

Patrick Riley

www.xenongames.com / patrick@xenongames.com
101 Redding Rd. #C4 / Campbell, CA 95008 / 408-559-9014

COMMENTS #338

Peter Hildreth

You definitely were not giving me a hard time. I felt bad for interjecting my Faraday cage comment,¹ but I loved the "But it's weird science!" explanation.

Joshua Kronengold

In Toaster, my optional rule for weapon length gave a bonus to the longer weapon until the shorter weapon hit. Once "inside" the longer weapon, the shorter weapon got a bonus until the larger weapon hit, etc.

Paul Mason

"All the other crap" in the rules are typically there because someone wants them. Most gamers want rules to be as comprehensive as possible. Considering how much work it is to GM, any support the game designer can provide is welcome. This includes stats for NPCs, adventure seeds, equipment lists, spell lists, etc. And they want lots of cool things for their characters to do. So not only do you have rpgs that go well above 32.7 pages, but then you have tons of splatbooks and such to add to it. And don't forget about the setting; I would be perfectly happy if an rpg was 32.7 pages of rules and 95.3 pages of setting.

You had a very nice discussion of screen time that seemed to be completely derailed at the end into discussing "competitive games." I fail to see how a detective game is different than other rpgs in terms of screen time or competition. But then, the "detective games" I have played in have either been CoC or LARPs and screen time was never an issue.

Brian Misiaszek

I am betting that large d20 with the spiral numbering is probably a 55mm "countdown die" from Koplów that was not designed to be rolled (though I am sure most owners use it like a normal d20).

Seven hours is not a "marathon game." Twelve-hour convention games are not uncommon out here. I cannot run a game for that long, but a game with a good pace, like ours had, seven hours flies by for me.

Jonathan Nichols

I had read a friend's copy of Harnmaster years ago and I remember not disliking it. I will have to see if I can find an inexpensive, probably used copy.

¹: I find it impossible to be a silent spectator (I lurked in A&E for all of two issues before contributing), so I left before I became a distraction or an annoyance.

Pum

In PumQuest, are you trying to roll high or low? With an open-ended roll, are the modifiers applied to the die roll or the skill level? Most games with similar mechanisms do the former, but it appears think you are doing the later. Suppose I have a skill of 12. I roll snake-eyes and roll again and get a 7. What is my degree of success?

Because you are rolling both dice over, you create humps in the distribution with local minima at $12 \pm 10n$ ($n=1, 2, \dots$). Of course, they are very small since we are dealing with percentages under 0.5%.

Robert Rees

At the risk of us talking past each other, let me say that I do not think most gamers play in a manner that could be called "deep" in any emotional or theatrical sense. For them, rpgs are a means of acting out an action-adventure-comedy. Not every gamer is like this, of course, but the majority of gamers, those who continue to drive the sale of D&D and D&D-compatible products, are. In that context, I think they are mostly concerned with doing cool things, doing more and cooler things as their characters advance, and exploring new cool rule options rather than exploring their characters, the setting, or themes more deeply. The structure of D&D, with its progression of levels and steady increase in ability, feats, prestige classes, spells, shopping list of magic items, and all the other cool things characters can do, is key to its popularity and success. White Wolf has also done a very good job of tapping into this "cool" mentality both in the WoD games and Exalted.

Slavery is not an "open wound" in the U.S. All the daily racial crap is. The myth of equal opportunity and the lie of equal protection cannot be corrected by reparations or apologies for slavery. The problem is not because one group reaps the benefits of slavery but because another groups continue to be held back and beaten down. If you look at the beliefs and attitudes that allowed slavery to happen, you will see their parallels today. Rather than address slavery, the American public (and all peoples) must eliminate those beliefs and attitudes or at least remove them from the halls of power and justice. The cry for reparations is yet another "quick fix" that is doomed to failure.

Of course, being the white suburban guy that I am, I perhaps should not be taking about what is right or what would work for others or what is or is not an open wound. I am as pessimistic about reparations as I am about the prospect that causes of racism (and intolerance and hatred of all forms) can be truly rooted out in my or anyone's lifetime. Because the problem is people. And people are ignorant, selfish, fearful, and short-sighted. In short, people suck (something I find myself saying more and more these days).

And on that happy thought, see you all next time.