

Dungeons and Dragons:

A dangerous diversion?

By Caroline Brown

How would you like to use magical powers to turn that ex-boyfriend or girlfriend who dumped you last month into a toad?

Or, would you like to throw that thoughtful roommate, who every morning during the entire fall semester turned on the radio at 8 a.m. into a pit of starving ants?

Acting out fantasies of fun or revenge is a big part of the appeal of the game *Dungeons and Dragons*. But for some people, this seemingly innocent escape from reality can turn threatening.

Take the example of a highly intelligent, but emotionally unstable college student who lost himself in the *D&D* world.

According to a Nov. 5, 1984 College Press Service article, James Dallas Egbert III, a 16-year-old freshman student at Michigan State University may have played the *D&D* fantasy too far and committed suicide.

Even though Egbert's suicide was probably influenced by other factors such as "his

intelligence, difficulty in relating to older classmates, and sexual preferences," William Dear, the detective whom the boy's parent's hired to find him when he disappeared, thinks *D&D* influenced his suicide.

Dear explained in his book, *Dungeon Master*, "Egbert was very involved in *Dungeons and Dragons*. Many of the kids who play this game don't realize it's a fantasy and become so involved.

"I've heard since this case from two other women who say their children, who were involved with the game, committed suicide," said Dear.

"I'm not saying the game is inherently dangerous, but kids with emotional problems should not play it," said Dear.

And, Magoon feels the same way about *D&D*.

"I see where it's possible for him to be so wrapped up in a character that it would filter into reality," Magoon said.

"Sometimes, you can get real involved and that's where the real problems occur," he said.

D&D consists of books

such as the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, dice, and a dungeon master.

Magoon suggested that a group of four or six people makes the game more fun.

Pete Hammet, another UNCA student, plays *Dungeon Master* for the group. Magoon called the dungeon master the "ominous" character.

Magoon explained a roll of the dice determines each character's make-up.

Magoon said the group tries to get a variety of qualities such as: wisdom, strength, dexterity, intelligence, and charisma.

The *D&D* books describe what characters to choose.

For example, the group playing may consist of a human, a gnome, a dwarf, an elf, etc.

The character may also be a fighter, a magic user, or a cleric.

Magoon explained that *D&D* then sends the character off for an adventure. The character should expect to meet dangers during the journey.

The dungeon master

isn't the only element which sounds "ominous" in the game.

"You may run into dangerous creatures. You have to fight to get out of that, or use your brains," said Magoon.

That's why it's so important to have a variety of characters in *D&D*. For instance, a magic user casts magic spells, a cleric uses his brains, and a fighter uses his physical abilities to ward off dangerous creatures.

But, even if the fighter has to use his physical power, it is only in the character's mind. The players use no physical force.

According to Magoon, the characters in the group move through "certain levels of experiences," and the object of *D&D* is to "live."

"The game takes a long time. It can never end as long as the character doesn't die. Then if the character does die, you can always get reincarnated. We stay up until all hours of the night," said Magoon.

"I don't think *D&D*



causes psychological problems. But, if you already have psychological problems, then you could go off into a tangent," said Magoon.

In fact, Magoon said he heard one story in which *D&D* supposedly influenced a high-school student's suicide.

"A couple of high school kids played *D&D* and a very high leveled magic user got a curse cast on him by a more pow-

In hot pursuit of trivial amusement

By Anna Wilson

Trivia fans unite! This Christmas is a trivia buff's fantasy.

Manufacturers have flooded the market with all kinds of trivia games. And the most wonderful thing of all is with the flood came lower prices.

The first *Trivial Pursuit* games sold anywhere from \$30-\$40 and now Sears offers them for \$22.99! This may be the lowest price in town. Even K-Mart sells theirs for \$24.77.

But K-Mart has a variety of games available—and what an array. The days of the one and only *Trivial*

Pursuit game is over.

First is the *View-Master 3-D Trivia Quiz*. This little gem is only \$14.96 and it has two skill levels for younger and older kids (ages 4-9). The good news is the 3-D viewer is included. (Will wonders never cease?)

And speaking of wonders, the legend lives on—in a trivia game. Yes, folks Elvis Presley has his own trivia game called *The Golden Illustrated Treasury: 1935-1985*. Too bad the box had plastic wrap around it—to keep the curious fan from ripping it open.

But let's not forget about another legend. The Beatles have their own game also—Elvis can't get anything on these limeys. *Beatlemania: The Illustrated Treasury* is put out by the same manufacturer as the Elvis game and K-Mart

sells both for \$24.96.

Another game dealing with rock and roll has the original title of *Rock Trivia*.

Making the transition to television, K-Mart has the *Golden Trivia Game: MASH Edition*. The game's description reads; "A madcap marathon of MASH memorabilia." Isn't that a great line?

By the way, who gave Hawkeye his nickname? How old was Radar when he enlisted? For the answers, buy the game.

Entertainment Tonight didn't get left out of this lucrative business either. Their game *Entertainment Tonight: The Trivia Game* grades their questions on levels of difficulty—the higher the difficulty the faster the win.

Brendles has some different games. Two of the

most interesting are *People Weekly: The Trivia Game with Personality* and the *TV Guide Trivia Game*.

People's game reads: "The rich. The famous. The powerful. They're today's people—making today's news." And it's only \$19.99. However, the *National Enquirer* is much less.

TV Guide's game says: "Nothing mirrors our life and times like the electronic eye of TV. For over 30 years TV Guide has been writing the book on TV every week." Doesn't someone wish they had used this on a recent research paper?

Ripley's Believe It or Not Trivia Game looks like a lot of fun and no one has to put up with Jack Palance either! The zebra has a black body with



TONY LEDBETTER, Jackie Youngblood, Cheryl McDaris, Tim Riddle, and Susan Benfield relax before exams with a rousing game of *Trivial Pursuit*. Staff photo by Anna Wilson