole in the wall restaurant. I was just a fly on the wall amongst the other well versed and creative attendees, but it was great just being there and soaking it in. -- Ron Wm. Hurlbut, *A&E* nom de plume 'Catlin' (“A Sunny Day In Shards”)

A&E is one of the great pillars of TTRPG and Lee brought together a bunch of enthusiasts who inspired me then as they do now. I was glad to meet Lee and Barry when they travelled to London and their influence has helped form me and this hobby in more ways that people realise. I can only thank them for all they have done -- Patrick Brady (“In The Hall Of Stone”)

To me, *A&E*'s always felt like the *Saturday Night Live* of gaming, where the Not Ready for Prime Time Players (and some who were obviously more than ready) got their start. I was surprised how many gaming pros read the APA. It's also *Cheers*, where everybody knows your name, a regular hangout for you to drop in, make friends, and shoot the breeze. Without it, there wouldn't be the "I'm with the Chinese Consulate" prank (hi, Peter!) Here's a toast to *A&E*, Lee Gold, and everyone who's ever contributed. You've all been nothing short of amazing! – Tony Lee (“I Came, I Rolled, I Fumbled”)

A&E will be missed, and it cannot be replaced. *We shall not*, as the new saying goes, *see its like again*. I have donated my thick, though nowhere near complete, file of *A&E* to the *Museum of Games Ireland*, because it is a unique and contemporaneous record of gaming as it was at the time . . . for a very long time. Thank you, Lee, for doing this for so long and for the love of it. Turns out you were doing it for history too. – Steve Jackson

I was so sorry to hear about Lee stopping the *A&E* magazine. It's been a staple of the gaming industry for the length of time of the gaming industry, plus Lee is a fun person to talk to or in the early cases exchange letters with. - Tim Riley (“Bahaumat Bimonthly”)

Alarums & Excursions opened me up to the world in a way that still informs my life, over 40 years down the line. In those days, we did not have social media to bring us close to people in other countries. And I doubt if those reading this would disagree that *A&E* was a much healthier way of doing so. It was a tolerant community of interesting people with a wide range of views. As a result, it was a remarkable font of ideas and inspirations. And this is all down to Lee and her ability to shepherd cats. Like so many with a remarkable skill, she made it look effortless. I have now been out of gaming for a couple of decades, but I recall *A&E*, and Lee Gold, with unalloyed respect and affection. – Paul Mason, Japan.

Hey! The Right Planet At Last!

One last zine by Doc Cross, Rider Into The APA Sunset

Email addresses: doccross@aol.com or agentroscoe@gmail.com

The Dociverse Blog: www.dociverse.wordpress.com/

Patreon Page, home of my podcast: www.patreon.com/DocCross

My Ko-Fi Page: ko-fi.com/doccross4591

Me on Facebook: www.facebook.com/doc.cross

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So, here we are, celebrating the many decades of A&E, which truly was and remains, the history of the RPG hobby, one month at a time. Some day, somebody will write a book about it. Maybe several somebodies. Maybe I'll be part of one. But for right now, it's time to lift our glasses and toast Lee, Berry, and all of the many zinesters that made Alarums & Excursions the wonderful thing it was.

Thank you, everyone who submitted zines over the years. You entertained, educated, amused, outraged, and puzzled us. You also got us thinking of new ways to tackle this hobby. While sometimes we handed out RAEBNCs, we more often had something to say. You did the heavy lifting each month.

Thank you to the artists who did the covers. We always looked forward to seeing what the new month would bring, and you never let us down.

Thank to everyone who did con reports. Reading about cons we might never get to, or even different takes on cons we did get to, was always fun.

Thanks to everyone who did game and/or fiction reviews.

Thanks to the folks who wrote game write ups, fiction pieces and just plain old info about what was going on in their lives since the lastish.

And, of course, thanks to Lee and Berry.

To get personal here, thank you for helping me get a broader perspective on the hobby.

Thank you for giving me something to look forward to each month when things got rocky.

Thank you for giving me a place to dump some of the flood of ideas that run through my head every day.

And related to that, thank you for being the vessel that brought my writing to the attention of people like Steve Jackson and John Nephew, who actually gave me paid writing gigs.

Thank you for providing a place that let me meet so many of the friends I have today. That's probably the greatest thing A&E did for me.

Thank you, Lee & Berry for all of your hard work and devotion to A&E and a constant stream of gaming geeks. It's hard to imagine our hobby without you.

And so, an era ends. We'll all move on with our lives and do lots of gaming and maybe write about or talk about gaming. Blogs, podcasts, YouTube videos, Discord...and many other venues are out there.

But they won't be arriving in our real or email mailboxes once a month.

And they sure as hell will never be Alarums & Excursions.

Doc Cross, signing out.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to Spike Y. Jones for his invitation to participate in this tribute. I know that after the 1990s, I lost track of Alarums and Excursions, and that is a great regret. But this is not about regrets. This is a celebration of a remarkable woman and the community she fostered and continues to inspire.

I first met Lee and Barry Gold at a convention in Portland, at the filk circle. She told me about her filk magazine, Xenofilkia, and offered me the chance to contribute songs to it. At the time, I was not a good songwriter, but publication helped me improve. Some time later, I sought to join the APA and was accepted, even though I was not a very good game writer at the time. I was mainly a game critic for a small magazine run by a friend. I came across some great stories and met some people who were, or would become, great RPG writers. I will never forget how men like Robin Laws and Jonathan Tweet, individuals who helped refine and redefine the art of the tabletop role-playing game. And when my contributions were read and appreciated by these people, it gave me an incredible sense of belonging, and that my ideas were worth sharing.

And it inspired me to continue writing, refine my craft, and not be afraid of new ideas. To this day, it has informed my desire to write. I have written two TTRPGs, two novels, and numerous fanworks since then. I started writing for A&E. I would not have been able to do any of it without the inspiration this presence gave me. It showed me that even though work very few people would ever see has value. And I got to meet several of you at Worldcon, Gencon, and Origins.

And it wasn't just in gaming. My first Internet serial was inspired by an off-hand joke I told in A&E. Some jokes came with a price, of course. I remember how I was dressed down by the man who helped run Game Designer's Workshop for my response to Gary Gygax' The Anubis Murders (which I still consider one of the worst books I have ever read to this day) and commented that his prose was like "Watching an erector set in the hands of a baboon". I stand by that opinion to this day. I learned about film from Robin Laws, inspiring me to see John Woo's undiscovered (in the West) masterpiece Bullet in the Head. I recall the many things I did because they inspired me. For that, I will be forever grateful to Lee Gold.

So today I celebrate Lee Gold. The inspiration she brought to many and the community she fostered have a lasting impact on those involved with it. Let us all celebrate her and what she has done for all of us, by extension, for anyone who loves filk music and tabletop role-playing games.

Emulators & Engines #24

July 21, 2025

Emulators & Engines is an apazine published by Blasted Heath Row, P.O. Box 259240, Madison, WI 53725; kalel@well.com; 718-755-9840 mobile; 323-916-0367 fax. It is prepared for contributors to *Alarums & Excursions* and select others. A recent copy can be requested for the Usual. A member of the Fan Writers Association (fwa). This is a Karma Lapel publication.

An Appreciation of Roleplaying Games, Alarums & Excursions, and Lee Gold

Having first encountered *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Dragon* magazine as a preteen in 1983—and growing up less than 40 miles away from TSR’s birthplace in Lake Geneva, Wis.—roleplaying games have long been a part of my life. My friends and I enjoyed playing *D&D* at each other’s homes and during church youth group lock-ins (fueled by Mountain Dew and Jolt cola), but I was slow to pick up *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* because it was the province of older scouts in our Boy Scout troop. Older scouts played *AD&D*. Younger scouts played *D&D*. Or so I believed.

When I first became interested in playing *D&D*, I didn’t really know where to start. Because the Frank Mentzer-edited red box was labeled Basic Rules Set 1, when I added the game to my Christmas list, I was very specific. I wanted the Basic Rules Set 1, not Basic Rules Set 2. Definitely not Basic Rules Set 3. I wanted to start with what, for me, was the beginning. (I’ve since learned that there are other, even earlier, games to play!)

Most of the roleplaying game material I was able to afford as a preteen and teenager, I bought at a Waldenbooks at the mall in Janesville, Wis. Sometimes, KB Toys would also stock game items, and I picked up a copy of the 1977 *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Set* complete with cutout cardstock chits at that mall’s location. (Or, I found it at the Nasco company store in my hometown, but that seems slightly apocryphal.) I devoured Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman’s *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* and subsequent tie-in fiction. Those books, like so many science fiction and fantasy novels, were also purchased at Waldenbooks.

I remember deciding not to participate in—or apply for—Gen Con in the late-1980s because, as a child, I wasn’t sure my friends and I were playing *D&D* “correctly.” I couldn’t imagine playing “competitively,” and I was worried I’d be embarrassed. If I’d only known! Regardless, I perused and scrutinized the Gen Con promotional material,

schedule, and registration information published in *Dragon* magazine and highlighted game sessions I wanted to participate in were I brave enough to go. (That regret—I should have gone!—is one reason why I started taking my son to RPG cons while he was still in grade school.)

The older sister of a friend from school was hired as an editor for TSR, and she’d occasionally give me tie-in novels and issues of the relaunched *Amazing Stories* that she picked up at work. As a participant in Badger Boys State, I might have met a relative of Dave Arneson. (I remember that the fleeting friend’s name was Will; we didn’t keep in touch after the youth leadership event, and I haven’t been able to track him down since then.)

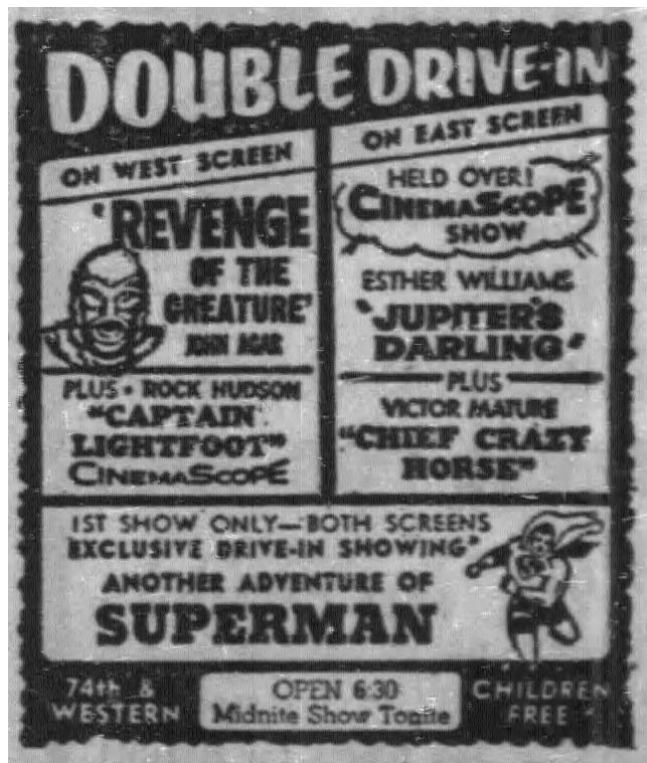


Chicago Tribune, Feb. 25, 1955

By the time I went to college in the mid-1990s, the second edition of *AD&D* had come out, but with my student budget, I couldn’t afford the rule books. Perhaps more importantly, even though I joined a group for a few game sessions held in a study room at the university library, I didn’t really connect with any of the other players, and I fell out of the habit and practice of playing. They weren’t necessarily people I wanted to hang out with generally at the time. (I’m sure they were fine people, and I’m grateful they let me join them, even if briefly.) I didn’t want to spend my time sequestered in that study room—if I wasn’t studying—and I turned my attention to student journalism and college radio.

It wasn’t until I was an adult and my son was in grade school that I—we—found my way back to *D&D*. By then, the fourth edition of *D&D* had been released, and that served as a notable milestone in our gaming. Just like my son’s becoming a Cub Scout pulled me back into Scouting, hiking, camping, and backpacking, a home campaign with my then 7-year-old son, Los Angeles-area conventions at which we’d both play at tables with other adults, and public play through the *D&D* Adventurers League pulled me back into roleplaying games with a vengeance.

An interest in science fiction fandom, fanzines, amateur press associations, small press publishing, and history brought *Alarums & Excursions*—and Lee Gold—to my attention. I believe my first submission to A&E was *The Game Closet* #1 in December 2008, before we moved to the Los Angeles area. My son was then 4, so I might have been taking small steps to return to roleplaying games before we started our home campaign. Since then, I haven't always been a participant in A&E, but I've been a recipient, a supporter, a fan, and for the most part, a friend.



Chicago Tribune, April 29, 1955

Over the last 17 years, I've contributed multiple issues of several fanzines to A&E. Titles have included *The Game Closet* (19 issues, 2008-2015), *Theoretically: Game* (two issues, 2022), and more recently, this fanzine (24 issues, 2023-now). I've participated in a few game sessions at Gold's home. I've spent time with her and Barry through the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society (<http://lasfs.org>). She participated in APA-L during my time as Official Collator. I included Los Angeles Filkers Anonymous filk sings in *De Profundis* event listings while I edited the LASFS newsletter. And I've donated boxes upon boxes of A&E back issues—from my collection and the collections of other participants—to the University of Iowa. That library houses the Heath Row Amateur Press Association Collection (<https://aspace.lib.uiowa.edu/repositories/2/resources/361>), which includes

many issues of A&E.

While living in the Los Angeles area, I lived close enough to Gold that instead of mailing me issues, she'd place them underneath her doormat for me to pick up. Every month or two, I'd stop by her home to retrieve my mailing. Sometimes I'd run into Barry in the driveway, and we'd talk a while.

When Gold stopped publishing A&E earlier this year, it was the only RPG-related apa I'd participated in, though I've also read *The Wild Hunt*, *Interregnum*, and *Lords of Chaos*. I've become acquainted with many people through the pages of A&E, developed several friendships, and broadened my roleplaying horizons. Every issue, I learned about a new game or gaming system that I wanted to explore and learn more about. I might have even become a better roleplayer and game master (not just a dungeon master) because of my participation.

Though I started with—and continue to focus on—fantasy RPGs such as *D&D*, any roleplaying game is worth playing at least once. My roleplaying game library or collection, which has grown substantially since my son and I started playing 4E, ranges widely, concentrating primarily on older roleplaying games, options that were contemporary with the early days of *D&D*; the Old School Renaissance; and independent games. Most of my recent gaming is solo play, often using materials from multiple games in a given game or game session. And I'm a firm believer that game prep is game play!

I sometimes think that every game is merely a small part of a larger whole: One Big Game. Every session is part of One Big Campaign. Every table is a representation of One Big Table. Every character is a single dice roll away from another, regardless of which game they were created for. (A witty wag might suggest that I should use GURPS for that. I'd suggest *Rifts* or *Torg*.)

While serving as the Official Collator for APA-L, another amateur press association that dates back to 1964—for a directory of active apae, refer to *Blue Moon Special* (<https://tinyurl.com/bluemoonspecial2024>)!—I learned that A&E had in fact spun out of APA-L. (APA-L remains loosely affiliated with the LASFS.) After the advent of *Dungeons & Dragons*, roleplaying game-related discussion in APA-L became so active that other participants who were less inclined to huck polyhedral dice encouraged early enthusiasts to take their conversation elsewhere. Thus was born A&E. I've always associated A&E with the LASFS and Los Angeles, and its relationship with APA-L intrigued me.

As a fan, writer, editor, and researcher interested in mundane zines, science fiction, sf fandom, fanzines,

comic books, and roleplaying games, I consider A&E directly related to all of those things, not just roleplaying games or amateur press associations. In the pages of A&E, participants are one small step away from other aspects of fandom, and roleplaying games—perhaps more so than video games—easily fall under the umbrella of One Big Fandom. (No matter what APA-L participants might have said or felt in 1974-1975.)

Gold is a sterling example of a fan—and pro—who understands that implicitly. She is the lifeblood of A&E, serving for 50 years as its host as well as a contributor. She's a game designer (*GURPS Japan*, *Pirates*, *Vikings*, *Land of the Rising Sun*, *Lands of Adventure*). She's a game master. She's an author (the Bloodslut trilogy and the more recent Valhalla series). She's a member of the LASFS. She's a filker. Until recently, she also published *Xenofilkia*, a filk-related fanzine. She remains active in Los Angeles Filkers Anonymous, hosting and participating in online filk sings. She was inducted into the Filk Hall of Fame in 1997. She was awarded a Hall of Fame plaque from the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design. And as a lifelong Los Angeles resident, she welcomed this newcomer to the Los Angeles area into her apa, her home, and her circle of friends. Gold might disagree with this, but not only is she a Big Name Fan, she's a Big Deal. In the best possible sense.

As the founder and Official Editor of A&E, Gold has served as an extraordinary host. (Her management of A&E has helped me learn how to be a better OE and OC of other apae myself.) Whether a gathering of people occurs because of filk music, roleplaying games, or another aspect of fandom, Gold has spent much of her life creating spaces in which she and other people can talk or write about activities and topics they love. She creates spaces in which people can do Very Neat Things. Throughout the history of A&E, she attracted a group of some of the most clever, critical, humorous, interesting, and thoughtful people who enjoyed playing, creating, thinking about, writing about, and discussing roleplaying games and adjacent topics. The impact of that decades-long conversation will continue well past the end of A&E.

Already, there are two successors to A&E. George Phillis's *A Gentle Stroll* launched in June and has already published two issues. Similarly, Jim Vassilakos's *Ever & Anon*—or *E&A*, A&E in reverse—began in July. Its second issue will be distributed soon. At the end of A&E, the conversation within its pages was still extremely active and lively. It is only fitting that the adventure continues.

Gold and A&E were also great motivators. Both encouraged me to think about roleplaying games in

new ways, to experiment with games I might not have sought out otherwise, and—especially in her home games—to step outside my comfort zone as a roleplayer. (I was surprised by the lack of character sheets and the rare use of dice, though they were available nearby.) And the apa's monthly deadlines were also highly motivating. Every month, I wanted to have something to say. I wanted to Be There. So I dove into roleplaying games in one way or another in order to share my experiences and ideas.

I will miss A&E, but I don't need to miss Gold—she's still around—and I don't need to miss the joys of roleplaying games. Already, in the pages of *E&A*, it feels like home. I cannot wait to see what Gold does next.

So, three cheers for Lee Gold:

Hip hip hooray!

Hip hip hooray!

Hip hip hooray!

Sound the alarum. An excursion is afoot!



Chicago Tribune, April 29, 1955

A FEW LAST BITS OF CHAOS #1
THE CHAOSIUM
NOSTALGIA DEPT.

The Chaosium and *Alarums & Excursions* both started our long journeys in 1975. Amidst the celebrations of The Chaosium's 50th anniversary we were greatly saddened to read that after over 590 issues A&E is soon to publish its last. Several of The Chaosium's staff and fans wrote articles for A&E, starting with Steve Perrin's *Tuesday Morning Report* in #26 (July 1977). Throughout the 70s and 80s regular installments of John Sapienza's *The Runelord Writes*, Mark Chilenskas *Al Araaf*, David Dunham's *Quark's Communique*, and Steve Marsh's *Analects of a Mad Sage* filled its pages. Over the subsequent decades, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Pendragon*, *RuneQuest* and The Chaosium's other games were often the topics of discussion.

Lee Gold deserves so much praise for her decades of tireless effort as editor for and contributor to *Alarums and Excursions*. Way back in Issue #1 (Feb/Mar 1979) of *Different Worlds* magazine we had the pleasure to speak with Lee for the *My Life in Gaming* series of interviews. The opening intro to it simply states "Lee is the editor of the largest Amateur Press Association (APA) magazine on RPGs. I don't know how she does it but she puts out a 160-page issue of *Alarums and Excursions* every month! All for no pay. She really loves RP."

Those words still ring as true today as they did back then.

Alarums and Excursions played a significant part in spreading the word about RPGs. Its pages featured almost every RPG published, often with passionate debates between passionate fans. Lee created A&E to "*Do Something to promote communication*" and she certainly did that. It will stand as an amazing legacy, and something we will always be proud to have been a part of.

All things change and, like the Gestetner mimeograph, it is now time for Lee's *Alarums & Excursions* to loudly gallop (Tantivy!) into the sunset.

Vale and Farewell, from all of us at The Chaosium.



... Porter Revolutionary Front - still gaming after all these years

The High Command of the Porter Revolutionary Front (AKA Jim and Sue Porter) look fondly back on the years that we contributed to A&E. From Sue's first appearance in Issue 153, to the unveiling of the Porter Revolutionary Front in Issue 161, and on to the first ever byline of the Youth Auxiliary in Issue 181 and the epically funny Porter Coup Takeover Issue, we met many wonderful folks through its pages. Sue had some great correspondence with David Dunham (musings on fantasy races) and Mark Goldberg (still in awe of the number of colored inks he used...). We even had the privilege of meeting Doc Cross, Spike Jones, Mary Chriest, Mark Denman, Jennie Hein and Dennis Medlow face-to-face!

Although we never got to meet Lee in person (with us being on the Wrong Coast and all), her deft hand publishing, printing and mailing all of those issues each and every month was an incredible service. Her zines were also masterfully written and gave us an ideal to strive for. To quote Silvius in As You Like It: "It is to be all made of faith and service...It is to be all made of fantasy, All made of passion, and all made of wishes..." Thus it is proven that Lee made A&E with love, for decades. Enjoy your well-earned rest. And thank you, from the bottom of our hearts (and the top and middle bits as well)!

My Life in Fantasy – Jenny Hein (aka ‘Round Up the Usual Suspects’)

In late 1978 my older brother came home with a box and a large book and announced that he'd found a new game that we should play. It turned out to be the OD&D boxed set and a AD&D 1e Players Handbook. My two brothers and I spent some time working out how to create characters and how to apply the contradictory and sometimes confusing rules. (We didn't realise we had two different systems.) We channelled our creatively competitive relationships into our monk and assassin characters, inviting friends to join in when we could persuade them. Without knowing we were doing it, we experimented with home brew rules, developed additional side quests and tentatively gave our characters personalities, aims and individual identity.

The release of the Dungeonmaster's Guide helped enormously with this process. As each new book or module made its way to Australia it was religiously scanned for new rules, ideas and boosts for our characters.

When I headed to university, I discovered that others had the same obsession. I didn't join the gaming club because it was never a problem to find like-minded people to play with. New characters were developed, friendships forged and stories told. I met a nice man with the same taste in music and joined his gaming group. Although Dennis has long since stopped playing FRPs, last year we celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary.

At first, we largely stuck to the printed rules (having discarded the OD&D set, though I still have the tiny dice). However, we continued to develop home brew rules. In the wider gaming world over the next decade or two these rules became increasingly complicated and detailed. Everyone was developing their own to fill in perceived gaps and the prevalence of personally created scenarios soon outstripped the number of published ones. There were no purely FRP dedicated stores in Adelaide, South Australia. What little we could get our hands on from a regular game shop or the single tabletop and hobby store or by mail order was too scarce and became too expensive for struggling students who could use their own imagination.

A couple of gaming friends, Megan Dansie (no longer playing) and Neil Fraser (deceased) told me about a fan magazine being published in the USA. They encouraged me to contribute and my first foray into the world of *Alarums and Excursions* was issue 81. Having never actually read or even seen a copy, my first efforts were tentative and rather naïve. However, other contributors soon engaged with my ideas and were kind enough to enjoy my rather clumsy efforts at writing up the years-long quest that Neil was running us through. In return there was a wealth of new home-brew characters, monsters, spells, systems, scenario ideas and some truly great fiction and writeups. I still relate the gazebo encounter from time to time.

Over the years, the people who wrote for the zine became friends. Games were not just in person but also 'play by mail'. It was always exciting to have the next instalment of a game arrive in a thick envelope and I ran a few myself. This style has long since been taken over first by emailed turns and now more immediately by Discord or other platforms but I still think of them fondly.

When Dennis and I started travelling overseas we had the opportunity to visit and stay with some of the A&Eers: Lee and Barry Gold, Doc Cross, Spike Jones, Simon Cornelius, Sid Ramage, Dave Flinn, Alison Brooks and Phil Masters. We encountered many others during these trips, talked gaming and all manner of other topics over coffee, curry and tacos during the Hein-Medlow Travelling Circus. We went home with suitcases jammed with magazines, scenarios and new rule systems unavailable in Australia.

The 80s and 90s were the height of new gaming systems. A variety of independent and mainstream gaming companies produced systems and campaigns set in a wide range of settings. My first departure from D&D was Runequest, a popular system I hated because of the overly strict, rules-lawyer way it was run by the GM, despite the sometimes absurd results. I dipped my toe in Lands of Adventure (by Lee herself), GURPS, Tunnels and Trolls, Traveller, Superheroes: 2044, Rollmaster, and a few other more short-lived and obscure systems. By the end of the 90s the gaming industry was on the wane but by then I had lost interest in experimenting anyway and happily settled into a few favourites: Call of Cthulhu, Star Wars, Vampire: the Masquerade and the perennial D&D (by then 3 & 3.5e). I could completely ignore the next decade of company disputes, closures and controversies. By then I had a stash of still-unused published material and considerable experience in writing what I wanted.

There were two controversies that did affect me along the way. The first was female participation in FRPs. Having developed from table-top wargames, the hobby was dominated by males. I was fortunate enough to normally be in a group that had at least one other female player and the odd times I was the only one didn't bother me. I had grown up with two brothers, after all!

What was annoying was the way game systems sometimes treated female characters. When designers attempted to make a 'more realistic' game system it inevitably resulted in inferior female characters, with limited or no compensation for the reduced capabilities, such as strength. Chivalry and Sorcery was the worst offender in this regard; female characters unilaterally lost around half of their rolled stats, despite there being female knights in the source material.

When Neil decided to make Call of Cthulhu characters more historically accurate, I protested and negotiated a compromise; male characters became slightly stronger and were better in combat while females were smaller, more agile and had better communication skills. In a setting where getting involved in combat meant you were losing, it was a bargain I could live with. It's a home-brew set I still use. Fortunately, no one seriously argued for gender accuracy in fantasy settings. In a world where magic ruled anything is possible.

I was more interested in fairness than representation. I had no interest in seeing myself replicated in games. Why would I want to play an ordinary, physically unimpressive, vanilla-flavoured character when I did that every day in real life? (And even more so now that I am old, overweight and heading to retirement?) I explored different skill sets, personality types, cultural and social backgrounds with varying degrees of success but usually increasing understanding.

D&D's depiction of magic created a persistent annoyance for the first decade of my gaming hobby. A couple of high-profile suicides in the USA were linked to D&D by families desperate for an excuse. Accusations were made of the game encouraging Satanism, witchcraft, murder and other crimes in the most tenuous of links. Rumours spread to Australia and Christian magazines published articles denouncing the game. I was (and still am) a devout and theologically conservative Christian. Once it became known that I played, I fended off well-meaning but uninformed advice from a variety of quarters that no good Christian would be involved in such things. They used the same arguments to reject fantasy fiction

I retorted that if playing the game summoned demons, then I should be knee-deep in them by now. I also argued that I was using my God-given gifts of imagination and that if devout Christians Tolkien and C.S.Lewis (two of my favourite writers) could write about magic then

so could I. It was far more dangerous to play monopoly or certain cards games which were guaranteed to cause fights amongst my siblings and me.

It also seemed to me that people were attributing far too much power to Satan and if they thought my faith in God could not protect me against a mere game, then they had a pretty poor opinion of God! It was an argument that could only be mounted by a Christian to other Christians. Others could be told that it was a game about maths and story-telling, made to sound so obscurely ordinary that they lost interest. Whether I was a lost cause or persuasive is up for debate, but critics usually backed off.

I expanded on my arguments in an article for an advocacy group and it was picked up by others and published on the internet for a while. The fact that I had trouble googling it for this write-up shows how the controversy has long since died away.

It helps that D&D is reasonably widely known, rather than being a niche game played in secret back rooms (but I exaggerate). I can now talk about my hobby without having to explain what it is to most people. Occasionally I pull out my treasured copy of the *Dark Dungeons* tract from Chick Publications for people to giggle at. No one seriously believes the accusations anymore.

All good things come to an end. I managed to keep up monthly contributions to A&E during my pregnancy with my son, but a move interstate and change of employment made this much more difficult. After around 15 years of writing I reluctantly gave up. However, FRP gaming continued and A&E never completely left my life. We managed another visit to Lee and Barry. Many A&Eers and their partners have remained life-long friends. It is fitting that I learnt about this tribute issue on a long-overdue repeat tour in Britain, where some of the same A&Eers were kind enough to host us again.

But it wasn't just the friends met along the way that were important; it was also the writing skills I learnt while contributing. I never became good enough to fulfill a fiction writing dream and the potential gaming career resulted in just 2 short articles (one published but never paid for, the other in reverse). However, I'd learnt what worked and what didn't work in writing and this proved useful when I went back to study, finally gaining a PhD in Church History.

Navigating differences of opinion and occasional flame wars was helpful in considering different points of view and wrangling children. Names which were just friends to me were sources of admiration from other gamers I encountered. And when my children were teenagers I was the 'cool mum', knowing a wide range of gaming terminology from personal experience and introducing their friends to the joys of live FRP gaming. My own group changed faces and locations but with few breaks it's been nearly 50 years of fun.

My children are now part of the next generation of gamers. Kathryn runs a D&D campaign full of politics and intrigue set in a world entirely of her own making. Her fiancé joined me in my son Christian's self-written campaigns of pirate exploration (D&D) and WWII combat (his own design).

Lee and Barry were an important part of my FRP journey. I still think fondly of the Valkyrie warrior that briefly featured in their campaign all those years ago. It felt like A&E could last forever but it wouldn't be A&E without Lee. All the best and may your influence last forever.

Gee! Writing A 'Zine Is As Much Fun As Being A
MERMECOLION AT A FESTSCHRIFT

Written by Spike Y Jones from his home at 57 Admiral Boulevard, Dundalk, Maryland, 21222-3945, whose trigger-finger tendonitis (acquired earlier this year) is made just that much more annoying by the fact that, illogically, it's not in his actual trigger finger.

e-mailers to spikeyj@crosslink.net about his frozen shoulder (also acquired early this year) will be told that the treatment is ongoing and slow, and punctuated with insurance company hassles (like the denial of an MRI to accurately diagnose it until after an unnecessary X-ray had been performed, followed by 6 weeks of treatment for an assumed frozen shoulder, which would take the treatment almost to the 10-week maximum treatment period for the ailment if it does turn out to be a frozen shoulder upon eventual MRI-verified diagnosis).

Phone callers to (410) 282-1640 to ask about Spike's grand theme for his Festschrift submission will be told that his thoughts have been scattered lately – so his submission will be a scattering of *A&E* memories too.

HOW I WAS “PRESSURED” INTO BUYING MY FIRST *A&E*

(reprinted from *A&E* #181, the 15th anniversary issue) It was the summer of, oh, maybe 19...82(?) and I had wandered into a gaming store called the Four Horseman. Actually, it wasn't really a store; it was a warehouse outlet, because the guys who operated it had been acting as the distributors for Toronto's other gaming stores until they realized that they could undercut the competition by opening their own retail outlet (and the store eventually disappeared a few years later, after two lateral moves to locations with much higher overhead, and end to their distributing business, and amid rumours of someone's absconding with something), but that's all tangential to this story.

So, I went into the store to get my usual fix of lead miniatures (already in the hundreds) and back issues of *Dragon*, when the store clerks, deciding it was a slow sales day, came up with a plan to boost sales. The BIG one (I can only remember calling him “The Bear”) grabbed me from behind in a bear-hug and lifted me off the floor, while the little one (who I still call “The Weasel” behind his back) picked my pocket, took out some bills, and gave me a handful of stuff to take home with me. Ordinarily, I'd have grounds to be eternally peeved at these two, except that the stuff included an old copy of *A&E* #74 (copy count 600, for you note-takers) that they'd apparently been unable to get rid of by normal means for over a year.

While I nursed my sore ribs, I read the *A&E* and was amused & interested, but not enough to actually contribute. Two things turned me off at that time: all of the esoteric discussion of some things called “stencils” and “corflu” (*A&E* was just full of comments about the print quality of people's zines back in those days), and an article entitled “The Krakatoa Flatulence Scale,” which rated the effects (kill radius, half-life, *etc.*) of the flatulence of various fantasy races. Even today that 1 page out of 155 is the only specific article I can remember off-hand.

Time went by, and in 1985 I ran across copies of #s 118-122 at a convention. For some strange reason, I thumbed through them, and I noticed two things: the print quality had improved (some people had computers now), and there was a discussion (read: flamewar) going on about Roman Technology. Suddenly *A&E* looked attractive to me!

So I (in my copious spare time while working night shifts at a self-serve gas station) quickly whipped off a zine (which appeared in *A&E* #131, July 1986), sent it in to Lee with a request for some other back issues, and then sent in another zine a week later, managing to get it into the “appearing next month” listing of that same issue. And thus was started the over-producing *A&E* career of Spike “Me” Jones.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY

(also reprinted from *A&E* #181, the 15th anniversary issue)

When Doc Cross planned this Anniversary Coup, he thought it'd be a good idea to request “How I Discovered *A&E*” articles from all contributors. I said that it would probably get repetitive and boring, and I was half-right. After typing up a bunch of these things, I noticed two repeated features. First, Peter Hildreth, Doc and I all discovered *A&E* at least twice before first contributing (with the first encounters occurring within a 3-year span). And second, the stores that four of us (Doc, Matt Porter, Bill Mullen and I) first bought *A&Es* from all went out of business sometime soon afterwards.

What morals can be learned from this?

1) That it might take more than one exposure to *A&E* to rope-in all those people who you once tried to get contributing a few years ago. (Case in point: I tried to convince Mary Chriest's brother Gerry (who, it turns out, already had a battered copy of #41) to get into *A&E* back 3 years ago when Mary and I were first going out together, but it took repeated exposures (of both me and *A&E*) over the course of years to accomplish it.)

And 2) That one effective way of making the initial *A&E* infection is to convince the owners of a store you don't particularly like to carry a few copies of *A&E*. The store will go out of business, but we'll have gained some new contributors out of the wreckage.

THE MACRO

And in retyping these old pieces, I remember how chuffed I was when I wrote a little macro (in OfficeWriter, I think) to do alternate-space-underlining for article titles back in the day when solid underlining risked causing the mimeograph stencils to rip.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Back in the day, I used to put an *A&E* recruitment flier on the bulletin board or leave a stack of them at the flier table at any convention that would permit it. They featured a 1/4 page cover illustration (one either I or my brother's friend Rui Albino drew) and a lot of text. The most recent one (they were updated frequently) I have on hand went:

Do you play fantasy, science fiction, or horror Role Playing Games?

Board-, computer- or war-games with a fantasy or SF flavour?

And have you ever wanted a place to talk with other people interested in the same games, to read about new games as soon as (or even before) they come out, to discuss rules variants, to ask for solutions to problems you've had, or even just to brag about your latest adventure? If so, then

ALARUMS & EXCURSIONS

is the magazine for you!

Alarums & Excursions is a monthly magazine discussing any aspect of role-playing games. And I do mean any aspect. Topics of the last year included: Stupid (and Smart) Villain Tricks, Authentic Medieval Guilds, The Nature of Miracles, How to Amuse a Dolphin, Rules for Creative PCs Run by Uncreative Players, How to Make Sea Voyages Boring and others. And there have also been game, book, comics and movie reviews, convention reports, historical essays, adventure write-ups, fiction, and far-out ideas about almost any game or topic one could mention, from *Original D&D* to games that have yet to be released.

Alarums & Excursions is an amateur production averaging 100, 8-1/2" x 11" pages per issue without a single annoying ad. And its writers aren't restricted to writing about the products of a single company. Lots are professional game writers (Lee Gold: *GURPS Japan*, Greg Stolze: *The Spherewalker Sourcebook*, Doc Cross: *Tooniversal Tour Guide*, Tony Lee: *Extreme Vengeance*) or editors (Spike Y Jones: *GURPS Celtic Myth*, *Russia & Egypt*), but just as many are average, everyday gamers from across the U.S., the U.K., Australia, New Zealand, and even Japan.

Alarums & Excursions is read by employees at numerous game companies including Steve Jackson Games, Atlas Games and TSR.

Now in its 23rd year of continuous publication, past winner of the Charles Roberts Award for Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine at the Origins gaming convention, ***Alarums & Excursions*** is looking for new writers, new artists, and especially new readers:

For more information, contact:

Lee Gold (editor) or Spike Y Jones (not-so-innocent bystander)
[addresses]

Or send a money order for \$3.24 US to Lee Gold for a copy of the current issue.

Wordy? Yes, but the 1/4-page illustration was intended to balance that a bit. And I know some other ***A&E***ers had their own less-wordy fliers, so it kinda balanced out. Never actually uses the term "APA" or explains how the thing operates? Yes, but try getting into all that without getting even wordier.

THE SPEECH THAT WAS NEVER HEARD

In 2002 (I think) ***A&E*** was nominated for an Origins Award for Best Amateur Magazine and Lee Gold was nominated to join GAMA's Academy Of Adventure Games Arts & Design Hall of Fame, and Lee asked if anyone was going to the convention who could potentially accept a statuette or two for her and mail it/them to Los Angeles afterwards. Since I was going to be there anyways, I volunteered. Lee sent me a short speech to give in her name if she won an award, but left it up to me to provide remarks if she also won the second. In the end, ***A&E*** won, but she didn't make it into the HoF, so I only got the opportunity to deliver one speech.

A couple years ago, I came across that backup speech on a 3x5 card in an old backpack, and finally tossed it into the recycling. I wish I'd had the foresight to keep it for today, but I can at least remember the first lines: "As I look out over this audience, I can see so many people whose lives were touched by Lee Gold over the years. Well, not really, because of the stage lighting, but in my mind's eye I can see" -- and then a short list of people I knew were there, because I'd seen them in the pre-ceremony crowd and jotted them down.

But it was with great pride that I accepted the Calliope for ***A&E***, feeling that in some small measure it was my accomplishment as well, And I have to tell you, I took my time about removing that statuette from my mantelpiece, and mailing it to its proper home in California.

And in the end, ***A&E*** won the Origins Award in 1985, 2000, 2001, and 2002, and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2022.

RANDOM MEMORIES

-The Canadian Coup Issue, ***A&E*** #153, May 1988 (which also featured my last typewritten zine). The slow-rolling Icfroimian Coup from sometime in the following year.

-The various covers I contributed over the years, including ***A&E***'s first full-colour cover: #165, May 1989 (printed a copy or two at a time over the course of a month by a friend who was working as a photocopier repairman, and who used the original as a multi-colour test page). Hard to believe that back in the day I'd hoped to make it as an artist, instead of a writer and editor.

-Encouraging new contributors by typing/stenciling their zines, and helping folks who were going to drop their subscriptions or participation because they'd hit bad patches through Spike's Struggling Subscriber Subsidy. And it was in typing other people's zines that I learned a lesson in editing years before I actually became an editor: Some people are particularly devoted to stylistic choices, like Ron "Catlin" Hurlbut's preference never to use contractions in his zines -- part of their authorial "voice."

-Forming friendships with people I hadn't met in person (decades before the creation of Facebook), many of whom eventually somehow became face-to-face friends. Heck, just the other month I found a shirt I'd made from a couple yards of fancy Thai cloth Australian contributor Jenny Hein had given me as a present during her round-the-world tour in 1990.

-The help Jenny gave me during my immigration application, providing me with photos of Mary and I together during Jenny's tour; and Matt Porter (or was it John Sapienza?), an actual licensed lawyer, vouching for the authenticity of the photos with the Immigration & Naturalization Service

-When I moved to Maryland and got married, I was lucky to have a ready-made gaming group in *A&E*ers Matt & Celeste Porter and Ed & Lisa Wilson.

-The many articles that I ran through *A&E* first for comments before sending them on to *Dragon* and/or other magazines.

LEE HERSELF

One of the biggest things to remember about *A&E* were the discussions, both on-topic and off-. And while *A&E*ers all shared the love of games, we also had different backgrounds, experiences (including gaming experiences), and framing assumptions. And some of the most different from mine were those of Lee herself. Lee started playing *D&D* only a few years before I did, but that was an entire game edition earlier than me, and unlike a lot of us, she didn't migrate from her *Original D&D* to *Advanced D&D* and then *Basic/Expert/Etc. D&D*, *AD&D2*, *D&D3/3.5/4/5/Whatever-The-Current-Version-Is-Called* as each new edition came out. And while she adopted some later RPGs like *Toon*, she didn't glom onto every new game and trend. So while not calling her a fossil, I did find it interesting that her play style was sometimes different (subtly and not so subtly) from what was taken for granted in my gaming groups.

But there were other differences as well. For example, Lee's Jewish. I didn't have many Jewish friends growing up, so not a lot of contact with Jewish culture. In other circumstances, Lee's Jewishness would be completely unimportant, but in the intellectual and conversational atmosphere of *A&E*, I learned a lot about Judaism – especially the differences between the Jewish Temple-centred religion of the Old Testament and the modern practice of Judaism – over the years.

She's also older than me, and a woman; her childhood and college experiences, her experiences as a woman gamer and woman game designer, all were informative. While we've had zines coming from five continents, in some ways (possibly because she was there every month for the entire 38 years that I was a contributor) Lee was the most alien to me.

So for all she did, for all she taught me (I'm sure I learned the term "transhumance" from her, among many, many other things), for four decades of friendship, and for four decades of a formative literary experience in my life, I give thanks.

NEXT ISSUE: Well, really not anything this time around.

Nike Nationalize/Kanga Control/Eris Ignore/Pooh Protect,
Spike Y Jones

MUNDUS VULT DECEPI

For the *festschrift* SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

by Michael Cule of 3 Barratt Place, Easton Street, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP11 1XS. UK.

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DAYS IN THE LIFE: A&E, Me and Lee. Mostly Me, I'm afraid.

I became aware of ALARUMS & EXCURSIONS back in the late 1970s when I was contributing to TROLLCRUSHER, a British attempt at flattery by imitation. I was only aware of that because by chance because the earliest part of my Glorious Theatrical Career saw me going around schools doing theatre for kids in the Nottingham area. And in the Nottingham area there was a lot of role gaming centered around the University and Asgard Miniatures. Asgard's head honcho, Brian Ansell was also the founder and publisher of TROLLCRUSHER.¹

And after a couple of zines from me he loaned me his copies of then-recent A&Es (I think there were some WILD HUNTS in there as well) and asked for a review. I didn't give it much of a one but noted a tendency to pile comment upon comment and petty dispute upon petty dispute. At that time this didn't appeal to me enough to investigate further and contributing to a publication from across the ocean seemed too rich for my blood back then. I know people managed it in those pre-internet days but I didn't have the means to pay Lee and getting stencils done seemed like a massive craft project so I let it pass.

My next interaction with Lee was at the 1987 Worldcon in Brighton. I had been to the dealers' room and had splashed out on a copy of LAND OF NINJA, that being the title the marketing people insisted on for the Avalon Hill/Chaosium Japanese supplement for RUNEQUEST 3. Being the arrogant person I was then, I took it down to

the gaming room and unpacked it with some sort of idea of finding some people and running the sample scenario.

In response to my unsent prayer, Lee and Barry Gold walked into the room. This sort of thing happens to me: I don't know why.

I'd never (to my recollection) spoken to her before but I knew who she was. I think I even owned a copy of LAND OF THE RISING SUN though I don't know if I had ever run it. GURPS JAPAN was still a year in the future.

And when she said

You plan to run it? Yeah, sure!

And then she sat right down! I didn't have the common sense to review my first enthusiastic impulse and say *Perhaps later...?*

I'm not at all sure I would have sufficient common sense today. Any wisdom I have gleaned tends to fade when I'm offered a smidgeon of temptation even now.

I have probably erased from my memory the worst bits of that disastrous session. I do recall some the things she said about LAND OF NINJA:

*Well, they (samurai) wouldn't do **that!***

*It says **what?***

That sort of thing. Like a very experienced and knowledgeable teacher reviewing a six year old's first effort at writing a story. I seem to recall her mentioning her and Barry's visits to Japan and their efforts to understand the language and culture.

Most of her disdain was for the game supplement. Most of my disdain was for my own

¹ THE PLAIN PEOPLE OF A&E: As in 'Sod off....'? ME:
See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bryan_Ansell

clumsiness as a GM. We parted amicably enough but I could not count it as one of my best sessions.

I have run Japanese inspired games since but not very much of it with RQ though my friend Hartley takes us to his version of mythic Nippon on a regular basis. I still feel that Chaosium didn't do as good a job on that setting as the others. Perhaps because it didn't quite fit their system.

Then some years later, I don't know quite why, the thought of spreading my opinions about the world and gaming seemed good to me even if it did involve 'comment piled upon comment and petty dispute upon petty dispute'. I think that Daniel James, who by then had become a fixture of the Monday night games at Hartley's place was a contributor to A&E back then and explained to me that the new wonderful world of electronic communication meant that I could put my contribution on a floppy disk, post it to Lee via airmail and get the disk back with my printed copy. There was even some means of sending her money that didn't require me to have an account enumerated in dollars. We were living in the future!

And so in the January 1992 edition of A&E (number 197 with a cover showing a shrouded ghostly figure) I stuck my oar in. If I recall correctly (my computer filing system having swallowed the text long ago and not wanting to do my back a mischief getting the physical copy out from under my bed) I was largely concerned with my feelings for ARS MAGICA, a game system which like so many other game systems I felt could be doing better if only it would become more like the game I had in my head.

People greeted me, people said nice things about me and I stayed on for just short of another four hundred issues. Thirty three years. Good heavens!

And a lot of that was Lee. Let me list the good qualities of Lee Gold for a while.

Firstly she was more knowledgeable about just about everything than I was. She had read extensively and was one of my prime sources for books I had never heard of but would turn out to enjoy. She had Lived by which I mean she had both Age and Experience more than I had and was willing to share it.

She thought about role-playing games, as she thought about everything, with depth and curiosity. She wanted our opinions and she invented the Ignorable Theme to give us a soap box to stand on and inform the world, snatching up a sidewise comment in one zine to make it a feature of a future APA.

She was patient with our follies (at least she was with me: I think I recall a couple of people over the years who were shown the door) and explained where we had gone wrong. She told me I couldn't do something a couple of times I think: one of them was her cutting out a set of lyrics I'd quoted in their entirety, going beyond 'fair use' in her opinion. I'd rather have her opinion than a dozen Intellectual Property lawyers.

She told us to keep our political enthusiasms to a strict limit. That probably saved A&E during the fiery years after 9/11.

She was reliable. That's what carried the APA forward. There were always people willing to give their opinions. There was always Lee ready to publish them.

I always found I had something I wanted to say to her in the Comments. Not necessarily because of something she said to me but there was always something she had said that provoked further thought.

I never was in a game she GMed. That's a regret now.

One morning,² I turned my computer on to check mail and websites before going to work and saw that Steve Jackson of Steve Jackson games had made the article in that morning's DAILY ILLUMINATOR about something I had said about BANESTORM in A&E. I have never been more pleasantly surprised. I felt like I was one of the Secret Masters of Gaming. I can thank Lee for that and for a lot more as well.

So Thank You, Lee.³



A BANNER WITH A STRANGE DEVICE

² April 3rd 2006 as it happens.

https://www.sjgames.com/ill/archive/April_03_2006/Pope_Gregory_Lives

³ THE PLAIN PEOPLE OF A&E: (*Standing by as workmen take down the MUNDUS VULT DECEPI signage.*) Oh woe! Oh the humanity! ME: What are you lot going on about? TPPoA&E: We'll have to be off down the Job Centre. Applying for the Universal Credit, and us without a bank account nor even a Universe to our name! ME: Don't be bigger iijits than you naturally are. There's a cunning continuation! Here you go. HANDS OUT A FLYER with an elaborate Gold logo on it. TPP of THE VOID BETWEEN WORLDS: Oh right! We'll see you there Squire! ME: Better get started! Best foot forward.... TPPofTVBTW: You do get that this was supposed to be about Lee and not so much about you, don't ye? ME: Get out of here! *They exit waving a Banner with a Strange Device.*

ADVENTURE MATINEE No.∞

Matthew F Porter

www.ByMatthewPorter.com

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

I've shared the story with friends before. Probably with my friends in the pages of A&E. The story about how one day in the 1970s my big brother Jim came back from a high school Model Congress -- itself an impressive thing to a kid like me just starting middle school -- with tales of this amazing thing he'd learned about.

It was a ... game? Sort of? There were dice, and there were rules. (Lots of rules. Whole books full of rules.) But there was no board, and no real way to win.

Instead, you use the rules, and the dice, and other stuff, to *tell a story*. A fantasy story, like in the Lord of the Rings. One player describes where you are, what kinds of monsters you need to fight, what kinds of treasure you find, things like that. And everyone else pretends to be a character on an adventure, like a wizard or a hobbit or a warrior, and describes what they do. And they get stronger the more experience they get.

("Lord of the Rings?" I remember asking. "So, like, I could be a balrog?"

Jim thought for a minute. "I guess so. But you'd start out small. Like maybe a baby balrog.")

Before long I was running "Dungeons and Dragons" games for my friends. Even before we had any books, we figured out a way to do something exciting with scraps of paper and a pair of dice liberated from the family Monopoly set.

Eventually this gave way to the D&D Blue Box. And AD&D. And other games, like Runequest and Traveller.

But this obsession of mine took a giant leap a few years later, when I found a weird multicolored stack of paper in my local game store.

Each color in this huge pulp rainbow was a *person*. A person who, like me, was crazy about these roleplaying games. Doing fascinating things I hadn't even imagined. And they took it all so seriously. Sometimes arguing, usually having fun, but always treating this world of RPGs as something that *matters*.

I won't try to name all the friends I made through Alarums and Excursions. I'd feel too bad on realizing inevitably that I'd omitted someone. But I did make so very many friends.

Some I eventually met in person. Some became neighbors, companions in RPG play groups, meeting my fiancé, attending one another's weddings, sharing our joys as we welcomed our children into the world, and wishing Celeste and me well as life took us to another part of the country.

Others remained voices on paper, both in the pages of A&E and in hundreds of pages of letters rushing to and from other states, other countries, other continents. Actual physical mail was so exciting in those days.

It's sad now to realize how long it's been since I've connected with many of those friends, as life has changed and taken us in different directions. But I do hope everyone involved in A&E knows that they were supremely important to me as I grew up. Whether we exchanged a single comment in a zine, or years of correspondence, or if I just read your contributions to the APA and reveled in the sparks they struck in my mind. You mattered to me. You helped make possible every part of the journey since then.

And Lee Gold, I hope you know how important your work has been. How much you and A&E changed the world for hundreds of kids like me.

Rowan Tree and Red Thread Revisited

Imagine

It was fifty years¹ ago today,

Lee Gold taught the band to play.

They've been going in and out of style,

But they're guaranteed to roll a die².

So may I introduce to you the gamers you've known for all these years?

Alumni of Alarums & Excursions!

My name is Myles Corcoran. I'm a 56-year old gamer from Cork, Ireland and I wrote regularly for Alarums & Excursions from issue 300 until issue 532. I stopped contributing when I found myself falling behind with the reading and finding each deadline more anxiety-inducing than a spur to my imagination. I kept my weekly RPG group sessions going after leaving the APA. I have been gaming with the same group of friends since 1999 and we've played about 30 different games or campaigns in that time.

I was sad to hear when Brian Misiasek told me about Lee Gold folding the APA. I enjoyed the years of back and forth comments, the weird ideas and write-ups, and especially the friends I made through the APA's pages.

Jim Vassilakos and others have taken up the torch and started a new APA, *Ever & Anon*. I've contributed to the first two issues of that.

I am grateful to Lee and her long editorship of *A&E*. I enjoyed the monthly conversations, the effusion of ideas and the table tales from role-players all over, all of which grew from Lee's original idea and her years of work. I am grateful too for the chance to share the antics of my gaming table and the ridiculous stories that we generated. I remember with great fondness the stories of the knights of the Fellowship of the Silver Rose, the rascals working for Walsingham in Tudor Talents, and the travels of the Chinese immortals in Magic Monkey Mischief, for example.

Thank you, Lee, for an unequalled contribution to the role-playing community. Your place in gaming legend is assured.

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Myles Corcoran - 20 Brookfield Park, Cork T12 K7V7 - Ireland

myles.corcoran@gmail.com

<https://mastodon.ie/@deetwelve>

¹ Give or take.

² I apologize for the failed rhyme.



Lee Gold
Tribute Issue

brian.misiaszek@gmail.com

Age of Menace

Brian Christopher Misiaszek



5 Livingstone Drive,
Dundas, ON, L9H 7S3
CANADA
Tel 905-627-5496

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The End of an A&E Era & the Beginning of a Legacy

LEE GOLD: Thank you for all the wonderful years of **Alarums & Excursions (A&E)**. It's easy to overlook the best years of our lives while we're living them. Only in retrospect do we grasp how much light and joy a steady presence like A&E brought to our creative role-playing worlds.

I was fortunate to receive 381 manila envelopes over the years, each adorned with colorful U.S. stamps and filled with those singular, hand-stapled, hard-copy issues, lg-themed, assembled, edited, commented on, and mailed out month after month with care by yourself Lee and Barry.

A&E has left its mark. It was never just a zine; it was a living archive of joy and obsession, of play and creativity, a vibrant dialogue spanning time zones and life stages. It reminded me that rolegames don't just connect us to imagined worlds, *they connect us to one another*. In a life where medicine sometimes demands restraint and detachment, A&E offered myself a creative refuge and a tether to my younger, wonder-filled self.

Whether or not you choose to participate in the successor of A&E, *Ever & Anon (E&A)*, or read along as a silent reader, please know that you've left an indelible mark on my role-playing life, and on the lives of so many others who share our unusual passion for this hobby.

With deep gratitude, **::Brian::**

Finis Alarums

ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS

APRIL #593
The Last Issue of A&E



Seeing the words 'the Last Issue' on final cover of the electronic version of *Alarums & Excursions* in early May 2025 was both heart- and gut-wrenching.

The words inside confirmed what many had suspected after an over-long delay after missing an issue due to illness: after nearly 50 years, editor **Lee Gold** was bringing the legendary RPG-focused *Amateur Press Association* to a close. A sudden and serious decline in her vision made it too difficult to continue.

A&E began in the summer of 1975 as a spin-off from the science fiction APA-L where *Dungeons & Dragons* chatter was overwhelming the usual content. Lee Gold launched *Alarums & Excursions* to give this new hobby a dedicated space. This link below is a bit of a teaser about the formation of A&E in an email interview Lee Gave for Rascal News [**Alarums and Excursions: how zines remade D&D and the web**](#)

Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) had just been released by TSR on January 26, 1974, or just 18 months earlier in a modest print run of just 1,000 copies. Many went to wargamers who bought it out of curiosity, played once (if at all), and shelved it. Distribution was limited to mail order and hobby shops. By 1975, TSR had issued two more print runs, bringing the total to roughly 4,000 official copies in circulation. In addition, some groups relied on bootlegged photocopies of the rules.

The name chosen by Lee for the new APA was borrowed from Elizabethan play stage directions and I thought it captured elegantly the chaos and excitement of early RPGs. From Brett now defunct zine webpage I found the following more accurate explanation this this quote from Lee herself "*I named the new APA for a Shakespearean stage direction, bearing in mind both the standard names of roleplaying games in that era (Dungeons & Dragons, Tunnels & Trolls, etc.: the Ugh and Argh school of naming) and SF fan Walt Willis's famous advice that one should name a fanzine something that began with A so it would lead off reviews that were ordered alphabetically*".

Back in 1975 A&E was the *only* place for discussion, design, and shared imagination for role-gamers, mostly D&D, to share ideas, discuss rules. This was in an era long before the Internet as we know it today, before gaming newsgroups, RPG forums, before dedicated RPG magazines. A&E predated *The Dragon*, which debuted in June 1976¹, and *White Dwarf*, launched by Games Workshop in 1977². By the 1990s A&E earned a reputation to be a launching ground for creative RPG writers who would go on to shape the hobby itself.

Just how important a role A&E played in the early days of the role-gaming hobby is extensively covered in the 2nd edition of Jon Peterson's two volume **'Playing at the World'**

¹ evolving from *The Strategic Review* of 1975, itself still largely wargaming-focused

(2024). Vol 1 has an impressively extensive mention of Lee Gold and the APA she founded, in chapter #17 "*Dungeons and Dragons and Los Angeles Fandom*", and in chapter #19 "*Alarming Excursions*".

With her husband Barry Gold's able assistance, over the next 5 decades Lee Gold's A&E kept on going, moving beyond initial stenciled mimeographed copies, to crisper looking photocopies, to include PDF version for those not wanting the hassles of mailings and storage of paper copies. During this nearly half century time span where the deadline was missed only a few times, many contributors who first appeared in the pages of A&E graduated to work in the professional role-gaming industry.

A&E has been recognized as worthy of its own entry in Wikipedia, and from it I learned it has been recognized in the hobby itself with several awards, has been a winner of the Charles Roberts/Origins Award four times:

- "Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine" in 1985
- "Best Amateur Game Magazine" in 1999
- "Best Amateur Game Periodical" in 2000 and 2001
- "Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts & Design Hall of Fame" in 2022

But all good things cannot last as we all know. Late spring Lee Gold shared the news of the closure of A&E with current A&E contributors, and scrupulously refunded all monies in their account. After the final issue was mailed out both electronically and by US Postal services, the news of the ending of A&E spread on gaming social media and other online sites.

Tributes to the end of A&E have been appearing online in in social media ever since. One of the more interesting of these was this Youtube video which included a fascinating interview with Lee herself done back in 2019.

[**Tabletop Weekly Episode 42 - Lee Gold SPEAKS - Alarums & Excursions ends its run after 50 YEARS**](#)

Jeff Meints, President of Chaosium and co-owner the company did a very nice [blog post](#).

² Evolving out of *Owl & Weasel* newsletter

One of the more ambitious tributes arose when a number of former A&E contributors, now bereft of their longtime community, sought to keep the A&E spirit alive, while respectfully honoring the intellectual privacy of the name *Alarums & Excursions*. This sparked intense online discussions and a variety of ideas about what a successor publication might be and look like. My modest involvement in these conversations on the rules for producing, sharing and distributing E&A deepened my appreciation for how skillfully Lee managed the structure and format of A&E as its editor since July 1975.

Ultimately, the name ***Ever & Anon*** was chosen at Patrick Zoch's suggestion. It cleverly preserves the "Ugh and Argh" tradition of playful naming, incorporates Shakespearean stage-direction terminology, and allows a simple transposition of letters, from A&E to E&A, serving as an ongoing homage to the original.

<https://www.everanon.org/>



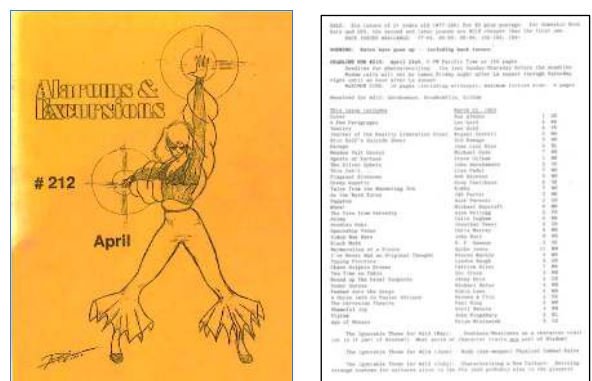
Two issues of *Ever & Anon* have been released under the current editor, Jim Vassilakos., with a third expected by the time this tribute, spearheaded by Lisa Padol, is collated and released.

Personal A&E Reminisces

By the time I first started role-gaming in Grade 9 high school, 1980 the mainstream surge was on. I somehow missed encountering A&E until I was personally introduced to A&E in the early '90s, thanks to **Robin Laws** and **Jose Garcia**, whom I was role-gaming with while I was living and working in Toronto Canada.

Thanks in large part to their encouragement I wrote the first installment of my own contribution to A&E, *Age of Menace*, which appeared in the April 1993 issue of *Alarums & Excursions* (#212). The title of my zine was inspired by my love of the classic hero pulps—*Doc Savage*, *The Shadow*, *The Spider*—and related paperback fiction that first emerged from those pulps, including *Conan*, *Tarzan*, Lovecraft's circle, and other genre works. My passion also extends to adjacent media such as Old-Time-Radio movie serials, and more, all of which helped shape the tone and spirit of *Age of Menace*.

You can see that mimeographed cover of A&E and the stencil run of the front page in the images below; my name is all the way down at the *bottom* of the contributor's page. I started writing just a few months before I started medical school at the University of Western Ontario.



Medical school & residency slowed down my real-world gaming opportunities significantly. Reading and contributing to A&E was lifeline during those leaner role-gaming years and most recently again during the COVID-19 pandemic. It filled a crucial void: offering community, conversation, and a consistent outlet for reflection, creativity, and collaboration.

When I first began working as an Academic Internist and Geriatrician, some work colleagues looked up my name online and teased me about what they found. That sting lingered, so I became more cautious about what I shared publicly online.

But A&E remained a sanctuary, a space where I could write with joy and without apology, surrounded by others who understood. Though work and domestic life often kept me from contributing every month, and there were

In addition to writing about gaming I would write personal natter, such as getting married, the birth of our daughter Lauren, included monthly photos of her, and about how she graduated from university just this spring. About graduating from Medical school, and becoming an academic Geriatrician. And such setbacks as the death of my father during COVID 19 from Parkinson Disease Dementia.

[illegible]

In A&E's honour, I leave you with a new stage direction: **Exeunt Tableaux**; *they leave the stage, and the scene freezes, full of memory.*

A&E Friendships & Connections

I've had the good fortune to meet quite several fellow A&Ers, former A&Ers, and A&E lurkers in real life. Some of those connections grew into true friendships.

I wish I had more photos of my first visit to GenCon in 2002 (the last Milwaukee one) where I met a bunch of A&Ers for the very first time at a gathering and others in subsequent years. In no particular order here are some of them: **Peter Hildreth**, **Avis Crane**, **Doc Cross**.

Richard Iorio (centre), flanked by his wife Ariana on his L, and an unknown to his right. You can just make out half of Peter Hildreth (far R).



Spike Jones & Family in GenCon Dealer's Room

On a trip to London UK in 2013 I met up with Pum and Michale Cule and visited gamestores like the *Orc's Nest* and shared a pint.



Paul Holman & Michael Cule

And there were all those A&Ers I had met only via correspondence like [Nick Parenti](#), [Edmund Shaw](#), [Rob Heinsoo](#), [Colin Speirs](#), [Robert Dushay](#), [Paul Mason](#), [Chris Murray](#), and Lee herself using her husband [Barry Gold](#)'s FB account. Across years of "natter," we got to know one another not just as gamers, but as people.

I had even convinced my old HS friend Chris Abbott to contribute to A&E for a few years too). Not only did he attend Bunkercon while we ran it, but he GMed sessions, as did another former A&Er [Viktor Haag](#) who lives in Ontario too.



Chris Abbott at Bunkercon (L) & playing Dust (R)

A&E also opened unexpected doors for me too. In 1993/1994, I wrote several pieces on the pulps, pulp heroes, and pulp gaming that caught the attention of fellow A&Er [Edmund Shaw](#) editor of the role-gaming magazine 'The Familiar, (alas, no more).



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He serialized my article *The Pulp Avengers* (which I wrote when I should have been studying for my anatomy exam) hat ran across issues #2 and #3, my first paid writing gig, at a penny a word, the same rate pulp writers earned 70 years earlier! Over the years, I even had the dubious honour of seeing portions of it plagiarized, at least once in a published RPG book, and thrice online.

Some of the most meaningful connections I made through A&E extended far beyond its pages. Nearly twenty years ago, thanks only to [Brian Rogers](#) offering me a lift with his friends by cutting through southern Ontario to pick me up, allowing me to attend my first GenCon in 2002.



Brian Rogers (centre, yellow) and I (behind him) flanked by two others in our Milwaukee hotel

Fellow pulp RPG fanatic [Matt Stevens](#) came up to Canada to attend our wedding 27 years ago this month as one of my groomsmen (blue arrow below), and later we shared a hotel room at the first Indy GenCon where copies of his pulp RPG *'Two-Fisted Tales'* were being sold.



I've had the good fortune to have several A&Ers visit our home and meet my family. [Spike Jones](#) and his family had their car freeze up and we managed to thaw it out in our garage about a dozen NYE ago; he also left a gift of a box of old gaming fanzines.

[Brian Rogers](#) and his family passed through Dundas and managed to visit Cactus Fest with us which his children enjoyed. And [Peter Hildreth](#) and his wife [Holly](#) visited us for a few

hours coming back from a trip in Eastern Canada a few summers back.



I stayed in touch with [Myles Corcoran](#) after he left the zine. In February 2024, during a visit to Cork, Ireland, he generously helped my wife trace the still standing but repurposed medical school buildings at University College Cork, where her great-grandfather had studied medicine in the 1880s and where he works now.



Myself & Myles Corcoran in Cork Ireland



Myles showing my wife Caroline the UCC campus

Since the start of the pandemic, [Peter Hildreth](#)'s monthly Savage Worlds online game, with Avis, myself, and others as regulars, has been a lifeline, keeping me gaming through some otherwise quiet years. I was lucky enough

to repeat the in-person experience at GenCon 2024 last summer, this time sharing a hotel room with Peter and deepening my friendship with both him and Avis over dinners and late-night in-room gaming.



Peter Hildreth & Avis Crane at GenCon 2024

Before I wrap this all up a big thank you for [Lisa Padol](#) to bring closure to us all with this tribute collection of essays in honour of Lee Gold and her tireless work with the now legendary **RPG APA Alarums & Excursions**

Lee and Barry Gold, ~1970s
from the LASFS web page



August 15 2025. BCM

Agents of Fortune - One More Time

by Steve Gilham.



22 Trinity Close, Haslingfield, Cambs., CB3 7LS, UK;
steve.gilham@cantab.net (alt: steve.gilham@gmail.com)
<http://stevegilham.com> X: @stevegilham1

Once more unto the breach

A sudden email from a familiar name out of the past, and the realisation that it 's now over 20 years since I last wrote an A&Ezine, and a lot has happened in that time, just not a lot to do with RPGs, having rather burned out in the mid '90s, even though I kept the chatter in A&E up for many years after.

I'm pleased to find out that A&E as an institution had carried on for so long, while the internet arrived, fan forums flourished, and then faded, being replaced by generic social media.

I think I may have recounted this at the time, but one of the things I'm grateful to Lee for – beyond acquaintances struck through this association of the like-minded – was her hints on pronouncing Romaji, passed in casual conversation at the 1990 WorldCon : correcting my pronunciation of samurai "think cows, not cats!", and noting in general that Japanese vowels were delicious, and frequently swallowed.

Simple, and easy to remember, they stuck with me, and provided several "Aha!" moments when, with the advent of DVD drives, I checked off a TODO item of "watch me some more anime" – and also set me up to cringe mightily when being told about some Oriental style RPG that some friends were involved with, and that one of the characters was a Kit-Soon.

Imagine a Clippy-style "Did you mean Kitsune?" here.

Where I'm at

The quick edited highlights of the past 20-ish years being that my wife, Karen, having been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in the mid' 90s, had become increasingly affected, and by the time I dropped out, we were in the planning stages of getting the house adapted for disabled living. That major project was a success, and stood us in good stead when a major attack at the start of '09 left her with just the use of her left arm.

So things continued, with Karen doing play by email, and me not having much energy and enthusiasm between work and caring responsibilities, until I took a severance package at the end of '17 and retired. I had entertained notions of getting something set up and running it in retirement, but at that point, between wanting a break, a long TODO list of house and garden tasks, and finally being able to publish open source without needing to consult lawyers, it never happened. While I was still in touch with the old gaming group, they had their own games, and were still working, and Karen's condition

made logistics of meeting difficult.

Karen passed, suddenly, peacefully, and unexpectedly, at the start of May '21, still in the middle of her PBEM, and that kicked off a whole new TODO list that I'm still slowly checking off – including doing strange things like actually getting out of the house and meeting new people. Who tend to be retired, and generally mundanes, and as I'm still on the young end of retired, mostly much older than me to boot. Meanwhile, the old gamer contemporaries continue to put off retirement, despite being of an age, and having the means, to do so.

And then, unlooked for, new shiny things emerged for me to play with, such as the rise of generative (so-called 'AI') art, which I started to dabble with in late summer '22, with the intention of illustrating some of the fiction I wrote in younger days.

Stranger Days

By amusing coincidence, having dug an old AoF document from March '03 out of archive to copy the formatting, to make this post, I found it had a comment on A&E #331, addressed to Myles Corcoran -

(Favourite PCs Calendar) For my part, the picture of same appeared a couple of issues ago, and her stats are out there... Artistic ability would have to be supplied for a real effort along these lines;



The likely picture in question.

Amusingly enough, with automated artistic ability now available, the most concrete new RPG related thing I've done since last time has been turning some of the **Champions** character sheet pictures from terrible colouring between the lines as above into something reasonable looking, without any recollection of that comment.

My workflow involved clipping the figure from the scan using photoscissors, then building up a composite with a white background layer, a low-opacity background image, and finally the character then placed into context



on top of those layers.

That gave a starting point for running Stable Diffusion 'AI' (sic) image-to-image, with a suitable model and prompt, and a few touch up and inpaint passes until "good enough" : these things are never really "done", as both the tech and one's technique continue to improve.

To someone who never managed to draw competently by hand – my one A&E cover illo being done with the 3D CAD system I was working on at the time – the results felt mind-blowing when I generated them in spring '23, even if they are rather "ho-hum" and "could do better" two



And now, what?

I may not be living the riotous old age Karen said she wanted me to have, after the years spent as her carer, but I'm having fun, writing code, riding my bike, finding new places to go out to eat, attending various coffee mornings, volunteering at the monthly village lunch club, making pretty pictures, and even starting to rework old, unfinished sci-fi stories of mine – having used chatbot AI for some successful rubber-duck debugging of a corner I'd written myself into. And who knows? Widow Right may turn up one day as well.

In Parting

Just time to say "Thank you, Lisa!" for this opportunity to connect after all these years.

And if Robert Plamondon is here, was that you on the various Citrix mailing lists, or a namesake? I never dared ask.

PumSpeak #last

by Pum (AKA Paul Holman), 12 Rushout Avenue, Harrow, HA3 0AR, ENGLAND.

Email: Pum@Pum.org

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Web: <http://www.pum.org>

My thoughts on Lee Gold and A&E

Writing prose, particularly of this sort, is not my forte, but I feel I absolutely have to say something in thanks to Lee for all she has done, and what that means to me.

Lee is one of the quiet, hidden giants of the role-playing game hobby. Since the early days of original white box D&D, Lee has been at the heart of our hobby's conversational and creative discourse. Other publications have come and gone, but A&E endured for an astonishing virtually 50 years!

However, her achievement is more than just longevity. A&E brought together the thoughts and words of players, designers, and others from the role-playing community all around the world. This wonderful discourse surely contributed to role-playing game theory and practice throughout the years across the entire industry and hobby. It is notable that many game designers have read or contributed to A&E, and were no doubt influenced or inspired by its content. For example, looking at my Runequest 2nd edition rulebook I find in the dedication thanks to "the contributors of ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS, [...] who helped us find what was needed."

The fact that Lee created this platform for such considered and innovative discourse, long before the internet was available to the public (to instantly trade often much less considered or ill tempered views) is all the more remarkable.

Furthermore, Lee didn't just put together A&E by editing and distributing it. She welcomed and encouraged everyone to join in, whilst also fostering a respectful and inclusive community of gamers. In doing this, Lee was no doubt a major influence on the nature and culture of role-playing discourse to this day, be it in fanzines, bulletin boards, internet forums, blogs, podcasts, or any other form of social media.

And by existing for so long, A&E has become an archive of the thoughts and activities of the hobby, from grassroots to major designers. Reading through the back issues gives a tangible sense of what the hobby was about at those times, how people were playing and designing games, scenarios and worlds, and what they thought about them then. In a very real sense, A&E traces much of the history and evolution of role-playing gaming.

Our hobby is richer, more thoughtful, and more enduring because of Lee's awesome and legendary work with A&E.

On a more personal level, when I left school I went to Loughborough university, where I found the chess & wargames club. By that stage, in 1982, it had become almost entirely a role-playing club, mostly original D&D and 1st edition AD&D (often a blend of both of them), some house rules, and a myriad of novel homebrew character classes. I recall a little Runequest, DragonQuest and Universe being played, and Traveller had been and gone by the time I got there. At that time, club members John Drake and Rory Mclean were editors of Trollcrusher, so I, of course, subscribed to that until it ended after 29 issues later in the 1980s.

At this time I was unaware of A&E, but not long after, on a visit to the Games Centre on Oxford Street, I stumbled on a couple of issues of A&E. Without knowing anything about A&E, I instantly realised that this was something special. Most other fanzines were A5 format, but, in US Letter format, A&E really stood out; and so thick! How much role-playing wisdom must be held within so many pages, I thought. And the title, "Alarums & Excursions", sounded so tantalising and high brow. Without a second thought I bought them, and devoured the wisdom within hungrily on the train back home and over the next few days.

I got inspiration for a large fundamental part of my magic system from a couple of articles in #96: Dave Kulp's and Bill Peschel's thoughts on magical Magnitude and Resistance tables, which, it seems, followed on from ideas previously presented by Scot Fritz and Martin Wixted.

I don't recall when I started subscribing to A&E, but my first contribution to was in A&E #245 way back in 1996. Since then I have made many valued friends in A&E, and had the further pleasure of meeting many of them in real life. You'd think that living in the great metropolis of London in the internet age, I would be able to find plenty of role-playing, but this was not the case, and for a long time A&E was my only contact with role-playing. Through A&E I met Michael Cule, and I was able to join first his Monday evening group, and then, when I was unable to continue to make that, his Wednesday evening group. So A&E means so much to me. My role-playing life would not exist if not for A&E.

Lee, for all that you have done, as far as I'm concerned, you are a legend! Thank-you so much.

A Farewell to Alarums

Alarums & Excursions and Lee Gold was an important influence on the hobby and yours truly.

A&E has ended its almost fifty year print run and Wikipedia has a good article about it. Its missing some minor details, one which is that Balboa Game Co., which in the early days distributed 40% of all TSR products, also distributed A&E, which meant on the West Coast you would find it in almost every game store. I'm not sure how long that lasted, two or three years? It kicked A&E's popularity to the max and it was widely read and influential, most of the published histories about RPGs seem focused on TSR and not much else.

About Me

My first article for A&E was in issue 6 and the last in the 200s. I stopped subscribing also. I also have an article in the last issue.

I also liked Japanese culture and gaming and enjoyed Lee's writeups about her Japanese campaign. Both my roommate and I started a shared D&D campaign based loosely on the idea. I only made it to Santa Monica to play once or twice, my memories a bit hazy here. I still have my copies of Land of the Ring Sun, plus one or two others buried in my collection. I used it along with Bushido for several campaigns.

Some of my sumi-e:



Figure 1: Moon and clouds #1 by Jim Eckman



Figure 2: Moon Gazing by Jim Eckman



Figure 3: Ugetsu by Jim Eckman

Memories of A & E

By David L. Pulver (dlpulver@telus.net)

I first heard of *Alarums & Excursions* thanks to Dave Nalle's "The Zines" article in *Dragon* #50 (1981), about three years after I discovered tabletop RPGs (then mostly called "FRP"). I knew of science fiction APAs, but hadn't realized there were any for gaming! At the time (while in high school) I was both unreasonably afraid of ordering things by mail, cursed with dire handwriting, and lacking a typewriter (computers? still in the punch card era), so it would be several years before I saw a copy. In the mid 80s I was still living in Kingston, Ontario and no game shops existed there, but my friend Troy Leaman, an avid RPG collector, hit up a game shop in Syracuse, New York and returned with samples of some-years-old back issues of *A&E* he'd found there. I was hooked and read them each several times. It was my last year of university, and I had by then gotten a typewriter (a computer would follow the next year) and was thinking about writing. Overcoming my fear of sending anything through Canada Post, I wrote to Lee, money order enclosed, to ask for the latest issue.

Upon receiving it I was intrigued to see several names beside Lee from Troy's back issues whose zines I'd enjoyed were still writing, among them George Phillies, Alison Brooks, David Flin, Frisbee, Jenny Hein, Spike Jones, Scott Ruggles, Dave Nalle, and Steve Gilham (and some like Phil Masters, I also recognized from *White Dwarf* magazines I'd read when I began gaming). After reading the issue, I soon submitted my first zine after reading it in the fall or winter of 1987—I think it was titled "Morgan's Comic Book" after a favorite NPC in a campaign I was running. About the same time, I was playtesting for SJ Games' then-new *GURPS* line, with an interest in writing for various game companies. I was pleased that everyone in *A&E* were so welcoming, which encouraged me to get involved in other gaming APAs.

I contributed to *A&E* semi-regularly between late 1987 and 1992 (as did Timothy, who joined soon afterward), with the usual mix of RPG discussion, gossip, reviews, and several game writeups. At the time I remember the most popular games at the time seemed to be **Hero system**, **Cyberpunk**, **Pendragon**, some **Star Wars**, and later **Ars Magica** (thanks to Jonathan being active at the time). I was carrying a somewhat lonely torch for **GURPS** until Michael Cule joined (Lee had written **GURPS Japan** by then, but I recall her own enjoyable Japanese game writeups were run with her **Lands of Adventure** system). A lot of people, myself included, also described their various homebrew systems or variants (e.g., David Dunham's cyberpunk-pendragon crossover and Robin's *Madlands* later published for **GURPS**).

Besides the many fellow contributors I got to know through their zines (some of them sadly no longer with us) I was delighted to meet a number of *A&E*ers in person: I remember encountering Phil Masters, Lisa Padol, Robin Laws, Scott Bennie, and Doc Cross at GenCon (among several others, apologies for not remembering) and meeting Spike Jones and his friends Kim and Jill when he dropped by our family home in Kingston for a visit and game session. (Tim and I later met more Toronto contributors when we moved there for a year). *A&E* also led to many rewarding exchanges of letters outside of the zine: I still have several from Scott K. Jamison and Rob Heinsoo (mostly about anime, which I was just getting into), Spike, and Dave Dunham (about writing, *Pendragon* variations, and game design).

Eventually the pressures of graduate school and deadlines from my newfound writing career (mostly for SJ Games and TSR at that time) saw my contributions taper off, although I briefly returned to *A&E* a couple of times for occasional issues. But **Alarums & Excursions** was my first real experience in game writing, introduced me to the wider community of gaming zines, and helped give me the confidence to write professionally.

I'm grateful to Lee Gold for her many years of effort, inspiration and fun!

Ephemeral Transactions #Infinity. A few collected thoughts on Alarums and Excursions by Daniel James. Thanks to Lisa Padol for providing me with somewhere to voice them.

For those that don't remember me -- and why should you -- I wrote a 'zine called Ephemeral Transactions that managed 30 instalments between A&E #90 and about #241. Initially I wrote with my friend David Webb (more from whom below), but after the first few it was just me.

I was at University in the UK in the mid/late 1970s. When I went up I was an occasional wargamer. I'd heard of Dungeons and Dragons because it was advertised in the flyers I received with various wargaming magazines and promotional material but I'd never seen a copy. I might have bought it if I'd known anyone I thought would be interested in playing it, but my experience at getting my friends to commit time to wargaming was disappointing, and I couldn't see how I'd persuade them to be interested in something new and unknown. It's probably just as well I didn't, as the original D&D set of three little books in a white box was fairly impenetrable.

I went through my undergraduate years at Oxford without thinking much about wargames and certainly not thinking about Dungeons and Dragons. I let my subscriptions to wargames magazines lapse as I found I wasn't making the time to read them. Then, in my last year (a research year, I was reading chemistry) I learned that one of the others with whom I was sharing an office was a member of the Speculative Fiction Group, and that her boyfriend had introduced her to the Dungeons and Dragons Society. I later met some of the D&D Society members at their wedding, and as they seemed like an affable bunch I decided I'd go along and see what it was all about. I don't think I ever played D&D, there. The main game we played was a hybrid with a points-based magic system based on D&D bolted onto a simplified (but not simplified enough, some would say) version of the combat system from FGU's Chivalry and Sorcery. Whatever it was, it was great fun and I made some lifelong friends. (there were also some guys in the next room who played Empire of the Petal Throne, but we didn't mix much, for some reason, which is a shame).

I stayed at Oxford to do more research, and so was able to attend the D&D Society meetings every Sunday afternoon during term, and in The Bulldog public house in the evening. It was during one of these Sunday evening sessions in The Bulldog that someone asked me whether I'd heard of A&E. I'd heard of it, because it had been mentioned in professional magazines like Games Workshop's White Dwarf, which in those days was a good window on the world of roleplaying games, and not just the in-house propaganda sheet for Citadel Miniatures that it has become. As I say, I'd heard of A&E, but I didn't really know much about it. Someone called Lee Gold on the other side of the world produced an amateur magazine from articles written by the subscribers? It sounded interesting, but surely such a thing must be a very local phenomenon? Of what relevance was it to me, in the UK?

One of my friends had a copy of an issue of A&E -- around #85 or so, I think -- that he had bought in a games shop in the UK, so it wasn't restricted to California. Contributions came from all over the US, some from Australia, and several from the UK. This was a game some of us thought we had to play ... but, Oh!, how to choose a 'zine name!?

I forget whether it was Dave or I who first came up with Ephemeral Transactions as a 'zine name. We both liked it, but went through a lot of other names before finally deciding on it. "Transactions" was a good word, found in the titles of several learned journals, and surely nothing we wrote would be of interest to anyone for very long?

As I write I have A&E #90, containing our first contribution, in front of me. I realize that what we wrote 40-odd years ago wasn't all that ephemeral, after all. We wrote about things that are still discussed by gamers and game designers. We wrote about systems, about realism, and about playability. I described two modifications to the Runequest system that I said I used. I lied. I've never, so far as I can remember, actually used these mods, but I'm sure I was planning to in my very next game ... if I didn't come up with anything better before then.

The discussions I enjoyed most in A&E have always been discussions about rules and systems, and how to balance playability and realism; finding the lightest-weight system possible that nevertheless feels realistic. Why do I care about the rules so much? Because the rules aren't important. The story is important, the characters are important, the setting is important -- but the rules are not. However, they can ruin everything if they get in the way. We used to talk a lot about "willing suspension of disbelief", the idea that we can forget that it's just a game until something feels so wrong that it pulls us up sharply and destroys the illusion. That has always been important to me: I want my fantasies to be uninterrupted by mechanics.

For example, I remember when I first read the Runequest rules and saw armour treated as a deduction from damage. In every system I'd seen before then wearing armour made you harder to hit, but it didn't reduce the damage when you were hit. What Runequest did was brilliant -- it felt so much more right, so much more believable!

["Believable" is, of course, quite different from "realistic" in this context. A game system can be believable so long as it doesn't "feel wrong"; a realistic game system would have to simulate every detail of an actual (real or fantasy) world, and this would bring a level of complexity that might make it unplayable.]

A&E gave me a place to discuss rule systems with a wide range of gamers with different interests and experience, to hear their views on the systems they were using, and to get feedback on my own daft ideas. The sense of community engendered by other contributors comments was fantastic, too. It was all interesting, stimulating, and fun. I'm eternally grateful for all of that. I even once received a letter from Steve Perrin, saying he agreed with something I'd written in A&E. Honour indeed!

I never really spent quite so much time on the fiction or write-ups or filk (sorry, Lee) in A&E; they could be fun, but they weren't my main interest. Don't get me wrong: I value write-ups of games I've played in and I try to provide a good write-up of most games that I run. I find, though, that reading a write-up of a game played by people I don't know feels kinda voyeuristic, and I wonder what people might think who come across my own write-ups without knowing anything about the game or the people involved.

As time went on I started paid work, I became a home owner, I got married; I acquired all the responsibilities those things bring. It was hard enough to find the time to play roleplaying games, let alone write about them, and my contributions to A&E sadly became less and less frequent and eventually my credit with Lee ran out and I stopped receiving copies. I kept meaning to send more money, I told myself I would do so as soon as I had written the next 'zine, but somehow I never got around to writing one. I'm sorry for that because I always found participation in A&E to be an enjoyable pastime, if not as much so as playing games.

In 1992 Sid Ramage (Eric Golf's Suicide Sheet) contacted UK-based A&Eers and suggested that it might be fun to get together face-to-face. He had the use of a bothy at Forest Lodge, in the highlands of Scotland, and offered its rather basic accommodation for a long weekend of roleplaying for those who were interested. A number of us went along, played some games, drank a lot of beer, and climbed one of the nearby mountains. We all had a great time and agreed to the same thing the following year.

So started a tradition that has continued every year since (apart from the year when Sid took a job-swap in New Zealand -- and, of course, during Covid-19). Our numbers have grown and these days we can afford more spacious and salubrious accommodation, but we still call it Forest Lodge. I have made a lot of good friends at Forest Lodge, and that all came about because of A&E. Another thing for which I am deeply grateful.

When I started roleplaying I was a student; now, almost fifty years later, I have retired. Roleplaying games, and more particularly the friends I have met through playing them, have been a major part of my life and A&E has been an important part of that. Thank you, Lee, for everything. It's been a wonderful ride!

David Webb writes...

I'm pretty sure it was Daniel who came up with the name Ephemeral Transactions, but I thoroughly approved. Unlike Daniel, shortly after leaving university I drifted away from role playing, but nevertheless many of the friends that I made in the Oxford University Dungeons and Dragons Society have stayed with me, and in that way I suppose the game has had a major impact on my life. In recent years I have been attending the Forest Lodge events that Daniel mentions. My motivation has been to see old friends and new, as well as to climb a few Munros, but the risk of forming a new addiction with role playing is ever present. Anyway, I was amazed to hear that A&E was still running after almost 50 years, and felt that I must put finger to keyboard to congratulate Lee on a fantastic achievement, and one that has clearly meant a great deal to many people over the years.

*Brian Rogers, 34 Madeline Drive, Ridgefield CT 06877 – or – Rogebrian@GMail.com
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All About Lee

In July of 2019 I wrote this in my final ‘zine for A&E

It is with a heavy heart that I announce that Subplot Kudzu is going on hiatus for the foreseeable future. While I cannot enumerate all the ways in which the community here at the worlds lonest gaming cocktail party has made me a better GM, gamer and writer, nor can I measure the joy I’ve had from my relationships here, the simple truth is that the last year has not afforded me the energy to keep up. Between the changes at work, the constant changes and re-evaluations with Zachary and the incessant background radiation of USAn and World politics that give significant penalties to any emotional recovery check I haven’t found the time for the longer-term investment and reward that A&E provides. If I have energy for gaming it has to go to my group here for the immediate social connection and to nurture Elizabeth in the hobby. (Once I finish this I will be driving Elizabeth to our friends house for her to run the third session of her game for Chant and his kids).

I am grateful for all the advice and support people have provided me since issue 306. I’ve made great friends here, some of whom have already stepped out of the cocktail party but remained in touch. After 18 years you know who you are.

To all the recent joiners to the A&E fold, it was great to have passed ways with you, if only for a few months. For those coming back to the hobby to those just jumping on board, I contend that A&E is the best place to do either.

Lee, I remain in awe of your ability, patience and dedication to this project for the last 45 years. You have provided me a venue to improve my skills in the hobby I love, meet a vast array of people I would never have met otherwise, and otherwise improved my life.

Thank you. Thank you all.

Little of that has changed, honestly. My son still has the same array of issues, US Politics is playing “Let’s do the time warp again”, and it’s difficult to make the energy for things. If nothing else, I know that Elizabeth, now at college, is rooming with her DM and her game group managed to finagle their way into the same dorm. She has a much stronger work ethic than I do; if I had managed that I would have done even worse in college (Still, I know my lack of education hasn’t hurt me none.)

As effusive as my comments in 2019 were, they barely scratch the surface of how much A&E meant to me as a gamer, and by extension how important Lee Gold has been to my life.

The biggest thing Lee game me through A&E was the massive broadening of scope over what a game *could be*. I have a tendency to be very genre dependent as a player, which has its advantages and drawbacks: people know what they are getting, and writing/playing to genre rules means they get what they want. There’s a challenge in how the game design catches the genre rules at the table. That’s all great.

But it’s not everything. Lee’s games – the Chocolate Campaign, Snæfellsnes, Toon, and others – were such broad-spanning, sometimes bizarre, always fascinating entities full of unique characters who drove the action across decades and generations, with players juggling multiple characters and plotlines that they were mind blowing to me in 2001. Mind blowing and liberating.

I don’t want to say that Lee’s games were unstructured because they all ran on their own clear internal logic that could be harshly applied (her story of the PC in her Japan game who insisted that their peasant was going to look directly at the passing samurai and suffered terminal consequences for doing so). It’s just that there were no intrinsic to the game system rules for doing or not doing things. They players could and did try anything, and Lee made it work. Which made me realize I could make it work – in ways that I had never made work when I was a child first starting and structure was a foreign concept.

I suppose that’s it. Lee helped me to remember how to run games as if I were a child again. I can’t think of a greater compliment than that.

I very much appreciated the one time our paths crossed at Boskone and I was able to play in one of her room games. It was a fairy tale session where I was able to finally play my idea of being a Baron Munchausen style companion having the greatest eyesight in the world (with the advantage of having a third eye in the middle of my forehead!). The ravages of time means I don’t recall who else was there, but I do remember how much fun I had.

There’s a saying that with so many necessary pieces making any motion picture is a miracle. I would contend that hosting the world’s longest gaming cocktail party is as well. It was also a mitzvah, for all of us.

Thank you, Lee Gold, wherever you are.

SINISTER THINGS

Patrick Riley; sexagesimalian@gmail.com

In the Halls of Fame for various sports, there is often a debate about whether so-called "accumulators" are worthy of entry. These are the players with long, respectable careers who never broke through to greatness but nevertheless appear on many leader boards because of their longevity. Lee Gold's 50-year run as the editor and distributor of *Alarums & Excursions* never gave her the fame and name recognition of other luminaries in the history of roleplaying games, but it definitely should earn her a spot in the RPG Hall of Fame.

Lee was a facilitator, not a gatekeeper. A&E was open to anyone with the desire to contribute – in my case, even if I did not know what a "stencil" was or how it would work with my outdated dot matrix printer. Though she compiled the contributor's zines, handled the money, and did a bit of editing when necessary, she was also a contributor with no greater standing than anyone else (except that her zine was always first). A&E was undoubtedly Lee's – she set the rules and put her foot down when needed – but it was a creative space available to everyone.

This openness meant that A&E was not hemmed in by any particular game, genre, or theme. Individual zines did not even have to be related to gaming. Topics ranged from the academic to the personal, from contemporary news to gaming theory and practice, and whatever else was on contributors' minds. This diversity of thought, form, and style separated A&E from other APAs and professional magazines.

A&E included long-form essays, reviews, game write-ups, and fiction, but its lifeblood was the comments. A&E has been described as a cocktail party with multiple ongoing conversations that people could start, join, or leave as they developed and evolved over the months and years. Yes, things could still get contentious and the Great Flamewars of the early days are legendary, but unlike the online message boards and internet forums, the monthly publishing schedule and zine format tempered some of the more heated arguments and encouraged longer, more thoughtful discussion (or at least I like to think so). A&E was a place for collaboration and community.

I read and contributed to A&E for over 30 years (and you should blame Doc Cross and Mark Denman for getting me started). I wrote a few good things and a lot of stupid things. It aided in my journey as a roleplayer and as a person. For me, A&E was a self-assembled community of folks that liked to share and read each other's stories, experiences, and opinions. Few endeavors in my life have lasted that long – even my marriage will take several years to catch up. I am grateful to the A&E family and its matriarch whose steady, consistent hand kept it going for so long.

Thank you, Lee.

TWIN CITIES BULLET

by Scott K. Jamison

4141 Meadowbrook Ln #222 Saint Louis Park, MN 55426 USA

952-938-1783

skjam@yahoo.com

<https://www.skjam.com>

Nostalgia

I first ran into Alarums & Excursions in an art supply store in Mankato, Minnesota in 1979, which is also where I first discovered gaming books. I had some idea what role-playing games were because there'd been an article in Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine a couple of years before, but coming from a tiny rural town I knew no one else in fannish spaces nor had access to stores with gaming supplies before. Admittedly, it was just Dungeons & Dragons back then, but it was fascinating to my young mind. I joined the University of Minnesota Mankato gaming group after seeing a notice on the store's bulletin board, bicycling over from Bethany Lutheran, my college.

I don't remember much about that first issue except that it was fascinating. I was still very shy back then, and didn't have much spare money, so didn't join.

After having a money crunch and having to leave college, I wound up joining the Air Force. On bases in Texas, California and Colorado I learned about other role-playing games, became a fair enough DM/GM/Storyteller and started sinking money into the hobby in a serious way. Then I was stationed in England, also gained an appreciation for British comics, and early Games Workshop stuff.

Back in Minnesota, I struggled to find my footing in the Twin Cities, having little luck with employment and mostly doing temp jobs. I eventually connected with the University of Minnesota gaming club that met in Coffman Union in Minneapolis, and was made aware of the Little Tin Soldier, a wargaming and role-playing game store on Lake Street in Uptown. They had a wide supply of fun gaming stuff, and another copy of Alarums & Excursions. After some other nonsense, I finally joined the magazine and began contributing, meeting in its pages many interesting people. You know who you are. RIP especially Scott Bennie & Quentin Long, who collaborated with me on Allies.

Over the years, I was in and out of the APA as my financial circumstances waxed and waned. The Little Tin Soldier expanded and de-emphasized wargames, renaming itself Phoenix Games. (The little sign on top of the building with a cannon on it remained even when the store itself moved out to Deephaven.) I also got into anime and manga, and had a supplement for Champions get published. That last resulted in my only appearance at GenCon and an A&E meetup.

The gaming club at the U had a disastrous couple of years, became primarily a Magic the Gathering club, and I lost interest in meetings, being more into the U's anime club now even as that got kicked

off campus for not having any student officers. I had another financial crunch and dropped out of A&E again. I only did sporadic gaming.

I did come back to A&E briefly for one of the anniversary issues and a few thereafter.

Since Then

The downtown apartment I'd been living in for a couple of decades because it was dirt cheap had a vermin infestation that got far, far out of hand, and I had to get rid of large amounts of things that had gotten contaminated, including alas most of my A&E collection. Then I got let go from Target, and decided to finally go back to college online to get my associate's degree (in Business Management, as that was one of the few things my veterans' benefit would help pay for. Still had to cash out my 401k.)

Bounced through a few more temp jobs before landing at Blue Cross Minnesota, where I am a phone customer service representative. The old apartment building changed management, they decided total remodeling was the only answer and pushed all the remaining tenants out, so I moved first to Uptown, then to Saint Louis Park where I have been since.

My health hasn't been the greatest, but I am probably going to make it to retirement age.

Where You Can Find Me Online

Primarily my review website, SKJAM! Reviews, at www.skjam.com which has been going since 2012. I am on Dreamwidth as skjam, and haven't actually deleted my Livejournal account of the same name, though I haven't posted in years. You can find me on Facebook, and technically on LinkedIn but I've lost the email that was linked to that. I sometimes post on TV Tropes and very rarely on the Hero Games forum. I'm in a few small Discords. Details if you really need them. I wouldn't mind email or even snailmail every so often. Oh, and Bluesky, I'm there now.

Gaming Stuff in Media

The anime series "Necronomicon and the Cosmic Horror Show" is clearly based on someone's Call of Cthulhu campaign, complete with SAN points and SAN checks.

And some things that might actually be usable for gaming, because, we're all gamers here, even if some of us are lapsed.

Soultaster, the Cursed Sword

Common Knowledge: Soultaster is a sword that gives the wielders great power in combat, but curses them to die young.

Medium Knowledge: Soultaster is at least two centuries old. It enhances the sword-wielding abilities of those who own it, even feats that seem magical. Known wielders include (insert famous dead swordsmen here). The most recent wielder was (name), formerly a simple peasant who led an

uprising against a tyrant and overthrew him, only to die on his wedding night, presumably the victim of whoever also stole the sword, which is now missing. You can recognize the sword by (distinctive feature).

Deep Knowledge: Soultaster was created a little over 200 years ago by (famous weaponsmith with a shady reputation). Almost nothing is known of its wielders for the first fifty years or so, when it by the lack of stories was no better than a normal sharp and durable sword. The first wielder of note was (name), who'd already gained a reputation as a swordsman by the time he acquired Soultaker, but rapidly rose in the ranks for the three years afterwards until his spectacular death at the (name of battle). (Name) and (name) came out of mediocrity to be great wielders once they got their hands on Soultaker, but also died young. Then it fell into the hands of (name), a sword wizard, who nearly conquered an entire empire before apparently losing control of the sword. Most recently, (name) was a simple peasant who became a great swordsman overnight after plowing up Soultaker in his field. He rose up against (tyrant), leading a rebellion to overthrow the evil one and restore peace to the land. Alas, on his wedding night, he was found cut to ribbons, and the sword was missing. It has not been seen since. It is said that the sword whispers to the wielders with cunning advice, making them invincible as long as they are holding it, but vulnerable if they ever let go.

How It Actually Works: Soultaster is a finely-made sword of the type most commonly used in the campaign's dominant culture. It has some interesting scrollwork along the upper edge which allows those versed in sword history to identify it. The sword has a primitive "intelligence" which allows it to bond telepathically with its wielder. Once it has chosen an owner, it cannot switch until that person's death. The sword can share with its wielder any sword-related knowledge a previous wielder possessed. This includes sword styles, particular techniques, and even special feats such as spells cast through the sword. However, just because you have the knowledge doesn't mean you'll be able to physically perform the feats. If a spell requires magical power and you don't have that, you're out of luck in that case. This is why it normally chooses physically capable beings to be its wielders.

The catch is that upon the owner's death, Soultaster rips all sword-related knowledge from the former owner's mind and soul to add to its trove. Even if the wielder is resurrected later, they will have lost everything they knew about swords. The "dying young" thing is just a coincidence as people who have lots of swordfights do tend to die.

Plot Suggestion: The treacherous coward who killed (name) to steal the sword was a physical weakling who got (name) drunk so he could cut him up without having to fight. Soultaster refused to work for him, and the man eventually pawned it for quick cash. It was being carried in a caravan to be sold, (just as a nice sword, the pawn shop owner didn't recognize it) when the caravan was attacked by bandits, and the bandits were attacked by monsters, who brought it to the dragon that ruled them, and it's in that dungeon now.

The player characters' patron wants Soultaster for (reasons) and had a diviner track down its approximate location. Dungeon delving time! The PCs have been warned about the supposed curse, but will they tempt fate?

Inspired By: A card from Magic the Gathering, though I don't remember the actual name.

I Know A Trick Worth Two Of That

A talent/special ability/gimmick for a certain kind of character. If the character sees a particular feat performed, they can attempt to use this skill to perform an even more impressive feat. If successful, they wow the audience and win the contest. This can be used with any skill the character possesses, from acrobatics to dancing to fiddle playing. However, it has a few limitations. First, it requires the other performer to go first. Second, it can only be used once per confrontation. (GMs may want to lower this to once a day.) If there are more than two contestants, this does not prevent a third (or more) person outperforming both the initial contestant and the person who used this feat.

Inspired By: Obviously, Johnny from "The Devil Went Down to Georgia", but I mostly came up with it because of Peter, an APA fiction character of boastful tendencies who did this sort of thing all the time.

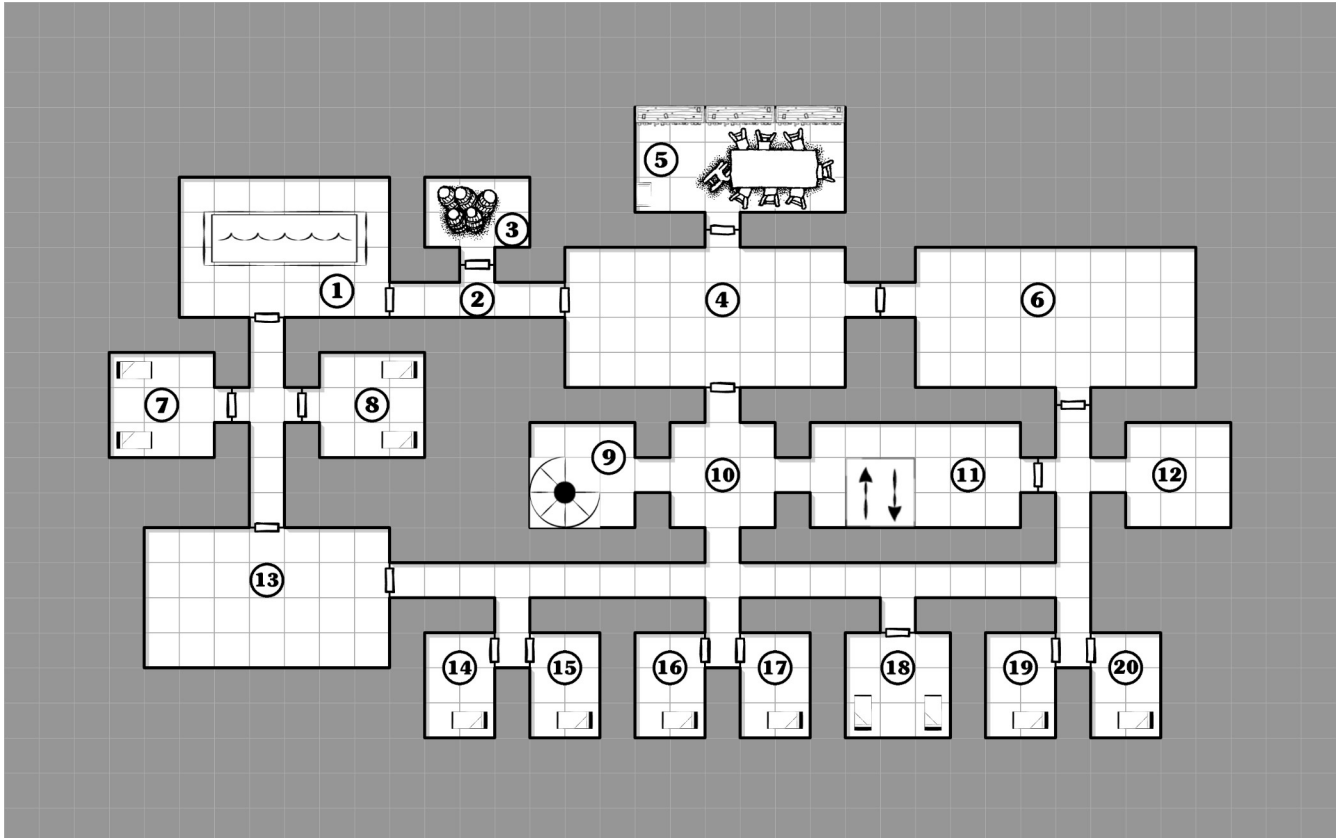
Looking Forward to Reading Everyone Else's Contribution!

A Dungeon Level for Lee & Barry

Jim Vassilakos

It had long been my intention to publish a dungeon in A&E, but for some reason I just never got around to it. Well, better late than never.

This dungeon level is lit in some places by torchlight and in others by phosphorescent fungi.



1 – Holy Water Trough: The holy water trough is covered with a thin coating of ice. At one end, the ice has been broken. If the holy water is used to wash one hands and then one drinks it from their cupped palms, their prayers may be answered.

2 – Hallway: Zezubei, a monk, is on his way to the holy water trough (Area 1). He's holding a vase filled with ashes, and the ashes can speak.

3 – Storage Room: There's food, drink, and various knickknacks, including a pair of carved, wooden owls (each small enough to fit into a bag tied on a belt). They will watch over the spirits of their owners while they sleep, so their spirits won't fly away and not come back.

4 – Room of Black Flowers: The black flowers will turned their faces toward newcomers like sunflowers facing the Sun. Each has a small, glowing red eye at its center. There's a gold nameplate affixed the north door that reads *Ambassador from Academia*.

5 – Meeting Room/Library/Office: There's a table here, with scattered papers and tiny polyhedrons. In the southwest corner of the room is a photocopier as well as an extra heavy-duty stapler, and along the north wall is a bookcase with a number of periodicals, including one called *The Third Foundation*, although issues 1-76 appear to be missing. There's also a book about magic, or more specifically about the differences between white and black magic.

White magic, it claims, is about life and freedom and creation and joy and truth, just as black magic is about death (or dying), compulsion, destruction, pain, and deception.

6 – Room of the Wingless Swans: A flock of 3d6 wingless, white swans will run past the party almost as soon as they open the door. Behind them is a very large boy, who aside from his height (around ten feet) appears to be only seven years old. “Come back, cousins, and I’ll give your wings back to you.” If stopped and questioned, he’ll claim to have no name. “I lost it when my parents ran away.”

7 – Bedroom: Floki Patricksson, a 7-yr-old boy who turns into a giant whenever he gets emotional, lives here with his sister, Aestrif. Blackie the Cat lurks nearby.

8 – Bedroom: Kokutaro, a fire-breathing lake serpent (orochi) who’s assumed human form, is sleeping here.

9 – Stairwell: A young man with a splendid voice sits on the stairs, singing *Oh, What a Beautiful Martian*, followed by *Frodi’s Mill*.

10 – Information Room: Ish, a bronze-colored cat (cat of information) — in reality a djinn who was once a divine messenger — patrols this room, hoping to answer people’s questions.

11 – Elevator room: On the west side of this room is an elevator that’s powered by 2d8 giant squirrels, who are on the east side of the room inside some sort of giant exercise wheel. It takes two squirrels to lift a mule or horse but only one to lift a human. Inside the elevator is a barbarian with a skin of rotgut wine, who’s looking to sell it.

12 – Robot’s room: Inside this room is a robot named Mira, who is currently recharging her capacitors. If questioned, she’ll ask if anyone has seen Ombu.

13 – Hungry Bear: There’s a howling blue bear, standing on his hind legs as well as a little girl with black hair and pale white skin in a blue

dress. “Do you have any food for the bear?” she asks. “He’ll dance if you give him food.”

14 – Bedroom: Gudrun Peace is here polishing her magic sword, waiting for her husband’s return. He’s out bartering with a troll over some sheepdogs.

15 – Bedroom: The cook/maid, Olivia, is here sleeping.

16 – Bedroom: This is Zezubei’s room, but he’s presently out doing monk stuff.

17 – Bedroom: An Irish Priest is here, waiting for his magic chicken to lay an egg.

18 – Big Bedroom: Vali Lokisson and Nari Lokisdottur are here plotting their next LARP.

19 – Bedroom: A golden-horned, rune mage & Walrus Girl are engaged in “witty conversation” among other things.

20 – Fuzzy’s Room: Sleeping peacefully on the bed is a half-sheltie/half-cocker spaniel along with two cats.

The map was drawn with Dungeon Scrawl.¹

Lee,

While other RPG periodicals came and went, you kept A&E going strong, month after month, for 593 issues. *The Dragon* went for 430. Also an extraordinary run, yet you outlasted even them.

I feel so lucky to have been a part of it. No doubt, it helped keep my creativity alive. So thank you for keeping A&E going so long. It’s been a pleasure *and an honor*.

May you and Barry be well for all the rest of your days, and may fate smile upon you always. Whatever the future may hold, you will be long remembered.

1 <https://www.dungeonscrawl.com/>

A KITCHEN IN BIBLYON

JERRY STRATTON

GODSMONSTERS.COM

AUTUMN 2025

I've been taking part in *Alarums and Excursions* since at least April, 2008, with *The Biblyon Free Press*. At some point I started including vintage food, that being my other obsession after gaming. I reviewed the ca. 1955 *Home Cooking Secrets of Charlotte* in the April 2021 issue, A&E 545. Lee replied in issue 546:

I could email you our Recipes files if you want to see them. One file is my transcription of my father's mother's recipes, given her by friends and relatives when she left Virginia for Los Angeles (June 25, 1895). Another is my father's and my mother's recipes. The third is Barry's and my recipes plus those of some of our friends.

She sent these three files:

1. Recipes of Howard and Judith Klingstein
2. Leonora Wise Klingstein's recipe book
3. Lee Gold's Recipes

All recipes I tried are from either her file of recipes from her parents (Howard and Judith Klingstein, the first file), from her grandparents (Leonora Wise Klingstein, the second file), or are her own recipes from, among other sources, friends in the science fiction community. One of the recipes, which I made just in time to meet the deadline, is from A&E itself.

The files of ancestral recipes were "transcribed by Lee Klingstein Gold, October and November, 1999" with at least Leonora Klingstein's "proofread by Barry Gold".

I've been meaning to try some of her heirloom recipes for quite a while, but without a deadline, I often don't do things even when I want to do them. There are so many things to do, and so little time to do them all. There is so much food, and only so much stomach!

So when Lisa announced a *Festschrift* one-off to thank Lee for "the decades-long party-in-a-zine and the com-

munity she created", I decided to use Lisa's deadline as a deadline for trying these recipes. If Lisa's zine was about thanking Lee Gold and celebrating A&E, what better way to celebrate an online community than a virtual community potluck? Grab a plate and a seat, and enjoy!

I was meeting fellow science fiction fans in August and couldn't resist bringing cookies attributed to Poul Anderson. The full title in Lee's notes is "Poul Anderson's mother's cookies from Astrid". Astrid would be Poul Anderson's daughter.

I call them *Cookie to the Stars* because *Trader to the Stars* is one of my favorite Poul Anderson novels and the one I've most recently read. It's also likely a strong influence on the *Traveller* RPG.

The original recipe calls for "Karo (dark) syrup". I don't keep dark Karo on hand, so I used sorghum molasses. Given the spices, any molasses should be a fine substitute in these cookies. They're obviously a Danish gingerbread cookie, a *brunkager* or, as it's listed in the file, *brunkager*. They are a great example of the genre.

I've tasted outside time and place
In my kitchen at Biblyon.
Foods beyond Adamic race
In my kitchen at Biblyon.
Cakes with an unearthly green,
Soups no living man has seen,
Vegetables known but in dream,
In my kitchen at Biblyon.

Entrails forecast man's demise
In my kitchen at Biblyon.
Grim dooms I've read, yet doughs still rise
In my kitchen at Biblyon.
Stars, and thoughts, undreamed 'till then,
Field and range unplowed by men,
All these texts, and more I ken,
In my kitchen at Biblyon.

What wild, presumptuous thoughts I've tasted
In my kitchen at Biblyon.
With time and ink and deeds I've basted
In my kitchen at Biblyon.
Ancient odors whirl in its heat,
Cryptic tongues chant strange receipt,
Shuttered stars in ovens meet,
In my kitchen at Biblyon.

godsmonsters.com/kib



The Danish phrase literally means “brown cookie”. Even more literally, “brown cake”, but in the Danish tradition cakes and cookies are the same thing. While we got it from their Dutch semi-neighbors, it’s where our word “cookies” comes from: a cake was a *koeke* in Dutch, pronounced “kook”. A cookie was merely a little cake, or *koekeje*, pronounced “kookiyeh”.

Pay attention. There will be a test later.

The very first recipe I tried was from Jack Harness. Harness was another member of the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society and an early participant (if perhaps only by observing) in Lee Gold’s D&D games. In her list of *where roleplaying comments had appeared in APA-L*, she has this note for APA-L 511:

Jack Harness wrote D&D comments on a game he’d observed that Lee Gold had DMed and announced he intended to design his own dungeon.

Harness was also part of the announcement of her new zinc’s name in *APA-L* 523. From her notes on that issue (and talking about herself in the third person):

Lee Gold wrote, “We have named the D&D-zine ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS... I have lifted some material from APA-L so that Swanson, Digby, Harness, and Tedron [Ted Johnstone] will be contributors to the firstish which will be appearing June 22nd” and added more details.

Jack had at least a small hand in A&E’s early days, too. When Lee announced in *APA-L* 531 that she and her husband Barry “were going to Japan for four months” she added that “Jack Harness would be editing A&E till she returned.”

Harness’s *Soy Eggs* is not just a recipe for soy eggs. It’s a soy egg manifesto. It appeared under “THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SOY EGGS” in *APA-L* 817:

Lee and Barry Gold have taken to including my Soy Eggs at their Passover Seders. This means they have to explain to the newcomers there why a set of eggs the color of Ken Porter² are added to the edibles and ceremony; they also have to explain why, if there is not an eggman there is no walrus. And are the eggs an Easter symbol... or possibly some more devious symbol. It didn’t help matters when one time I came hopping in the front door with the eggs in a yellow basket lined with shredded green cellophane.

Jack Harness’s original recipe notes that “the longer the immersion, the more the white turns chocolate. You will have a somewhat rubbery hard-boiled egg. But it will have a mild flavor, and many people like the soy eggs.”

Chocolate is not the color I’d use to describe these eggs. “Bathroom brown” might be more appropriate without being too scatological. They are indeed slightly rubbery.

¹Lee added: “Conservative and Orthodox Jews won’t eat them during Passover, because soy is kitniyot, seeds. We also like serving Soy Eggs at Sukkot.”

²I’m assuming that, rather than being a person’s name, this is a brand of beer. But I am not at all sure.

“Spirit leans not on...”

But they are very tasty. I’ve added the instructions to cut them in half, because a whole egg is a lot of food, and these would best be served as a side or appetizer. Harness’s original says to cut them in quarters, but it seems to me that that would make them more difficult to handle as finger food.



Soy Eggs would also be a wonderful start for adding a bit of excitement to standard deviled eggs.

I love ice cream, and I love sherbet, so this very creamy sherbet from Howard Klingstein has been on my short list of recipes to try since Lee sent the files. (Yes, my short list is very long.)

Howard’s recipe calls for “extra-rich” milk. This is a product that is no longer easily available, at least in the States. There are apparently multiple ways to simulate it. One is to combine whole milk with milk powder. I decided to mix whole milk with cream. So where the original recipe calls for three cups extra-rich milk, I used two cups of whole milk and one cup of cream.

In fact I used more, because I somehow read down from “2 eggs, separated” to “3 cups extra-rich milk” and separated three eggs. Rather than try to grab only two thirds of the egg white, I chose to make a +50% recipe.



This stuff is very good, and I didn’t mind one bit having the extra. It would, however, have been easier to store the amount as written. The standard amount fits about perfectly in a 1-1/2 quart glass dish in the freezer. By

increasing the recipe I had to use two containers in the freezer. In order to free up freezer space, I sadly had to breakfast from the extra container every morning until it was gone. Woe is me!

I also love potatoes. Of the three fake food holidays I cover, one is *National Potato Day*. I've already *featured potatoes* for *National Sandwich Day*. And I'll be featuring potatoes on *Pi Day* in 2026. While I don't cover National Soup Day (assuming that's even a thing, which it probably is) I do like soup, and I especially like potato soup. I don't make it very often because it requires more planning than I normally do.

But Leonora Wise Klingstein's Tattered Potato Soup requires no more planning than having potatoes on hand. Even better, it's easily proratable to one, two, or three servings. The basic recipe is water, potato, spices, butter, and either onion or garlic.

It looks like a dump recipe, so that's how I treated it. I left out the garlic and butter; instead I stir-fried garlic in butter with some mushrooms that were about to go bad in the fridge, then poured them over the finished soup.



I used about a quarter cup of chicken stock that I had left in a carton in the fridge, then filled out the rest with water and some leftover spicy stock from making ground beef sauce.*

Even without the mushrooms, butter, and garlic, the soup was phenomenal. It would have been less flavorful, of course, without the well-spiced beef "stock". But it still would have been good and the spices can be adjusted for. They *have* to be adjusted—no amounts are given.

This soup was very quick to make and a good way to mostly empty my fridge before a trip.

I enjoy pancakes and waffles but I rarely make them. The Matzo Meal Pancakes in Leonora Klingstein's file are marked as "from Mamma Wise", which may mean they're from Leonora Klingstein's mother; that is, Lee Gold's great grandmother. Depending on how ancestral slang worked in that place and at that time, "Mamma Wise" could even be Leonora's grandmother.

*I'd already removed the fat from the ground beef stock for use frying eggs. If I'd thought about it I would have saved it for frying the mushrooms.

It's definitely an old-school recipe: it involves separating the egg and folding in the egg white after mixing the batter. I've seen that mostly in old waffle recipes.

The recipe itself definitely reads like a recipe from the last half of the nineteenth century or the first decade or two of the twentieth:

Matzo Meal Pancakes (from Mamma Wise)
1 pint sweet milk 3 eggs (separately beaten) salt
Enough matzo meal to thicken like pancakes
If it swells and gets too thick, thin with milk

Several things mark this as an older recipe: the lack of a separate ingredients list; the lack of amounts for the salt or the "flour"; and the lack of even a small amount of sugar. Also, the call for "sweet milk", which is a phrase that mostly predates modern refrigeration. All it means is milk that has not begun to appreciably sour. It's what we, in our *era of abundant refrigeration*, call merely "milk".

The use of separated eggs could also mark it as a *Passover* recipe. Whipping egg whites to fold them into a batter is a substitute for leavening, common in the era before commercial leaveners. Whether it's also a *Passover* tradition, I can't say. Apparently, whether or not adding leavening to matzo meal is forbidden during *Passover* is a complicated question. After a short dive into the topic, my conclusion is that I do not want to deal with it.

Whatever the reason, this recipe has no baking soda or baking powder. So the beaten egg white is the only thing that will cause the pancake to become fluffy.

I made both a pancake and a waffle from the batter. Using an already-baked "flour" gives this an interesting lightly toasted flavor. With no sugar[†], these are not at all sweet. To make up for that I topped the waffle with *Vermont maple peanut butter ice cream*, and the pancake with good old Log Cabin syrup.



I wouldn't buy matzo meal to make these. But if I had some on hand, I would definitely use it.

[†]There's no sugar in matzo meal. Matzah crackers, from which the meal is ground, are literally just flour and water, to adhere to the rules of *Passover*.

Finally, I made John Redden's Avocado Spice Cake. His wife sourced the recipe from the apparently in demand 2002 *Kona On My Plate*. He called it "an island version of fruitcake with spices and fresh buttery avocados."

The genesis of how this recipe appeared in A&E is a good example of how conversations flowed issue to issue.

1. Issue 565. Lee Gold wrote in her prefatory "Natter", "We plan to celebrate Barry's and Rita's birthdays on the evening after our November game. The festal desserts will be Napoleons and eclairs."
2. Issue 566. John Redden replied, "**Lee Gold:** re food. My wife has been making avocado cake (also known as Hawaiian fruit cake). It's delicious."
3. Issue 567. I cross-replied, "**John Redden:** I have never had avocado cake. I'd love to see your wife's recipe, if she has one."
4. And so the recipe appeared in issue 568.

I ran out of sugar at 1-1/2 cups, so, rather than open a new bag of sugar I filled out the remaining half cup with brown sugar. I suspect that contributed to the cake looking burnt.

In going with the "green" line of *In My Kitchen at Biblyon*, I replaced the raisins with candied green cherries. Partly for the green, but partly because they were left over from the holidays. The 2023 holidays.

I chose macadamia nuts as the unspecified nuts, because they're the only nut that gets its own section in the *Iiilo Woman's Club Cook Book*, which makes them the most Hawaiian nut that I have on hand.

The batter is pea-green but it tastes amazing.

The cake started to look (and smell) burnt on top around 45 minutes in. I checked whether the loaf was done using a thin knife, and it was not, so I moved it to a lower rack. I'm not sure but that this might not be better made in an actual cake pan; the insides would then be done along with the top and sides.



Brunkager Sherbet Sandwich.

That said, it doesn't taste burnt, it just looks it. And it is incredibly rich. It was very good buttered warm as if it were bread. It was very good with a couple of scoops of Orange Cream Sherbet as if it were cake. Despite my jokes about it being green, the avocado color, strong in the batter, disappeared completely in the baking.



John concluded the recipe with:

And if you bake cookies and you don't cook cookies, why aren't they called "bakies"?

To which I responded in the next issue:

RYCTM on avocado spice cake, thanks! I will try it. RE cookies vs. cooking joke, cookies are little cakes (koekje). Cooking is from the Latin coquere—which included baking; it was basically any food preparation.

Enjoy the buffet by the gaming table. And to Lee, thank you for fifty wonderful years of freewheeling gaming, fantasy, and tangentially related discussion. Thanks especially for the seventeen years in which I was allowed to participate, however much that participation veered to the tangential rather than the gaming!



Avocado Cake with Sherbet

Jack's Soy Eggs

4 eggs
1/2 cup soy sauce
1/2 cup chicken broth
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 tsp sesame oil
1 tbsp minced onion

Cover eggs with cold water and boil gently for five minutes. Remove eggs and put under cold running water for five minutes. Peel carefully.

In a very small pan, combine soy sauce, broth, sugar and oil; wrap onion in cheesecloth, place in liquid, and bring to a boil. Add eggs and simmer for ten minutes, covered, occasionally turning the eggs to color evenly. Remove from heat and allow to sit for thirty minutes, turning a couple of times. Marinate overnight in refrigerator.

Slice in half lengthwise and serve. Makes 8.

Adapted from *Lee Gold's Recipes* (2021).

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Astrid's Cookie to the Stars

1/4 lb butter
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup molasses
1/2 tsp ginger
1/2 tsp cloves
1/2 tsp nutmeg
1/2 tsp cardamom
1 tsp cinnamon
2 eggs, beaten
2 cups flour
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp baking soda
4 dozen almond slices

Melt butter and cool. Cream in the sugar and molasses, then stir in the ginger, cloves, nutmeg, cardamom, and cinnamon. Beat eggs in well.

Sift the flour with the salt and baking powder. Stir into the batter. Cover and keep refrigerated overnight. Roll into a flat disc, wrap, and refrigerate for another day. Roll thin on waxed paper, cut into 2-inch rounds, and decorate each with one almond slice. You may find it easier to cut into rounds if you chill yet again after rolling onto wax paper.

Bake on a lightly-greased cookie sheet for 6-8 minutes at 350°. Makes 48.

Adapted from *Lee Gold's Recipes* (2021).

ClubPadgett.com

Klingstein Cream Sherbet

3 large lemons
1 large orange
2 egg yolks
1 cup sugar
2 cups whole milk
1 cup cream
2 egg whites
pinch of salt
1/2 cup sugar

Coarsely grate the lemons and orange; this should provide three or four teaspoons of peel. Juice the lemons and orange. Beat yolks. Beat in the peel, juice, one cup of sugar, milk, and cream.

Beat the egg whites with salt until stiff, then gradually beat in the 1/2 cup of sugar. Fold into the yolk mixture. Place in freezer until almost firm, then beat until fluffy. Pour into a chilled 1-1/2 quart container and put back in freezer until hard.

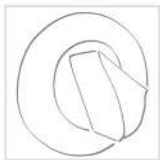
Adapted from *Some Recipes of Howard & Judith Klingstein* (1999) by Lee Klingstein Gold.

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“They also have to explain
why, if there is not an
eggman there is no walrus.”

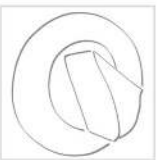
—Jack Harness



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“Reason is just the lackey
for instinct.”

—Poul Anderson
Trader to the Stars

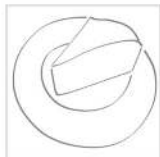


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“I was inspired, rhymes blazing like
fire. When I ran across a patch of
ash honey, and the bees swarmed
up and stung me, I cried out in joy,
because I knew just how they felt.”

—Lee Gold

Valhalla: Into the Darkness



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Tattered Potato Soup

- 2 cups potatoes
- 4 cups water or stock
- salt
- pepper
- parsley
- celery seeds
- butter
- onion or garlic

Bring water to a simmer. Chop potatoes into little squares. Simmer in water, adding salt, pepper, parsley, celery seeds, butter, and onion or garlic, until soft, about fifteen to thirty minutes. Mash as much (or as little) as you wish to give the soup a body.

Adapted from *Leonora Wise Klingstein's Recipe Book* (1999) by Lee Klingstein Gold.

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Matzo Meal Pancakes

- 2 cups milk
- 3 eggs, separated
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt
- 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ cup matzo meal

Beat the egg yolks, and then beat in the milk and salt. Stir in enough matzo meal to thicken barely enough for pancakes. The meal will thicken on its own for several minutes after being mixed in, so use sparingly. Whip the egg whites to soft peaks, and fold into the batter.

If the batter gets too thick, thin it with a little milk.

Fry in a hot greased pan, flipping when it begins to bubble around the edges.

Adapted from *Leonora Wise Klingstein's Recipe Book* (1999) by Lee Klingstein Gold.

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Avocado Cake

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter
- $1\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 1 cup mashed avocado
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup buttermilk
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. allspice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup candied green cherries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped dates
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup macadamia nuts

Cream together butter and sugar. Cream in the avocado. Add eggs one at a time, beating thoroughly. Whisk the flour, baking soda, salt, nutmeg, cinnamon, and allspice together, then stir in alternately with the buttermilk. Fold in cherries, dates, and nuts.

Pour into one 8x4x3-inch loaf pan (it will look like too much; it is not). Bake at 375° for an hour and fifteen minutes. Let rest for another fifteen minutes, and remove from pan. Cool on wire rack.

Adapted from *Alarums & Excursions* 568 (2023).

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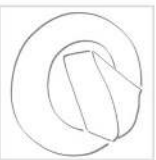


Read slowly, pause patiently.
Think seriously. Use cleanly.

Return duly with the corners of the
pages not turned down.

—Leonora Wise Klingstein

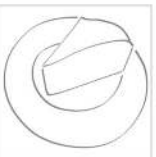
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If thou art borrowed by a friend
Right welcome should she be
To read, to Study, not to lend
But to return to me.

Not that imparted knowledge
Doth diminish learning's store
But books I find if often lent
Return to me no more.
—Leonora Wise Klingstein

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“Originally there was nothing. Where do the sky, the ground, the mountains, and the rivers come from? If you open your mouth everything appears.”

—John Redden

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godsmonsters.com/kib

Avram Grumer

PLAYER NAME

November, 1990

DATE CHARACTER BEGAN

JOINING THE APA

ttto: Waltzing Matilda

Alarums & Excursions

CAMPAIGN

183

Once a bunch of gamers, bashing balrogs with their chums
Filled APA-L up with their D&D.

“Let’s make an excursion; I will sound the alarum:
Won’t you come join a new APA?” said Lee.

*Join a new APA, join a new APA,
Won’t you come join a new APA? said Lee.
Let’s make an excursion; I will sound the alarum:
Won’t you come join a new APA? said Lee.*

Up called a Gygax, thinking he would be a pal,
Used to wargamers with manly esprit.
“Wait!” cried the Gygax, “I did not expect a gal!”
“You can still join in the APA,” said Lee.

*Join in the APA, join in the APA,
You can still join in the APA, said Lee.
Wait! cried the Gygax, I did not expect a gal!
You can still join in the APA, said Lee.*

Up grew the hobby, and the APA grew along,
Filled with discussions of highest degree.
She set up another, just to publish filkin’ songs!
“Won’t you come join in an APA?” said Lee.

*Join in an APA, join in an APA,
Won’t you come join in an APA, said Lee.
She set up another, just to publish filkin’ songs!
Won’t you come join in an APA, said Lee.*

Fifty years later, A&E has been shut down,
And we’ll all miss it terr-uh-bull-ee.
But don’t you worry, apazines are still around!
You can go join in an APA, like Lee!

*Join in an APA, join in an APA,
You can go join in an APA, like Lee!
But don’t you worry, apazines are still around!
You can go join in an APA, like Lee!*

LEE GOLD: AN APPRECIATION

OVERLORD'S ANNALS

ATTRONARCH, THE EXALTED OVERLORD OF UNCONTESTED VASTLANDS

SPECIAL ISSUE · 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

OVERLORD'S ANNALS is a monthly zine in which I share session reports from games I either run or have participated in.

I mostly write about the *Conquering the Barbarian Altanis* old-school Dungeons & Dragons campaign.

But this special issue is all about an inimitable Lee Gold and immortal Alarums & Excursions APA, told through the story of how I discovered, got involved with, and remained engaged with the APA.

DISCOVERY

Around 2019 I earnestly got into old-school Dungeons & Dragons campaign. Since I prefer to go deep, I started by getting all the rulebooks—yes, everything from the little brown booklets to all editions of so

called Basic editions to Advanced trinity—and studying them whilst playing.

It didn't take long to start digging into various zines like *The Strategic Review*, *Dragon Magazine*, *White Dwarf*, so on and so forth. That is when I became aware of Lee Gold and *Alarums & Excursions APA*. I wasn't really sure what it was, but it sounded all very interesting.

Fight On! #6, frankly the best OSR zine, was dedicated to Lee Gold "who spearheaded the fanzine movement, launched a thousand heroes on the road to adventure, and kept the home fires burning."

What caught my attention first was the *World Creating as a Hobby* article by Lee Gold herself. It was fascinating to read how she and her husband played D&D, run campaigns, and make worlds. A lot of little fascinating anecdotes.

Above article is followed by an interview with Lee, conducted by James Maliszewski and Allan Grohe, two well known names in the old-school milieu.

This interview made me really curious about this "APA" thing I had never heard of. What was it? A zine? I was perplexed by all the abbreviations—APA-L, LASFian, among others—but violently curious about this person with seemingly endless endurance and determination.

INVOLVEMENT

Finding Lee wasn't difficult. I just followed the breadcrumbs to an antediluvian, but working, set of websites. Instructions were typed in monospace font with a wallpaper like background. I wrote to Lee in June 2022, ordering first ten issues of Alarums & Excursions.

Lee got back to me nearly instantaneously. She was brief and to the point. I greatly appreciated that! No non-sense, concise communication, with clear instructions.

I devoured the zines in few days, asked Lee if I may join as a contributor, and sent in my first APA contribution in July 2022, not even a month after buying the first issues. I was unsure what am I getting myself into, but it was darn exciting.

ENGAGEMENT

Idea of fanzines was not foreign to me. In fact, when I was a young man I used to make and trade underground metal fanzines. I'd make them by cutting out various magazine pieces and taping them on paper, using a typewriter to write articles, photocopying the result, and finally stapling it all together.

These were exciting to make. But they were also more than zines—making and trading them was part of the ritual and form of communication with broader community.

I'd excitedly receive zines from others, personalised and with notes. Then I'd send new ones out, likewise customised, continuing the conversation.

Eventually life intervened I did not have as much time, nor desire to engage with that specific subculture any more.

And somehow, decades later, I discovered something similar in the RPG space! Older and slightly wiser, I knew I had to be focused and choose the right tools. I worked out a simple template in $\text{\LaTeX}$ that would allow me to focus on the text, not tweaking layout for each zine issue I contribute.

This had served me well, for I was able to create each issue in two to three hours, depending on the length. Lee was always quick to respond to my numerous questions.

I am a disciplined man. Once I committed, I sent in a zine every month, until eventually Lee decided to sunset the APA.

By regularly contributing I also got to know many other good people; i.e. other contributors, both regular and those who sent in their zines sporadically.

It took me several issues to get a feeling for how the intra-APA communication works. It was a like a time capsule to a time before internet as we know it today. In essence, contributors address other authors and contributors in their own zine.

Being a structured guy, I decided to have a fixed section in my zine where I'd reply to and address other contributors. I must admit to being barely involved.

Allow me to use an easy excuse and blame that on lack of time. I limited my intra-APA conversation to replying to others. I seldomly proactively addressed others, and my contribution and experience were poorer for it.

Nevertheless, I kept contributing and kept enjoying reading everyone's zines until the end. I greatly appreciated Lee's firm steering and management of the APA.

It was nearly invisible, with a lot of it happening in the background. Over the years she set up all the processes needed to produce and distribute Alarums & Excursions APA.

Only in retrospect do I recognise what massive work and undertaking that was.

GRATITUDE

It was a joy and honour to contribute to Alarums & Excursions APA. I am forever grateful for Lee's patience and dedication.

Thank you for everything Lee, you are amazing!

ATTRIBUTIONS

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COLOPHON

Several long-time Alarums & Excursions APA came together and launched a spiritual successor APA named Ever & Anon. It is available for free from www.everanon.org



Quark's Communiqué

I can't remember exactly how I discovered Alarums & Excursions, but it's safe to say it changed my life. I probably still would have become a game developer, but without collaborating with people I met through the zine, my career would probably not have been nearly as successful.

Starting some time in the late 1970s I started submitting "Quark's Communiqué," which I think I tried to send when I could via photostencils. I still have the masthead I used to use, quite a bit worse for wear.

It was through A&E that I met Robin Laws and Rob Heinsoo, who helped me create King of Dragon Pass. And I think my zine writing also got me connected with Chaosium and then Greg Stafford, who also helped me create KoDP.

I met many other great people through A&E, eventually including Lee & Barry Gold.

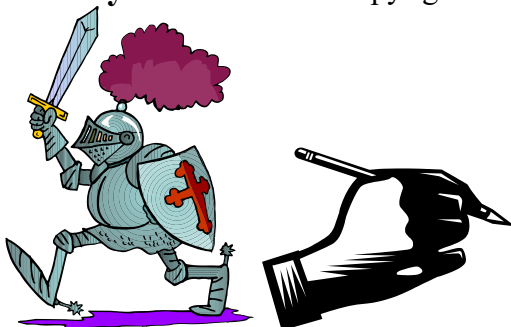
Lee and Barry were also kind and generous. I remember visiting their house and being driven around Los Angeles. As I moved and the Internet took over I drifted out of touch.

I hope at some point I thanked them, but if not: thank you Lee and Barry for producing something unique and amazing. [I typed "amazine" but maybe that's a better word for A&E.]

David Dunham

<https://www.pensee.com/dunham/>

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I'm a little choked up as I begin writing this zine. While it has been over ten years since my last zine, *Alarums and Excursions* meant a great deal to me. My love for RPGs pulled me in, but interesting minds kept me reading about other subjects. A&E was fun, informative, and a great place to meet and socialize with other lovers of imagination and adventure. I thank Lee and Barry for the hard work and dedication which brought to life this creative community. I am grateful for the participation of everyone who uplifted others through their involvement.

My recent years have featured much good to excellent gaming. The first online Gencon was quite wonderful. In *Pendragon's Great Hunt*, I played a thoroughly gracious knight who won top marks for Glory. An enjoyable *Night's Black Agents* scenario allowed me the chance to test drive the Gumshoe system. Over the course of time, I've had few opportunities to play *Runequest*, but Gencon took me on both a sneaky visit to a Gold Dwarf citadel and to the Hero Plane. The Gumshoe Cthulhu game was good. Other sessions were less engaging but at least let me try game engines I had not yet explored.

My L.A. group played the pulpy *Two Serpents* campaign for *Call of Cthulhu*, mostly remotely. At one point, Carstairs, my gentleman cat burglar, added to his wardrobe a jacket that buckled in the back. He was replaced by Patrick Doyle, a murderous Irish-American gangster and explosive expert. Both were fun, but Doyle was better suited to this violent, nihilistic pulp setting. He was also my first Prohibition-era gangster PC. My by-then-somewhat-sane cat burglar returned after Doyle spectacularly blew himself up in a heroic, near-successful effort to kill a brains-of-the-outfit Serpent queen.

A traumatized Carstairs survived the campaign, along with a male archeologist swapped into a female PC's body. The four other characters died in the final, triumphant battle. We all had a great time.

I played an intelligent crab from a race mutated by magic in a *Fifty Fathoms* campaign. He was an antisocial hunter-philosopher, stealthy but fierce, and possibly my favorite PC ever in a campaign. I also ran two fine *Timewatch* scenarios, and a bit of *Call of Cthulhu*.

Until a year ago, for Traveller, I played a doctor with great social skills and no combat abilities. Count Diego Zamora adventured in order to escape family pressure to join the tedious diplomatic corps. The game was fun, but I finally left to dive back into an old writing project. I had pitched a novel to literary agents before lockdown and got a couple of “send-it-to-me-again-after-you-fix-it” responses. Emotional trauma caused by long solitary confinement buried my literary aspirations. Or so it seemed.

Much else has happened since last I wrote. Linda and I got divorced but are still good friends. We cat-sit for each other and hit the gym together on Saturdays. A few of our sweet, furry monsters have died. I enjoy a closer relationship with my family than ever for reasons I shall later disclose. Two summers ago, I spent a month with my aged father in Grants Pass, Oregon, when the rest of the family went to Sweden and Iceland. My dad’s wife is Swedish and wanted to share the places of her youth with her step-daughter and granddaughters. My dad and I enjoyed some good talks. I love to cook and had the chance to do so for my father. We watched *The Last Kingdom*. This good, not-especially-historically-accurate show is too violent for Eva’s tastes, but Dad liked it. I am very grateful that we spent this time together. I attended the last two Loscons. I’d stopped for years as they felt moribund, but the one two years ago was good and the last one even better. I attended the 2018 San Jose Worldcon. Many there were Mexican-American or Mexican. Meeting these was a special treat.

My brother, sister-in-law, and two nieces greatly enjoyed whitewater rafting on the McKinnley River earlier this summer. These clever, kind, ferociously-literate girls are now in middle school.

Lockdown took me to very dark places. I didn’t actually try to kill myself but did think about how I could do so and make it look like an accident. I couldn’t stand living like that anymore and found a way to work on myself. After five years of prolonged effort, the old, constant cycles of fear and anger and judgement are gone. I no longer feel a strong need to prove myself to others. Now, I like myself and am happy most of the time, and all my relationships are so much better. I’ve told a few people how I used to be inside and no one even suspected. When I’m angry or afraid now, it’s usually for good reason and I process the feelings relatively quickly. This may sound strange to you, but I did not even know this was possible before. I often did not even know what emotions I was feeling at the time.

Anyway, that all happened.

I’ve been writing a lot, something that A&E encouraged. After exiting this fine zine, I joined the Greater Los Angeles Writers Society. I helped put on conferences and formed Westside Weird, a wonderful critique group. The Writers of the Future contest awarded me honorable mention for *The*

Collaborator, a noir alien invasion novelette. *Somos en Escritos*, an online magazine that publishes work by Latinos let it loose on our reality. I just finished the final draft of my YA dark fantasy novel, *Intrusion Zone*, a work kissed deeply by cosmic horror. It is now in the hands of my beta readers. By fall, I'll incorporate any criticism which resonates with me, then send samples to several agents who have expressed interest. Fingers crossed.

Here's a sample. Some of you may not enjoy the protagonist's voice. No hard feelings.

Intrusion Zone

By M.R. Subias

Chapter 1

Blue Light

There's no streetlight close by that works so I listen to the dark for a couple minutes and decide it's good a time as any to leave the Old Man's place. A siren screams a little ways off and a couple more farther off. An explosion goes off close by, but it's just the usual loud TV noise from the house next door. Street's quieter than usual, no people or cars going by. Gotta start heading home before something bad happens. If you stay out in one place where people can see you too long, it always does. Wasn't like that when I was a little kid, but then the Intrusion Zone came and zapped a lot of people and some of 'em you need to keep away from.

It's too hot to wear a hoodie in L.A. in August even at two in the morning, but it'd be stupid not to. Mine's so dark red it's almost black so when pull it up over my head, I'm close to invisible. I do the usual. Step out onto the sidewalk. Swing the metal gate shut behind me hard enough it clicks shut but slow and careful, so nobody hears me. I grab a bar, try to shake the gate just to make sure, like always, trying to keep Abuelo safe.

My brain flashes pictures of me walking away, the Old Man all alone in the house. Somebody's hiding in the dark, ready to break in. More being guilty hits me every step I take on my way home. I hate when emotions make me feel like that. Like usual, I shake my head, push away what my brain makes me see. Wasn't too hard this time. Me and Abuelo having good night helps a lot.

I look back at Abuelo's garage door for a few seconds, smile. The Old Man and me put a new radiator and hoses in that '62 Chevy pickup and that's gonna put some cash in my pocket, enough to help Mom buy groceries for a few days. I switch on my brain, see metal flaking off the radiator, soft, rotting hoses, and dirt and grime. Then I see at how clean it all got after we fixed it. I love working on cars part-time, even if Abuelo and me mostly get little jobs from people who can't afford to pay much. But nobody around here has much money and pretty much all the cars we work on are old.

I head out, go a few blocks. I get lots of practice walking home in the dark. Everything's quiet right now. But you never know who's out there and always have to remember any adult you don't know could be dangerous.

I'm gonna try a different way home tonight. A couple times over the last week, I thought I saw a dark shape somewhere behind me a few blocks after I left Abuelo's. I didn't get a good look though, so my brain's probably just messing with me again. It coulda' just been some guy heading home after his night job, just like me. You just never know.

There's a noise somewhere behind. I turn around to check it out. Don't see anything. I wait and listen. Could be nothing. No way to tell, but I don't want to find out. I like the dark, but only when it's quiet and I don't have to watch my back. It always feels like being in an empty church. Or a mausoleum.

I liked it better when I didn't have to feel this kind of stuff.

Just in case, I walk fast for a couple of blocks and turn left where I usually go right. A car comes down the street this way so I back up against a chain-link fence. A big tree's right on the other side. Just hope that makes it hard for anyone to see me.

The car slows for the turn, then goes right by. I start walking.

My hand slides into my hoodie pocket and feels the package the Old Man gave me before I left. Six eggs wrapped in clean shop rags. I smile. Gotta be careful. If I run into anything in the dark, raw

eggs'll be dripping down my chinos all the way to my shoes. I almost laugh but hold it in. Like usual, I'm probably worried about nothing.

I turn right at the next corner then wish I didn't. There's a couple of streetlights that work not too far off, so I see what people left at the edge of the sidewalk before even getting close.

It's mostly bent, brown stems in cheap, green, plastic vases with a dirty water smell. There's dried-up petals on the sidewalk and white wax blobs in little glass candle holders. A little, chipped-up Virgen de Guadalupe in her red dress and gold-starred green mantle stands in the middle of it all. Somehow the mess all around her only makes her more beautiful.

Right next to Our Lady, face-down on the sidewalk, there's a flaking, fake-gold picture frame.

Could be it's bad luck to touch what's here, but I like to fix things so I reach out to set the little frame back up. Right before, I see the small, pink, dirty teddy bear with the missing eye lying on its side on the sidewalk and decide I really don't want to know who died here. If I leave everything here alone, maybe my brain won't hit me with this sad descanso when I'm trying remember something else.

I walk fast for a few minutes to get away from the pink, dirty stuffed bear and face-down picture. Cuz its hot and I got my hoodie on and up and I'm sweating, I stop and take out my bandana, fold it the long way, wrap it around my head. Doing something with my hands always makes me feel a little better. I slow my breathing down and start walking again.

Go right, cut down an alley. I can barely see now and walk slow so I don't trip on the trash people dumped here. Then I start thinking again, like always, about what's gonna happen after high school. No way I can afford college and couldn't spend six years bored in some classroom anyway. Especially with me not making any money. And it isn't like getting a degree means you'll get a job.

Me, Mom, and Abuelo just scrape by. I need a good-paying job that doesn't take a college degree. Some trade school job people do with their hands. But that still costs money I don't have and

could take a year or even two. There's no such thing as good-paying job I don't need more school for. I'd buy a lottery ticket, but whether I'm Joker or just plain Victor Mata, my luck's never good.

The glass bottle bounces and rolls across the pavement before I feel the toe of my boot hit it. My stomach clenches up. I've been too deep in my head, stopped being careful. The bottle hits something in the dark, but not too loud. A second later, there's a loud slap like the flat side of a board falling on pavement. I cringe cuz I did something stupid again.

Dogs start barking loud close by. I freeze up, listen, decide they must be locked up in somebody's yard.

I hear something else.

I look around, then behind. Somebody's standing in the middle of where the alley opens up to the street, maybe fifty feet back. He's moving this way. Don't know if it's the same guy from before and don't want to find out.

I run, cut right at the end of the alley, go fast as I can. Turn left at the end of the next block. A streetlight's working a little ways off, but here it's almost dark as the alley. This way is longer than how I get to school so a stitch jabs me in the side. I try to run more but it turns from a stab to a blowtorch. Gotta stop, lean over, and push my hand against my side.

There's a boarded-house up ahead with faded police tape around it. A burnt-up Ford Fiesta with smashed windows sits in the driveway. A chain-link fence and a rolling metal driveway gate in front, bashed-up and barely open.

I limp to the gate fast as the stitch lets me. Somebody pulled loose the boards from the front door of the house, like you'd expect. Probably to go in and rip out the copper wiring and pipes to sell. Could go in and find someplace to hide. Maybe that way I can lose the guy who's chasing me.

I shove the rolling gate hard but it won't move. Gotta squeeze through, hold my side, limp towards the front door.

Maybe going into the house's a bad idea. What if somebody's camped out there? What if the guy following me goes in? I'd be trapped. Could wait inside and jump him but even if I knew how to fight, I'm out of breath and almost not even standing up.

Like my Dad always said, "Think it through, Victor, think it through."

I limp up to the Fiesta, grab the handle on the trunk. pull up. It's stuck. I suck in breath, try again. It lifts up a little, sticks, won't open more. I duck down low, hide by the side of the car you can't see from the way I got here. I try the back seat door handle. No good. I look through the broken rear window of the car. There's somebody coming. Gotta stay low, hope he won't see me.

I take a chance, crawl through a busted-out window onto the back seat. Chunks of glass on the upholstery dig into my hoodie into my chest. I try to keep my legs up and hope my chinos don't get chewed up too bad.

I close my eyes and breathe. In through my nose, deep as I can, then out slow through my mouth. Knuckles says emotions aren't who I am, just feelings to let go of if they don't help me. Don't know if I'm here for one minute or ten when metal screams. Somebody's muscling open the driveway gate. They gotta be scary strong to do that. Part of me says to stay down. But I can't stop myself.

I lift my head up to see what's going on.

When I do the guy's just six feet away in front of me, looking right at the house, back facing me. My stomach squeezes up hard.

Average build, wearing a beanie, holding some kind of bag. Hard to see more than that. He's not a big man, but the guy shoves open that jammed gate I couldn't even move. He's leaning over some like he's out of breath, like I was when I crawled into the Fiesta. I lock what's going on into my brain so it'll be easy to play back later.

The guy turns around. Starts to, anyway, but stops, waits a sec, then heads to the front door of the dead house. Maybe he's on something cuz he's so strong. The guy walks funny, like his foot's asleep and his neck's got no bones in it.

He stops, talks to himself but I can't hear much. The guy says something crazy like "target acquisition."

He heads up to the porch. Walks right through so he breaks the police tape. He reaches his hand into the bag, goes inside.

The stitch in my side's gone and breathing's normal, so running sounds like a plan. I reach back, try the door handle, push back with my foot. Somehow the door opens. It squeaks, but not loud. I crawl out backwards.

Glass edges dig into my hoodie and a little into my chinos but I don't think either one's cut through. I move careful as I can, crawl out, see a weird blue light glowing. I check out the house. The light's coming out through one of the front windows. It moves slow from room to room, like somebody's looking for something inside. Looking for me.

Emotions make me feel like throwing up. That never happened before I stopped taking the blue pills.

Keep it together, Joker. Keep it together.

I stay down, crawl down the driveway. I get to the wide-open metal gate, stand up, run.

After a couple of blocks and a couple of corners, I'm breathing hard again. I find a dark spot by a big electrical box sticking up from the sidewalk. It's painted with an Aztec warrior with brown skin and a hawk nose like my cousin, Roswell but mostly covered with tagging. All I hear is a siren far off. I wait 'til I'm breathing almost normal again.

"Think it through, Victor, think it through."

Who's this guy that's after me? Is he really after me, or just anybody? What does he want? Nobody forgets how most adults got messed up on Intrusion Day, but only some turned dangerous. Problem is, you can't ever be sure which ones you can trust 'til it's too late.

I rub my eyes. My hands shake. I'm always tired but there's nothing I can do about it. Nobody to talk to either. I mean, the people I care about have enough problems already. And it'd be wrong to give 'em more stuff to be scared about. I'll be okay.

I'll be okay.

I look around to take my mind off things and see a robot street patcher up at the next intersection. It's the usual one working in the neighborhood, minivan-size, red flashers on, beeping quiet beeps. Boxy and orange with a red and white striped bumper wrapped around it, alarms and cameras tell the cops if anybody's trying to mess with it. I never know why, but seeing a patch wagon always makes me feel better. Like how little kids feel about firetrucks.

People used to talk about self-driving cars, but patch wagons are about as close as we got now. Getting a job fixing 'em would be sweet, but I got no money for training. I squat down, watch the stainless-steel nozzle under the chassis spray cold patch into the big pothole underneath.

Patch wagons do good work, but slow, and can't keep up with the new holes. And they only work late at night. Too many adults are afraid of technology since Intrusion Day, especially computers and robots.

I hide for a little longer, then get up. I check out myself out. There's just a few little cuts on my hands and hardly any blood. I pull off my black bandana, wipe 'em clean. I pull off my hoodie, shake it a few times to get rid of any glass, then put it back on.

I start walking again, stick to the shadows, make sure nobody's behind me. Nothing bad's gonna happen to me. A few more blocks and I can lock my front door behind me. Everything is okay. Everything is okay.

Marco Subias, the Mercenary Scribbler

Alarums and Excursions, Class of 2010 through 2014.

Flagrant Blossoms

© 2025 by Rob Heinsoo & Jonathan Tweet

robheinsoo@gmail.com

& robheinsoo.blogspot.com

& jonathantweet@gmail.com

From Rob

For the past few years, Jonathan Tweet and I have been working together all the time on [13th Age Second Edition](#). We met through A&E and we decided that collaborating on a zine for *Something Completely Different* would prod us into action.

Lisa's title for this issue nails it. I've never written an emotionally charged gaming zine before. Let's grapple with the Big Thank You first.

Thank you, Lee, for creating a wonderful creative community that entertained and educated itself and many others for so many wonderful years! Tokaido no Shimbun has a unique place in my head, as a road I didn't walk but won't forget.

A&E introduced me to many of my friends. Contributors like Scott Bennie, Robin D. Laws, and David Dunham set me on the path to spending my work hours exactly as I choose to spend my play hours, designing games.

Jonathan's Thank-You

Thanks for everything, Lee! *Alarums & Excursions* played a big role in my career as well as in my personal life.

Mark Rein•Hagen and I loved the intelligent and challenging conversations

that we found in A&E. It must have been 1987 when friends from the Twin Cities showed us A&E and got us hooked.

A&E is how I met my Robin D. Laws, now an old friend. My game *Over the Edge* would never have been created without it. Robin's think-piece about a William S. Burroughs RPG got me reading *Naked Lunch*, which helped inspire the original game, which was explicitly not for publication. John Nephew read my reports about the campaign in A&E and said that an unpublishable game like mine was just what he wanted to publish. OTE went on to inspire several prominent indie RPG designers, so lots of gamers around the world have A&E to thank for their fun. Doc Cross even appears as a character in the game.

When I was contributing to A&E, every month I looked forward to the new issue's release. Its arrival in the mail was always a highlight.

The connections I made at A&E helped me get back into professional game design after I had "retired" from the field to sell mutual funds for 18 months.

A&E is also how I met Rob Heinsoo, now a best friend of mine. In 1993 when I moved to Seattle for the job at Wizards, I finally met Rob in person. Eventually he ended up at Wizards, too, and later we created *13th Age* together.

Plenty of other old friends I also met through A&E, such as Lisa Padol and James Wallis, and I sure am grateful for that.

These days, I'm reading Jon Peterson's *Playing at the World*, and it's fun to read about you, A&E, and all the valuable game-design conversations that A&E fostered.

Thanks, Lee! Who knows where I'd be today without A&E?

Another Thanks from Rob

I'm running a 13th Age game tonight, with Jonathan as a player. I call the campaign *Arduin, Blessed Arduin*, after Jonathan told me that the original meaning of the word blessed was something like 'spattered with blood.'

While prepping for tonight's game, I've been thinking about how Dave Hargrave introduced me to A&E by plugging the zine in the back of the *Arduin Grimoire*. I wrote to Lee and saw my first issue around issue #64, I think, when I was in junior high. When I started contributing in issue #82, Dave Hargrave sent a super-sweet letter welcoming me to A&E and encouraging me to keep writing, saying something like "We need young voices." I was star-shocked and failed to write him back before he died, so this is another long overdue thank you.

Arduin, Blessed Arduin

I run Arduin games as wild, most-everything-goes environments that live up to Hargrave's eclectic grimoires. Since this is a "13th Arduin" game, the players and I started the campaign by inventing a new cast of icons, the organizations or archetypes that shape the world and give the 1st level characters a stake in its major conflicts.

Jonathan's Arduin mastery helped guide a couple of the new icons, and I was quite happy with what the players came up with. Unlike the core

13th Age game, which is a game of heroes, this 13th Arduin campaign is more a game of agents. I'll mention a couple of the heroes and their One Unique Things in the icons writeups.

If I run the game much longer, I'll need to come up with icon symbols, but I haven't worked on that yet.

Guild of Mundane

Omniscience, aka The Deep State:

Gnome engineers and sages who claim that they're the ones who keep Arduin and its capital Talismonde running smoothly. "There is no record of the Guild ever subverting a client." Represented in the adventuring party by Olvin, a gnome "combat optimizer" (a non-musical reskin of the bard). He's the only left-handed gnome in the world, which is important since the party has started their adventures in a mirror dungeon.

Old Talismonde: Decadent gothic clan, powerful but frayed thin, hanging on to some of their original power via dark secrets. Represented in the adventuring party by Jonathan's "magic-user", Yenzdillian, whose One Unique Thing is that he is the only magic-user in Old Talismonde to have a pseudodragon familiar, giving Jonathan a chance to talk in one of his funny voices.

The Jade Queen: Insectile druid who created phraints to give humans and elves and dwarves someone from her camp that the humanoid kin could

relate to; alien but not an enemy. Pure neutral.

The Jester: A forgeborn wizard, an optimistic nihilist. Represented in the adventuring party by the only forgeborn "who is cool." Which may mean more than you think it means, it means this forgeborn cleric can get high. He's also a full-on gleaming robot.

Multiversal Trading Company: One of the original Arduinian orgs! Several of the heroes/agents have connections with MTC. One of the players wrote, "The kind of capitalists that Ayn Rand imagined, only they're real." It's now clear that a rival multiverse's version of MTC is attacking through the mirror dungeon, so MTC is accumulating obligations to the so-far-successful heroes.

Brother Harrow: The mighty arm of righteous vengeance. The End largely justifies the means. Somehow still mostly good, or as good as it gets. Represented in the adventuring party by a melee ranger who is the Perfect Hobbit. Like Michelangelo's David but Hobbitish.

Luc-Jourez, the Death Master: Vampires! Fashion! Well-dressed cultists! A trend setter for the young and callow. Jonathan's Yenzdillian has a conflicted relationship with the death cults because of course he does.

The Lector: An ancient, living, powerful tome of demonology and black magic. It finds mortals to

temporarily become its "body", the great demon known as the Lector. Sadly for Arduin, this chaotic evil demon power is growing stronger after the destruction of the Codex of the Great Gold Wyrms.



Here's last's week's image of me and Jonathan. I decided to shoot from above to help us impersonate members of the Arduinian Deep State.

Greetings and appreciation to everyone who came back to say hello! We both hope to see you online and at conventions.

May your paths be smooth, your governments cured of their malice, and your dice hot.

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Random Access #NaN

For Something Completely Different #1/1

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52nd ST, APT GD, Woodside, NY 11377-3230. eaddr: mneme@labcats.org

Cell: 646-361-3257

Dreamwidth: <https://mneme.dreamwidth.org>

Gaming blog: <https://labcats.dreamwidth.org/> (with Lisa Padol; defunct-ish)

Tumblr: mneme / Mastodon: @mneme@dice.camp

Bluesky: mnemex.bsky.social

OUT OF MEMORY ERROR

I was in Alarums and Excursions before I was in Alarums and Excursions.

Of course, I'm hardly unique in that respect. Lisa Padol, my long time GM and somewhat less longer best friend and partner, published writeup including my characters in her writeups from her decade-old campaign, CthulhuPunk, well before I first wrote a zine for the APA myself, but then, I suspect that Michael Cule zines about Paul Holman's PCs appeared before PUM became a contributor and I know this is true for Jim Vassilakos's writing/GMing partners.

Still, it's an odd progression—to have gone from an occasional contributor (and before that, character) in A&E, both before I was 20, to a regular contributor for many years starting in my early 20s (I needed a way to regularly write comments as I read rather than read and then forget everything I wanted to write, and the Palm Pilot in the late 90s was it), to, eventually, having my writing outlive the APA at 52.

As simple arithmetic shows, I've lived for more than half my life with the APA as a feature in it, and for more than half of my life as a regular contributor.

Which makes me look, honestly, with askance on claims that the APA was a hugely influential figure in roleplaying over this time. It wasn't?

The APA has been important in many ways in my life. It acted as a safe way to practice writing and make mistakes—readers looking at my earlier contributions will, I suspect, find common artifacts like overuse of parentheses that I still struggle with, more successfully I hope, and paragraphs that go on forever because I didn't know when to break them.

(As soon as you think of it. That's almost always the best time to break a paragraph, if you're not sure.)

But, aside from making connections between people, it was never -important-. Not in the way that *The Forge* was important, and not in the way that some of its greatest defenders might think. Instead, in the absence of the Internet as it grew to be early this century (and was in the process of becoming late last century), the APA acted as a way to share experiences and make connections across different locales, different styles, and different experiences of gaming.

This lack of focus meant that it was never a place where important *work* was being done. Talked about, sure; Jonathan Tweet talked about his work with *Over the Edge* (before I joined) before it was published and D&D 3rd edition (well after I joined and we were, albeit at some remove, friends) in these pages; Matt Stevens wrote up his pulp game that eventually became his revolutionary, if not so acknowledged *Two Fisted Tales*, I talked about my early issues with Gumshoe that became hacks that made their way into published games, Brian Rogers and Patrick Riley have done work they displayed in the APA that I certainly hope will eventually become published work, or at least more available to others.

But the same lack of focus that enabled people to grow and develop as writers and designers there, that made the APA a tiny galaxy of very different perspectives, meant that there has never been the kind of intense focus that results in Important Work being done in between the APA's pages as it did in other places.

Lee Gold wrote about her games, putatively using the Toon rules and slimmed down Lands of Adventure, but in fact running on a protocol of her scattering plot seeds in the wind like grains of sand, and then following the ones the players were most interested in as they grew, turning to the I-Ching and a D100 with free interpretation whenever the answers were in doubt.

Michael Cule wrote about his adventures, most often run using GURPS (and I've been pleased to see him experimenting with other systems over the years, even if most of those end with a decision not to use the system in question again), his players encountering complex conspiracies and plots and almost inevitably, a dimension or time shift towards the end of a campaign.

Lisa Padol wrote about the games she runs and plays in (which only include me around 2/3 of the time), writing things up with surprising detail.

Spike Y Jones would write about whatever was going on in his life, or his latest editorial gig.

I would most often put my most substantial work in my comments, spinning off new ideas (I hope) out of whatever I saw in others zines, favoring narrativist games (as Lisa does but the majority of the contributors rarely did) but having plenty of tolerance for more crunchy gamist approaches as well.

John Redden would write well meaning and occasionally insightful comments...and short stories and game writeups that, I admit, I could never really grasp the cosmology of, except to note that they were clearly posthuman or might as well be.

Jonathan Tweet, Robin Laws, Nichole Lindroos, or Doc Cross would occasionally drop by with some wild idea, whether it was one of Doc's drabbles or fictional life stories, or someone talking about the work they were coming out with next.

And, of course, I could go on; there are so many new friends who have joined us over the years as well as old friends who we no longer see, one way or another (and those we still do).

It was never deep. At least, not consistently. But even after the Internet became the place where all ideas met and most contributors were both contributing and reading in electronic editions (which took quite a few changes, from Lee's mimeograph finally dying and being unrepairable due to the company not existing, resulting in her finally getting a photocopier, to rising international shipping prices leading, I think, to Lee finally deciding to make the APA available by email to foreign readers and shortly to domestic ones as well), the unique format always resulted in very different styles of conversation than we see elsewhere.

Having each contribution be a single 1-15 page document, with a periodicity of 1-3 months (I and Spike Jones, I suspect, were notorious for usually being at least a month behind), would certainly not prevent flame wars and heated arguments—we had our share—but it kept things more respectful overall and let people go into a lot more depth on their ideas (or just their lives) than people tend to get into even in long blog posts—while the central feature of mailing comments—nearly each zine having significant comments on what was said in issues previous, made it much more connected than any blogging system since LiveJournal.

There are and were other APAs. But Alarums and Excursions style of letting anyone read for just a fee, and anyone contribute even if they only do so occasionally was unusual, and for my entire APA-active career, there has not, to my knowledge, been another TTRPG-focused APA. Until now.

While I'll miss Lee's monthly games (which also seem to have ended with the APA, and which I would never have been invited into without it), I hope not to miss the APA too much, as (as Lisa goes into more detail) there are at least two APAs that aim to continue the conversation. So I'll likely continue writing somewhere, even as I also try to redirect some of my effort—being constantly behind on the APA meant I was often spending 3 or more (sometimes much more; avoidance can be a full-time job) nights a month trying to catch up and only occasionally succeeding, and honestly I'd rather spend my time elsewhere while only spending *some* of my time reading and writing for APAs.

But a chapter has been turned, and one brilliant, quirky galaxy has turned its last page. Let a hundred new flowers, each different, bloom in its wake, with more to come!