

Local Harbor Crackdown Uncovers Smuggling Ring

Palanthas – A recent sweep by the Golden Shield has resulted in the discovery a large smuggling ring operating in the harbor. This group, which has been tracked across the Blood Sea and is said to have contacts as far as Queen’s Landings, was based in the Old Sea Hag Tavern.

“Seems that the owner of the tavern was also affiliated to the smugglers,” said Golden Shield Captain Thomas Kilner. “We were tipped off by a local disgruntled customer about this groups involvement here.”

The smuggling ring’s headquarters were surrounded early in the evening by plain clothed Golden Shield members. The group acted on the knowledge of knowing that nearly 40 smugglers were in the building.

“We kind of had to move quickly, it wasn’t easy and it did lead to some lump and

bruises on our end, but its better then what we gave them,” reported Golden Shield member Lionel Hightower. “Had to run a couple of them through with my sword to show them that we met business.”

A total of 24 smugglers were arrested with 9 more of them being killed in the scuffle that broke out during the arrest. It was reported that none of the smugglers escaped the building and that more arrests are expected to be made in the coming days as the Golden Shield uncovered more evidence.

The evidence points to several prominent citizens of the city being connected to the ring an unnamed source told the Herald. If acted on the city will be reeling from the arrests that will be made and it will be felt on every corner. The city will learn that its City Guard has been turning a blind eye for a long time now the source continued.

Jousters Needed for Yule Joust

By: Gerrin

Palanthas-As the Yule time season nears, the Knights of Solamnia have a need. They are currently seeking anyone with jousting experience to take part in the annual Yule Joust. This year as to date there are only 7 participants entered into the tournament that until recently drew as many as 200 contestants.

*Continued on Page 2

Wandering Minstrel’s Performance

By: Sal Lloyd

Solace-This year the Wandering Minstrel has selected Solace as the location for his winter concert. The Minstrel has played throughout Ansalon and has created quite the following.

Concerts will take place in the Brown Brew Inn throughout the winter season. Interested patrons should arrive early to ensure a seat.

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*Continued from Jousters Needed

“This year’s turnout is poor. We are hoping that in the days leading up to this event we are going to see an increase,” said Sir Derek uth Drolth, Knight of the Sword. “It’s been a draw every year; I don’t know what is causing this.”

The Joust traditionally a weeklong event, leading up to the Yule season. In the past jousters have journeyed from all over Ansalon to compete. The past few years though has seen a steady decline in jousters. Last year’s joust only attracted 15 jousters and the event was shortened to 2 days.

“We are working hard at recruiting some new talent into the fold here,” continued Sir Derek. “It’s been a tough sell with the local Knighthood especially after the war.”

Others though say there are many factors keeping them from taking part in the tradition.

Fires Strike Part of Palanthas

By: Gerrin

Palanthas- On this past Misham fire struck three warehouses in the merchant district. The fire was three separate blazes that all happened around the same time and it took several hours to put out the flames. Bucket brigades were called out and the City Guard worked hard to contain the fires.

“I used to joust here, but they wrecked it,” said Sir Felton Miles, Knight of the Rose.

“If you believe that the war was responsible for the drop off, then you better check those facts. It happened long before that.”

In the years prior to the war the tournament underwent a series of safety recommendations that were compiled by a committee of knights. This committee has limited what types of lances that can be used and the kind of armor that must be worn. The armor has to be stamped by Freen Brothers Armorers to be legally worn in the tournament. The cost of getting the armored certified has grown tremendously.

“It would cost 50 steel to enter this tournament, but 125 steel, that’s right steel to get my armor certified,” continued Sir Felton. “It cost too much and that isn’t even factoring in that I must purchase my lances from them, get my horse authorized by them, and for what a purse of 300 steel. Seriously someone is making a profit here.”

“It definitely appears that the fires were set deliberately,” said Sergeant Thom Skullreaver. “They all occurred within a hour of the first and were in the same area.”

It is unsure of why the arsonist would strike these buildings as they are all owed by separate companies. Also two of the warehouses were sitting empty while the third only contained bales of cotton. The City Guard have no suspects in this case.

Ramblings By The Fire

Hello There Old Friend

It has been a long time since the Palanthas Herald has graced you the loyal reader and for that I apologize. It hasn't been an easy time for many of us here on the Nexus, as we have all been struggling with our own personal real life issues. Now this isn't an excuse, but rather an explanation as to why things seem to have come to a standstill here at the Herald.

Times they are a changing though; and while I don't expect all of our readers to return to us immediately, I do hope that you will pass us on to your friends, fellow gamers, and your mother. I am really excited to the changes that are being offered here as I feel that we will create a better publication than any previous installment of the Herald.

[Dragonlance Canticle #47 – Modernizing Dragonlance](#)

In this episode, Tristan, Trampas, Chuck, and Cam discuss (among many other things), what would be entailed in modernizing Dragonlance, rumors of 5th edition D&D, changing fantasy art styles, and the history of gunpowder in Europe.

Mail, including comments, feedback, praise, and hatred, can be sent to Podcast@DLnexus.com. We respond to every person who emails us.

In this issue you will find the classic news strips that feature the local happening of our lovely city of Palanthas. These strips will mixture a feel of the old and new. Also in this issue you will see a section containing reviews, I was proud to review the newest installment of the D&D board game series, The Legend of Drizzt. Also included will be reviews of novels, movies, and so much more. We also are including some gaming elements into this and in coming issues. We will touch base on a lot of different topics and give you something to use in your own adventures.

So sit back and enjoy this issue, its dedicated to you the fans.

Peace

Chuck Martinell

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The Herald Game Review

The Legend of Drizzt

By: Chuck Martinell

Dungeons and Dragons, the Legend of Drizzt

The Legend of Drizzt is the newest offering of Adventure System game line being produced by Wizards of the Coast. In this edition the players take on the roles of well-known heroes as they explore an underground cavern. The heroes of this game are none other than Drizzt do'Urden and his companions.

Whether you are a fan of the book series or just of the genre this game you will find that this latest offering has something for all. The box game contains everything you need to play a rules light edition of D&D, and without the need for the pesky DM.

The Components: In today's market a games components can often make or break a game. Great games with cardboard chits don't often make a lasting appeal to all gamers, but yet games with lots of bits often make even a mediocre game feel better.

For Legend of Drizzt you won't be dissatisfied with what the game offers. Inside you get some nice thick cardboard counters, and tons of monsters. While unpainted these monsters are still in good detail, and if you are like me a coat a paint is easy to really make these monsters more fearsome.

The Gameplay: The style of play has changed a little in this game when compared to its predecessor's (Castle Ravenloft and Wrath of Ashardalon) into mainly cooperative but a few scenarios pitting teams or the party against

itself. As with the previous D&D adventures many of the quests in this game deal with retrieving of items or killing a villain.

As with previous editions the exploration of the game hasn't changed. Players still need to move their characters to new areas of the board to reveal a new area of the board. When the new area is revealed a monster is randomly drawn and placed on the tile. On that player's turn it activates (so as soon as the exploration phase is over) and the player follows the directions listed on the card.

Monsters are but one thing for the heroes to defeat; also they must overcome traps, and follow directions to complete some of the scenarios. This game contains 13 scenarios but the potential to create more is easy to see.

Overall Impression: For someone who enjoys D&D but doesn't have the time to commit to a campaign, or the ability to do so then this will be right up your ally. The game is easy enough to understand and within a session or two you learn the basics. Even though it only takes a few minutes to learn the basic turn sequence, it does take some time to learn to act as a team. Also scenarios increase in difficulty forcing you to use new powers or solve scenarios in a particular manner.

I would say this is a great game for board game fans or D&D fans. I have played it with my nieces and nephews (ages 7-11) and only have to provide a little assistance the first few times to explain the cards. They have enjoyed it so much that they request it every time we mention playing a game, but yet it adds enough that my brother (who joins us) is also engaged in the adventure. Overall Score: 4 out of 5

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Saving Solace: *A Dragonlance Novel Review*

By: Chuck Martinell

First off I would have to say *Saving Solace* was a breath of fresh air. The book *Saving Solace* was not only a change of pace compared to other recently released books but was surprisingly entertaining too read. The premise of the book perhaps is not as appealing as other books that have been released in the last year but nevertheless it deserves to be recognized as one of the best books released this year.

The story centers around Gerard uth Monder and his beginnings as the sheriff of Solace. Gerard enters Solace during a booming period of the town as its growth is almost non-stop and the trouble is only increasing. Once arriving there Palin Majere bestows upon Gerard the office of sheriff and Gerard quickly learns of the pleasures and troubles that are associated with that office.

With the previous sheriff murdered Gerard begins to investigate the crime, while policing the streets, helping prepare for the new Temple of Mishakal dedication, and trying to maintain the kender in the city. By following the pages of the adventure the reader finds himself immersed in the town of Solace and its charming and sometimes odd residents. Also the book provides a blueprint to what the town of Solace has become and covers all of its famous locales.

The author's love of writing is really well demonstrated in this book as he approached the usual problems of a boomtown with a new approach. His characters are all given personalities that reflect not cardboard cut outs of town people, but rather folks with real problems trying to get by. Also his

solutions are much different then killing the villains; instead the characters respond to events and act according to their own conscience.

The book also creates a town that feels alive to the reader. Not only are the citizens given personalities but the reader will be surprised to the details the author put in. As the story progresses the reader will be given a clear picture of the problems in the town and the conflicts the main character is going through.

The writing style in the book is one that flows through and the reader will find it hard to put down. The author does an excellent job on expanding the character of Gerard. In the War of Souls trilogy Gerard appeared depressed and hateful of being a knight. After he leaves the knighthood and his father's overbearing presence he transforms into a confident man who realizes what he wants. Other characters are portrayed in the usual self and while Clark adds little to them, he does maintain their normal social behaviors.

In the end, the book is a fantastic read for those who want a change of pace from the other books the series is currently offering. It is a solid read in that the reader gains a ton of information about Solace, from local businesses to how the city government is run. To any gamer out there centering there campaign around Solace, this book would be a must have for their collection; to any reader this book is worthy read and well written. I would have to say that this book far exceeded my expectation going in and I am giving it 4.5 stars out of 5.

The Gamemaster's Forge: Design, or not to Design

By: Chuck Martinell

With the coming of every new game release, or edition change there comes a crop of new game masters who are willing to take up the shield and weave a tale for all to hear. Of those who begin in the adventure some will falter out of the gate before their first session. It will be because of the overwhelming feeling of creating a campaign that can meet their and hopefully their future player's expectations.

Many game masters take the approach that to save time and energy, it is by far easier to open a pre made world and run the material. This approach works well at first, but over time this approach has to change, or the game master must have deep, almost unending pockets as supplements and support material will be created faster than the average GM can dig through it. Even if you are able to buy everything that is out there it isn't long before many GMs discover what they bought, although it seemed like it would fit the campaign they are running is really something that doesn't.

GMs have a lot of difficulty with the first step in running a system, whether to design or not to design. It is by far easier to by the sourcebook of the world, and in most cases GMs do, and just pull a part of the world out of it that the GM likes. Then it is easy to let the book populate the world for you, and create a story for your campaign world. While there is nothing wrong with this, you

will also discover quickly that there is no flavor to the world.

Most sourcebooks provide brief material and cover the basics of a region, they do not add in the smaller details that make the world vivid. So many GMs read straight from the text and use that text is the only basis to what the city is like. One of the largest complaints of player characters is that they feel that they are alone in a world that is populated by millions of other creatures.

One of the surest ways to ensure the death of your campaign is to paint a very exact picture of what things look like. For example the party rides into the starting village and the GM reads or shoots for the hip a little information about the looks of the village.

"You enter a village you see some houses, and you see the mayor standing in the middle of the town waiting for you." This description has graced nearly every gaming table and immediately most of the other players get a sense that the only thing in the town is the mayor, which explains how he got elected, but still it's a pretty bleak, dreary sounding place.

If you instead would just add

"You enter a rundown looking village, many of the houses as you first enter are in shambles and a few look like they are inhabited by nothing more than rats. As you ride towards the middle of the town, you see few people about, those that you see, do not look up to see you as they keep their heads low. When you arrive in the middle of the town you ask a ragged man selling bread

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and ask where the mayor is. The man points towards a group of three men and says “That’s the mayor Bren, the white haired man.”

While you have given nothing more away to the PC’s about the world you have created a place where life teams, even though it is less then glamorous. This kind of information gives the PC’s enough of a carrot to create a village looking like it is on the edge of desertion. You don’t want to overdo it, but you want to give them something to draw from. Think of a movie, how many movies are interesting if they have no extras. While having no real importance in the movie the extras provide the life of the movie because without them it would be a dozen folks running around in an empty world.

When it comes to designing the world of your RPG a GM must take extra effort to make it a living world. Also GM’s must make it effort to make it their own, not a perfect clone of some former campaign world or mass produced world.

Tavern Rumors

Merchant’s Request

Location: Urban

Hook: A merchant guild has approached adventurers for assistance in guarding its warehouses from attack by another local company.

Line: The merchant guild is not being attacked by a rival company instead a disgruntled family member is taking his revenge.

Sinker: The family member has made a pact with a demon to become a warlock. He has also recruited some street thugs to help him reach his goal.

The Goblin’s True One God

Location: Rural

Hook: The adventuring party encounters a caravan that has been recently destroyed and discover that from a wounded guard that the survivors have been taken away.

Line: The survivors have been taken by a fanatical group of goblins who plan on sacrificing them to their god in return for great power.

Sinker: The goblins “god” is really a goliath.

The Last Dragonarmy Officer

Location: Xak Tsaroth

Hook: It is rumored that great riches are still in the former city and that only the brave need to take them.

Line: The city’s current inhabitants have been spreading the rumor hoping to lure the unsuspecting adventure into it.

Sinker: The Dragonarmy that was sent to the city never left. Following the war they have created a deadly system of traps to protect the real treasure.

The Kender's Pouch

Top 5 Rejected Kitiara Plot Ideas

5. To become the queen of the gully dwarves
4. To be cast as an angry kender
3. Originally was to live out the life of Caramon but refused to be a bumbling buffoon
2. To become the leader of the Solmanic forces
1. To travel to the red moon (oops.....that one slipped past somehow)

Kender Taunts

- Cross eyed, flee infested, buck toothed, gully dwarf!
- Did your parents ever insult any gods?
- Have you considered using skunk oil to hide that horrible smell?
- I've always wondered what a cross-breed between an ogre and a gully dwarf would look like!
- Why do you always make that funny face at me? Oh! That's how you always look!
- Your father was a minotaur and your mother's a ranger!
- Your mother was a hamster, and your father smelled of elderberries!

The Palanthian Gallery's Showcase

Raistlin Majere in Black Robes

By: Mike Thom



The latest in all things Dragonlance can be found here. Stop in to check out what is new, swing by the Lexicon to end the eternal debates about Dragonlance facts.