

CLUB NEWS

**Newsletter of the SASRA
Roleplaying and Wargames Club**

Probably the least imaginatively named newsletter in the world...



The

***“Lots of
Official
Business”***

Issue



***Issue 57
July 2005***

SASRA Roleplaying and Wargames Club

The Club holds regular meetings in the function room of the Falcon Club, Egremont starting at 7:30pm on Monday evenings.

Anyone is welcome to turn up and play. If you want to, you can just watch, but be warned: Roleplaying is a participation hobby and makes dull viewing.

The Club's activities include:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Table Top Roleplaying | The Club runs D&D 3rd Ed, AD&D, Shadowrun, Vampire and Werewolf games on a regular basis. Other systems, such as MechWarrior, Warhammer FRP, and other D&D & White Wolf settings are also run from time to time. |
| Live Roleplaying | The Club is currently running three High Fantasy campaigns, Teolvar, Arath and Pheonix. We have also run events in other genres in the past. |
| Wargaming | The Club runs Battletech, Hordes of the Things and Warhammer 40K games from time to time. Other wargames have also been played. |
| Play-By-Mail | The Club has run an En Garde campaign, although it is currently on hold. |
| Computer (LAN) Games | The Club runs network gaming sessions from time to time. Games run include Quake III Arena, Unreal Tournament, Crimson Skies and Diablo 2 |

You can contact the Club through any of these people:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Steve Proud (Games Coordinator) | Tel: 01946 62312 |
| Andrew Bowers (Secretary) | Tel: |
| Geoff Brown (Club News Editor) | Tel: 01946 823 372 |

All members of the Committee can be contacted via our website at
<http://www.sasrafrp.co.uk>

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all of this issue's contributors, who are:-
Steve Proud, Liz Dixon Geoff Brown

Contributions

To put your article in Club News, give it to Geoff Brown at the Club.

Alternatively, you can send it to:

Club News Editor
SASRA Roleplaying & Wargames Club
SASRA Office
B524 Zone 3
Sellafield
CA20 1PG

E-Mail it to:

ClubNews@sasrafrp.co.uk

Or even fax it to: 0870-164-0866

(Calls charges at national rates – so do it cheap rate.)

All submissions welcome... We support many different formats but prefer Microsoft Word. Artwork is especially appreciated. All materials will be returned if requested.

Your Editorial Team is:

Geoff Brown

CONTENTS

3. The Usual Blurb
4. Editorial
5. LRP News
7. From The FRP
Coordinator - Games
Allocation Guidelines
10. Games Allocation
Guidelines/House
Rules Changes.
14. Be Careful What You
Wish For
19. Small Ads & Editorial
20. Friday Night Magic
Flyer

Thought for the Issue:

What, me worry?

Editorial

Well, whoever said that the Curse of Club News was dead? Of course, it doesn't seem as potent as it used to be, but getting this issue out has been a bit of a struggle. First, some great artwork was submitted, but my scanner broke, so I had to try and find someone willing to scan it for me (thanks got to Steve T). Next, Real Life™ intruded, so I was unable to get finished in time to print for changeover week. Finally, on Saturday night, my PC, having worked perfectly for weeks, and shutdown cleanly, earlier in the day, decided to do a disk check on startup, and reported a number of disk errors and corrupted files. As far as I can tell, the only things I lost were the inbox of my e-mail, and the CN57 folder!

So., many thanks to Liz & Andrew, and Steve P for getting duplicate articles to me so quickly, and my apologies of the absence of the others - they'll be along next issue

Our new website is now up and running at www.sasrafrp.co.uk , and has already received it's first compliments. Victoria phoned me

Continued on page 19

....LRP.News....LRP.News....LRP.News....

This years LRP's have gone well so far. Phoenix 2 was well attended as was Arath 12. As far as I am aware most people enjoyed these events and look forward to the next one.

Arath News

Arath 11 is booked to be run the last weekend in October at Ratlingate and I urge people to try and come along to play it, as it will be very difficult to bring players in to Arath 13, who aren't on this next event. Also a word of warning, we are planning to run on into Sunday morning, and this means that we need people to be there until the end, because the only way of removing a character, easily before the end of the event is death (and we would prefer not to do this). This is the penultimate event for Arath and we would love for it to be well attended and to bring some of the old players back together.

Teolvar News

The Teolvar ref's inform me that there will be an event in November (Hear me cheer). This event is open to new characters as well as existing ones. If you are interested in playing or crewing, please contact Steve or Jacqui, I am sure they will be pleased to have you participate in their event.

One-Day Events

I suggested that I would try to encourage the running of one day events at the club AGM. I have tried to plan and run one such event but lack of numbers has caused me to cancel the July one dayer. I think that these low numbers were partly due to short notice and partly the holiday season. I haven't given up on the idea though and will try to offer a couple of one day events in different genres, next year. So, if you have any ideas for an event or you would like to run something, please contact me and I will give you any assistance I can.

Other News

On a related note, I have been asked about people running events for Arath or Teolvar. I must say, the ref's of both these systems would be happy for people to come to them with ideas for events or with whole events written. The only rider being you couldn't expect to run without some "world" ref input. For instance I would expect Steve, Andrew and myself to be involved in any event run in the Arath world, and I would expect anyone running such an event to understand if we vetoed something that didn't fit into the world, or that ruined a current storyline. Please think about it though, I would encourage people to have a go at writing an event, even if all it does is makes you realise that it isn't as easy as it looks. Also, remember that there are a lot of experienced ref's out there, most of whom would be happy to lend a hand, make suggestions etc. As LRP Coordinator I would be happy to help people with any aspect of running an event, from locations, costs, logistics, viable numbers through to which type of encounters are possible or enjoyable.

Liz Dixon

Proposed Changes to the Games Allocation Guidelines *(House Rule 13/ House Rule 7/ FRP Coordinator's Book)*

Most of you may remember that at the AGM in March I put in a discussion motion concerning a new House Rule – Rule 13 - which had been introduced without the club learning about it. Leaving aside totally the discussion that followed, I ended up with both the position of FRP and Wargames Co-ordinator and the charge to rewrite the rule to make it more palatable. Here's the result of my work so far.

However first a bit of background on why I've done things the way I have.

Firstly – even before the AGM, the committee were worried about the backlash that Rule 13 had generated and had withdrawn it as a separate rule, instead the wording was tweaked and it was moved to within House Rule 7, “The Duties of the FRP Co-ordinator”.

I'll admit that I felt, and still feel, that it was a dirty trick – as it eliminated the need for the discussion because “Rule 13” no longer technically actually existed, though it's contents lived on in Rule 7. If the committee had wanted they could have said that the discussion motion submitted was invalid as “House Rule 13” no longer existed, and been entirely within the rules. To their credit they didn't and allowed the discussion to go ahead.

This was the state of affairs as the AGM started, and it was at this point, after the discussion, that the club members present at the AGM gave me the mandate to re-write the letter of rule,

whilst attempting to retain it's spirit.

Secondly - once I looked at revising the rule I had the major problem (one of several problems that I had with the rule) that it was a **RULE**, by nature of it's presence within the House Rules, and not a guideline as a lot of people tried to insist.

The problem is in the definition. A rule (as defined by the Cambridge Online Dictionary) is: “*An accepted principle or instruction that states the way things are or should be done, and tells you what you are allowed or are not allowed to do*”. Whilst a guideline (as defined by the same source) is: “*Information intended to advise people on how something should be done or what something should be*”.

The difference between the definitions is obvious. Rules are the definitive articles on how to do something, while guidelines are only advice on how to do a thing. If the people insisting that it was a guideline were correct then this meant that the entire House Rules were

only guidelines and, as a result, could be ignored when required.

When I came to present my attempt at rewriting the rule to the committee, I asked the other committee members present a series of questions before I began and agreed to be bound over by their answer. The questions (paraphrased, because I don't have an eidetic memory) were: "Because this had been only a motion for discussion and not a formal motion, how much room did I have to manoeuvre in rewriting the rule? And, if they felt it was required, could I move all or pieces that I felt were in the wrong place to the FRP Co-ordinator's Booklet providing reference was made to them in the House Rules?"

The members of the committee present agreed that as long as reference was made to them in the House Rules all or pieces of the rule could be moved to the FRP Co-ordinator's Booklet, if it was felt to be required. It was felt by the committee present that this would allow the rule to be more freely structured and less constricting as most of it would become guidelines - due to it's presence in the Booklet rather than the formal Rules - whilst still retaining a degree of legality because of the reference to it in the House Rules.

I then presented my draft rule to the members of the committee who were

present, and a discussion over the wording and phrasing of my draft occurred. Once those members of the committee present had come to an agreement on the content, wording and phraseology of the draft rule, it was passed on to those members of the committee who had not been present for comments or amendments. Once they had had their say, this article was written (and then rewritten) for Club News to present the latest draft of the problematic House Rule (and the relevant pieces of the FRP Co-ordinator's Booklet) to the membership of the Club in general.

This article was originally meant to be in Club News 56 in order to get feedback from the AGM to the membership of the club as soon as possible. However a disagreement over phrasing and objectivity meant that it was rejected and parts of the article had to be rewritten and expanded upon. I feel obliged to point out that these were not the draft Rule itself but parts of the surrounding article. During the time that this article was being rewritten we have already had one incident that should have been dealt with under this particular set of rules. These rules were in an extremely awkward place at that point. The following draft rule had been accepted by the committee but had not been passed to the membership for consultation, so it was not in general use and I wasn't sure which set of rules to

use. There is a second article outlining what happened and why I made the decisions I did, which should also be in this issue of Club News. Please read it and bear it in mind when you are thinking about the draft rule overleaf.

My rewritten draft of the Games Allocation Guidelines are on pages 11 and 13, where they are displayed side by side with the current version, on pages 10 and 12, to clearly show the changes.

The rewritten draft has been agreed by the entire current committee. In the interests of transparency – and with the agreement of the rest of the committee- I am now putting this version of the rule out for public consultation to the rest of the club. (The fact that this rule, which had a potential effect on all those members of the club who attended on Monday night's, had been originally drafted behind the back of the club membership was a charge that I and others had levelled at the previous committee, so I have an interest in seeing that all decisions that may affect them are passed to the club membership for comment before they are implemented).

Please pass on any concerns or comments in writing (to avoid misrepresentation) to myself or any other member of the committee. Any and all feedback will be taken into consideration in any further re-drafting

of this rule that becomes necessary following this consultation period.

I, and the rest of the committee, am happy with this. It is now up to you – the membership of the club – to tell us your feelings.

We need your feedback before the next committee meeting on Wednesday 24th August so that we can either formally adopt this into the House Rules and FRP Co-ordinator's booklet or review any further changes requested.

(A reminder - If anyone wants a copy of the House Rules, Club Constitution or SASRA Constitution then please ask the Secretary for a copy. If anyone wants to see the FRP Co-ordinators Booklet then please ask the FRP Co-ordinator).

Steve Proud
FRP & Wargames Co-ordinator
2005-06

CURRENT VERSION OF THE GAMES ALLOCATION GUIDELINES IN THE HOUSE RULES

Key: *Red Text is being Removed*

Blue Text is being Added

7. POST OF ROLEPLAYING & WARGAMES CO-ORDINATOR

The Committee member elected, as Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator shall have the following responsibilities:

- 7.1. Organise the running of the eight-week game sessions, including the games to be played and the people playing them, allocating players using the following guidelines
- 7.1.4. It is the responsibility of the role-playing co-ordinator to place people in games. The final decision on placement is their responsibility. Care should always be taken not to disadvantage any member of the club in this respect. Under no circumstances should any member not receive their first choice of game two sessions in a row.

(I have moved 7.1.4 to line up with the equivalent text in Steve's draft to allow a clear comparison - Editor)

7.1.1. All members of the club should be allocated their first choice of game wherever possible. When this becomes impossible, due for instance to over application for one particular game, the following priority of selection is recommended.

- Those members who ran a game in the previous session are guaranteed their first choice.
- Next those members who did not get their first choice the previous session should be assigned their first choice.
- Members who have active characters in that campaign should now be assigned.
- All remaining club members now receive equal allocation. It is recommended that the role-playing co-ordinator refer to the history of who has received second or third place choices to maintain fairness in allocations.

PROPOSED NEW VERSION OF THE GAMES ALLOCATION GUIDELINES AND THE HOUSE RULES

Key: *Red Text is being Removed*

Blue Text is being Added

7. POST OF ROLEPLAYING & WARGAMES CO-ORDINATOR
The Committee member elected, as Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator shall have the following responsibilities:
- 7.1 Organise the running of the game sessions, including the games to be played and the people playing them, allocating players using the guidelines outlined in the FRP booklet. It is the responsibility of the Role-playing Co-ordinator to place people in games. The final decision on placement is their responsibility. Care should always be taken not to disadvantage any member of the club in this respect. Under no circumstances should any member not receive their first choice of game two sessions in a row.

And my draft of the new section of the FRP Booklet (as referred to in Rule 7.1) states:

All members of the club should be allocated their first choice of game wherever possible. When this becomes impossible, due for instance to over application for one particular game, the following priority of selection is recommended.

- *No attempt should be made to place any player into a game that they will not play or is distasteful to them. For example: placing a player who dislikes Wargames into a Wargame; or placing a player with strongly held religious views into a supernatural horror game.*
- Those members who ran a game in the previous session are guaranteed their first choice.
- Next those members who did not get their first choice the previous session should be assigned their first choice.
- Members who have active characters in that campaign should now be assigned.
- All remaining club members now receive equal allocation. It is recommended that the role-playing co-ordinator refer to the history of who has received second or third place choices to maintain fairness in allocations.

CURRENT VERSION OF THE GAMES ALLOCATION GUIDELINES IN THE HOUSE RULES

Key: *Red Text is being Removed*

Blue Text is being Added

7.1.2. Newcomers thinking of joining the club should be introduced to and welcomed by the Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator. In their absence a committee member should do this. They should then be placed in the game of their choice. The only exceptions to this are if the game already has 7 players or the game was **offered for experienced players only**.

7.1.3. When Occasional attendees plan to come, they should make every effort to inform the Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator in advance of their arrival so that a place in a game can be arranged, **otherwise they may discover that no place is available for them**.

Under no circumstance should they make plans directly with a GM, as this can cause games to be unbalanced to the detriment of other players.

The Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator should discretely poll the Game Masters and ask if they can easily accommodate the Occasional attendee, following these guidelines:

- **The Occasional attendee should not be placed in a game that a club member was unable to join as a 'first-choice' even if they have an existing character.**
- The Occasional attendee should not be placed in a game with 6 or more players.
- The GM should not be put under any stress, pressure or inconvenience to accommodate the visitor.
- Discretion should be used before asking first time Game Masters.

PROPOSED NEW VERSION OF THE GAMES ALLOCATION GUIDELINES AND THE HOUSE RULES

Key: *Red Text is being Removed*

Blue Text is being Added

- Newcomers thinking of joining the club should be introduced to and welcomed by the Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator. In their absence a committee member should do this. They should then be placed in the game of their choice, **subject to GM agreement**. The only exceptions to this are if the game already has 7 players or the game was **described “for mature players”** due to its subject material.
- When Occasional attendees plan to come, they should make every effort to inform the Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator in advance of their arrival so that a place in a game can be arranged. **Where this is not possible they should approach the Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator (or a nominated deputy in their absence) when arriving at the club.**
- **Taking into account the Occasional attendee’s preferences**, the Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator should poll the Game Masters and, **subject to the Games Masters agreement**, ask if they can easily accommodate the Occasional attendee, following these guidelines:
 - The Occasional attendee should not be placed in a game with 6 or more players, if such a situation is avoidable.
 - The GM should not be put under any stress, pressure or inconvenience to accommodate the visitor.
- Discretion should be used before asking first time Game Masters.

Be careful what who wish for...

...because you just might get it.

Before I get to the meat of this article there are a few things that I need to do.

Firstly - I owe several apologies to various people concerning this article for three reasons: because I broke a house rule, as it stands at this point in time, to deny a new player the game of his choice; because this person has unfortunately become caught up in the entire argument/discussion/conflict concerning the house rules without his knowledge; and because I am writing about this incident in Club News.

Secondly - I'm not trying to say "I told you so" or having a rant, despite what people may think upon reading this. Instead I am trying to make a serious point about rules and how they are worded. If this had gone ahead there is an **EXTREMELY** good chance that you would **all** have been playing different games in the session that has just finished - and it would all have changed, to everyone's annoyance, in the changeover week.

Thirdly – This is the article mentioned elsewhere in this issue that needs to be borne in mind when thinking about the latest draft of House Rule 7 (incorporating "House Rule 13").

Finally – If **anyone** after reading this article feels that I didn't have good reason for doing things the way I did and abused my powers as FRP & Wargames Co-ordinator can they please tell me. I will then immediately tender my resignation to the committee and never stand for election again. The reason I make this promise is not as a threat but as a confession. This has been praying on my mind since it happened and while I had to bite the bullet and make the hard choice I am still not sure that I made the correct choice rather than the convenient choice.

Now, to the incident in question that caused me to feel that I had to write this.

It occurred around a new player, who had only joined the club a couple of weeks earlier at the close of the previous session. Unfortunately he had been absent for the final week of the session and so had totally slipped my mind when I was sorting out game allocations for the session to follow, as he was new enough not to have made it onto the sign-up sheet. (My fault entirely, but as I was trying to organise 5 games I thought there would be enough options to deal with anyone I had missed or who turned up unexpectedly.)

When he arrived on the changeover week he settled down with the d20 Star Wars game group and expressed a preference for playing that game, which was his right as a new player. The problem was the new d20 Star Wars game itself. It already had changed GM due to outside problems, which had caused the original GM to drop out, but a replacement had stepped in and volunteered to run it with my thanks. He was reluctant to, but as the only GM with experience of the d20 Star Wars I think felt obliged to help recover the situation. However he was adamant that he could only run for six people at most, and the new player would be a seventh. He was threatening to with-

draw entirely from running if he was given a seventh player, which would have meant rearranging all the games that session immediately to accommodate the players without a game if I forced him to carry out his threat as the rules (7.1.2 is the relevant section) below say I should have. And nobody would have been happy about that. Assuming of course that I didn't decide to just send an entirely new sign-up sheet around (which did cross my mind at the time).

Due to a disagreement over phrasing, the article in Club News concerning the revised draft of the House Rules wasn't published in the issue that came out that changeover week. This was a problem because I had promised the rest of the committee who had been present at the committee meeting that agreed to the draft that I wouldn't implement these rules until the rest of the club had a chance to scrutinise my draft of the rules and agree to either them or a version that would arise from the feedback to them. This meant that the rules that were (and still are) in place are the set that were discussed at the AGM. This relevant part of this particular set, which are the rules currently in use as I write this, read as follows.

7.1.2. Newcomers thinking of joining the club should be introduced to and welcomed by the Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator. In their absence a committee member should do this. They should then be placed in the game of their choice. The only exceptions to this are if the game already has 7 players or the game was offered for experienced players only.

7.1.3. When Occasional attendees plan to come, they should make every effort to inform the Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator in advance of their arrival so that a place in a game can be arranged, otherwise they may discover that no place is available for them. Under no circumstance should they make plans directly with a GM, as this can cause games to be unbalanced to the detriment of other players. The Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator should discretely poll the Game Masters and ask if they can easily accommodate the Occasional attendee, following these guidelines:

- The Occasional attendee should not be placed in a game that a club member was unable to join as a 'first-choice' even if they have an existing character.
- The Occasional attendee should not be placed in a game with 6 or more players.
- The GM should not be put under any stress, pressure or inconvenience to accommodate the visitor.

- Discretion should be used before asking first time Game Masters.

7.1.4. It is the responsibility of the role-playing co-ordinator to place people in games. The final decision on placement is their responsibility. Care should always be taken not to disadvantage any member of the club in this respect. Under no circumstances should any member not receive their first choice of game two sessions in a row.

Instead I chose to use the set of rules that the committee had passed, but which the club membership hadn't yet seen – despite the fact that I had promised not to. The relevant section of these rules (printed in full elsewhere in this issue) state the following:

7. THE COMMITTEE MEMBER ELECTED, AS ROLEPLAYING AND WARGAMES CO-ORDINATOR SHALL HAVE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSIBILITIES:

7.1 ORGANISE THE RUNNING OF THE GAME SESSIONS, INCLUDING THE GAMES TO BE PLAYED AND THE PEOPLE PLAYING THEM, ALLOCATING PLAYERS USING THE GUIDELINES OUTLINED IN THE FRP BOOKLET. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ROLE-PLAYING CO-ORDINATOR TO PLACE PEOPLE IN GAMES. THE FINAL DECISION ON PLACEMENT IS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY. CARE SHOULD ALWAYS BE TAKEN NOT TO DISADVANTAGE ANY MEMBER OF THE CLUB IN THIS RESPECT. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD ANY MEMBER NOT RECEIVE THEIR FIRST CHOICE OF GAME TWO SESSIONS IN A ROW.

And the relevant section of the FRP Booklet (as referred to in Rule 7.1) states:

- ◆ Newcomers thinking of joining the club should be introduced to and welcomed by the Roleplaying and Wargames Co-ordinator. In their absence a committee member should do this. They should then be placed in the game of their choice, subject to GM agreement. The only exceptions to this are if the game already has 7 players or the game was described “for mature players”.

I will freely admit that I worried over the fact that I was denying the new player his automatic first choice, and still do, but I am relieved that he appears to be enjoying the game that I placed him in. All seems to have turned out well but it could have been very different if I had followed the House Rules as I was meant to have.

However I feel that the rules immediately above are the better for allowing the GM a say in the matter, as it was obviously a problem for him to accommodate another person.

If you take the time to compare the two sets of rules it becomes obvious how a subtle difference, such as allowing the GM a say in the matter of new players, affects a situation. At one extreme it would have led to an entirely new set of games being ar-

ranged suddenly, whilst at the other it leads to a player not joining a particular game.

So that was the situation. It's now up to the club membership to decide, did I make the correct choice or not? And which version of the house rules do you want to have used. There's no sitting on the fence or declaring that “we don't care”. It's already happened once this year and next time it could impact on you personally.

Steve Proud

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Reward Offered for information leading to the arrest of the person or persons responsible for the hijacking of the Space Shuttle Atlantis. The shuttle landed safely on the M1 Southbound near London, but was found to be unmanned when the security forces boarded. Contact your local US Army, NASA or CIA representative with information, to receive details of rewards.

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Editorial

Continued...

up to pass on her thanks to our Webmasters, Trevor & Steve for getting it running, and making old Club News issues available for download.

Last of all, please read the article on the proposed changes to the Game Allocation Guidelines and House Rules. It was a vigorously discussed topic at the AGM, and has been hotly debated since by the Committee. At the AGM it was agreed that Steve P would look at revising the wording, but the proposed changes go a bit further than that, so we need the Club's feedback on the new draft. For easy comparison, the old and new wordings have been printed out on facing pages in the middle of this issue.

Happy reading,

Friday Night Magic in West Cumbria

Magic: The Gathering trading card game's most regular local tournament. Whether you normally only play for fun or if you've entered the world of competitive tournaments, Friday Night Magic is an ideal place to meet new players, boost your DCI rating and win prizes including FNM premium cards.

The local FNM club meets at the Chase Hotel, Whitehaven, starting at 19.00. The next event is Friday 22nd July. It has been suggested that the 'Vanguard' format be played, although bring along a Standard (8th edition Core Set, Mirrodin block and Kamigawa block) deck just in case. For full details of the Vanguard format, contact Paul as normal.

For any information regarding the events, rules, cards or formats, contact Paul Young at grendelprime@btopenworld.com.

Also, the owner of Derwent Bookshop, Workington (the sponsor of the local FNM club), has expressed an interest in running an Arena league event once a week above the shop. Anybody interested in this can either get in touch with Paul or pop in to the shop.