

Encumbrance

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I was a walking around the SilverCon just as happy as could be Saturday morning when I noticed it. People were looking at me strangely, as if something was strange about me. I casually checked my fly, no that wasn't it. Could it have been the stories of my drunken exploits the night before, naw I didn't do anything that bad. As I went through a mental check list of all the possible things that could have brought on the uneasy glances I was getting, it dawned on me. I was a gamer.

I know in the past I've been a little paranoid if not just plain defensive about my hobby, but that wasn't it.

It crept up in to my conscious like a spider slowly creeping to the center of it's web (Yech!). People must wonder why I do this stuff so much, what makes gamers so fanatical anyway. If you've never wonder about this well heck I was making a guess, like you've never been wrong.

Why I got into gaming by Karl H. Kreder. Well it all started when I was ten years old. A friend of mine got the Dungeons & Dragons boxed set and I was hooked. He was a few years younger than me and was having a hard time understanding the rules so I sat down and read through them. Finally a game that was worthy of my attention. I wasn't some simple game like Life or Monopoly, and took you to a world where your only boundary was imagination. At ten years old I had plenty of that and over the next year I emersed myself in it. Soon it was the rage all over the school everyone was playing and other games



followed suit. Top Secret a game of modern espionage, Gamma world a science fiction game of a post apocalyptic future. By junior high I was totally hooked, and spent my lunch hour traveling to far off planets or traversing dark dungeons. I also had a love for history and with my experience with role-playing I began wargaming. World War II simulation at first, then into anything the Avalon Hill could crank out.

I like to call those days between 1979 to about 1983 the golden age of gaming. These were when the first games came out and where breaking all the new ground. Where it seemed to me a whole subculture sprang up overnight. I remember going into my favorite game store one day back in 1984 or something like that. There was this little boy telling his mom about how great the game he was pointing to on the shelf was. He reminded me so much of myself I couldn't help but stare and smile. Then his mom turned to me with a puzzled expression and said to me. "Which of these games is safe do you know?" I couldn't help but chuckle, I went on to explain

what each game was about, how complex they were, and what was probably over the little boys head. She thanked me and bought one of games for her boy, she seemed a little more confident that her child would not end up a devil worshipper or a serial killer.

Lately I sit around and wonder what is that draws me to these games, am I a loser who can't relate to normal folks. You'll have to tell me, I think it

has to do with possibilities. I like exploring possibilities, you know like what would happen if a vampire drank the Blood of a person from Amber (A world chronicled in Roger Zelazny's Amber chronicles). Could he walk the pattern (inquiring minds want to know). I also like to explore relationships between people and within individuals. A little more complex than my original reason for role-playing. There is the appeal of escapism and just getting together with friends that I also enjoy.

My last reason may seem rather odd to people, but I think it's important. I know gaming, I know a great deal about gaming as a matter of fact. I get a shot of pride when people refer to me if they ever have a question about it. Yeah there are other people that I know more than me about a particular game but not about any others. I want to assure you (and myself) that I'm not patting myself on the back, or saying that I'm the definitive source. I'm just proud of the fact that I have a great deal of experience in this field. It's nice to take pride in the small things sometimes, ya know.