

JIMCON XV

(SPRING 2010)

BY CHAOS STEVE
AND EVIL MIKE

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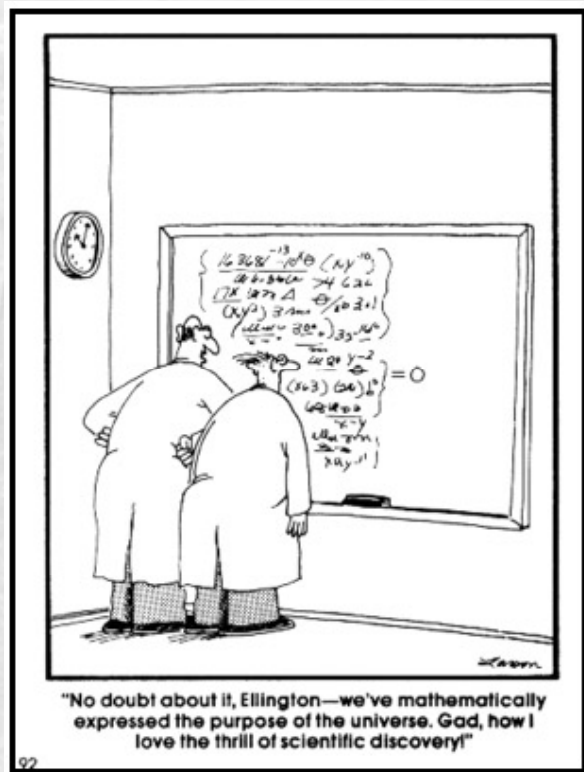
Another Jimcon has come and gone. I've said this before but...if Einstein had been a gamer, I'm sure he would have discovered that as you fill time with games, time begins to approach the speed of light. The equation would look something like this Far Side...

...or maybe not.

As usual, the committed, hardcore gamers arrive early Friday morning at Jim's house. The uncommitted gaming sloths arrived much later. (This is not to imply in any way that any gamer looks like a sloth.) After the opening ceremonies--which is basically everyone loading up the fridge with food and drinks--we began playing our first game.

DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

Our first game was *Descent*. Ben was the evil, maniacal overlord. He also ran



Ben shoots flame at the heroes!

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the game for us. Owen, Evil Mike, Jim, and I (Steve) were the courageous, loot-grabbing heroes. Evil Mike spilled water on Ben's *Descent* pieces...again. Not as bad as the first time as nothing needed to be replaced this time. I don't know if Owen was the first to die, but he was the only one killed by a kobold. (Owen swears it was a kobold horde, but I say a single figure doth not a horde make.) We all died at one time or another during the game. Evil Mike died twice. This game was made slightly more difficult by the fact that the caves we were looting...er, I mean saving the Duke in, were collapsing. At the end of Ben's turn a piece of the board disappeared. (That's how I died. One of Ben's evil minions knocked me back into an area just before it collapsed.) Owen did get the last laugh on the Kobolds though. At the end of the game,

it was Owen's character that killed the "undying" Kobold leader. Way to come back Owen!

I CHOO CHOO CHOOSE RAILROAD TYCOON

Next we played *Railroad Tycoon*, a game of cunning strategy as you build your railroad network from the ground up! We all started out well. Owen and I were vying for the northeast. Jim had taken the southeast, while Ben and Mike the Younger concentrated on the Midwest. For most of the game, Owen, Jim and I were the point leaders. Mike the Younger and Ben had their own contest going on for who would NOT be last. To Mike's credit, he managed to wrangle out a significant amount of points without ever issuing a single share. Most of the rest of us had 3 to



Evil Mike's Magical Mug!

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6 shares outstanding at the end of the game. In the end, it was Owen who killed us by completing a Western Link that connected back to New York City. This earned him 20 points and placed him as the winner...by about 20 points. His second-to-last play was to screw me out of 12 points. I'm not bitter though. It was the right play and had our roles been reversed, I would have made the same move. Although even had I got those points, I still couldn't have beaten him. I did manage to come in second; followed by Jim, Mike the Younger and Ben.

A KING FOR A DAY

The last game of the day was *Kingsburg*. The players are all lords sent by the king to administrate over frontier territories. The game is played over five years as players gain resources by influencing the king's advisors. With

these resources the players build structures and train troops to gain the most victory points. From the start Jim was out in front. Sometimes, he was waay out in front. The invading armies at the end of each year set many of us back as we lost resources and structures. Even after losing 9 VPs right at the end of the game, Jim still won. I came in second...again, followed by Owen and Mike the Younger. Ben came in last...again.

That evening we watched *Zombieland*. Never forget Rule #4: Doubletap. [Evil Mike's Note: And rule #40, kill Steve.]

Saturday morning, while everyone was waking up, Ben, Mike the Younger, and I played *Kachina*. *Kachina* is a tile playing game based around Hopi Indian spirits...and those spirits were with me nearly the whole game. It was down to the last play of the game. I had set



Bob...meet Ellen.

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up a nice 7 point score for my last play. Ben's last tile was the usually worthless hummingbird tile. Unfortunately I was so intent on my play, I over looked a vulnerable spot on the board where a hummingbird tile could score big. Ben took it, edging his points ahead of mine and winning the game. Had I played my tile where Ben had played his, I still would have earned my 7 points, but I would have won the game. I should mention that Ben and I had played this game many times and it's a game where experience counts. Even without playing before, Mike the Younger did very well; coming in a close third.

THE HOLY GRAEL

This was the regular two-year installment of my *50 fathoms* game. After some mercantile wheeling and dealing in the city of Kiera, the characters

undertake a quest to find the holy leader of an ancient order--an ancient order that just happens to produce all of the gunpowder for the Kieran emperor. The holy one was heading to a particular location in the Flotsam Sea to search out an ancient artifact said to bring blessings to those who own it. The players set sail for the Flotsam Sea and soon encountered storms, sea weed demons, and giant sea worms. It should be noted that Owen's Doreen is known for his tendency to finish off sorely wounded creatures, thus earning bennys from the coup. In this case, Ron's two-fisted swordsman finished off any creature near the Doreen, much to Owen's consternation.

The ships arrived at the area in the Flotsam Sea and found a strange island. They could see that at the island's center was a building with a



The Monkapes Cometh!

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golden doom. [Mike's Note: I assume Steve meant "dome" here, but doom is funnier.] They decided to head for the building. Once on the beach they were attacked by a pair of giant monkapes. The monkapes nearly killed poor Ellen's Air mage with a well placed tree stump. Mike the Younger's character amazingly stood toe-to-toe with one of the monkapes and survived. No he didn't harm it. He just stood there trembling. After killing the monkapes the party continued inland and found the building was surrounded by a fire-filled chasm. There was a bridge...a rickety, shaky ol' bridge. Jim's Kraken would have fallen to his death after critically failing his agility roll to get across the bridge except Evil Mike's character's quick thinking and his possession of an air stone saved the kraken's life.

Once inside the golden-domed building

they found the holy one. Unfortunately he was under the influence and in the possession of the Eye of Caribdu. A mind altering, wish granting artifact of great power. After much discussion they eventually convinced the Holy One to come back with them. Once off the island the Eye turned into a normal stone (and rolled into the sea.) So much for dreams of grandeur.

MORE PIRATES THAN HUMANLY POSSIBLE

Next, Owen continued his Pirates of the Spanish Main game. We began by rescuing the lovely Yvette Hellion, played by Ellen. During the daring rescue we lost two of her companions to the sharks. Some might say my character had something to do with that. I blame Ron's character, Magumbo, for



Just before Alex and I critically fail our rolls

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being so heavily muscled that merely by shoving him aside he tipped the boat over. Yevette was wounded so Evil Mike's doctor took care of her... and critically failed. *[Evil Mike's Note: I did finally heal her...it's just I never worked on a woman before, so I had to figure out where everything was at!]*

We had some unfinished business in Port Royal. We had to ransom the brother of the last woman we saved. Apparently we are always saving persons in a dress...uh, distress. We were to meet the kidnapper in a bar. Once there Evil Mike's character critically failed a notice roll and mistakenly attacked the person we were to meet. All the while, Yvette was dancing on tables to distract the other patrons, and Alex's character (Alex is Evil Mike's son) critically failed an agility roll and fell out of the bathroom with his pants around his ankles. After many apologies and a little footwork, we got back the brother that was kidnapped.

The plot thickened though when we learned the kidnappers had stolen the brother's treasure map. Not having anything else to do, we track down the kidnappers in Tortuga. Their ship laid at anchor in the harbor. We silently boarded and after a perilous fight, took over the ship. We sold both ships, a letter of Marque, and everything else we had to get a new, bigger ship. On this new ship we ventured off following the treasure map. It led to an island where we would "...find the truth in the sand." We did find truth in the sand; written on old wooden planks. One plank was different and eventually led us back to the home of the original owner of the treasure map. The home was long gone, destroyed. Sailing around the coastline where the home used to be, we spotted a cave at the water line.

Using small boats we navigated the cave, did much underwater swimming, and even devised a waterproof flash powder keg. Eventually we discovered what must have been the caves directly under the house proper. They were filled with all manner of things... and even some treasure. My character went on ahead to explore only to be surrounded by ghostly undead pirates from the past. *[Evil Mike's Note: Steve likes to make this sound like something new he's discovered, but he's been running ahead and getting his @\$\$ whooped since he started playing RPGs!]* The number one rule in exploring is: DON'T GO OFF ALONE. I paid dearly for it, but in the end some unknown person in our party saved me. Ok, it was Evil Mike's character. With his help I survived to enjoy the bounty of treasure we retrieved from the caves! Of course we exited the caves to find two ships surrounding our one. We ended on this cliffhanger. *[Evil Mike's Note: Here is where Ben got*



This is the trouble that's coming

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captured by the English, from whom he was apparently running.]

Oh, I need to mention one more thing about this game. Ellen got 4 jokers during the game (maybe more) and Ron got at least one. All-in-all the James's got all of the jokers during the entire (8 hour) game! No one else got one. *[Evil Mike's note: Ok, that's not exactly true, although I think nobody got one when it mattered!]*

DESCENT INTO MADNESS

It may look from the title that we played Descent again. We didn't. Sunday morning Evil Mike ran us through his modern day horror game which took us down into the caves under Mammoth Cave. I got two jokers during this game. On both occasions I rolled critical failures. Even jokers couldn't change my luck.

Evil Mike is a clever guy. Here is the

list of the characters from Mike's game: Capt. Morgan, Jack Daniels, Old Grand Dad, Jim Beam, Johnny Walker, Adm. Nelson, & José Cuervo. (I think Mike drank his way to this game.) Each of us was a member of a team of cavers hired to search and recover another group of cavers lost in the caves deep under Mammoth Cave. It wasn't long before characters were yelling and screaming. This started about the time the albino alligator rushed out of the underground river to grab a bearer. (Oh yeah, we had bearers. No reason to carry the extra load ourselves!) I, being heroic, naturally dived in to save him... and did. Resurfacing dragging the alligator and carrying the injured bearer back to safety. Sure the other bearer died at the hands of the alligator, but then again, they were just bearers. Mr. Walker (Jim) required that we measure the beast from tail to snout. We ignored him.



The croc is devouring our bearer!

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After finding some dead cavers with strange injuries and then a horrific scene of an entire room filled with blood and dead bodies, we decided to find a nice place to rest. During this time Ben's character was sneaking around when Ron's character caught him.

Ben said, "But I thought you were all asleep?"

"That's what my Stealth roll of 10 makes you believe." Quipped Ron.

In one of the best scenes of the game, Alex's character's 9mm glock goes missing. Ben's character walks suspiciously out alone in the cave network. (There is always something suspicious about Ben's characters.) Owen and Mike [*Evil Mike's Note: This should be Owen and Alex. Evil Mike was running the game!*] take after him to recover the missing glock only to find, after a vigorous search, that he doesn't have it. They then come back and search

everyone, but the glock is missing. Much later, in the final scene against the underground "morlocks" and their master, Jim's character mysteriously pulls a glock and begins ineptly shooting things.

That final scene was full of surprises as Owen's Character, who had a death wish, pulled the pins on all of his grenades and walks into the morlock's master. Both are injured--Owen is bleeding out--but neither are killed. In the end we did manage to kill the master and escape. We weren't able to rescue anyone and very nearly got ourselves killed in the process. Another horrific end to a great horror game.

This year's Spring Jimcon went by like a speeding train being pulled by a FTL rocket. Nevertheless it was filled with great fun, great games, and great friends. I so look forward to the next one in the fall. Thanks Jim, as always, for hosting!

