Shoemaker Village

Volume 37 - April 2000



The Knights of the Square Table and *Evan's Quest* continue! Don't miss out on the latest installments of both novels!

Staff unveils revamped website to expand the *Village* onto the Internet in addition to the print version! See the Editor's Pages for details!

PLUS!

Should articles be censored? Find out in The Discussion Forum!

Voting for the *1999 - Best Article of the Year* award begins April 10!

Amanda Dilks takes over as Assistant Editor after Matthew Care's resignation!

Dog Fiasco in *Going to the Dogz*!

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Editor's Pages

Information you should know

Thank you for reading the April issue of *Shoemaker Village*! There's a lot of news to report, so let's start off right away with what's new this month.

First, you may have noticed that this issue arrived four days behind schedule. This was due to the fact that the Editor received notice that he was to attend a field trip scheduled on the day on which all formatting prior to publication needed to be completed. Unfortunately the notice was not received until after school had concluded on the day before the field trip. As a result, he was forced to make up work that he could have planned for had he received notice at least a day in advance. Though many of the attendees of these trips have complained to the guidance department about the short notice that is received, there has been no improvement in two years of suggestions. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

As you may recall, Matthew Care, the former Assistant Editor of the *Village*, stepped down from his position on February 29, just before last month's publication of the *Village*. Amanda Dilks, previously a story contributor, has agreed to step up and fill the position of Assistant Editor. In the future, Amanda will be handling the Discussion Forum, as well as making contributions to various other sections of the *Village*. On behalf of the *Village* staff, I would like to welcome Amanda to her new post. We're sure you will see many great additions to the *Village* over the next few months. Amanda has composed a letter of acceptance, which you will find on page 5 of this month's issue.

Also, we would like to welcome Kyle Daigle, from Vernon, Connecticut, who has agreed to contribute an article to this month's publication of the *Village*. The editors met Kyle through the Internet, after he had seen the *Village* website. We would like to welcome Kyle as one of our story contributors.

Speaking of our website, over the past month, the editors of *Shoemaker Village* have been planning to unveil a new website that, unlike in the past, would be updated more regularly and receive more visitors, as well as contain a wealth of information that has never been and will never be published in the paper edition of the *Village*. With the attention from various people over the Internet joining the *Village* staff, it was decided that the *Village* would register a domain name for our website as well as redesign the entire format of the site.

Beginning on Monday, April 10, we will unveil our new website at **www.shoemakervillage.org**. Though the new website was originally planned to be unleashed on April 1, publication delays as described above forced us to delay its opening. Unlike the previous website, where visitors experienced slow downloads and had to put up with numerous advertisements that filled each page of the website, our new website has been designed with the reader in mind. Those of you who have been visiting our former website probably noticed that it was updated fairly regularly with the latest news, but some sections such as the Neighborhood News were unable to be updated because of limitations with our former service provider. To this end, we have

decided to host the website on the *Village* computer itself. Equipped with a cable modem connection without thousands of other users on other sites to slow it down, the new website should load in seconds.

In addition, some of our readers may be wondering why we chose the name www.shoemakervillage.org, as opposed to www.shoemakervillage.com, which was available at the time we made the decision. The reason for this is quite simple: while the .com (short for commercial) address implies that the *Village* is attempting to make money off of our subscribers, an address with an ending of .org (which is used for a non-profit organization) conveys our purpose more clearly.

With the unveiling of our new internet extravaganza, you will also be able to E-Mail any of the *Village* editors with the click of a button to voice your opinions on their articles, to show support, or simply to comment on a recent addition to the *Village*. Beginning on April 1, you can reach Stephen Sokolowski at editor@shoemakervillage.org, Amanda Dilks at amanda@shoemakervillage.org, Lori Blickley at lori@shoemakervillage.org, Daniel Burgess at flare@shoemakervillage.org, Steve Conway at conway@shoemakervillage.org, and Kyle Daigle at kyle@shoemakervillage.org. I encourage you to email our staff members with comments on their articles or to make suggestions for the *Village*.

Of course, creating a website with useful content that is updated regularly is a big challenge for our staff members to pursue. Therefore, we are still looking for a webmaster for our site. If you would be interested in helping out in maintaining the *Village* website, please email us as soon as possible. Of course, anyone who decides to help us will receive free printed issues of *Shoemaker Village* for the time they are helping.

To bring visitors to our new website, and to continue a three-year tradition, we will again be holding voting for the *1999: Best Article of the Year* award beginning on April 10 with the unveiling of the website. Readers can vote online for their favorite article in last year's publication. In addition, one lucky voter will be chosen at random to receive a *free* three-month subscription to the printed issues of the *Village*. We hope that you exercise your right to vote during the month of April. Voting will close on Monday, May 1.

Since the website will now be a valuable source of information that rivals the printed copies of the *Village*, we encourage you to visit the site frequently to keep updated with the latest news and read the latest contributions to the *Village*. Thank you in advance for your support.

In other news, *Evan's Quest* and *The Knights of the Square Table* continue this month. As stated in last month's issue, *The Knights of the Square Table* may see its end around June or July. Therefore, any suggestions as to its successor would be appreciated. You can email suggestions to editor@shoemakervillage.org. If you would be willing to contribute another work to be published in the *Village*, contact us as soon as possible. Please note that this does not have to be a novel. Any type of contribution would be appreciated and ideas for a regular column would be welcome.

The Puzzle Page has also changed again for this month. We have included a cryptogram for your solving enjoyment. However, to make it more challenging, instead of normal letters, we have used Greek letters as part of the code. Please note - this puzzle was created before the *original* publication date. Therefore, one of the dates in the puzzle is incorrect (see above for clues). To change the puzzle would have meant changing most of this month's edition of the *Village*, and that was not possible in the time we had. Of course, the solution for this puzzle will be published in next month's edition of the *Village*. Unfortunately, despite numerous requests, we were unable to recover the solution to last month's addition to the Puzzle Page, which was lost shortly after publication. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

That's about all for this month. On the next page, you'll find Amanda's letter about her new post. Thank you for reading this issue, and we hope you'll keep reading in May!

A Letter from the NEW Assistant Editor

by Amanda Dilks

Hi everyone. I'm Amanda, and I'm the new assistant editor. Many of you have known about this since the last issue, but I didn't have a chance to write any sort of letter in time for the March issue. So, you get it now! Aren't you lucky!! Most of you should know that I have been contributing to the discussion forum for about a year now, and I have also written a few short stories. You'll also remember that I have never had a picture on the acknowledgments page. This really isn't anyone's fault except mine, since I always forget to give Steve a picture of myself. Mainly this is because my last two school pictures have been so bad that I don't want to use them, and I can't find any other one to use. Hopefully sometime soon, you will see me for the first time.

I don't really know what else to say right now. You should all check out the Shoemaker Village web pages, I've seen them and they look really good. Don't give anyone the excuse that you don't have Internet access, just go to the local library, they have computers that let you get on-line. We're in the process of getting new pages designed, and I'm sure they will be even better. Be sure to read the discussion forum this month, it has some very well written articles, and the formatting is simply beautiful. (I did that part!) Thanks for taking time out to read my letter, I'm sure you're glad it's not as long as Matt's was!

Acknowledgments

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TOTAL NUMBER OF CURRENT READERS: 111

Shoemaker Village is published by The Curry Courier Publishing Group
2010 Butternut Drive
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006-1733
Internet: **www.shoemakervillage.org**
The Shoemaker Village website contains information that is not published in the magazine.

Please note the date change for next month's publication.
The May issue of Shoemaker Village will be published on Friday, May 5, 2000.
All contributions for the next issue must be received by Monday, May 1, 2000.

Upcoming topics in **The Discussion Forum:**
May 2000: [To be determined]

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Puzzle Page

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
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Neighborhood News

April 2000

UM HOOPS CELEBRATES END OF SEASON, BUT NOT WITHOUT CONTROVERSY

The Upper Moreland Hoops basketball association is now celebrating the end of yet another successful season. Ironically, however, a season that played out, unlike previous years, without any major controversy, ended with one of the most controversial games in recent memory.

Championship Day for Hoops was held on Saturday, March 25. The first game, for the under-11 girls league, ended with neighbor Ray Johnston's black team trouncing their competition by a score of 22-10.

The next game, the under-11 boys league championship, was scheduled to begin shortly after. The largest league in the organization, teams had to play through two or three playoff games to reach the championship.

In this game, the red team, sponsored by U-Pull It Auto Parts and coached by Bill Oetinger, faced off against the orange team. One of the closest games in recent memory, neither team led by more than four points throughout the entire contest.

However, as referee Henry Sokolowski reported, "This game was one of the most physical I've ever reffed in my five years of experience." This observation can be confirmed by looking at the 45 fouls that were charged to players.

"That game was out of control," Henry said. An incredible seven injuries were sustained while the game was in session. Though several were minor such as bumping heads, one team member was rushed to a local hospital after leaders of the organization feared that his wrist was broken.

With two minutes remaining in the fourth period, the game tied at 22-22, and the championship on the line, one player committed a flagrant foul during a fast break attempt, pushing an opponent into a wall, snapping his wrist. With the red team leading by two with 14.7 seconds remaining in the season, the same orange player committed another atrocious violation, picking up one of the red players and body-slamming him onto the floor, placing the game out of reach for his team.

At the end of the game, Oetinger's team emerged victorious to claim the championship with a score of 26-22.

Throughout the organization's 2000 season, there were few complaints, surprising everyone involved in the organization. That was just about forgotten, however, during the incident on March 25. "I wouldn't be surprised if that kid wasn't allowed to play next season," Henry said grimly after the game.

In related news, Jack Brodsky, a former Hoops board member, passed away on Monday, March 20. We extend our sincerest condolences to the family on their grievous loss. President Paul McCarthy will be making a donation on behalf of the organization to a charity of the family's choosing.

FIRE AT UMMS

In a rash of strange events, fires were reported in both Upper Moreland secondary schools during the month of March.

At the Upper Moreland Middle School, a stage curtain jammed during a production of the school musical *Peter Pan* on the night of Saturday, March 18, causing the cord that opens and closes the curtain to burn. White smoke caused fog-like conditions throughout the auditorium and backstage area. Nobody was hurt in the incident, but the play went on with a half-opened curtain.

At UMHS, the fire alarm sounded on Thursday, March 9, at around 12:00PM. Students scrambled for the exits, including those who were in the cafeteria at the time just sitting down to enjoy their lunches.

Firefighters arrived at the building minutes later, just in time to declare the building safe for students to reenter.

The alarm was reportedly triggered by someone pulling a wall switch somewhere on an upper floor of the building, most likely near physics teacher Timothy Hoffman's room.

This incident took place only a month after a similar happening occurred. During the school's winter concert in January, spectators were evacuated from the auditorium when someone pulled a fire alarm. The culprits for both incidents have not been found.

OTHER NEWS TIDBITS

-The Upper Moreland police, for the first time in recent memory, set up a speed trap along Pioneer Road on Friday, March 31. The trap appeared rather successful, because flashing lights were seen often as Friday-night speeders were ticketed. As you may recall, neighbors had long petitioned the police to lower the speed limit or to enforce the current one on Pioneer Road after a rash of traffic accidents in 1999.

Going to the Dogz

DOG PANDEMONIUM SHATTERS PEACEFUL DAY

When neighbor Jean Sokolowski arrived home from religious services on Sunday, March 26, she believed that it would be just another day. Her prediction was proven drastically incorrect just an hour later when neighborhood canines invaded her yard.

The first dog to break its bonds was Max, the Rorviks' dog. As you may recall, Max was spotted several times during the past year in different parts of the neighborhood. Max entered Jean's yard shortly after noon of that day, after her husband and son, Henry and Stephen, left the house to acquire some items at the local supermarket.

Jean placed a call to the Rorviks, asking them to remove their dog from the property. Before one of the members of the Rorvik family was able to arrive, however, Klaus, the Hoffmans' dog, escaped from his chain and rushed over to Jean's yard.

Attempting to control both dogs at the same time, while keeping them away from Jake, the Altimaris' dog, who was in the next yard, Christopher placed another call, this one to the Hoffman family. For several tense minutes, Jean bravely attempted to protect her property while waiting for both dogs' owners to retrieve their respective animals. Though the incident ended just a few minutes later, everyone was glad to see the situation resolved.

"I'm glad I wasn't home at the time," Henry said.

Humor from the Village Square

PROBE OF ALLEGED BINGO PAPER DUMPING (3-21-00)

TORONTO (Reuters) - Undistinguishable to the average bingo gambler, cheap and illegal U.S. bingo cards have allegedly infiltrated Canadian bingo halls, threatening Canadian jobs.

To shield against cheap foreign imports, Canada said on Monday that it is probing the possible illegal dumping of U.S. bingo paper used to make cards for the popular lottery game.

Bingo Press & Specialty Ltd., which makes 90 percent of bingo paper produced in Canada, alleges that U.S.-based Arrow International Inc. (ARRO.O) has hurt its market share, sales and profit by dumping bingo paper on the Canadian market, the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency said in a statement on Monday.

Bingo Press is a wholly-owned subsidiary of B.K. Entertainment of the U.S.. About 25 products subject to anti-dumping protection are "either under investigation or under current enforcement," said Ron

McTiernan, spokesman for the agency.

They include bicycles from Taiwan, steel from all over the world, and appliances and carpeting from the United States.

AIR FORCE MAINTENANCE LIST

Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by US Air Force pilots and the replies from the maintenance crews. "Squawks" are problem listings that pilots generally leave for maintenance crews.

Problem: "Left inside main tire almost needs replacement."
Solution: "Almost replaced left inside main tire."

Problem: "Test flight OK, except autoland very rough."
Solution: "Autoland not installed on this aircraft."

Problem #1: "#2 Propeller seeping prop fluid."
Solution #1: "#2 Propeller seepage normal."
Problem #2: "#1, #3, and #4 propellers lack normal seepage."

Problem: "The autopilot doesn't."
Signed off: "IT DOES NOW."

Problem: "Something loose in cockpit."
Solution: "Something tightened in cockpit."

Problem: "Evidence of hydraulic leak on right main landing gear."
Solution: "Evidence removed."

Problem: "DME volume unbelievably loud."
Solution: "Volume set to more believable level."

Problem: "Dead bugs on windshield."
Solution: "Live bugs on order."

Problem: "Autopilot in altitude hold mode produces a 200 fpm descent."
Solution: "Cannot reproduce problem on ground."

Problem: "IFF inoperative."
Solution: "IFF inoperative in OFF mode."

Problem: "Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick."
Solution: "That's what they're there for."

Problem: "Number three engine missing."
Solution: "Engine found on right wing after brief search."

EUROENGLISH

The British Government has now co-signed the accord with the European Union commissioners and is able to announce that agreement has been reached to adopt English as the preferred language for European science communications, rather than German, which was the other possibility. As part of the negotiations, the British government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five-year phased plan for what will be known as EuroEnglish (Euro for short).

In the first year, "s" will be used instead of the soft "c". Sertainly, sivil servants will resieve this news with joy. Also, the hard "c" will be replaced with "k". Not only will this klear up konfusion, but typewriters kan have one less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the sekond year, when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced by "f". This will make words like "fotograf" 20 per sent shorter.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkorage the removal of double letters, which have always ben a deterent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horible mes of silent "e"s in the languag is disgrasful, and they would go.

By the fourth year, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" by "z" and "w" by "v".

During ze fifz year, ze unesesary "o"

kan be dropd from vords kontaining “ou”, and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters.

After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav a reli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubls or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi tu understand ech ozer.

Ze drem vil finali kum tru.

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

In December, education officials in the borough of Islington in London, England, announced they would begin to pay 30 14-year-old students to attend classes on Saturday mornings to improve their chances of graduation. The academically borderline students would sign a four-year contract for the extra sessions, at a wage of almost $6 an hour (nearly $1 more than the minimum wage for teenagers).

A 45-year-old man was identified by police in February as the one who had recently taped as many as 100 vials of water to trees in Milwaukee and suburbs (though at press time, he had not been charged with a crime). He told police that he was testing the frequencies of radio stations because one of them had been bombarding him with signals. Though he did not explain the role of the vials, he vowed to send the test results to the FCC. The man's son, 17, said he was a good father but that sometimes he neglects his medication.

In December, the Education Ministry in Turkey asked a math publisher not to use the letters “p” and “k” in algebra equations because they could form the acronym for the rebel Kurdistan Workers Party (“PKK”). The ministry suggested instead the letters e, f, g and h.

Barely six months after the murder conviction of San Diego surgeon John Ronald Brown (whose patient died while voluntarily having a healthy leg removed), a hospital in Scotland announced that it has been the site of two similar but successful surgeries in the last three years, on patients so dissatisfied with their bodies that they have a psychological need (“apotemnophilia”) to have a healthy limb removed. Surgeon Robert Smith said he was troubled by his patients' (one British, one German) needs but ultimately performed the operations at no charge because the patients were so distraught, one having earlier shot himself in the leg to improve the chances a surgeon would agree to amputate.

GULLIBILITY VIRUS

WARNING, CAUTION, DANGER, AND BEWARE!

Gullibility Virus Spreading over the Internet!

WASHINGTON, D.C.--The Institute for the Investigation of Irregular Internet Phenomena announced today that many Internet users are becoming infected by a new virus that causes them to believe, without question, every groundless story, legend, and dire warning that shows up in their inbox or on their browser. The Gullibility Virus, as it is called, apparently makes people believe and forward copies of silly hoaxes relating to cookie recipes, email viruses, taxes on modems, and get-rich-quick schemes.

“These are not just readers of tabloids or people who buy lottery tickets based on fortune cookie numbers,” a spokesman said. “Most are otherwise normal people, who would laugh at the same stories if told to them by a stranger on a street corner.” However, once these same people become infected with the Gullibility Virus, they believe anything they read on the Internet.

“My immunity to tall tales and bizarre claims is all gone,” reported one weeping victim. “I believe every warning message and sick child story my friends forward to me, even though most of the messages are anonymous.” Another victim, now in remission, added, “When I first heard about Good Times, I just accepted it without question. After all, there were dozens of other recipients on the mail header, so I thought the virus must be true.” It was a long time, the victim said, before she could stand up at a Hoaxees Anonymous

meeting and state, “My name is Jane, and I've been hoaxed.” Now, however, she is spreading the word. “Challenge and check whatever you read,” she says.

Internet users are urged to examine themselves for symptoms of the virus, which include the following:

-the willingness to believe improbable stories without thinking
-the urge to forward multiple copies of such stories to others
-a lack of desire to take three minutes to check to see if a story is true

T. C. is an example of someone recently infected. He told one reporter, “I read on the Net that the major ingredient in almost all shampoos makes your hair fall out, so I've stopped using shampoo.” When told about the Gullibility Virus, T. C. said he would stop reading email, so that he would not become infected.

Anyone with symptoms like these is urged to seek help immediately. Experts recommend that at the first feelings of gullibility, Internet users rush to their favorite search engine and look up the item tempting them to thoughtless credence. Most hoaxes, legends, and tall tales have been widely discussed and exposed by the Internet community.

Courses in critical thinking are also widely available, and there is online help from many sources, including:

Department of Energy Computer Incident Advisory Capability at http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/CIACHoaxes.html
Symantec Anti Virus Research Center at http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/
McAfee Associates Virus Hoax List at http://vil.mcafee.com/hoax.asp
Dr. Solomons Hoax Page at http://www.nai.com/asp_set/anti_virus/library/hoaxes.asp
The Urban Legends Web Site at http://www.urbanlegends.com
Urban Legends Reference Pages at http://www.snopes.com
Datafellows Hoax Warnings at http://www.Europe.Datafellows.com/news/hoax.htm

Those people who are still symptom free can help innoculate themselves against the Gullibility Virus by reading some good material on evaluating sources, such as:

Evaluating Internet Research Sources at http://www.sccu.edu/faculty/R_Harris/evalu8it.htm
Evaluation of Information Sources at http://www.vuw.ac.nz/~agsmith/evaln/evaln.htm

Lastly, as a public service, Internet users can help stamp out the Gullibility Virus by sending copies of this message to anyone who forwards them a hoax.

This message is so important, we're sending it anonymously! Forward it to all your friends right away! Don't think about it! This is not a chain letter! This story is true! Don't check it out! This story is so timely, there is no date on it! This story is so important, we're using lots of exclamation points! For every message you forward to some unsuspecting person, the Home for the Hopelessly Gullible will donate ten cents to itself. (If you wonder how the Home will know you are forwarding these messages all over creation, you're obviously thinking too much.)

ACTUAL LIBRARY REFERENCE QUOTES

Part 1: Actual reference queries reported by American and Canadian library reference desk workers of various levels.

“Do you have books here?”

“Do you have a list of all the books written in

the English language?"

"Do you have a list of all the books I've ever read?"

"I'm looking for Robert James Waller's book, Waltzing through Grand Rapids." (Actual title wanted: "Slow Waltz in Cedar Bend.")

"Do you have that book by Rushdie: 'Satanic Nurses'?" (Actual title: "Satanic Verses")

"Where is the reference desk?" This was asked of a person sitting at a desk who had hanging above her head a sign saying "REFERENCE DESK"!

"I was here about three weeks ago looking at a cookbook that cost $39.95. Do you know which one it is?"

"Which outlets in the library are appropriate for my hair dryer?"

"Can you tell me why so many famous Civil War battles were fought on National Park Sites?"

"Do you have any books with photographs of dinosaurs?"

"I need a color photograph of George Washington [Christopher Columbus, King Arthur, Moses, Socrates, etc.]"

"I need a photocopy of Booker T. Washington's birth certificate."

"I need to find out Ibid's first name for my bibliography."

"Why don't you have any books by Ibid? He's written a lot of important stuff."

"I'm looking for information on carpal tunnel syndrome. I think I'm having trouble with it in my neck."

"Is the basement upstairs?" (Asked at First Floor Reference Desk)

"I am looking for a list of laws that I can break that would send me back to jail for a couple of months."

Part 2: Actual Reference Interviews reported by American and Canadian library reference desk workers of various levels.

Patron: "I'm looking for a book."
Mental answer 1: "Well, you're in the right place."
Mental answer 2: "Here's one." (Hand over nearest volume.)
Audible answer: "Can you be a little more specific?"

Patron: "I got a quote from a book I turned in last week but I forgot to write down the author and title. It's big and red and I found it on the top shelf. Can you find it for me?"
Mental answer: "Books classified by color are shelved downstairs in the [non-existent] third sub-basement."
Audible answer: "What were you looking for when you found the book the first time?"

In an art library:
Patron: Do you have any books on Art?
Ref: Yes. Did you have a certain artist in mind, or a period or style in mind?
Patron: No.
Ref: I guess you'll have to look through our 120,000 books and see if you find anything.
Patron: OK.

Patron: "Do you have anything good to read?"
Reference person getting her audible and mental answers mixed up: "No, ma'am. I'm afraid we have 75,000 books, and they're all duds."

Telephone patron: Do you have books on leaves?
Library worker: Nope, we keep them on shelves. (She then hung up. Can you tell she's not too fond of Reference duty?)

Caller: "I have a painting by Vincent Van Gogh. It's all blue with swirly stars on it. Can

you tell me where I can get it appraised?"
Ref.: "Sir, does it say 'Metropolitan Museum of Art' on the bottom? It does? Well, what you have there is a poster that they sell in the gift shop. I think they're about $10.00."

Patron: "I am looking for a globe of the earth.
Ref: "We have a table-top model over here."
Patron: "No, that's not good enough. Don't you have a life size?"
Ref: (after a short pause): "Yes, but it's in use right now!"

Patron: "I have to write a two-page paper on the Civil War. Can you help?"
Ref: "What aspect of the war interests you?"
Patron: "What aspect? You mean I have to choose something in particular about it? I thought I'd just write about the whole thing."

Censorship in General

Last month, I finally went over the two page mark for a Discussion Forum article. I would like to keep that going for this month as well.

I do not think censorship is way out of line. Sure people are going to curse on television - that's only natural. People have to understand that there is a time and a place for everything. "Mister Roger's Neighborhood" and "Sesame Street" are not good places for profanity. Late at night, you will see Tim Meadows, Will Ferrell, and the rest of the "Saturday Night Live" cast shout out words of profanity. Howard Stern's radio show always has profanity on it. I have never seen the show. I just hear about things by word of mouth. In my mind, there is no place for profanity at all.

As I said, television is chock full of profanity. Just look at any talk show. "The Jerry Springer Show" is a terrific example. The little beep that is used to prevent profanity from being heard on the air is still being used because of that show. The fights, the language, the weird stories - it is just like WWF without all the wrestlers. This is one show I have seen. If you haven't seen it and are looking for something to do besides count the socks in your drawer, watch that show. I do not condone the actions on that show. Heck, if I was asked to be on that show, I would not go. You would have to pay me a lot of money to get me there. I won't go into the types of topics they have on that show.

Censorship is a good idea. I think that goes without saying. When I heard about the student at Hatboro-Horsham who was caught for something he said in a newspaper article, I couldn't believe it. In the Bill of Rights, we are granted the Freedom of Speech. I understand that that right has its limits, but it is our right to say whatever we want, whenever we want, to whomever we want. I would not make fun of Mr. Daher, Mr. Hafele, or Mrs. Segal, or any teacher in that school. I would not curse them off or anything like that. Censorship should never have to be used if people were nice and respectful.

In conclusion, I think that censorship should never be used. People should have the common courtesy to be nice to others. I probably misunderstood the topic.

Censorship - A Necessary Part of Every Publication

As almost everyone is aware, Matt Care's resignation letter that was published in last month's edition of the Village caused quite a bit of controversy. Though it was not my idea to publish the letter, I originally believed that since Matt chose to write the letter, people would blame him for whatever he said in it. And while Matt has received some negative criticism, some actually believe that it was not a problem for the Village to publish that article. Had it not been for our proofreader insisting that the article be published uncensored, I would not have agreed to its publication. In my opinion, while contributors shouldn't be allowed to say whatever they want in any periodical, censorship should not be so tight that the message of their articles is changed. If you've been listening to the news on television during the past month, you probably already have heard about the incident involving censorship in the school newspaper over in Hatboro-Horsham school district. For those of you who don't remember, let me refresh your memory. The problem began when two students submitted their articles to the school newspaper for publication. The articles had encompassed two opposing viewpoints on the topic of abortion. Upon seeing the content of the periodical, the school principal immediately removed the questionable articles from the paper. The students, still wanting to voice their opinion, then submitted an article on flatulence that was reportedly an allegory to the same topic as their previous article. The paper was then printed and distributed to the school, but when the administration was informed of the last-minute inclusion, the papers were recollected and recopied, with a large black area where the previous article had been. Later, at a school board meeting, students and parents voiced their opinions to the board while the Pennsylvania Free Press Association threatened to sue the district for its censorship policy. This was simply going too far. What harm can an article on abortion do to the students at a high school? If the goal of the administration was to simply pretend that the subject didn't exist, then they obviously accomplished the complete opposite of their purpose. The Free Press Association has every right to sue Hatboro-Horsham, and I hope they

win. But getting back to the topic of this article, Upper Moreland is the same way. However, if I were to write an article on abortion and submit it to the Bear Print (the school newspaper), not one soul outside the staff of the newspaper would find out. Why? Our school is probably even more strict on their censorship policies than Hatboro-Horsham. The idea of publishing such a thing wouldn't even get out of the door. I have contributed seven articles to The Bear Print this year, and all of two of them have been published so far. The most common comment I have received is that it downgrades the staff at UMHS. Every one of these articles has been published in Shoemaker Village during the past few months, ranging from an article on the school's pathetic computer system to the poor quality of the cafeteria food. You can make your own judgments about the content of the articles. Here's the definition of irony: the school board granted the Bear Print an opinion column for this school year, but not one article has made it past the censors in the administration. In fact, the former (or is it present?) editor of that column no longer attends meetings of the Bear Print, and it's not his fault as to why he does not attend. But the purpose of this article isn't to criticize the Bear Print; it's to talk about the role of censorship in newspapers. Getting back to Matt's resignation letter, I was shocked when two teachers actually told me that I should publish articles of that kind in each issue to increase readership in the Village. I had expected to be destroyed by teachers who read the magazine, as well as lose subscribers while Matt's life went slowly down the tubes. However, although none of this occurred (at least to that degree), I refuse to downgrade the Village to the state of other publications that use profanity, violence, and sexual content to increase their readership, by including a column that is completely uncensored in each issue. There is certain material that should not be published in any magazine. This brings me to another important point: there is absolutely no reason to use profanity in contributions to a magazine. Not at all. Someone once told me that people who use profane language in their everyday conversations have a small vocabulary. Think about it: there isn't one profane word that cannot be substituted by another, more suitable one. It's simply pathetic to ride home on the bus twice a week and hear the 12th graders sitting in the back of the bus cursing at cars who come past.

One time, I counted the F word used over 30 times in a ten-minute ride. Matt, attempting to justify his actions, told me last week that it would be naive of me to assume that most people in this age group do not use that kind of language. While that may or may not be true, profanity has no place in the Village or any other publication where better words with more literary merit could be used. Sexual content also has no place in magazines that have reputable standards. When the parents of small kids who are still in elementary school catch them reading a magazine with leud content, it does not send a good message to anyone. Now, hopefully, those who insist that I publish profane or sexual articles will see the point that I have been trying to make. Overall, while most articles should not be edited for their content if they are written on a controversial issue, profanity and sexual content are never excusable under any circumstances. You can rest assured that the Village will remain a family magazine for the months to come.

Censorship

Well, I really don't have much to say (that's a first!) on this topic, but I think I can pull something together in the next few minutes. When Steve first told me about the big stir going on with the March issue, I wasn't sure what was wrong. I had to ask what was causing the great controversy. He said that Matt's letter was causing all kinds of problems. Personally, I really don't see a big deal in the article. Matt expressed his opinions and may have hurt people's feelings, but he was being honest. Although I don't agree with everything he said, I think that if his letter had been censored, the readers would not have fully grasped what he was trying to convey. I'm looking back at the letter now, to see if I have anything else to say about it. I can't even remember everything it said since it was kind of long.

As for censorship in general, I think that at times it is necessary to protect people from things they may not want to read or see. In other contexts, I think things should be left uncensored when it is appropriate. I don't think that Shoemaker Village should be a place for profane language or sexual content since it is a family magazine, and I know that there are several young children who read it also. But, I don't think that Matt's letter used any inappropriate language. I could make the argument that it's OK to use foul language since kids of all ages are exposed to it everyday in school, but I don't really like that argument. It's not OK to use that language in the Village because it is meant for families, and I think it's in very bad taste to use foul language.

Why so Early?

by Stephen Sokolowski

A high-pitched whine that seems to be the most annoying sound in the world to you fills your ears. It's Monday morning at 6:00, and the dreaded alarm clock is making the same racket as it has for the past 130 days of the school year. You do the same thing as you have the past 130 days – slam your hand down on the snooze button to get a few extra minutes of sleep, anything to help you survive the day. After rushing to grab a quick breakfast (if at all), you run outside to the bus to begin another day. When it's time for first period, you are exhausted and decide that the only solution is to put your head down and ignore the teacher for the sake of a few minutes' sleep. This scene is repeated hundreds of times every morning in the households of UMHS students across the district.

I am writing this article on a Monday morning, and the same scene played itself out at my house just three hours ago. Although I never fall asleep during first period, I'm usually too tired to learn anything the first half of the class. When I am awake enough to take notice to my classmates, however, I see that most people in the class are performing the same ritual as me – trying to stay awake while actually learning something.

How can teachers and administrators expect their students to learn anything at 7:28 in the morning when they are still asleep? If you were to look at my report card over the past few years, you would see that my first period classes are an average of 3 percentage points lower than my other classes, and I know of many people who show a larger discrepancy. Something needs to be done to make school more conducive to learning at this time of the day.

The best solution, of course, as well as the simplest, is to make the school day begin later. Not only would students be able to learn better in the morning, it would be beneficial to their overall health. Though I would say that most people in this school get to sleep at a reasonably early time of about 10:30 to 11:00, there are some whose "genetic makeup" favors staying up late and getting up around noon. Therefore, these students, no matter how hard they try, cannot fall asleep at this time. Though

starting the school day a half hour or an hour later wouldn't mean getting up at noon, it would certainly help. Research suggests that younger children are more alert and receptive to information in the early morning and should attend school earlier, while adolescents and older children should begin school later.

However, for some reason, it is just the opposite in the Upper Moreland school district. While the elementary schools don't begin their day until 8:30, high school and middle school students are forced to get up almost an hour and a quarter earlier. In the study, scientists determined that the ideal starting time for a high school is about 9:40 AM, and students would be at their peak performance when attending school during this time.

However, even if everyone in the building wanted the school day to begin later (nobody, myself included, would want to begin school at 9:40AM), this would not become a reality because of extracurricular activities and athletic events. From what I've heard, there are two main reasons that the school day begins as early as it does: the bus schedule, and the starting times of athletic events. To avoid the second problem, the administration simply decided that school should be done (or near done) before students were to participate in activities and adjusted the time schedule accordingly. Other districts, I am told, handle this problem differently than ours. One has added a "break period" in the middle of the morning, which is nothing more than a 15-minute break between classes for students who will be leaving early to see teachers and get the academic help they need if they will not be in class during the afternoon. Using a system like this in Upper Moreland would help *if* the school day were to begin much later.

However, I believe that beginning the day a half hour later, at 7:45, would solve most of the problems above without forcing the administration to rearrange the schedule. With this change, students would be able to perform to the peak of their abilities and achieve better grades overall, as well as improve performance on standardized tests. Though this change may not happen during my educational career, implementing it in the future would make school a much more enjoyable and

productive place for UMHS students.

Evan's Quest

by Daniel Burgess

Chapter 4 - Ambush

Evan had been riding for about two hours, and he couldn't feel his legs. He needed a rest, so he stopped at a clearing to the left of the road. He placed all his things in the saddlebag and tied Crystal up at a tree. He went to the clearing and sat down on the soft, wet grass. He lay there for about five minutes and closed his eyes. The afternoon sunshine was beaming on him and he didn't want to move, but something happened that meant he had to move.

An arrow flew across his outstretched body and stuck in the grass next to him. He quickly sat up and looked around. In the bushes around the clearing, he saw movement. Hordes of arrows flew out of the brush. He quickly dodged them and tried to run for Crystal but there were too many arrows.

"Who's there?" Evan shouted.

"GET DOWN!" a gruff voice shouted from the bushes. Evan didn't really want to disagree so he went down on to his knees and then on to his stomach and put his hands round his back and up onto his head.

Evan watched as a man walked out of the bush nearest the road. The man looked rough. He was wearing tatty clothes and had many weapons around his belt. The man walked toward Crystal and laughed, always watching the helpless Evan. Evan knew what he was going to do so he shot up and shouted, "No!" Evan ran toward him, getting ready to fight. But more swarms of arrows flew toward him.

Evan was near the man now and the man said, "I wouldn't." The man laughed again and carried on toward Crystal. Evan knew he had no chance so he got back in the same position.

The man took Crystal and walked back into the forest. Evan could still just see the men in the bushes.

"DON'T FOLLOW US!" one of them shouted again. Evan looked around and a rock was flying toward him. It hit him on the forehead before he had a chance to move. He was out clean.

Evan slowly opened his eyes and saw it was getting dark. The men had long gone and he stood up. His head was throbbing with pain. Evan knew he had no chance in succeeding in his mission so he headed into the forest the way the man went with Crystal.

Evan could tell that these criminals were inexperienced because they had left their footprints in the mud. Evan followed them for quite a way when he saw a faint, hazy glow up ahead, and smoke drifted over the treetops. It looked like campfire.

Evan edged his way closer. Staying out of sight, he climbed a fair-sized tree. He looked down into a clearing, surrounded by large rocks. He could see about six or seven big men, huddled around a small fire in the centre. A few of the men were lieing on clumps of straw, fast asleep. Others rooted through his rucksack. Evan stared amazed as they went through all his belongings.

He looked around the clearing. At the edge, quite far away from the men, was Crystal standing, tied up to a small branch. Evan glanced his eyes back to the men and his foot slipped on the moss covered branch. He fell onto a lower branch and hung on so as not to make any more sound.

Evan listened as he heard murmuring and mumbles. The men had heard him and one of them said, "What was that?" The others looked around, and another, who looked like the leader

answered, “You heard it. Go look!” While they were saying this, Evan pulled himself back up and sat on the branch, with his grip tighter than before. He peered back over the treetops and saw the other men had gone back to what they were doing. One of them, the one who had heard Evan, was walking cautiously toward him, looking round timidly.

Evan quickly snapped a nearby branch and it made a crunching noise. The man’s head abruptly shot up and his ears pricked. Evan waited until the man was out of sight of the others and underneath his tree. He swung the log and it made a soft thump noise as it hit the man on the back of his head. The man was clean out on the floor with his face in the mud.

Evan smiled to himself at his achievement. He then climbed down and crouched next to the man. He quickly darted round the back of the rocks and all the way around to where Crystal was. Crystal, at seeing him, made a peculiar noise. Evan looked in the horse sack and the only object left was his crossbow. Evan smiled to himself again. He took the crossbow, loaded it with a bolt and peered his head over the boulder.

The men were still looking through his rucksack. Evan gazed as the bulkiest man took one of Elgan’s bottles out and stared into it. Evan still didn’t know what those bottles did, but it was his only chance. He put the crossbow up onto the rock and steadied it. He stared down the sight and pointed directly onto the bottle the man was holding up.

With one quick movement, the bolt was released and cut through the air in a silent, swift movement. The man said, “What do you think this is then? It might be ale!” The man was cut off as the bolt struck the bottle. It cracked and the red liquid spilled out onto his hand.

“Arrgh, what’s this?” The liquid then began to smoke. A blue haze started drifting into the air. First it surrounded the man and he rocked on the spot in a dizzy motion.

“What’s wrong, boss?” one of the men asked. Then the dazed man exploded in a swarm of green sparks.

Evan smiled again. The potions worked very well. The mist began to grow and drift over more of the men. They began to scream and struggle away, but with no luck. Within a matter of seconds, all the rest of the men were bursting in the green sparks.

Evan giggled to himself as all the men had finally gone. He picked up his crossbow and started to walk toward his possessions. He realised the smog was still expanding. He stopped on the spot and then realised he was going to have to move. He turned and his pace began to quicken. He ran to Crystal, jumped up on her back and rode away from the smoke.

He was quite far away when he stopped, turned and looked, but he could not see the haze any more. So he slowly walked back to the campsite. The smog had gone. He went to the centre, picked up his things and headed off. But he then saw that it was late into the night now and he decided to stay for the rest of the evening. So he settled down by the fire, tied Crystal near to the warmth, ate some of the food they had left and slowly drifted to sleep.

Evan's Quest

by Daniel Burgess

Chapter 5 - Hazardous Province

Evan awoke abruptly to the song of some nearby birds. Evan rubbed his eyes and stood up. He realised that it was still very early and the sun had only just peered over the horizon, so Evan sat back down next to the fire which was only just glowing. Evan looked through his possessions to make sure it was still there. It was, apart from one of the bottles which he had used the night before.

He picked up one of the remaining bottles and stared into it. The orange solution inside was swirling around in a pattern of red colours. The liquid seemed to form the shape of a face. Evan looked harder and the face was screaming but he could hear no sound. The face looked terrified of something. Evan felt like opening the bottle but then remembered the horrible things it had done to those men. So Evan just placed the bottle back in his rucksack, lay down and stared into the white ash and the smouldering embers.

He opened his eyes some time later and looked around. He had dropped off. It was now late morning and he quickly got ready to leave.

He rode Crystal for some time and tried to get back to the road where he was ambushed. He found it and carried on down it for quite a way. The sky was a bright blue colour and Crystal seemed eager to carry on.

Back at the castle, Chloe was becoming more and more worried about Evan. Isaac still remained frozen and the King was depending on Evan to succeed.

Some way on, Evan looked up at the sky. It was becoming black and murky up above him. He then looked ahead and he saw there were dark, crooked mountainsides way in the distance, and he was coming to an unlit wood.

Now Crystal seemed apprehensive and distressed to go on, but Evan urged her on and used that to block his own worry about the journey ahead. He had an uneasy feeling about going into the forest. But he reached the edge of the wood and forced Crystal and himself to proceed. As soon as they entered the forest, Evan felt an unsettling chill come about him. He slowly walked Crystal down a rough, rocky path deeper and deeper into the darkness.

Evan looked around him into the dark woods. He did not only feel like he was being watched, but he saw it. He could see lots of bright white eyes staring at him, drilling worry into his mind. As he went deeper still, the thought that he wasn't going to make it out lurked in his mind. Evan's hand was etching at his sword, just in case.

The sounds of the forest made Evan's worry even bigger--crunching and cracking, weird mumbling and screams. Then the forest went silent. Evan pulled Crystal to a halt and looked around. The forest was totally silent.

Then, suddenly, a horrible beast jumped from the brush just ahead of Evan. Crystal was spooked and bucked but Evan managed to stay on. He grabbed at his sword that made a scraping noise as it was thrust into the air. Evan's heart was thumping and there was an awful chill down his back.

The beast had sharp, white teeth with sticky spit dribbling down its face. It was the shape of a dog but bigger and more brawny. It made a high-pitched scream and bolted toward Evan and Crystal.

Evan also started Crystal running toward the beast. van grew closer and bent to one side and swung his sword down to the ground but missed the beast. The creature then leaped at Crystal and with its almighty claws it scratched at her body. Blood appeared and Crystal bucked again. This time Evan

was sent flying to the dusty ground.

Crystal bolted off down the trail and out of sight and left Evan on the ground with the creature moving slowly toward him.

The beast stopped and made an evil growling sound. Evan was terrified but knew he was going to have to fight. The beast then made a jump for Evan and he rolled out of the way. He had his sword ready for the next attack. It came and Evan did an almighty swing and struck the beast on the back. It fell to the ground and squealed. Evan saw his chance, struggled to his feet and ran as briskly as his wearied feet would carry him.

He got quite away, then turned his head and saw that the beast was still lieing in the middle of the road. But other beasts like it came from the brush and were looking at it. When about ten were there, their heads simultaneously turned to look straight at Evan. He carried on running. When he turned his head again, he saw that the remaining creatures were now running toward him in a ravenous rage.

Evan thought fast and took the crossbow that was hooked to his back. He loaded it while running and, still running, he turned the top half of his body and fired the crossbow. The bolt hit one of the pursuing beasts and it fell to the ground.

The rest of the beasts were catching up fast and Evan didn't have time to load another bolt. He just tried to run faster. They were right on his tail and about to leap on him when Evan felt a pair of hands on his side that pulled him. Evan closed his eyes, ready for the pain of the hungry beasts feeding on him but nothing happened. Evan slowly opened his eyes and saw he was inside a small house. He looked and there was a very stern looking man and a woman standing next to him.

"Oh, dear, are you okay?" the woman asked. Before Evan had a chance to answer, she asked another question. "Why are you out here on your own? It's very dangerous around these parts, you know. It's a good job that Bill here saved you or you would have been those beasts' dinner for sure." The woman babbled on.

"Oh, leave him alone. He's not a child."

Evan saw his chance to speak. "I must thank you, sir. You saved my life out there." Evan thanked Bill as nicely as he could.

"Well, you must stay with us for a while, er, what did you say your name was?" the woman asked.

"Well, I didn't, but it's Evan."

Evan and Sue, which he found out was her name, talked for quite some time. He told her about his adventure, and he found out that Bill had found Crystal running past their house and he'd tied her up around the back.

So Evan agreed to stay with them for a short while and they ate a satisfying meal. By now it was very late and Evan was in his room.

He looked around the room and saw it was a small room, with a bed, chair, mirror and a small window on one wall. He sat on the bed and it went in as he put his weight onto it. He was about to get into the bed when he heard voices. He stood up and went to the closed door. He slowly opened it a little bit and light beamed in. He saw Sue and Bill standing in the lounge area. He could just hear what they were saying.

"Let's just kill him while he's sleeping and eat him now!" Sue said to Bill. Evan's mouth dropped as he heard these words,

"No! If we attack him now we'll lose his trust, but if we become his friends we may be able to use him for other uses!" Evan's heart began to beat faster and faster, out of control. He quickly closed the door

to again and sat back down.

His mind was racing. He had to get out of this place, and fast. He looked at his things and remembered where Sue had shown Evan where Crystal was. He grabbed his things and got his sword ready. He went to the door and peered through the crack once more. Evan looked closely at Bill. He then realised that Bill's eyes were glowing a red colour, then his teeth grew longer and Bill's body was changing into one of the beasts he had encountered before.

These things were not human! Evan suddenly barged through the door, his sword flying. Bill, upon seeing Evan, made an evil growl. Evan carried on and swung his sword at Bill. It had no affect and Bill made no move. Evan got worried that the sword didn't hurt him. He was stronger that the beasts outside. Evan looked around for anything hard, but Bill had already made his move. He jumped at Evan and sent him flying to the ground. Evan grabbed at anything, and that thing happened to be a vase, which was sitting on a nearby table.

Evan swung his newfound weapon and it smashed on Bill's head, but the smash, again, did not hurt Bill. But something did. It was the water inside the vase. It burned Bills skin and he moved back in pain.

Evan had time stand up and run for the door. He got out with his life and all his belongings. He shut the door behind him and hurried around and jumped onto Crystal, and he went as fast as Crystal could carry him down the road he had first come on.

Evan got a long way without looking back and relaxed a bit. That hadn't gone as well as Evan had hoped. But he said to himself, "That was close!"

And then something happened that startled Evan. "It sure was!" Evan looked around him. There was no one on the road behind him or in the bushes to the side of him. Who had said that? Evan just told himself he had imagined the voice and carried on.

Some time later he heard the voice again. "So, what's the plan from here?" Evan knew he did hear it this time and he drew his sword.

"Who's there?" Evan shouted out into the thick forest to his side.

"Well, there's no need to get that thing out!" Then Evan was jolted as Crystal jumped back and his sword flew out of his hand and stuck into the ground below him.

"Nasty, horrible things they are!" Evan couldn't believe it. Crystal was talking to him.

"Crystal? You can talk?" Evan said, not even believing what he was saying.

"Well, clever you!" Crystal answered back.

"This is amazing! A talking horse!" Evan answered.

"You've never heard of a talking horse?" As it happened Evan hadn't. Evan and Crystal rode and talked all through the night and the sun began to rise. Evan was very tired and his eyelids were really heavy.

"Oh, we've ridden all through the night!" Evan said to Crystal, and she replied, "Yep, and look around, we're out of the dark province!" Evan did and they were out of the forest and riding down a small, pebble path through beautiful countryside with the warm sun beaming on both of them.

The Knights of the Square Table

Chapter 11

"Everyone down!" Anthony shouted. The calks were approaching so rapidly that it was impossible for anyone to think of anything else than saving their own lives.

Outside the walls, a roar erupted that droned out all sound. The trolls were beginning to celebrate after seeing their reinforcements coming.

The calks swarmed over the city, enveloping it in a cloud of darkness. Strangely, however, they did not attack the soldiers protecting the city on the outer walls. Instead, they swarmed around a small building that seemed to have no importance to them, and then flew off to the East just as quickly. The cheers of the trolls quickly turned back to war cries. A few even seemed puzzled. The battle quickly resumed, but quite a few trolls fell during the stoppage when the defenders of the city had managed to fight back. Christopher and the others looked toward Anthony for answers, but he had the same expression on his face as the rest of them.

"What just happened?" Christopher inquired. "The calks could have killed us all. Why didn't they attack us?"

"Perhaps some spell you cast caused the calks to turn back," Anthony stated, a little too matter-of-factly.

"Spell?" Chapin inquired, as the calks disappeared over the horizon. "I don't recall casting any spells here."

"Maybe Yavin has other plans," Anthony suggested, but Christopher had doubts that he was telling the truth. He said nothing. The battle continued around them, almost in a deadlock from the numbers on both sides.

Chapin looked around and saw that Dave was standing in the same position that he had been ten minutes ago. He had not moved the entire time.

"Dave?" she asked. "Are you alright?" There was no response. Christopher and the others turned toward her in alarm.

"Dave?" Christopher asked, a little louder.

Suddenly, without warning, Dave fell backward toward the stone battlement. Mike, who was standing behind him, reached out with a cry and stopped him inches away from the stone.

"We must get him some help," Katie told Anthony.

"Yes, you should," Anthony replied. "Go down into the city, and the medical station is the first building on the right. It's only a minute from here."

"Thank you," Christopher said, and he moved off toward the stairway that led up to the battlements, carrying Dave over his shoulder. The stairs were steep, but Christopher somehow managed to descend into the city without any major difficulty.

As Christopher departed, Katie and the others turned their attention back to the battle. It was still a stalemate, with neither side able to gain a clear advantage. Just a few seconds later, a guard approached the group and requested that they assist in repairing equipment. As Katie and Mike followed the man, they were preoccupied by thoughts of what Dave's fate would be...

"Hurry up!" the woman shouted again. "I won't tell you again!" Dave was groggy. As he regained his senses, he realized that he was again standing in the square of that small town - Terringrama, he recalled hazily. He took a few unsure steps in a random direction. Apparently, they

were in the correct one, because the woman turned and continued ahead, ceasing her pleas.

It seemed as if not a second had passed since his last encounter with the woman and the town. The sky was still covered in a sheet of grey, and a cold wind still chilled him to the bone. And the strange building still loomed ahead of him.

In his previous experience, Dave had not noticed how fancily everyone in the town was dressed. All of the men wore identical cloaks, dark blue with white stripes across the top and bottom. The women also wore identical dresses, with the same design as those of the men.

As Dave approached the large building in front of him, he realized that it was a place of worship. Not a church, but it looked similar - a large dome on the top of the structure, similar to a steeple but not exactly the same in that there was no adornment at the top of the rise. The roof of the enormous structure slanted off to both sides but was exceedingly high, at least three times the height of a man. The place was so huge that it was the dominant feature in the town.

Dave saw that the doors stood open, and others in the town were leading the way inside. The town was larger than Dave had originally thought from the number of people who now entered the ediface. As he followed the woman closer to the building, he began to develop a sense that something was wrong, though he could not quite pinpoint what.

The inside of the building was just as impressive as the outside. The walls were painted pure black, and contrasted with the ceiling, which was painted a bright red. Not standard colors for a church, Dave thought. Furthermore, there were no pews inside; the entire floor stood open with the exception of a small podium stationed in the middle of the expanse. Next to the podium were various candles and assorted religious articles not out of the ordinary for a town of this size.

What was next to them, however, was what caught Dave's glance. A large, elaborately decorated box was stationed at least ten feet above the floor. There was a small opening on the top of the object, which was slanted at an angle apparently to allow the spectators below to see. Situated inside were many strong metal shackles that were as decorated and elaborately designed as the rest of the box.

Many others had gathered around all sides of the podium, where a man who was adorned differently than the others stood, as if preparing to give a speech. The woman filed past the milling crowds and took a position near the back of the congregation, motioning for Dave to stand next to her.

There they stood for several minutes, during which time more of the townsfolk entered the room with them. The place was plenty large to hold everyone three times over, but it seemed as if the entire town were present, because there wasn't a sound from outside. His suspicions were further confirmed when those who appeared to be the leaders took a head count of the people present.

Satisfied, one of them headed toward the large, heavy metal doors and began to swing them shut. It clamored closed with a loud clang, and all of the outside light was blocked. It took three of the men to slam a heavy metal bar down over the doors. It was clear that no person could lift that bar without the help of two others. Dave looked around, but nobody seemed to regard this as strange at all, though many of the people looked apprehensive.

The speaker stepped up to the podium and cleared his throat. "Unfortunately, the time has come again for us to perform the rituals that we have all come to hate. Yavin came to me in a dream last night and requested yet another cleansing." The speaker's voice grew more depressing with every note.

"Another one?" one of the villagers piped up. "This is the second time in three months!"

"I can only obey..." he paused, and a look of disgust filled his voice. "Lord Yavin, not argue with him. Remember, he could have destroyed our town and everyone in it many years ago, but he has

elected to preserve us.

"Being located at the foot of the Black Stone mountains does not come without its disadvantages," the speaker half-pleaded. "What is better? Death for all, or taking your chances amongst 1000 other townsfolk?" The room was deathly silent. Dave was still confused.

When the speaker realized that he would receive no more opposition, he continued on. "As you all know, Yavin decided to save our town during the wars many years ago but required that at least one of the captured serve him. We have held out for many years, allowing the chosen to die rather than to waste their lives serving Yavin. We must not back down--we cannot give into his evil wishes!" The speaker had raised his voice considerably. He lowered it now and continued on. Apprehension ran high in the audience.

"Therefore, the usual ceremony will commence. Chistan has the papers here - he will pick who is to be sacrificed. The chosen will then have one hour, as usual, to decide whether to reveal our secrets to Yavin or to die instead.

"I sincerely wish each of you that your name will not be chosen." He looked around as if the death that was being proposed would be a horrible one. Dave now began to get nervous. Why was he present at this gathering? Was he in the lottery for Yavin's scheme? If his name were chosen, he realized fearfully that he would not be able to escape. Was it a dream? It was too real to be a dream. Dave hoped that it was.

"Let's get this over with as quickly as possible," the speaker behind the lead speaker said. He raised up a basket that was filled with thousands of small scraps of paper. The leader reached down into the basket as Dave began to black out...

Dave sat up with a start. The noise of battle was all around him. He never thought that he could be so glad to be back in the middle of a war. Looking around, he noticed Christopher standing on the other side of the small tent where he was lying, tending to another casualty.

"Well, well," Christopher said genially. "It's good to see you back."

"Where was I?" Dave asked.

"You fainted on the battlements," Christopher reminded him. "The medic thinks it was because of stress."

"Fainted..?" Dave asked. "I was just..." He caught his tongue, not sure whether to reveal his experience with anyone.

"You were where?" Christopher inquired. Dave cursed himself in his head for being so stupid. He now had to make a decision. If he told Christopher and the others, they could think he was going mad, or under the influence of some evil power, and leave him. If he didn't tell them, however, he had no way of knowing what would happen to him - the ceremony certainly looked real.

"I was in a town. They were holding some sort of ceremony."

"What kind of ceremony?" Christopher asked.

"I don't know. They were trying to make up for something that Yavin promised them in the past."

"Do you remember the name of the town?" Christopher asked.

"Yes, I believe it was... Terringrama."

Christopher's eyes shot up from his work. Hastily, he wrapped a bandage around the injured man's arm. "You'll be just fine in a few days," he whispered quickly to him, and then moved toward Dave.

"You must tell me everything you know," Christopher said.

"Why?" Dave asked, half puzzled and half afraid. "What's wrong?"

"I can't determine that until I'm told everything that happened."

"Well," Dave began, "I was in a small town. Everyone was going to a religious ceremony. There was a big building, with heavy doors with a metal bar to block it."

"Slow down," Christopher said. "I can't understand a word you're saying!" Dave realized that he had been talking rather quickly.

"When I got inside," Dave continued, being careful to speak more slowly, "the entire town was there. They shut the doors, and there was a strange table that was raised above the floor that looked like a torturing device. There was someone who talked about a deal with Yavin or something like that, and he sounded like something bad was about to happen."

"That's because something bad *was* about to happen," Christopher stated plainly.

"How do you know?" Dave asked, puzzled.

"Terringrama..." Christopher said. "There was an old legend - about a town whose location had been lost in the mists of time. The inhabitants of the town were living peacefully until trolls and other creatures invaded, but they fought back bravely with magic and conventional weapons and forced them out of the town. The trolls suffered heavy losses, and no matter how hard they tried, they were unable to conquer the town. After a year of fighting over the same land, Yavin himself reportedly visited the trolls in hopes of encouraging them as if that might somehow win the battle."

"After the trolls suffered another defeat and their numbers were dwindling, Yavin cast a curse on the town. He wanted to be able to learn how the townsfolk had survived, but yet he did not want to let their deeds go unpunished. To this end, he cursed the town so that every time he demanded, another person would be chosen from the town."

"That person would be given an hour to defect to Yavin's forces and tell him the secret of the town's survival or be killed by Yavin's power. Since it was only a story, nobody knows how long this had been going on, but supposedly there wasn't a single person out of the thousands who were murdered who would confess. According to legend, the process still continues today, wherever Terringrama is located."

"Some story," Dave said. "At least I hope it's just a story."

"We may have more to fear here than just a dream," Christopher replied gravely. "This has happened to you twice, correct?"

"Yes." Dave knew what Christopher was getting at.

"There is a very small chance that you would have the exact same dream, leaving off at the exact same point, in the exact same setting, at the exact same time. My theory is that some force, perhaps Yavin himself, is bringing you to have these dreams. We can only guess at the purpose."

"What motive would anyone have to summon me to this place in my dreams?" Dave asked.

"That's hard to say," Christopher replied. "Yavin may be hoping to find out more about you. Or it could be as simple as that someone in the town is casting magical spells to ensure that the town's memory is never forgotten. In any case, I must inform the others as soon as possible. This does not bode well with our current strategy." Christopher turned and in several long strides reached the door.

"Wait," Dave said.

"Yes?" Christopher asked, turning.

"Is..." Dave said, a hint of uncertainty in his voice. "Am I in any danger from these dreams?"

Christopher stopped and looked at Dave. "I'd like to be able to tell you that they're only dreams, but we have no guarantee that they are. It is a possibility that you could be...affected in some way or another. That is why I must tell the others as soon as possible." He vanished from the tent

before Dave could say anything else.

Affected? Dave thought. *What does that mean? He was obviously hiding something, but what?* The noise of battle that permeated through the thin canvas that surrounded him didn't make things any better. Standing up, Dave attempted to move toward the door to follow, but a sharp pain flowed through his arms. *Maybe I better lay back down,* he thought grimly. *These dreams are having an effect on me. What next?*

Up on the city wall, Christopher relayed the news to Katie, Chapin, and Mike, who were gathered together repairing armor and weapons that had been damaged in the battle. While most of the tasks were simple - mending a stitch in some body armor or forging the hilt back on a sword (that was saved for the experienced blacksmiths), some were beyond repair or too complicated for the novices to attempt. As a result, they were taking a break due to lack of work when Christopher entered.

"How is the battle progressing?" he asked.

"Not very well," the others replied. "At first, it seemed that the knights were going to be able to hold out, but their numbers are dwindling, and calks and trolls are multiplying by the minute."

"Is there any hope of reinforcements arriving in time?" Christopher asked.

"This is the only village for days, and the attack was a surprise that happened just yesterday. I think we can, unfortunately, rule out that possibility."

"Then we must find a way out of this town quickly, without ourselves being killed. Things will only get worse here, and our best course of action would be to flee as soon as possible," Christopher suggested. "I fear that something out of the ordinary is affecting Dave - possibly Yavin himself. There may be some sort of energy here that is affecting him, and I suspect that is why the calks withdrew."

"We have to talk to Anthony about this," Katie said.

"That would be foolish," Chapin chided. "We would be placing ourselves in unnecessary risk."

"No, it isn't a bad idea," Christopher said after a moment's thought, "but we must watch what we say. We wouldn't want to give away any important information, especially to a source I do not completely trust. Remember how he said he didn't know why the calks abandoned attacking us? The look on his face made it clear that he is obviously hiding something from us, or perhaps the entire town."

"There's no use speculating about it here," Katie said. "Let's go up top and talk with him."

"No, you should not accompany me," Christopher warned. "It will only attract suspicion if you volunteered to help with the war effort and you are skulking behind me, eavesdropping. We must be more discreet. I'll go alone."

"Very well," Chapin agreed. "It is for the best."

"While I am gone," Christopher ordered, looking around him to be sure that nobody overheard their conversation, "Find a way that you can get out of here quickly, if need be. If the stones weren't depleted, we could possibly teleport ourselves a short distance, but that won't be possible. Still, in case of an emergency, it will be helpful for us to get as far away from everyone as possible."

"Hey, you over there!" a man shouted from across the room. "Get back to work! You volunteered for this job, now do it!"

"Hopefully, we'll meet up soon," Christopher said, and then exited the building while the others returned to their tasks.

Once outside, the conditions had changed a great deal. Wounded were being brought in through secret passages all around the walls. Passing by one of them, Christopher saw that two soldiers guarded the inside entrance, with heavy metal gates that could be sealed off long before a troll could enter the structure, due to the immense thickness of the wall.

Ascending the ladder, Christopher was met with an incredible sight. All around, the snow was stained red from the blood shed by the knights. Everywhere, bodies of the slain knights were piled up sometimes knee-deep around the outer walls. The remaining knights were outnumbered by the trolls almost two to one. The trolls were hardly being met with any resistance.

Sir Anthony was in the middle of a flurry of activity. Knights swarmed around him. Christopher was almost unnoticed as those who appeared to have a high rank moved in every direction around him.

After what seemed like quite a while, the knights eventually had told Anthony everything he had needed to know, or so it appeared by the fact that almost everyone left at once, leaving an opportunity for Christopher to talk to him. He took it. As he approached, warnings flared through his head.

"How is everything progressing?" Christopher asked.

"As if you could not tell," Anthony said with a hint of sarcasm in his voice. Christopher was taken aback. "My men are being slaughtered. If we do not find a way to hold back the trolls, we will be overwhelmed by nightfall."

"Well," Christopher said, mentally calculating what he would say next. "At least the calks aren't attacking us anymore."

"Yes," Anthony said in a voice that was too calm for him to be telling the truth. "It is fortunate."

"May I ask what that building in the middle of the square is that the calks were attracted to?"

"It's just an ordinary building, as I told you before," Anthony replied in a rude manner. "Please, I must be attending to business." He turned, and without looking back, walked away, leaving Christopher stunned.

He spotted Dave mounting the stairs as he finally regained his senses.

"What happened?" Dave asked, sensing that something was wrong.

"I was just rudely informed that the building in the center of this city is of no importance."

"No importance?" Dave asked. "I think not. I took the liberty of investigating a little." When Christopher's face tightened, Dave added quickly, "I didn't go that close, and nobody saw me. But there were many knights guarding whatever it is. They're obviously hiding something."

"Well then," Christopher said, climbing down the ladder with a purpose in his step. "We'll just have to go inside and find out what's there."