

Fables & Tables Magazine

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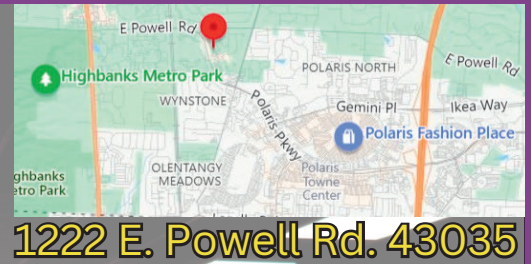
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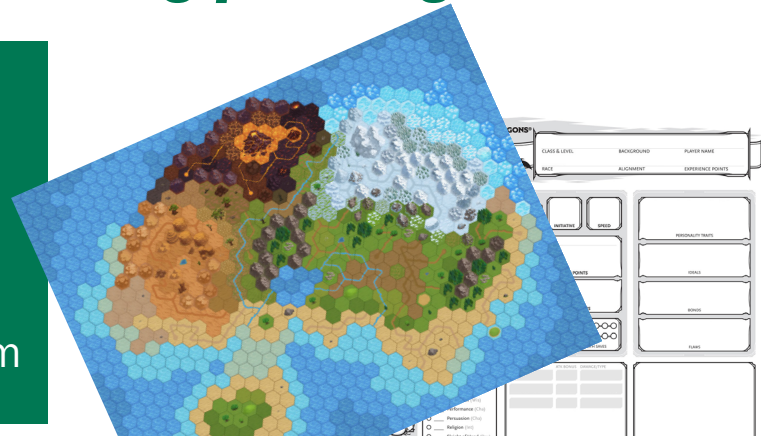


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State of the Series

Rythm is a Gamer

By: David "Blue" Wendt

Welcome back, friend. Yes, the fire's still lit—and no, I haven't stopped planning. But lately, I've been thinking about why I keep doing this. Not just the games... But this column.

This is my sixth, or maybe seventh, submission to Fables and Tables and I find myself pondering my motivation for writing these pieces every three months. When this journey began, it was about tracking, sharing and processing my games as they evolved. After a couple of articles, it became a rhythm. It became a quarterly moment to pause and reassess how I was using my creative energies. It started as a way to stay honest with myself. But now, it's more than that. It's part journal, part touchstone.

This column has become a glimpse into my mind workshop, a look over my shoulder while I work, and a place to be honest and transparent about my feelings about my relationship the hobby. With that said, let's check in on what I've been working on.

First and foremost, it should be noted that I'm down to one ongoing game. A dramatic shift from where I started this series. I have passed

my regular game slots on to other GMs. A wise friend suggested that I needed to play more... So I am trying that, and enjoying the free time. Well, sorta... You will see:

The game I am still running is a prequel campaign to The Heart of Necrothar. We meet face-to-face every other month, which gives me time to flesh out the session in more detail and to prepare physical props. There is a real joy in running with everyone around the table. We laugh more, smile more, feel more. And that's something I deeply treasure.

As noted above, I passed on Cleveland X-Men to another player. We framed it as a new creative team and I am enjoying watching the new GM building on the world I set up.

So what am I doing with all that free time? Well, a thing or two... I've been developing game materials to share. Many of them are old ideas that have been floating around my brain for a while. Others... Others are a result of a sort of brainstorming I do when watching TV in the evenings.

A quick snippet of some of the results:

The Four Turkey of the Turkpocalypse. Four turkey hybrids for high level play, plus a mini-adventure (Gobblegeddon: The Four Drums of the Apocalypse), a bit of tongue-in-check Warlock Patron (The Gravy Witch) and five tasty magic items.

Middle of Nowhere. A zine game about the secret war between heroic cryptics and the

blood-pact bound uber-rich.

12 Ravens: SMACH Edition. A near final play test draft of my Saturday Morning Action Heroes game, using my D12 mechanic and inspired by the Saturday morning cartoons of my youth.

Cataclysm Kitchen. An early draft of a post-apocalyptic cooking beetle ttrpg where chefs fight for culinary supremacy.

All of these should be available via my Patreon by the end of the summer.

How am I accomplishing this level of productivity? I credit three things:

1. *Free time - reclaimed by passing on most of my GMs duties to others.*

2. *Tools - a Notion board that helps me track projects, store ideas, and manage my creative cycle.*

3. *Permission - I've allowed myself to use ChatGPT to break through creative blocks and break through creative blocks and offload the busywork that gets in the way of what I truly want to do.*

Across all these projects, I'm not just building adventures—I'm exploring ways to tell stories. I'm experimenting with ways to put fun first, meet the players where they are, and let the GM play too. These projects are just the latest milestones in my 40+ year adventure with table top role-playing games. Just the latest

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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waystations along a long road of adaptation and improvisation.

With that in mind, these dispatches are, in a way, a series of love letters to the part of me that never stopped playing. I keep writing these because reflection sharpens my vision. It lets me see not just the game, but the also reasons I'm creating. During the next three months, I'm going to create games and content - big and small - and publish it on my Patreon.

I hope these articles encourage you to take stock of your own creative urges. Because these updates are as much for you as they are for me.

That's all for now. I should really get back to creating. Until next time—happy gaming. ■

Until this magazine gets a letter page, you can find me on:

Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/DocBlue>
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Episode VI: Time Flies

In the year 29 BCE (give or take) the Roman poet Virgil wrote his epic *GEORGICS*, a work consisting of 2,188 hexametric verses split into four books.

It was about agriculture.

Well, okay, it was about man's struggle against a hostile natural world using the subjects of agriculture, animal husbandry, and bee-keeping as models for society, but that's neither here nor there, the **IMPORTANT** thing (in **THIS** context. The whole poem is important but I'm not going for my Master's Degree, I'm writing a thingee about comic book conventions) are three words written in line 284 of Book 3:

"Fugit irreparabile tempus."

This translates as "it escapes, irretrievable time" and is often shortened to simply "tempus fugit" or, in the Queen's English, "Time Flies"

And it does, my friends. It flies. Like the wind. Like an arrow. Like Superman (who, technically, didn't "fly" in the comics until Action Comics #65 (October, 1943) or Superman #30 (September 1944), depending on who you ask... Unless you count the August 5, 1939, issue of the UK magazine "Triumph" (#772) which featured an image of Superman flying in space,

away from Earth but not many people do. Before that he just sort of JUMPED long distances. Y'know, the whole 'Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound' thing? Of course he flew first in episode 2 of THE ADVENTURES OF SUPER-MAN radio show in February, 1940 and then in the 1941 Fleisher cartoons, but we're talking about the comics and my God, I did it again, didn't I?

THAT, my friends, is what we in club Neurospicy call "an info dump".

Moving on.

Time Flies.

As I'm writing this, I am a mere two days way from celebrating my fifty-second rotation around the massive, naturally occurring nuclear fusion reactor that the Toltecs called "Tonatiuh", the Egyptians called "Ra", and my dad called "that goddamned ball of fire" (like me, dad was, according to every Cosmo quiz my sister ever forced him to take, a Winter). Now, remember, when we celebrate a birthday, we're actually celebrating the **CULMINATION** of that year. It's a celebration of survival. You have beaten the Grim Reaper for another 365.2422 days (hence why we have "leap years") so have some cake! In two days I will celebrate surviving through numerous medical maladies, various instances of misadventure, and three dreadful STAR WARS prequels for 18,993 days by going to get my Driver's License renewed followed by a nice meal with my person and our daughter (who will be turning fifty and eighteen, respectively, in August) at our favorite Italian place.

As one does when one gets old, I took a trip down memory lane by reading through some **TRULY** embarrassing LiveJournal entries. LiveJournal, kids was what we had before MySpace (which was what we had before Facebook, which is what we had before whatever-the-hell kids are using now). In doing so, I was reminded that it's been twenty-four years since some co-workers and I decided to create our own comics and try to sell 'em to people.

I had started a job working at a Kinko's copy place in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh. This was the college part of town, smack between Pitt and CMU. As it turns out, at the time, anyway, Kinko's was like the hub of Pittsburgh indie comics. The number of ashcans and 'zines we helped produce there would melt your brain. Back then, they had these number counters on the machines to keep track of the number of copies made. If you were in the know, you knew how to roll those counters back allowing the indie creators to print up hundreds of copies of their books while paying for dozens. We called this the "creator discount" and it varied based on whether we liked you or how cute you were.

I once printed up a hundred fliers for the singer, Nelly Furtado, who was having a show at the late and lamented Beehive, across the street. I charged her a quarter. She was super cute and super friendly and was supposed to meet me dinner after said show, but she, like a bird, only flew away.

Anyway, Kinko's...It was the place where I first got the drive and inspiration to create comics (something that I really, really wish I had the time and work ethic to do, these days). I couldn't help but be inspired! The guy who trained me was

The Forge Tavern Presents Spring Cocktail Recipe:

SPICED APPLE WHISKEY

SPICED APPLE WHISKEY!

the ginger syrup takes it over the top!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 oz Proper 12 Irish Whiskey
 - 2 oz Apple Juice
 - 1.5 Oz. Ginger syrup
- Add ice and top with ginger ale.

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat and Let cool. Strain out the ginger pieces. For a thicker syrup, allow to boil until thick.

House Made Ginger Syrup:

- House made ginger syrup:
 - 1 cup water
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 1/8 cup sliced fresh ginger
- Combine ingredients in a sauce pan. Boil on medium heat until mixture thickens to a syrup consistency.
Note: Syrup will thicken more as it cools, so be careful not to overcook.



Barry Linck who as of this article, been writing and drawing the adventures of PHINEUS: MAGICIAN FOR HIRE for thirty-seven years (www.phinmagic.net), and a co-worker at another store was Marcel Walker, currently one of the brilliant creators behind CHUTZ-POW! SUPERHEROES OF THE HOLOCAUST, an acclaimed and on-going comic-book series created and published by The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh (<https://hcofpg.org/chutzpow/>). At some point, Marcel was subbing in at our store and he and I along with three other co-workers, Jason Bender, Ross, and Jay, waxed philosophic about comics and art and our desires to, some day, get our shit together and start creating. Marcel had, by that point, already published one issue of his book SMOKING GUNS under the business name Ricochet Graphics, and had a desire to create more but, like all of us, had difficulty with inspiration and encouragement.

People may not know this about is creative-types. Many of us need constant reassurance that what we're doing is worth the doing. We need encouragement. We live off "atta boys". It's the fuel for the creative fires. The best thing we can do is support our fellow creatives. I stopped creating comics when the "atta boys" dried out and the nourishing environments became few and far between. Back then, however, I was in an environment that promoted creativity. Like a fern in a rainforest, I was sucking in that oxygen-rich air and releasing scripts and art.

We called ourselves G.Y.S.T. (because: Get Your Shit Together) and, within a few months, we had put together some genuine, comic-book-sized comic books! I put together a book featuring a character called SOLITAIRE that I had created back in my college days. Originally, the character was a masked freedom-fighter doing battle against a tyrannical government controlled by the Catholic Church but I abandoned that for a more "meta" tale about a comic book character who knows he's a comic book character. In this first issue, he has a thirty-two page long conversation with Superman and Batman (or, rather, lawsuit-dodging amalgams thereof) about the nature of comics, what it means to be a comic book character, and how to manage the responsibility that comes with it. I thought it was pretty funny but had chosen not to use dialogue bubbles and, instead, place the dialogue below the panels (ripping off, poorly, the method used by Kyle Baker on HOW I MET SATURN) which was probably a bad idea.

The other book was called TALES FROM KIRBY'S DINER, an anthology book based around the conceit that, in every known "universe", there exists a Diner which serves as neutral ground for the various heroes and villains of said universe. The only constant is the diner owner, a guy by the name of Jack (named, of course, for Jack "King" Kirby). The stories all took place in the diner. My story was a tongue-in-cheek jab at the then-fledgling ULTIMATE line of Marvel comics (modern 'updates' of classic Marvel characters), Marcel contributed a SMOKING GUNS story, Jason the debut tale of his character THE SCARF, and Jay submitted a story called LADYKILLERS - which would prove to be eerily prophetic in a manner which I really don't want to go into, here, (but anyone with any internet sleuthing skills can likely find for themselves).

By the by, a copy of TALES FROM KIRBY'S DINER is currently for sale on eBay, if you're at all curious.

Were my stories any GOOD? I mean, "good" is objective, but Of COURSE not! I had no idea what I was doing and could barely draw BUT... and this is the important thing...they were MINE. They were OUT THERE. They EXISTED and, damn it, I was going to get people to BUY them from me!

I attended my first Pittsburgh Comicon as a creator in April of 2002. It was the five of us crammed behind an eight foot long table with our comics displayed on metal point-of-sale shelves "borrowed" from the Kinko's basement (don't worry, we brought them back). We approached the show like used car salesmen, boisterous carnival barkers with absolutely nothing to lose. "Hey, kids, do you like comics? Then you might like THESE!"

"Come read the comics SOME readers are calling 'Not Bad!'"

We had bowls of candy on the table and we had freebies! Stickers, little one-inch pins, Mini-comics! Come, let us draw for you! We will be your dancing monkeys!

And, hallelujah, brothers and sisters, we sold books! MANY books! In fact, it seemed like Mother Nature, herself, was on our side as, during the final hour on the last day of the con, a great thunderstorm broke out and the convention center lost power but we, WE, my friends, we merry band of brothers, were sitting under a SKYLIGHT! A beam of glorious, heavenly light shining down on us as if to say, "THIS is where you should spend the last of your money!"

Patrons, like pilgrims to a Holy site or the zombies on the WALKING DEAD, turned and shambled over to our table, eager to see what we lads had for them and we lads gladly showed them...For a few bucks, of course (all hail the Golden Calf that is Capitalism).

Riding high on that wonderful weekend, we swore to keep creating, to keep encouraging, to keep being each others' biggest cheerleaders

It all, of course, fell apart within months amid clashing egos, job changes, relocations, and good ol' fashioned bullshit.

But that seed was planted. I've said before that every con is somebody's first con and that one, in that capacity, was mine. By the next year I had met a nerdy Starbucks barista and she and I would create HATE YOUR FRIENDS, an indie comic about an indie record store, that would run for seven ashcan-sized issues and get good word-of-mouth. She would meet her future husband at a con, I would find out that my partner and I were expecting our daughter at a con (seriously. She took the pregnancy test Friday night at the 2006 Pittsburgh Comicon). Comicons, specifically the Pittsburgh comicon (there was something about that event that was special, man, let me tell you) weren't just sales opportunities. They were family reunions. My SPACE MONKEY COMICS table being merged with my buddy Al's LUCHADOR ENTERPRISES booth and whomever we adopted for that weekend to make the Island of Misfit Toys. It was a safe-space before safe-spaces were things

My daughter grew up in comicons. She, as a baby, was snuggled by the likes of David Mack and Gail Simone and Holly G. Taimak, the LAST

DRAGON himself, once babysat her while her mom and I grabbed some food. People watched her grow while I drew their sketch cards or commissions, still the dancing monkey. Always the carnival barker.

I haven't tabled at a con in years. As I mentioned earlier, at some point I just wasn't making the revenue I needed to in order to justify the costs. I haven't drawn a comic since 2012's THE GOLDEN SCARAB (although I've written a metric ton of scripts so if you feel like drawing a comic, let me know). Bering a creator lost its luster but I still meet up with my pals and hit some comicons as a patron. The same thing always happens, when I do. Friends from the past who are still out there creating...Barry and Marcel and Jason and others like Shawn Atkins (msha.ke/coffeehousecomix) and Jared "Incrediman" Catherine always ask:

"When are you going to start making comics, again?"

Someday, pals. Someday.

Time flies, my friends. Do things that you love. Take chances. Do you have stories to tell? TELL them. Draw comics. Make comics. Sell comics. Give 'em out if you want to. Don't keep them to yourself. Find a con and sell your wares and, if you're lucky, you'll have the kind of experiences I've had. Moments I wouldn't trade for anything

And if you're not a creator, that's okay? Go to cons. Support indie creators. Read comics that are outside of your comfort zone. Try new things. Let them know that you enjoyed them. Your kind words can be the fuel someone needs to keep going.

I'll talk to you next time, nerds. ■

RECOMMENDED READING:

HATE YOUR FRIENDS vol. 1:

A WEEK IN THE LIFE by Kristen Blank and Mikey Wood
(available, Print-to-order on Amazon)



Halma

Strange History of Halma

-Craig Israel

The game of Halma (Greek for "JUMP") was invented in 1883 by George Howard Monks, a Boston-born surgeon, sculptor, and all-around Renaissance man. Upon first publication it was a smash hit, becoming one of the favorite parlor games of the Victorian age. The game found its way across the sea to Europe, where it was just as popular. A crafty German game company expanded the number of players by creating a six-pointed board. They called it "Star-Halma."

This 6-player version crossed the ocean again in 1928. Tapping into American's then-fascination with everything Far West, the game was sold as "Chinese Checkers"—as it still is today.

RULES

Halma is played on a 16x16 board. Traditionally this is a checkered board, but it need not be as the colors have no impact on play. In a 2-player game each uses 19 pieces. In a 4-player game each uses 13 pieces.

The goal of the game is for a player to advance all of their pieces diagonally across the board to the opposite side and occupy all of the starting spaces of the other player's army. Naturally, their opponent is simultaneously trying to do the same thing. In a 4-player game the two players opposite each other are in conflict and the other two players are locked in their own battle. Each pair essentially gets in the way of the other players as they try to advance their pieces

On a player's turn, they can do one of two things:

- STEP—Move a single piece a single space in any direction: diagonally, orthogonally, forwards, or backwards.
- HOP—Jump a single piece over any other piece to land on the empty space beyond. Hops can also be in any direction.

Pieces can hop over any piece on the board, their own or their opponents. A piece can hop multiple pieces in a single turn (like in checkers), switching between diagonal and orthogonal hops as needed

Hops do not result in a capture—the move only advances the piece.

Victory is defined as filling all spaces in your opponent's starting position, either with your own or your opponent's if they

fail to advance one or more of their pieces from its starting spot. This prevents a beligerent player from leaving a single piece behind, preventing you from occupying their starting position completely.

THE STRANGE MYSTERY OF HOPPITY

In 1884, George Monks' younger brother, Robert, was traveling in England when he witnessed a game called "Hoppity." Knowing his brother's fondness for board games, he wrote home to Boston and described the game to him. The elder Monks, seeing the possibilities of the game, reportedly either was inspired by Hoppity or outright copied the games mechanics to create his own board game. Monks

same board of four quadrants containing six points each.

3. Hoppity was a traditionally published game. Someone bought it at a shop, took it home, and happened to play it in front of the younger Monks.

Personally, I believe in theory #3. Otherwise why would history include the bit about Monks changing the rules just enough to avoid copyright infringement for an impromptu or folk game? It certainly doesn't make him look like a hero. I suspect that there was something in the rules of Hoppity that made it tedious or boring in repeated play. Monks, like many great innovators, saw past this critical flaw and transformed



specifically changed the rules and game play to ensure his game didn't infringe on the copyright for Hoppity.

However, modern game scholars have been unable to find a single copy of Hoppity. In fact, there is no evidence that Hoppity ever existed.

So, how do we square Monk's creation story with the lack of evidence of a progenitor game? I have three theories:

1. Hoppity was an impromptu game made up on the spot. Imagine two people bored with checkers, who decide to turn the board 45-degrees and starting their pieces in the corners just to make it interesting. Then saying, "This time, you can jump over a piece but it stays on the board."

2. Hoppity was an established game commonly played on the board of another game. This was extremely common throughout history. For example, the game we know as backgammon was just one of dozens of "tables" games played on the

the game into a form that has stood the test of time (albeit not with his original name).

If you want to learn more about Halma, scan the QR code to go to my YouTube channel, The Gaming Bench, where I have a video that takes a deep dive into the rules, history, and strategy of the game.



SPOTLIGHT ON

ORIGINS

GAME FAIR

50 Years of ORIGINS GAME FAIR

- Justin Rood

Summer is a busy time for most of us, and for gamers all over the country, it marks one of the biggest events on the convention circuit. This June 18th through the 22nd, the Origins Game Fair was once again held in Columbus, Ohio at the downtown convention center. Thousands of gamers came for a chance to do some peak shopping, learn about new games, meet celebrities, attend the Origins Awards, and so much more. Fables & Tables was present at the game fair and here's our annual discussion of this terrific event.

For those who may be unfamiliar, the Origins Game Fair is an annual gaming convention that is held by the Game Manufacturers Association (GAMA). While GAMA has an industry-facing convention, GAMA Expo, Origins is really for gamers and the gaming community. It's a place to meet up to see and play games you've never seen before, both old and new. Retailers and publishers from all over the country gather to make their wares available to an audience who may never have encountered them otherwise. There's also

a lot of game playing that goes on, from scheduled RPG mini-campaigns or one-shots, card playing tables, starship simulation rooms, a live play dungeon, and more. Miniature painting, cosplay, the convention has grown over the years to include more dimensions of our increasingly multifaceted hobby.

While Origins is always an event, there was a special buzz to this year's proceedings. It was in 1975 that the first Origins International Game Expo was held in Baltimore, Maryland. That makes this the 50th anniversary of Origins! The first Origins wasn't held at a convention center or a hotel but at John Hopkins University. Originally organized and run by a local war gaming club named Interest Group Baltimore, a few short years later in 1978, the Game Manufacturers Association was formed to take over the convention. Over the years, Origins has had many homes; Chicago, Atlanta, even Milwaukee a few times during collaborations with Gen Con. It was in 1996 that the decision was made to make Columbus, Ohio the home of Origins permanently. While the basics of the convention remain the same, GAMA continues



to iterate and try new things. Sometimes it's a minor tweak, such as changing the convention's name to the Origins Game Fair in 2007, other times it makes a larger shift in schedules and function, such as beginning to have celebrity guests starting in 2024.

Origins 50 was a success by any metric. Attendance was up from 2024 by 8% for a total of 19,171 persons, no small feat at a time when many around the country

are tightening their financial belts. There were more participants in the Exhibition Hall, a 26% increase from 2024. Scheduled events increased by a similar percentage, giving attendees even more to do while at the con. The convention wasn't just good for gamers but for the community as well! Over \$20,000 were raised for charity through donations by attendees. A Red Cross blood drive on site went well past its goal by collecting 98 units of blood, which could benefit as many as 294 patients. Congratulations and thanks are due to the dedicated GAMA staff, the professional convention workers, and the numerous Origins volunteers who made this success possible.

The Exhibition Hall is probably the most well-known aspect of Origins and there were no disappointments this year. 410 different vendors, publishers, artists, and authors were present to offer their wares to attendees. More games were available at the convention this year than ever before.



Being in the hall gives smaller publishers and vendors a chance to sell their products to an audience who may never encounter them otherwise right alongside larger and more well-known companies like Chaosium and Catalyst. There were vendors selling all manner of accessories for gaming such as dice towers (and prisons for those dice that like to roll 1s), mugs, bags, miniatures, and so much more. Artists Alley was quite robust with several artists working in different styles covering a wide range of interests such as game specific fan art or watercolor impressionist originals. There were a number of authors selling their books, as well as speaking and presenting at some of the many events held at the convention.

The Exhibition Hall held an additional attraction this year, as this was where Origins celebrity guests could be met to pose for pictures and sign photos for their fans. It was a Whovian's dream this year as three of the four guests hailed from different eras of the long-running BBC science fiction program Dr. Who. From the classic Who era, the Seventh Doctor himself, Sylvester McCoy was in attendance. Tolkien fans might also know him as playing Radagast the Brown in the recent Hobbit films. Sophie Aldred, best known for playing the 7th Doctor's stalwart companion Ace was one of the guests as well. Sophie's time as Ace has continued into the modern era in appearances alongside Jodie Whittaker's 13th Doctor, and straddles both classic and modern through audio books and plays. It was a brilliant move by the convention

to have the two of them attending, what Whovian could pass up seeing one of the Doctors and their most pivotal companion? Rounding out the Dr. Who connections the phenomenally talented John Barrowman, MBE, whose portrayal as Captain Jack Harkness made fans all around the world. Reprising the role for the series Torchwood,



he's also known to audiences for his role as the devious archer Malcolm Merlyn in the CW's DC Comics shows, most notably Arrow. The final celebrity guest brought a burst of culinary creativity to the convention, Timbo Sullivan, a four-time Food Network Champion renowned for his wild and fantastical cakes made a special 50th Anniversary Crit Cake just for Origins. There were

scheduled events with all of the celebrities as well, giving fans many ways to see and hear from these famous figures in geek culture.

The scheduled events featured an incredible variety of entertainment and learning opportunities. There were plenty of games to sign up for and play, of course, as well as panels and Q&A sessions, but that was far from all that was on offer. Musicians Heywood Banks, the Stereoflowers, and 2d6 were on hand and held performances for those wanting a show. Comedians of the Galaxy held two standup comedy shows to spread more levity around the convention. Escape rooms run by Co-Operatives were ready for those who wanted cooperative puzzle solving, while those who like to make their puzzling competitive could join the Tournament of Pieces to prove their puzzle prowess. The Origins Film Festival was held for its 9th year, hosting days of independent and short films about gaming and gamers or in the fantasy and sci-fi genres. Another returning classic of the Origins line-up were the Origins War College and Origins University slate of events, offering war gaming insights and information.

Miniatures were the focus of other events. The Miniature Painting Contest had an array of beautifully painted entries. Busts, individual minis, and dioramas were all on display to try and bring home the prize. Your humble correspondent's personal favorite was a diorama depicting the events of a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



card from the game Red Dragon Inn. That rabbit's unhinged, I tell you. For those who might not be experienced enough to enter the contest, the Paint And Take tables sponsored by Restoration Games were open for as long as the Exhibition Hall every day, allowing attendees to use paints, and even one free miniature to learn from those on hand and practice their painting.

For those that preferred more active pursuits, along with the aforementioned escape rooms, there were two other events of note. The live action role playing group Amtgard was in attendance with events and training for combat with foam weapons (foam and/or foam padded), perfect for those of all ages who wanted to let loose a little bit. They also had classes on how to make safe weapons for boffer combat yourself. A standout favorite from last year, True Dungeon returned to offer two different live action adventures for attendees to play through complete with animatronic monsters and NPCs in full costume and character.

Costumes were also on display with the Cosplay Contest held Saturday night. With seven different categories of competition, including a Group category as well as ones for Teens and Juniors (12 and under), there was a wide array of models competing. Being sure to honor the tradition and craftsmanship of cosplay, all costumes to be entered had to be at least 50% made by hand, with any purchased pieces



disclosed beforehand. Rubber City Cosplay ran the event and a photo of the winners can be found on their Instagram.

The Game Manufacturers Association was created to take over and run Origins, but the mandate of that group has expanded to be dedicated to helping as many games as possible be created, published, and finding their ways into the hands of the gamers that are just right for them. GAMA's

devotion to game development was on display at the convention with the Unpub room. Developers could get space here to playtest their games to get feedback and refine their product. Game creation exercises and a Speed Pitch session also served to help developers gain the skills needed to bring their game from concept to finished product.

Part of GAMA and Origins' mission is that gaming can be more than just entertainment. This idea found expression is a first time offering at this year's Origins 50. While classes and events have been held before about using gaming for education and in an educational setting, this year had the kinds of classes held previously organized into a curriculum. The Game-Based Education & Therapy Conference had two tracks of sessions, one based on gaming for therapeutic uses and another for gaming in education. The organized structure of this conference within the convention allows educators who participated in enough sessions to use it for the continuing education credits needed to maintain their licensure. Your humble correspondent attended one session about evaluating games for use in the classroom, focusing



on determining what skills a game actually teaches and whether it would fit with the structure and necessary limitations of a classroom environment. One of the big takeaways is that while games can be tailored to reach specific information - a self-contained game based on photosynthesis from TTRPG Kids was used as an example - there was a focus on the emotional and life lessons a game can teach. Emotional regulation, patience, turn taking,



all these and more can be part of play and taught implicitly using games as simple as Duck Duck Goose.

The culmination of the convention was,



space. Origins 2026 will be taking place June 17th through the 21st at the Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Ohio, the home of Origins Game Fair now and into the future. ■

ORIGINS

GAME FAIR

as always, the Origins Awards. First up among the awards was the induction of persons and games into the Academy of Adventure Gaming Art & Design, which recognizes persons and games that have made lasting impacts. Among those inducted this year were the wordplay matching game Codewords and creator Ryu Mizuno, whose Record of Lodoss War novels (later manga and anime) were the first known example of RPG gaming as spectacle, creating the foundation on which today's Live-Plays and streaming was built. The Origins Awards themselves celebrate the most outstanding entries in their respective categories for games published in 2024. Categories include RPG Core Product, RPG Supplement, Light and Heavy Strategy Games, Gateway Game, and many others. A full list of the categories and winners can be found at <https://www.originsawards.net/news/2025-winners-announce>.

Origins 50 has come to an end and attendees and staff alike can feel satisfaction that this Origins was a terrific success. There's a tremendous amount to do and see at the convention every year, and if anything mentioned here sparks your interest, then Fables & Tables suggests you look ahead on your calendar and clear some

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BATTLE REPORT

Game: Warhammer 40k, 10th Edition: Date: 6/18/25: Game played at the Guardtower East

Reported and Written by - Cassie Rood

Good evening folks, and welcome to yet another perfect day for a war! A Warhammer, of course! Here we are, a fine afternoon at the Guardtower East, and I am, of course, your friendly neighborhood battle reporter, Audelan Bloodfury, and with me as always is my best nemesis, Zagdur! I'm excited for some really good combat today, how about you, Zagdur?

'Ere we go today, Audie! The WAGH today gonna be between Warhammerer Ivan's Salamanders – your brothers, right, Audie? And Warhammerer Jon's Aeldari! Been a long time since I seen a proper roast!

I've asked you before not to call me that, Zagdur, but you're right! My brothers in the Salamanders will be taking on some serious competition in these Aeldari, but I'm confident in the power of their purifying flames! Let's get into the lineup for today, since I know some folks think all us Space Marines look alike. Looks like Warhammerer Jon is showing up with Phoenix Lord Asurmen as the Warlord, and leading his squadron of Dire Avengers!



Phoenix Lord

'S a fine choice, havin' a Phoenix Lord leadin' means they'll be more mobile – as long as they stay outta close range, that is. An' 'ere we got a squadron a Fire Dragons, lead by an Autarch! I ain't seen one a them since Gazbag, Audie, and ain't they a sight? Next to that Wave Serpent wot just pulled up, I bout to feel like I'm back on a Craftworld!

Look what just piled out of that Wave Serpent, ten Dark Reavers – oh, look at that, Zagdur, they've got launchers! Splitting into two squads, you love to see that kind of tactical thinking. I'm starting to worry about for my brothers in green, but there's always hope with the Salamanders around!

Nuffin like a nice launcher, if you kin get hold 'a one! Never had the knack fer it, m'self, but the lads in the Kommandoz swore by 'em. Borzag's britches, Audie, now 'ere comes the Warp Spiders and their Exarch! Mebbe you should be worried about the 'Manders, mate!

I sure am, Zagdur, I sure am. Did I ever show you the scar I got off one of their Deathspinners? Clouds of sharp monofilament wire, my flank was never the same.

That's bleedin' ugly, Audie, thanks for the show. Didja kill the Aeldari wot give it to you at the least? Oh, while we wuz busy playin show-the-scar, it looks like Warhammerer Jon deployed his last unit, looks like a squad of Rangers to round out the lineup tonight!

I didn't, but one of my brothers took care of him for me. I was a bit occupied with not bleeding out at the time. I know – poor discipline on my part, but what can you do? And those Rangers look a bit dangerous, we'll see how they do. Those rifles of theirs are dan-ger-ous at a distance. But it's time to see what Warhammerer Ivan's going to have in his roster today – well, by the Emperor's eyelids, is that the Venerable John P. Warhammer in that Dreadnought?

I certainly ain't on a firs' name basis with the lad, but I think I recognize those markin's. If that ain't 'im, I'm a nob! I fink I ran into 'im, lit'rally, on Thrastos the firs' time. Too focused on krumpin', I just crashed righ' against 'is metal . . . whatever that is on the side. Oh, an' righ' behind 'im, a squad of 'ellblasters and their Apothecary! I don't s'pose you recognize 'im by name too?

Sadly, I don't, I suspect he's a new recruit. But then again, I don't know every Marine by name, despite my winning personality. Oh, a Rhino! That takes me back, Zagdur, I haven't seen the inside of a Rhino since I can't remember when! And I think . . . yes, inside is a Tactical Squad and their captain. Wait, TWO captains, including THE Adrax Agatone!

Well, I'll be a squig's snotrag! 'At ripe bastard's killed more boyz than an entire platoon of Khornites. This is shapin' up to be a proper WAGH, Audie, an' no mistake! Well, 'cept I'm the only Ork for a fousand fousand miles, a'course. An' 'ere's some Intercessors, wouldn't be Marines wivout 'em!

They are a key part of a Space Marine force, that's the truth. And here's Warhammerer Ivan's last deployment, a half squad of Infernus Marines! Just look at how those Pyreblasters catch the light! Imagine how they'll shine when they're lit up!

Looks like 'at's 'bout it for both'a 'em, s'now it's time for 'em t'set up! While they're bein' strategic, lemme give the folks listenin' an idear of what the battlefield looks like. We got a big tower in th'middle – wonder if 'at's the Guard-

tower you mentioned earlier – with some ruins an' bunkers 'round it. We got a couple stands of trees near a couple hills s'roundin' the tower, and look like . . . d'you reckon 'ey're gravestones, Audie?

They do look like that, I'd wager they are. Likely from the last battle that happened here, the locals probably just buried them where they lay, Zagdur. Must not have been any of your folks, I've heard Orks just get back up unless you burn to ash. And a couple of abandoned bunkers deep in their deployment zones.

Gah ha ha, 'at's the truth, Audie! Could

be some folks wot ran into some Boyz, we plant 'em regular-like! But ei'ver way, th'armies seem ready for some WAGH at last. An' looks like Warhammerer Ivan's makin' the first move!

Seems like he's picked the target for his Oath of Moment, and he's focused on that Wave Serpent, that's a smart choice – getting vehicles off the field can make the difference in any battle! As usual with the first time foray in a battle, a lot of movement up front. The Intercessors move to occupy a strategic point inside Warhammerer Ivan's deployment zone, and tuck themselves into the ruins for some cover.

Early on's a fair bit o' positionin', it's true! An' the Rhino's on it's way to the tower, wiv 'is entire



Salamanders Deploy

IMPERIUM OF MAN SPACE MARINES VRS. AELDARI!

Side A: Ivan's Imperial Marine Salamanders

Side B: Jon's Aeldari

Tactical Squad an' their cap'ns inside. Looks like the Infernus are headin' round the hill they was behind, with the 'ellblasters comin' up behind 'em! 'At's good reinforcement, s'portin' each over. Might not be positioned t'shoot right off, but holdin' 'at point is key. I remember once, durin' Ironteef, I woun' up runnin' after a Killa Kan, an' how 'em Boyz didn't 'ear the Tau Fireblade comin' behind, I'll never –

Zagdur, take a look! The Dreadnought is moving out from behind those trees! Bold choice, leaving John P. exposed like that, but no risk, no reward! And looks like those armaments are turning to focus on that Wave Serpent, even if he's a bit out of range for the moment. No need to rush just yet, and . . . oh, dear. The Salamanders' rhino is releasing its Hunter-Killer Missile!

'Eaded right for 'at Wave Serpent! Oh, 'at's gonna sting! Or mebbe not! Looks like the Wave Serpent's force field managed to deflect the blast, 'at's a lucky bloody thing. Leastwise, if you're not the ground, it is. An' it looks 'bout like none of 'em are close 'nuff to get into proper krumpin' range, so we're back to Warhammerer Jon!

He's got his Rangers moving to the base of the hill near his deployment zone, taking a bit of cover. And the Wave Serpent heads that way as well, drawing attention and making Warhammerer Ivan's forces work to get past it to get to them. And the Fire Dragons are heading to the edge of the graveyard on his side of the field, getting set to burn some grass, I'd guess.

Oh, and the Wave Serpent's firin' off, towards 'em Hellblasters but looks like the Shuriken Cannon isn't gonna make it through the Hellblasters' armor. An' the Brightlance just sorta blows up the grass around 'em! Ah, well, win some, lose some, am I right? Prolly time for a recal'bration on 'em. An' sendin' part of his Dark Reapers squad – squad alpha, we'll call 'em – up into those ruins. 'At's good positionin', bein' more than a floor or two up can give you real good vantage on poor suckaz underneath.

Zagdur! Look, the Warp Spiders! They flicker jumped, and now they're . . . God-Emperor preserve, they're on top of that tower now! It's always so impressive to see, the way they can move around the battlefield like that.

'Bout t'send your hair t'stand on end, Audie, make no doubt! Imagine 'em Aeldari just poppin' right in fronta you, ready t'shoot with 'em Deathspinners. 'Is Dire Avengers are movin' towards the ruin, too, backin' up the lads in 'em, while 'at second squad of Dark Reapers 'ead for the corner to scan for a signal.

We're into the second set of moves, and it looks like that flicker jump got the Salamanders feeling edgy – they've moved that Oath of Moment to the Warp Spiders while the Infernus Squad's making a move to the base of the tower to hopefully get an angle on them! They pull out their Pyreblasters and . . . well, smack my face and call me a Necron, they're firing at the Wave Serpent! They're bathing it in flames at this point, but

all they've done is wreck the paint. Too bad, but they did their best. The Rhino's moving towards the tower, too, and stopping to let its crew fire at the Dark Reapers in the ruins, looks like a decent hit but it seems like their armor did its job.

An' Adrax's 'alf of the Tactical Squad jumps off the Rhino, getting' set for a shot or five at the Dark Reapers, too. And it's a bit betta, just Bolt-guns but two 'a 'em Aeldari Dark Reapers fall down bleedin'! 'At's fir's blood, and 'bout time for it, if'n you ask me. Now the Intercessors move on up after droppin' a sticky beacon on 'at point. Smart if'n you wanna win stead 'a just bustin skulls – which 'a course is its own reward, Audie! When 'ey stop, looks like another round 'a shots just bouncin' off 'at Wave Serpent.

John P. Warhammer stomps his way forward towards the Rangers and the Fire Dragons, looking like he's getting ready to . . . fire on that Wave Serpent again! Looks like Warhammerer Ivan really has it out for that transport, Zagdur! And he connects, look at that, three decent holes in that chassis, that won't take it out but it might slow them down a bit! Hellblasters are holding their position, at least that means they won't be taking at shots at the Wave Serpent this time around, eh?



The Venerable John P. Warhammer

Ga ha ha! You got 'at right, Audie! But 'ey're pullin' out the meltas and superchargin' 'em, pointed right at the Warp Spiders! If it hits, 'em boyz'll be in some serious hurt. Gazbag's guts, four 'a 'em drop – ooh an' one a' 'em dropped right off the tower! Good luck recoverin' 'is body, lads! But lessee . . . oooooof, Audie, the supercharge got two 'a 'em, plasmas blew right up. Bad luck, innit? But looks like no chargin' for Warhammerer Ivan, an' no krumpin' nei'ver.

That's a big hit, almost the entire squad in one blast! Warhammerer Jon gets a chance to move a bit, so let's see what he's going to get up to. The Fire Dragons are making a move towards that Dreadnought, nice and quick, and their Fusion Guns are powered up, let's see how it goes! God-Emperor rest his soul, they annihilated John

P. Warhammer with that volley of fireballs! You can smell the burnt metal and hair from here.

Makes me nostalgic, it does. Been ages since I 'ad a good WAGH, but ain't 'at the way it goes? Oh, 'at Warp Spider Exarch's makin' a bold move, usin' 'is teleport to get be'ind 'em Intercessors an' off the tower, now 'e knows it ain't safe up 'ere. Manages to get off a couple shots, 'e's bloodied one of 'em Intercessors, but now 'ey know where 'e's at. An' the Wave Serpent's movin' t'oppose the Rhino.

It's splitting fire this time, that Shuriken Cannon slamming into Adrax's Tactical Squad, taking one of the Salamanders down! And the Brightlance misses the Rhino, not even close! The Rhino lets out Tactical Squad Beta, no hits there this time with the Melta Missiles. Warhammerer Jon's having his Ranger squad move to take the point in his deployment zone, and they take the opportunity to fire on those Intercessors. One of the Intercessors goes down, they're not having a good day today, Zagdur!

You ain't wrong, not even a little. The Dark Reapers in the ruins head further up, taking a shot down at th'Rhino, and I'll be a gretchin's grandma if 'ey didn't manage to put a proper dent into it. Th'other Dark Reapers move 'round the bunker in the corner an' fire 'eir launchers towar' Tac Squad Beta and manage to take out two 'a 'em! Blown ta smithereens, th' carrion birds'll eat fine t'night! Take a look, Audie, 'em Dire Avengers are slidin' 'round the ruins, flickerin' like spectres!

Two of Adrax's Tactical Squad are down before he even knows what hit them, and then Asurmen takes aim – I've heard he calls his guns the Bloody Twins – and fires six shots. That's all for Adrax's Tactical Squad, I bet he's fuming right now! And just like Warhammerer Ivan, Warhammerer Jon isn't going to charge or get into a melee right now.

Oath 'a Moment gets moved over to the Dire Avengers, an' no question as to why. Adrax's makin' a move towar' the trees, but takes a shot at Asurmen. Clearly tryin' to get some payback fer his lads, I'd say, an' 'e's got it, 'at Drakkis 'e's got blasts a couple good 'oles into the Phoenix Lord. An' the Rhino's 'eaded for 'em Rangers, but



Warp Spiders Take High Ground

also fires its Storm Bolter into Asurmen too, but the Aeldari deflects the bolts las' secon'. Now 'at takes some skill, Audie!

That Aeldari agility has been the ruin of many a good army, Zagdur, and once again, please

BATTLE REPORT

IMPERIUM OF MAN SPACE MARINES VRS. AELDARI!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11



Ardax Vrs. Asurmen

don't call me that. The Hellblasters are moving in front of the hill they were near, and it looks like their Apothecary has brought one of them back to his feet! They supercharge those plasmas again and shoot at the Wave Serpent, you'd think they'd be more cautious after the last time. Ahh, the shots hit but can't get through that force field, but that's all the bad luck they have this time!

An' Tactical Squad Beta are makin' a move towards one'a the points in No Man's Land, tryna get points. Not the worst idear, an' now 'ey're tossin' a grenade? 'At's gonna leave a bit of a mark if 'ey got decent aim – an' it works, 'at Wave Serpent's not shaped right no more! Tac Squad Beta's gonna take 'eir shot at the Dire Avengers, two 'a 'em go down, you don' see targetin' like 'at ev'yday. Well, not it workin', 'at is.

Firing from the hip is valid, Zagdur, but I know you've never been the best with a gun. Those Infernus Marines are making a move to get around that tower at last, setting up and taking their shots at the Dire Avengers as well. Oh, that's a LOT of fire, and the last three of the Avengers drop. Glad it isn't my job to clean up, those scorch marks are hard to get up. And the Intercessors move towards the trees, but take the chance on their way to take out that Warp Spider that was left with a well-placed shot.

Cap'n Adrax decides to charge right into 'at Wave Serpent, Audie, and it's time for a proper krumpin' at last! Whips out 'at bloody big 'ammer, Malleus Noctem, and slams it right into the abused Wave Serpent! Oh, I rec'nize 'at sound, the Aeldari are down a Wave Serpent, an' good luck to 'em. The Salamanders' Rhino decided to get in on the chargin' too, goin' straight at 'em Rangers. Oh, but the Rangers

manage to skip outta the way, keepin' 'em-selves from gettin' crushed.

The Rangers fall back, moving out of immediate range of that Rhino. And that was a smart move because I see the Fire Dragons moving towards the Rhino around that hill – and they're chucking a grenade at it! Oh, it lands underneath it and detonates, that's gonna cause some damage, I can see it smoking from here! They're doubling up on it, firing their Fusion Guns and blasting that plate metal to pieces! That is IT for the Rhino!

Dark Reaper Beta Squad's movin' toward the trees near the tower, an' 'ey're takin' some shots with 'em launchers at the 'Ellblasters. 'Em missiles are deadly, an' 'at proves it by knockin' out two 'Ellblasters – knocks 'em out an' 'alfway 'cross the map, I mean to say! Asurmen 'olds 'is position, points 'is Bloody Twins at Adrax and unloads 'em. An' manages to blast a couple'a 'oles in 'im too, you 'ate to see it!

And the Dark Reapers up in the ruins are shooting down into the remains of Tac Squad Beta, missiles just crashing into those Salamanders. That's the end of that squad, leaving the two captains solo in the foreground of the fight! And it looks like Warhammerer Jon and Warhammerer Ivan are reassessing their target objectives here, I guess we'll find out if there's any changes.



Salamander Infernus Marines

Don't look like it, Audie, but we'll see 'ow the game turns out. Not sayin' I 'member at all what the original objectives wuz, a'course. Warhammerer Ivan's Oath 'a Moment gets moved onto the Dark Reapers on the ground, which'll 'elp that lone Cap'n as 'e shoots right int'em! Or not, don't look like it did anythin' to 'em. I 'bout to forgot the Infernus Squad back there, but now 'ey're movin' up toward Asurmen, an' I'm worryin' a bit for 'at Phoenix Lord.

And they are taking those Pyreblasters to him, Zagdur! I don't think he can withstand that much fire, phoenix or not. Down he goes, and too bad for the Aeldari! Now the Hellblasters take their shots as they move away from the base of

that hill, shooting into the Dark Reaper Alpha Squad up in those ruins. Looks like another loss for the Aeldari as three of those Reapers fall to the flames.

Th'Intercessors are makin' a move on the point 'tween 'em and the Fire Dragons, but still stayin' outta melee range with 'em. You know I always get sad when 'ere ain't a lot'a fights, Audie, but 'ere's been plenty 'a excitement in this WAGH for me. A handful 'a shots into the Fire Dragons an' three 'a 'em go down! But looks like no chargin' an' no krumpin' from Warhammerer Ivan this go 'round again, more's the pity.

Not a lot of movement for Warhammerer Jon this time, but his Fire Dragons move to try and hit the Intercessors with those Fusion Guns. But first, they toss a grenade at them, and while the ground takes the bulk of the damage, one of the Salamanders gets tossed to the side, and I know what it means to see a helmet still on but turned backwards, Zagdur, he's out of commission! Now they take the shot with their weapons, and – ooof, two Intercessors fall! He's evening the odds pretty well, all told.

The Dark Reaper Beta Squad unload into Adrax, an' I'll be a T'au's toothbrush if it weren't 'nuff to drop the big man 'imself! I s'pose 'ere's only so much abuse even a Space Marine Cap'n ken take. An' now the Rangers move to take the point inside Warhammerer Jon's deployment zone, but 'ey take a shot at 'is last cap'n up. Smart lad, 'e drops to the groun' an' manages t'save 'is 'ide. Good 'e's wearin' green already, innit, makes 'im blend in nice 'ere.

I just saw missiles from that Dark Reaper Squad in the ruins, headed for the Infernus Squad, and . . . well, I never thought carrying that much accelerant was the best policy, and I was just proven right as three of the Infernus boys get smashed by the concussive force! Oh, and they're advancing now, heading toward – well, it doesn't matter what they're heading towards, since the Dark Reapers in the ruins took their motion as an opportunity to fire some overwatch! Those missiles take out the last two members of that Infernus Squad, and that's that.

An' the Intercessors are movin' to close some distance to the Fire Dragons, firing bolt rifles into 'at mass'a fire-aspected lads. Only manage to knock one down, but 'at might be 'nuff, even if I 'spect the Intercessors are worried 'bout how close 'ey got. Looks like the cap'n's movin' off the point 'e was on to cross into enemy territory, firin' off at the Dark Reaper Beta Squad – takes one down, but still some trouble for 'im if 'e ain't careful!

The Hellblasters decide to follow and take over the point he just left, holding it to hopefully get some value from it as the battle seems to be coming to its end. The Captain charges right into the Dark Reapers on the ground, swinging away with that sword and

Mixed Heritage

Mixing and Maxis

By: Scott Ashcroft

manages to take most of them out! One Dark Reaper left on the ground, and they look like they are NOT in good shape, Zagdur! Looks like they're gonna fight this out to the end!

It's a close WAGH, that's f'sure! An' the las' Dark Reaper clap back 'at 'em, but 'e's too wriggly for 'em, ain't it a shame? But the Intercessors are runnin' up on the Fire Dragons, better to burn out rather 'an fade away, innit? Swingin' on 'em with as 'ard as possible, but once again, 'at Aeldari armor 'holds steady.

The Fire Dragons are fighting back, and by the Emperor! They knock down the last of the Intercessor squad, I did NOT see that coming, Zagdur, not even a little! The Rangers and the Fire Dragons look like they've found something unexpected on those points, and are settling in to try and cleanse whatever mess is there – likely viscera – rather than taking any shots at Warhammerer Ivan's forces.

The Dark Reapers blast into 'em 'Ellblasters, and bloody 'em a bit even if all a'em stay up. The cap'n takes his swing at the Dark Reapers again, an' looks like it's the end for 'em! Down in the dirt – wait a secon', wait a secon'! Audie, 'at lad's stabbin' with the las' 'a 'is strength! 'At's the kinda fightin' spirit wot sends a chill down m'spine! But it ain't matter a squig's squog, 'at armor's too strong.

And there's a buzzer, and what a time for it! Now it's time to tally up the score, from both holding the different points and how much of their missions they've each managed. I don't know about you, Zagdur, but I got too caught up in the fighting to keep an eye on what they were trying to accomplish.

Gotta 'ope 'ey're honest, I s'pose, Audie, cause you know I ain't ever been good at maths. I'm jus' 'appy it was a quality fight today, you know me.

I do indeed, Zagdur, an' it's good Orks don't need to do much math if you're their shining example. Oh, it looks like they've figured out the results, I'm going to wager it's a close one. And I'm right, it looks like our winner today is . . . Warhammerer Jon, 32 to 31!

Too bad for Warhammerer Ivan, but 'is Salamanders just couldn't pull out a win! But 'ey fought 'ard and maybe next time it'll be a win for 'em – never know how a WAGH'll wrap up. 'Less it's got Orks, 'at is.

I like to dream too, Zagdur! In any case, our time's up too! We hope you join us next time for another Battle Report! As always, I'm Audelan Bloodfury.

An' I'm Zagdur! An' we'll see you again in the grim darkness 'a the far future! ■



Aeldari Amongst the Graves

You were born into two different worlds. Perhaps you began your life with a single parent, growing up under their watchful gaze until you reached a certain age and then sent away to live with the other. Maybe your village was raided the season before you were born and your mother was carried away by the invaders, or you grew up in a metropolitan city in a stable, loving home. No matter the circumstances, you were not like the other children and that difference affects you to this day.

Occasionally, new names are established for some of mixed heritage: the child of a dwarf and a halfling might be called a Tallfellow, perhaps your parents' lineage is elven and tiefling, so as a youngster you were teased and called a Fiendling. Whatever your personal history, your childhood was difficult at best; not fitting in with school-mates, cousins teasing you. In general you retain the most striking physical characteristics of your parents: angular elven features, smaller orcish tusks, tiny fiendish horn/fail, the stone-like skin of your goliath parent. In the end, you are a product of two worlds.

Type: Humanoid

Size: Small or Medium

Speed: 30 feet

Ability Score bonus: +1 to two different ability scores.

Saving Throws: Choose three.

Skills: Choose two.

Special: Do NOT choose one particular species, see below.

Special: Choose two compatible species to have been your parents.

Example: Human/Elf to make a Half-elf or Goliath/Orc to make a Half-orc. Your GM will determine which combinations are likely or possible.

Special: Gain the following abilities as your racial benefits due to your parents' lineage.

Tougher than most: Once per week you can take the full benefit of a Long Rest in the time of a Short Rest.

Ancestral Traits: Choose two species-specific abilities from your parents' species lists, with the following exception: Versatile.



Example: Half-Elf

Type: Humanoid

Parents: Human and Elf

Size: Medium (5'6"-6' tall)

Speed: 30 feet

Ability Score bonus: +1 Dexterity, + Charisma

Saving Throws: Dexterity, Intelligence, Charisma

Skills: Stealth, Persuasion

Tougher than Most: See above

Specials:

(Human) Skilled: as per the feat.

(Human) Resourceful: You gain Heroic Inspiration whenever you finish a Long Rest.

(Elven) Darkvision: You have Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

(Elven) Fey Ancestry: You have Advantage on saving throws you make to avoid or end the Charmed condition.

Example: Half-Orc

Type: Humanoid

Parents: Goliath and Orc

Size: Medium (7' tall)

Speed: 30 feet

Ability Score bonus: +1 Strength, +1 Constitution

Saving Throws: Strength, Constitution, Wisdom

Skills: Intimidation, Athletics

Tougher than Most: See above

Specials:

(Goliath) Large Form: Starting at character level 5, you can change your size to Large as a Bonus Action if you're in a big enough space. This transformation lasts for 10 minutes or until you end it (no action required). For that duration, you have Advantage on Strength checks, and your Speed increases by 10 feet. Once you use this trait, you can't use it again until you finish a Long Rest.

(Goliath) Powerful Build: You have Advantage on any ability check you make to end the Grappled condition. You also count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity.

(Orc) Adrenaline Rush: You can take the Dash action as a Bonus Action. When you do so, you gain a number of Temporary Hit Points equal to your Proficiency Bonus. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Short or Long Rest.

(Orc) Darkvision: You have Darkvision with a range of 120 feet. ■

Sponge Bath

Using Washes and Sponges

- Jasper Troncoso

Whether you are a casual or a frequent tabletop player, we can all agree that painting miniatures can be daunting for a lot of people. Getting them ready for your campaigns or battles is not always optimal if you have many things going on as an adult. Maybe you feel like your skill level isn't good enough to make your models look good, and as a result, they often end up unpainted, piling up in a corner. I have a solution for you! Casual or not, this technique I'm about to show you can save you a lot of time and frustration without sacrificing quality. I'm speaking of none other than using a makeup sponge. This tool seems to have taken the internet by storm in recent months, but painting using a sponge traces back to the Renaissance period. Full-time miniature painters like me have been using these sponges for years as one of our secret weapons to making impressive paint jobs in a short time, followed up with some detail work using washes, and inks with a paint brush. Let's get to the tutorial. Please be advised that this is a tabletop-ready level of painting, but you are free to follow these steps and then take it further by implementing more advanced techniques to elevate your paint job if you choose to.

Step 1: Get yourself a container of these types of makeup sponges. These can be purchased at your local beauty supply store, or if you don't have access to one, Amazon has them in all shapes and quantities.



Step 2: After priming your model/models, base coat them using a paint brush or an airbrush with the main color of your choice. I recommend using the three-color method: a Dark(base color), a mid tone, and a highlight color. Let the paint dry fully between colors, and start applying them in the order from darkest to brightest.

You've already covered 100% of the model with the base coat. The next application color, which would be the second brightest from your base coat, is the one

you will use to cover 80% of the model. Using the sponge makes this step very easy and fast. Simply dab the sponge on all of the exposed parts of the miniature and feather those colors in with the darkest areas of the model, such as under the neck, between the legs, and under the arms, and any part where the light wouldn't hit from above. The pictures below show the base coat of this model, followed by the application of the second color, which was 80% covered, followed by a darker wash color to create more depth and shadows.



The base coat covered 100%



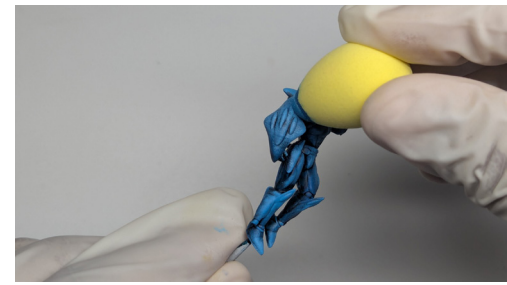
Dark wash over the base coat, covering the model 100% as well.



Here is the second color I chose to cover 80% of the model



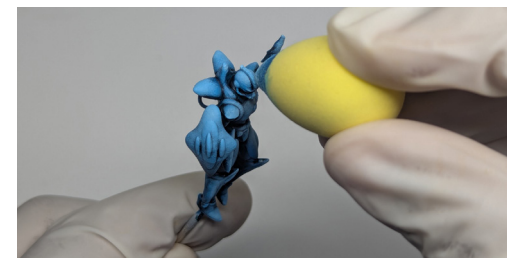
This is how your model should look after covering 80% of it with the secondary lighter color.



Step 3: For this step, I suggest using a bright color to make the highlights only on the most raised areas for that additional eye-catching finish. In the same way the secondary color was applied, dip the tip of your sponge and dab that color to the



raised areas. This coverage should only be 20% of the model.



20% of the model painted, only the most raised areas.

Step 4: As a final and complementary step, dilute any wash of your choice and cover the entire model, this wash with locking in all of the colors together, giving it a more cohesive finish. But you are welcome to leave the model as is. I follow these steps every time I need to paint a miniature for a game or an army that has 5 or more miniatures in it. Although this is not a display quality, it is helpful if you are aiming for a tabletop-ready paint job that looks like you airbrushed your miniatures. A conversation starter for sure.

Before applying the wash



Step 5: If you chose to apply the wash, let it fully dry, and finish off the model with any additional details and accessories it might have with a paintbrush, a thin coat of varnish, and you are done and ready to play.

The model, after the wash was applied,



and some small details were painted with a paintbrush. The base was also painted only using a sponge.

Final thoughts, you can save time, energy, and still get very satisfying results. Painting in this method, painting miniatures doesn't have to be scary or time-consuming. The point of this hobby is to have fun and reduce burnout as much as possible. Painting this way is guaranteed satisfaction. Now you can go and take on all of those unpainted characters and finally bring them to life. ■

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Tuesday:	Dragon's Lair The GuardTower West The Warp Gate	Player vs. Player Night Warhammer 40K Magic The Gathering Modern 7:00PM MTG Free Cube Drafting 7:30pm
Wednesday:	Grimm's Keep The GuardTower East Dragon's Lair The Warp Gate Marche of Tirnewydd The GuardTower West	Weekly Foam Fighting Practice Pokemon Warhammer Kill Team & BattleTech Magic The Gathering Pioneer 7:00PM Digimon 6:30PM Weekly Gathering Meeting & Armored and Rapier Practice Heroclix
Thursday:	Dragon's Lair The GuardTower West The FORGE Tavern The GuardTower East Canton of Pfedersdat The Warp Gate	Paint and Take Crisis Protocol Thursday Trivia Night Youth DnD Armored and Rapier practice Commander Open Play
Friday:	The GuardTower East The Soldierly Dragon's Lair The Warp Gate	Magic The Gathering MTG Casual Commander Friday Night Magic Casual Commander Magic The Gathering Draft 7:00PM Magic The Gathering Modern 7:30PM
Saturday:	The Soldierly The GuardTower West Dragon's Lair	MTG Casual Commander Warhammer 40K Youth Pokémon, All ages Pokémon, Lorcan*
Sunday:	Barony of the Middle Marches The GuardTower East The GuardTower West The Warp Gate	Armored and Rapier practice Magic The Gathering Open Play DnD Bolt Action Sunday Warhammer 40k Open Play Pokemon League 6-8PM