

IFGS
DALLAS

The Whispering Runes

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 25

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President Column

Greetings IFGSers! This is your new President for the Dallas chapter David Wood. Needless to say I am excited and honored to be in this position. Several things have happened since I became the President of this fine chapter and all of them were wonderful!

Lets see, first we had the banquet game Mordra's Caldron. The low level characters took a pot across a land and the high level characters used the pot to purify the lands. Went off very amazingly and everyone I spoke to enjoyed the game to the fullest. Despite what everyone says I still think the best special effect of the day was Soreen ordering pizza. Great game that revealed a lot of things about interactions with characters. Thanks Pat for the game!

The next thing was the board meeting and sanctioning class at John Jones. Not people showed, but those who did got CAP and a very instructive class on what kind of effort it takes to sanction a game. Thanks David Spence for this, I know I learned a lot about sanctioning from this. Also everyone else that didn't show up also missed out on some freaking awesome cookies from John Jones oven.

The last thing was Onward Into the Darkness. This game was attempted last year to no avail, and this year when it was coming up I can tell you that everyone involved was going mad. We lost several people to some legitimate reasons, cause life happens. When the game began on day one I had a total of 3 GMs and 11 NPCs. This game supposed to have 20 NPCs to run smoothly. IT went amazingly. The gentlemen from Colorado came down to play this game, and all they have to say to my wonderful little NPCs is they were impressed. They were actually out of breath and loved every second of it. The game got some very nice ratings and some funny Best-ofs. Thank you so much to everyone who helped me get this game off the ground, you have no idea how much it means to me.

Upcoming is Dragons Revenge and The Ring. 2 risk 9 games from a family that risk 9 really means risk 11. Needless to say this is going to be a very fun and enjoyable weekend for a lot of people.

That's all I got guys, look forward to seeing you on the 23rd of April for Dragon and Ring. Have a safe and unendingly entertaining month.

LATERZ!
David Wood

Observations from a Game Writer and Producer (Also known as David's ramblings)

Game Length:

How long is a game? Over the several years we have seen games that are being run faster and faster with teams getting off course quicker. Why is that? Is it because games are shorter now, or less complex, or are the players just that much faster? Tina and I have talked about this and one thing stood out. When we ran the Samurai games initially up in the Norman chapter they took a good 8 hours to run with some teams still being on course when the sun went down. Yet, when we run the same game here we had teams off course in 5 hours.

It comes down to something very basic, land size. From watching the games run here and balancing them against the same in Norman it appears that we are getting between 2 and 3 encounters per hour. A game with good production, teams spaced out with very little down time are able to run 3 encounters every hour – assuming, of course, that Tom Paul and Rich are given non-speaking roles - and that there are no killer downtime puzzles. This means that a 12 encounter game can finish in 4 hours plus a little time for check in/out.

As game writers / producers we need to be aware of this and either increase the number of encounters or space them out more. I know I have gotten into the habit of using the same old encounter sites time and time again, maybe next time we should think about different encounter sites, even if it means a little more work or walking. I applaud Murphy's use of running the course twice in the last game, very inventive. Lets all try to think outside of the box like that.

Sanctioning:

This is really Pat's area now as the Sanctioning Committee Chair, but I wanted to drop a few notes. I have found that the best way to sanction a game is with two experienced people and one newcomer. During the sanctioning process it is their job to make sure that the game follows the rules and can bring the game writer's vision to fruition. All three people on the sanctioning committee need to provide input on the game, not just rubber stamp what one person says. Rubber-stamping is the way to failure for the GW, GP and for IFGS as a whole. I would like to point out some of the things that I have seen and done that were wrong over the years. I'm not pointing fingers here at anyone, just highlighting potential pitfalls:

- Make sure every class can contribute. An encounter or two where 1 class is useless leaves a bad taste in the PC's mouth. I made this mistake at an early game called Justin's Revenge and I still consider it one of the worst things I ever did. I took away the Cleric's powers for a time to enable them to do something later and it was a horrible decision.
- When designing fighting encounters make sure everyone can help in some way. Reducing the mage to swinging his staff because he cannot break the AC or LI of the monster causes a PC to wonder why he even came on the adventure\
- Give the GMs room to role play and make adjustments for the team. Games cannot be changed once they are sanctioned without the WD approval and a WD cannot just make changes without getting an appeal from a player or GM. According to the rule book a WD "...has the sole authority on game day to approve or reject any changes needed to ensure that the game's rating and flavor remain as sanctioned." No one else has the authority to make changes, not the NPCs, production staff or even the game writer. That is why the game goes through so much time in sanctioning, so that all the issues can be worked out in advance. If you are the WD, be very careful about making these changes. But if the game writer gave the GM some leeway in the game script then they can help or hinder the team as needed.

- Be varied in your monsters. Not all monsters have to be able to fight like Errol Flynn. It is OK to put in an encounter that the monster is a bad fighter.
- Production: use the shed! Just telling the PCs they see a skeleton/Balrog/tunnel etc and having a NPC standing there holding a weapon makes the player wonder why he spent \$20.00 on the game. The higher the production, the better the ratings, the more people come out to play!
- Stay consistent. I know it is your world but the players are playing in it and they need to make sure that the same rules apply everywhere. Having NPCs that are allowed to ignore the rules a PC must follow causes PCs to be indecisive and lost. That leads to them getting angry and rating the game low. PCs will understand a God has permanent Autocast, that is understandable, but when a NPC bad guy gets to ignore all damage, knockdowns and anything else that prevent him from sacrificing the maiden WITHOUT a REASON it's never a good thing.
- Be very careful about forcing PC's into a specific course of action. We play this game to role play and be different. Forcing PCs down a specific path makes them feel like extras in a play. Giving the PC's a choice at some point and then forcing a set outcome on them no matter what they chose can also cause a PC to be disgruntled.
- Alignments and codes. Give players an out on their alignments and codes. I know not everyone plays them as a major portion of their character, but many do. Forcing a lawful good character to watch an innocent get slaughtered for which he takes the blame can be catastrophic. I once had my knight lose his ability to heal for over two year's real time because a game writer forced him to lose a bet with no way to win.
- Who is the game written for? *You* may enjoy a beat-down game but not all players will. Some players enjoy high fighting, others enjoy puzzles, still others like high risk, and others want high role playing. Any of these games are fine, as long as they ARE ADVERTISED properly and appropriately. One of the first games I helped sanctioned had half the PCs rating it a 10 and the other half rating it a 1. If we had advertised the game correctly as "Dark, high risk, part 1 of 3 with no resolution in the first game" we would have had the people playing it that wanted that type of game and not the ones that wanted fluff and bunnies.
- Lastly, perform a walk through of the game with your favorite characters. Did they enjoy it? What did they not enjoy? Did any of the above apply to them?

Noticing these issues, and making the appropriate adjustments, are the things that will help make your game a success.

David Spence

“Onward into Darkness” Bank Report

Well it seems David Wood learned his lesson in challenging the gods of rain and Onward into Darkness very successfully ran on March 19th & 20th. It was a beautiful sunny weekend with no rain that was full of fighting, fun and mayhem and good friends from both Colorado and Oklahoma joining us here in Texas.

A major two-day game is very ambitious effort for a first time game writer and producer to start out with and he did such a great job with it! On top of that he pulled off a miracle and ran this game with only 10 NPCs on Saturday and, even less, 8 NPCs on Sunday. Many of these NPCs were relative new comers and they did a fantastic job! I want to thank every NPC who came out to this game and I most *sincerely* mean it when I say we couldn't have done it without you.

Hats off to David Wood for running his first game with so little help and doing a wonderful job of it! He wrote a great game with a wonderful storyline that the PCs really liked. Everyone had a good time and it certainly reflects in the game ratings. The one question everyone asked after the game was “When is the Sequel?”

Game Ratings:

Overall	Logistics	Design	Mental	Physical	Fighting	Risk
8.6	8.2	8.0	6.8	7.1	8.5	7.9

NPC's voting for PCs:

Roleplaying
1. Team 2
2. Tom Paul Grissom
3. Rich Adkisson
4. Tie - Ray Michel & Nathan Tryon

Costume
1. Brad Everson
2. Tie - John Jones & Jim Davie
3. Tie - Tom Paul Grissom and Nathan Tryon

Monster
1. Nathan Tryon
2. Team 2

Humor
1. Team 2
2. Nathan Tryon
3. Olan Knight & Nathan Tryon Singing
4. Tie - Tom Paul Grissom and Chris Wright

Fighting
1. Team 1
2. John Jones
3. Tom Paul Grissom
4. Tie - Olan Knight and his @#\$ D#\$N backstabs, Michael Whaley and Andrew Nunnely

Special Effect
1. Ray Michel blind fighting
2. Tie - Tom Paul Grissom, Team 2, Chris Wright and David Spence polymorphing Freddy Mercury straight.

“Onward into Darkness” Bank Report Cont'd

PC's voting for NPCs:

Roleplaying
1. Taryn Cox
2. Greyson Cox as Darlek
3. Jeff Mangrum as Old Man
4. Tie – Tina Cox as Solara & John Shugers
5. Tie - Kenders & Jenny Wright as Calean

Costume
1. Taryn Cox as Dark Babe
2. Tina Cox as Solara
3. Tie - John Shugers & Greyson Cox as Zeke & Jeff Mangrum as Old Man

Monster
1. Taryn Cox as spider
2. Elemental knights
3. Greyson Cox

Humor
1. Gabby Merino & Jennifer Wright as red death mist
2. Kenders
3. Illusion Mages

Fighting
1. Greyson Cox
2. Taryn Cox
3. Tina Cox

Special Effect
1. Cage
2. Spider Sack
3. Spider Web
4. Tie - The Tower & Greyson Cox as Darlek

Some Comments”

- Excellent first game, looking forward to sequel.
- Great Game, Great fights on day 2.
- Novice NPCs did a very good job.
- NPCS were wonderful. I loved the good attitude. Great first game.
- Very Good Game.
- NPC pulled off a miracle, great job.

Tina Cox
Bank Rep

Character Communique's

Francis,

To say that our last encounter was less than productive toward any shape or form of an alliance is an understatement. But overall, as much as I hate to, I have to offer an apology. The quest might have gone better had I not been insufferable, and if you had not been quite as insufferable as well. You bother me. You're attitude is unbearable, and I can't find the means to trust you or generally find you alluring to be around when you insult me and find fun in picking at my most sensitive points, but I can be reasonable when left to my thoughts and find it in both of our best interests if I apologize for the way things went earlier in this last month. Especially for the branch in the face.

Character Communique's Continued

Also, I don't expect any apologies from you, but I, myself, see means for both of us to apologise to your brother for being children. It was an important mission and we both should have been more professional like he was.

Thinking about my recent actions I'd like to come to a point of agreement in the "relationship" we hold. Mainly, to agree that we don't like each other and move past it for the sake of any future we have. Since it's already out in the open, I have to say that joining the Guild only to get close enough to you was a mistake on my part and I'll accept consequences whenever they come my way. It doesn't look like I'll be getting out of the Guild itself any time soon with the record I hold, but if at all possible, I'd like to avoid any further punishment for the way I've acted. I'd really just like to move on and have a more professional relationship with you.

Not many people get something like this from me, but not many people have the circumstance to lean on that I do, seeing as we'll be meeting more and most likely be going on more quests together. It's not easy to squeeze an apology out of me so I'm, actually, really looking forward to your response. I don't expect a fruitful and fulfilling friendship out of either of us, I don't keep many friends in the first place, but I hope you'll find some sort of forgiveness at least. So again, Sorry for the way things happened and my attitude toward you. I hope we can move forward from this point

-The Name Thief, "Danielle"

Jim,

I must apologize for how I acted on our quest for Mordra with your brother. Whether or not he takes the time to express his apology to you is his business, I frankly could not care less. However, for the sake of being civil and finding more of a partnership among those close to the Don, since I'm going to continue through my current lifestyle as a Lady Member of the Guild, I've offered my apology to him as well. Whether or not he accepts it is a matter of his own. The fact I'm even stretching my hand in friendship is a feat in itself – whether or not either of you know it.

I hope to move forward as colleagues. I don't expect any more or any less from either of you and I would hope you would expect the same from me. Strictly professional. As further missions come to pass, if they come at all, I hope that your brother and I will find a common ground on which the poking and prodding at each others patience comes to a halt.

I respect you as a person, and find that you held yourself well in our last encounter, despite the fact we acted like such children. You seemed quite level headed, much smarter than I took you for when I first saw you. I guess "Don't judge a book by its cover" holds some weight in the world. Your tardiness, though, was a tad offsetting. You should do that less often. Were it not for that I'd probably respect you much more highly than I already do. It's, simply, just laziness to be late for such a high held event.

Once again I offer my apology, and hope we will meet again soon, even if your brother happens to come around. oh, this part goes after "late for such a high held event" as another paragraph... or what is a sad excuse for a paragraph I might say.

Once again I offer my apology, and hope we will meet again soon, even if your brother happens to come around.

Sincerely

-The Name Thief, "Danielle"

Dallas Chapter IFGS - Board Meeting Minutes**March 13, 2011**

President David Wood called the meeting to order at 12:30pm at John Jones apartment.

People in Attendance :

Board members: David Wood, Alyssa Phillips, Andrew Saunders, Patrick McGehearty.
Patrick held Allison Pace's proxy.

General Attendees: Kiwi Tinker, Joe Dimatteo, David Spence, Tina Cox, John Jones.

Committee Reports:

Treasury – No Report

Quartermaster - Thed cleaned. John announced he may be moving soon. Once a date is set, we'll have a shed moving event.

Registry – Up to date, including Banquet/Mordra's Cauldron

Safety – No Report

Newsletter - A February edition is on the website.

Society Liaison – There are openings for various Society positions. The FRC has more candidates than positions and is interviewing the candidates before making their recommendation to the Society Board.

Webmaster – No report

Sanctioning –

~Onward into Darkness – David Wood

- Watchdog - will ask Justin Murphey..

~The Ring/Dragon's Revenge - David Spence - April 23 -

- Is a double game, high level in the morning, mid and low levels (The Ring) in the afternoon, Board meeting at lunch. The game will be held in in Weatherford.

Teams for *The Ring* must have a female LM.

~Lifestyles of the Rich and Bored - Allison Pace - May 21 or 28 (for all levels).

- SC: John Jones

~Averlast Again (Part III) - Justin Murphy (planned for summer)

- SC: Allison Pace, Brandan McGranor, Robert Armbruster, Chris Washington

~Samurai Pirate - David Spence - Sept 17 - Anime-theme/style game

- SC: Grayson Cox, Taryn Cox, Greg Cox

~Dead Man's Chest - Alyssa Phillips (planned for fall)

- SC: Allison Pace, Brittney Hogle, Kiwi Tinker, John Jones

~Aftermath - Allison Pace (levels 2-3) (planned for late in year)

- SC: Danny Fuchs and Kiwi Tinker

~Shipwrecked II - Danny Fuchs

- Needs an SC.

If other game writers want a sanctioning committee, they should send the name of their game, general style, and intended levels (but not plot detailed) to patmcgeh@flash.net and as Sanctioning Chair, he will see about getting them committees.

Other previously run games are also available if a gap develops in the schedule.

Board Minutes Cont'd

Old Business – none

New Business

We discussed participation in Texicon. David Woods expressed interest in at least having a table on Sunday for a few hours, perhaps with a laptop and slide shot. Patrick volunteered to get him the contact info again.

David Spence held a class on how to sanction a game called “Sanctioning 101” which was informative, interesting, and sure to be of great help to all GWs. Contact David at malik.risen@yahoo.com for a copy.

Next Board meeting will be on April 23 during lunch at the double game Dragon's Revenge/The Ring.

End time ??

BOARD / COMMITTEE CHAIRS BOARD / COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Alyssa Phillips, David Wood, and Andrew Saunders.

President

David Wood

Vice President

Alyssa Phillips

Secretary

Allison Pace

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Jason Dziuk

Allison Pace

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Check the Dallas IFGS Website for Schedule - <http://www.dallasifgs.org/>

IFGS Websites

Newsletter Information

Editor: Paul Coley

Submission Addresses:

Email: paulcoley@comcast.net

Submission Deadline:

5 Days prior to last day of the month.

Dallas Chapter

<http://www.dallasifgs.org/>

National

<http://www.ifgs.org/>

Chainmail (National Newsletter)

<http://www.ifgs.org/chainmail.asp>

Note from the editor:

My goal is to have the newsletter out by the last day of the month. I will gladly accept future submissions up to 5 days prior to that last day. I will be using OpenOffice 2.4 that will accept **** MOST **** Microsoft formats. As always, Artwork, Pictures and personal articles are welcome.

Editor
Paul Coley