Shoemaker Village

Volume 19 - June 1998

NOVELS SECTION EXPANDS! THREE NOVELS INCLUDED THIS MONTH!



The Tomb of the Unknown World continues!



The characters in *The Knights of the Square Table* fight a battle!

PLUS!!
New novel written by Sean Malseed, author of One Moment!
The conclusion to Terror in the Wall!
Missing turkey spotted!
DETAILS INSIDE!!!

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Editor's Page

Information you should know

Well, everyone, what better news can I convey to you than this: The best month of the year is here! Finally the summer has returned, and school will end! During this great month, look in the *Village* for all the news and stories you need to make your June more complete.

First, as you may recall, *The Tomb of the Unknown World*, which was first featured in April's issue, was not included last month due to an excessive amount of homework assigned on the night before the *Village* was published. The story returns this month, letting you in on more and more of this exciting story! Unfortunately, Matthew Care, the author of this novel, has found a few flaws in the first chapter of the story. As a result, he has rewritten the first chapter and extended it. We bring you the entire first chapter, four pages long, to you this month.

A special note: there are some people who believe that Microsoft Word is a better word processing program to use to publish the *Village*. We agree with you, but we use WordPerfect instead because of the limited number of colors available in Word (12) compared to WordPerfect (256). We're glad that we have finally cleared this up.

The Knights of the Square Table, as you may notice, has the caption CHAPTER 11 under it. No, this is not a misprint. Although the story will continue from the point that it left off, we are renumbering the chapters in order to make them congruent to the ones in the novel. In the novel, chapters 1 and 2 were combined after they were published in the *Village*, and as a result, the *Village* chapter numbers were not the same as the novel. Starting this month, they will be the same as the novel.

We are proud to announce that we have *News from the Curries*! We have waited a long time, but we have finally received some word of what has happened to the Curry family over the past few months. If you don't live in the neighborhood, look at page 7 for a picture of their family.

During a special agreement, Sean Malseed, another great writer for the *Village*, has agreed to allow us to publish one chapter a month of his new novel, which is yet to be titled. Starring a scientist who attempts to invent a time machine, this novel is sure to be a hit. Don't miss the first chapter so you don't have to catch up later on! Hopefully, Sean will continue his novel through the summer. We will keep you up to date with this novel as soon as we receive new additions to it.

The Discussion Forum, which is currently among the highest rated sections in the *Village*, has received a disappointing few number of essays during the past few months. We originally planned to involve our readers in this section by publishing their contributions, but this idea has yet to "catch on". We hope that you will seriously consider writing an article for *The Discussion Forum*. Next month's topic will be *Food Services in our Schools*. With over 65 readers reading your article, it's sure to get your opinion across!

Please take the time to fill out the enclosed survey. It is necessary every once and a

while to get some input from our subscribers. **Do not worry about offending members of the *Village* staff.** There is no way we can get a clear picture of what our subscribers think when they do not tell the truth.

There are several subscribers who, sadly, have not paid their subscription money and have had to be discontinued. We hope that our loyal subscribers will continue to support us. If you have a renewal notice on the cover of this magazine, **this is your last warning!** You will not receive any additional notices or forms in the mail. It's up to you to renew. All you have to do is to send $4.00 to the address on the Acknowelegements page.



As stated earlier, **short stories are needed!** We are trying to get short stories from wherever possible, and we need yours. Any topic will do, just send them in! Any person who contributes a short story receives that month of the *Village* free!

Since more than half of our subscribers now live outside the neighborhood, we are currently planning a section that will cover other news in the general area along with the current neighborhood news instead of just the news from the neighborhood.

Also, we have received an ad from Melissa Johnston, one of our subscribers. It is located just above to your right. Be sure to view it.

That's all for this month! We hope that you enjoy the summer. Teachers who wish to receive the July, August, and September issues can send their mail address or E-Mail address to the *Village* address on the next page or speak to one of our editors and we'll be happy to mail the *Village* to you. To all our subscribers: Have a great month!

Acknoweledgements

Shoemaker Village STAFF

Editor Stephen Sokolowski

Assistant Editor Matthew Care

Assistant Proofreading Jean Sokolowski

Storywriters Matthew Care
Steven Conway
Sean Malseed
Henry Sokolowski

This month's story contributors

Stephen Sokolowski
Sean Malseed
Steven Conway
Michael Curry

New subscribers this month

Mrs. Miller
Mr. Richard Cohen
Jeff Muller

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2010 Butternut Drive
Huntingdon Valley, PA
19006-1733
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Internet: **http://members.aol.com/shoevill**

The next issue of *Shoemaker Village* will be published on Friday, June 26, 1998
All contributions for the next issue must be received by Tuesday, June 23, 1998.

Next month's topic in The Discussion Forum will be *Food Services in our Schools*

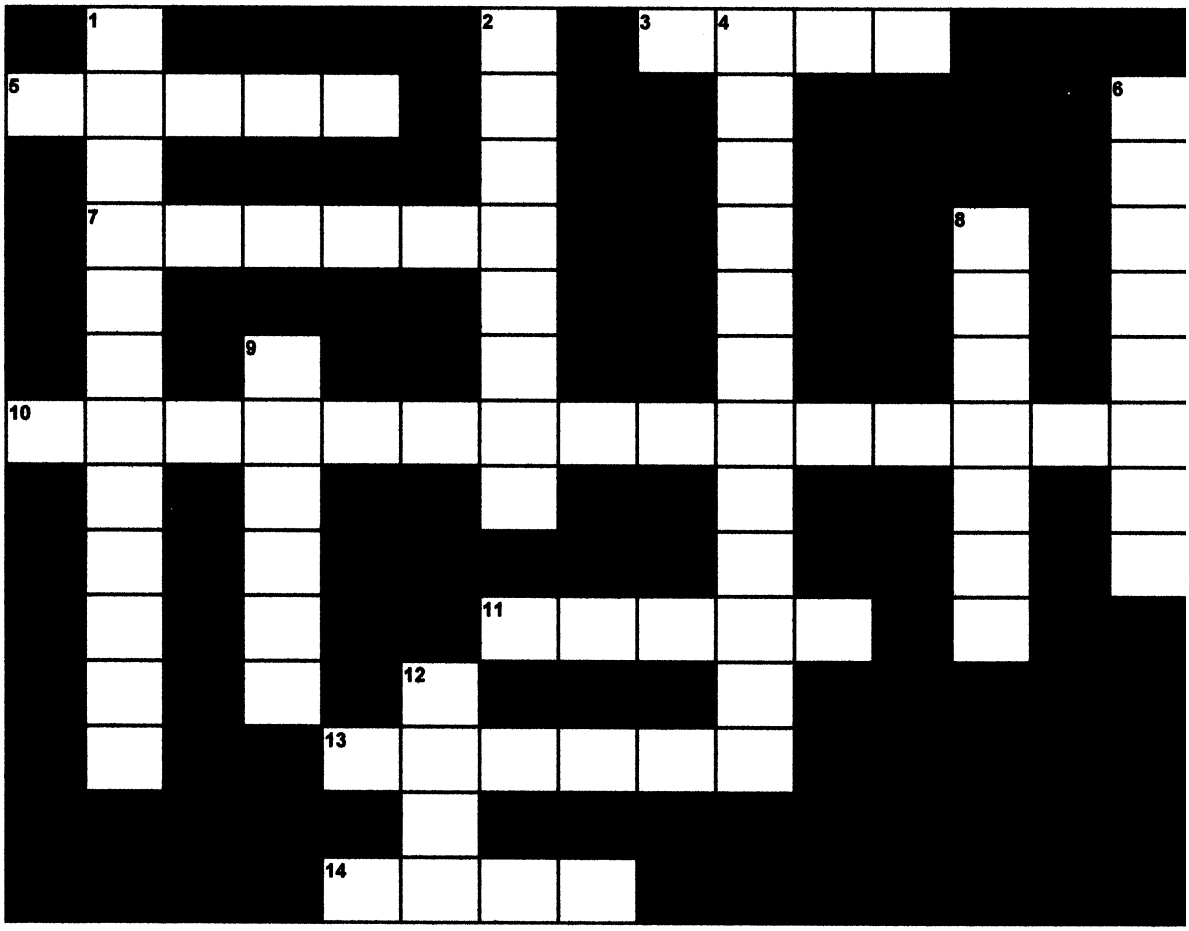
Coming Next Issue

Volume 20- July 1998

It will be July already and it's time to disclose all the annual information pertaining to summer parties! You won't want to miss that!
The Untitled Story continues - there's no way you want to miss it next time!
The action in *The Tomb of the Unknown World* is starting to build up! Be sure you don't miss next month!!
In *The Knights of the Square Table*, the party finally restores the fire elemental - or will they?
More great stories, news, comedy, and more!

ALL IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF *SHOEMAKER VILLAGE*!

Puzzle Page



Across

3. The abbreviation for the school that is commonly discussed in The Discussion Forum

5. The last word of the title of Matthew Care's novel, which debuted in the April issue

7. The weather phenomenon, opposite of El Nino, which is expected to form this winter, creating opposite effects

10. The periodic storywriter and Environmental Engineer for the *Village*

11. The original family to subscribe to the Courier, which was named after this family when it began in May 1993

13. The sheet of paper distributed with all *Villages* this month, which all of our subscribers are supposed to fill out

14. The name of the lead knight of the party in *The Knights of the Square Table*

Down

1. The town that the family, mentioned in Across #11, who moved a few years ago moved to

2. This month's topic in The Discussion Forum

4. Name of the writer of How the World Was Made, included in this issue

6. The AOL screen name dedicated to the *Village*

8. The last name of the writer of the untitled novel included in this month's issue

9. The name of the play that the school, mentioned in Across #3, performed this spring

12. The happiest (or worst, depending on your point of view) month of the year

Neighborhood News

June 1998

FIRE AT UMHS

On Thursday, May 7, 1998, a fire broke out in the Upper Moreland High School Auditorium.

The fire was reportedly caused by a malfunction in the set of the school play, *Grease*, during a rehearsal for the play which was held on May 14-16.

The fire was started around 4:00pm, when it began burning in the lighting system in the auditorium. "I looked up, and the lights were on fire!" one witness commented the day after the blaze. The commotion was ended a few minutes later, when Mr. Robert Barron, a music teacher at UMHS, climbed some scaffolding in the set with a fire extinguisher to put an end to the fire. Although fire trucks were called in, they arrived after the fire was out and no help was needed.

The next day, an electrician was hired to do repair work at the school. "He's the best man I've ever seen with electrical work," the Biology teacher commented during a side trip in her class. "If anybody can do the job, it will be him."

WEIRD WEATHER CONTINUES

Unusual weather has been plaguing the area for a few months now, and it isn't expected to end anytime soon.

For 14 consecutive days, From April 30 to May 12, it rained in and around the Philadelphia area. After the rain ended, the heat wave began, bringing temperatures usual for mid-June and early September into the area.

"It's amazing," said neighbor Jean Sokolowski, who works at a bank, when asked to comment on the weather. "You can tell what the weather is when people come up to make transactions with me. People were grouchy during the rain streak."

Her husband, Henry Sokolowski, commented on the heat, "This is HOT!"

The cause for the unusual weather is unclear. Most unusual weather events this winter were blamed on the El Niño phenomenon, which brought a mild winter to the area. However, the phenomenon is so weak now that it is doubtful that it could have caused a rain spell this long. More likely is the developing La Niña phenomenon, which forms after severe El Niños dissipate.

Ironically, this falls into a pattern in which it seems to rain during the first days of May every year. In 1994, when Volume 5 (the first edition featuring neighborhood news) of the *Village* was published, Henry also commented on how he had to empty his pool because of the rain.

Whatever the cause, the heat is most likely here to stay, so as Jean Sokolowski says, "Get ready for a long, dry summer!"

RAIN DELAYS PIONEER ROAD WORK

Last month, we reported that Pioneer Road work resumed after a pause in early April. Since then, it has moved down to the close end of the street.

However, with the rain from April 30 to May 12, road work was delayed due to the deluge. "I'm disappointed," said neighbor Jean Sokolowski's father, Alfred Muzyka, when he came over to her house on May 6. "The rain canceled the work."

However, after the rain ended, road work resumed, and the street has been closed from the Byberry-Pioneer intersection to Shoemaker road. Although



For unknown reasons, this lawn was torn up on May 20.

local traffic is allowed through the barricade to get to the neighborhood entrance at Butternut Drive, as Jean told us recently, "It's a nuisance that we have to go the other way. I hope it doesn't rain any more so this long-delayed work can finally get done." For unknown reasons, a lawn on Pioneer Road was destroyed on Wednesday, May 20, 1998. It is suspected that they road workers had to install new gas lines to replace the old ones; however, nothing is sure at this time because we just discovered this story on the night we went to press. Keep reading next month for further developments on Pioneer Road and this lawn.

The road work, which was originally scheduled to be done in early June, is now expected to be completed sometime in July.

YARD SALE POSTPONED, BUT STILL A SUCCESS

The semi-annual Spring yard neighborhood yard sale, originally scheduled for May 2 and 3, was postponed to two weekends later recently.

The reason for the change is reported to be the prolonged period of rain, which plagued the area for two weeks. Although the signs were up during that weekend, it is doubted that the Lynches, the organizers of the yard sale, received much business.

The yard sale was held on May 15 and 16. Although only the Lynches participated on those days, it was enjoyed by all.

OTHER NEWS TIDBITS

-Allison Curry recently received her first communion at a ceremony sometime in late April. The Curry family reports that everything went fine at the ensuing party. Congratulations, Allison!

-At UMHS, two signs proclaiming their new status as a Pennsylvania Blue Ribbon School were recently torn down and lost by vandals, who then spray-painted the railroad bridge where the signs were hanging near the school. An investigation is underway.

Lost and Found

TURKEY STRAYS, RORVIKS SUSPECTED

On Thursday, May 14, 1998, a turkey strayed onto the Sokolowskis' back porch, wreaking havoc with Henry Sokolowski, the owner of the house.

"I want this thing out of here!" he screamed angrily when he spotted the turkey. "The Rorviks should learn to control their animals!" The turkey, shown on the right, refused to leave even after Henry tried to chase it away. "Then I was afraid," he said, "that the turkey would attack me because it was so huge."



This turkey was spotted on Henry Sokolowski's porch.

Eventually, the turkey left on its own, but not due to a call to the Rorvicks. To that, Henry said, "I'm not calling them [The Rorvicks]. I'm tired of them and wish they would keep their wildlife out of my yard!"

OLGC CARNIVAL NOT TO BE HELD

Since there has been no notice of the annual OLGC carnival this year, it can be safely assumed that the carnival has been canceled yet again due to lack of an organizer. As you may recall, the carnival was canceled last year when the organizer decided to take a "break".

News from the Curries



The Curry Family

The following stories have been written and provided by Mr. Scott Curry via the Internet. We hope to make this a regular section if we keep receiving news. For the majority of our subscribers who live outside the neighborhood, the Curry family used to live in the neighborhood until they moved to Collegeville on August 25, 1995.

GRUB PROBLEM DISAPPEARS

The "king of grass", Mr. Curry, reports that he no longer is having a problem with grubs. "Its amazing that after I moved away from the Altimaris, I no longer have a grub problem.", joked Mr. Curry. "Could it be coincidental?"

BABE RUTH SIGHTED IN COLLEGEVILLE

If you are looking in the sky and see a moving light it may not be a falling star but a recent home run- by Michael Curry. Yes, Michael Curry has again "parked a 4 bagger" at the Perkiomen Little League. On May 5th MC launched a three run home run over the left center field fence, roughly 220 feet. When asked to describe the hit by his older brother David, Michael replied, "It was only a check swing!"

HAT TRICK PLUS ONE

On almost the same day as "the Babe", David Curry scored 4 goals in the first soccer game of the season. The coach of the opposing team was overheard saying, "This guy is unstoppable!" When DC was asked to comment on his performance, he replied "I'm just warming up for my game against Upper Moreland and the potential to play against the Hoffman kid."

CURRY GALS TEAM UP FOR SOFTBALL

Yes, you read this correctly - the Curry girls are teamed up. Mrs. Curry is coaching the 7-8 year old girls softball team where Allison Curry is "tearing up the ball".

Comedy Central

THE FINAL EXAM

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each question thoroughly. Answer all questions.

Time limit - four hours. Begin immediately.

HISTORY: Describe the history of the Papacy from its origins to the present day, concentrate specifically but not exclusively, on the social, political, economic, religious, and philosophical impact on Europe, Asia, America and Africa. Be brief, concise and specific.

LITERATURE: Compose an epic poem based on the events of your own life in which you see and footnote allusions from T.S.Eliot, Keats, Chaucer,
Dante, Norse mythology and the Marx brothers. Critique your poem with a full discussion of its metrics.

MUSIC: Write a piano concerto. Orchestrate it and perform it with flute and drum. You will find a piano under your seat.

LOGIC: Using accepted methodology prove all four of the following: That the universe is infinite; that truth is beauty; that there is not a

little person who turns off the light in the refrigerator when you close the door, and that you are the person taking this exam. Now disprove all of the above. Be specific; show all work.

PHILOSOPHY: Sketch the development of human thought; estimate its significance. Compare with the development of any other kind of thought.

MEDICINE: You have been provided with a razor blade, a piece of gauze, and a bottle of Scotch. Remove your own appendix. Do not suture until
your work has been inspected. You have fifteen minutes.

BIOLOGY: Create life.

PSYCHOLOGY: Employing principles from the major schools of psychoanalytic thought, successfully subject yourself to analysis. Make appropriate personality changes, bill yourself and fill out all medical insurance forms. Now do the same to the person seated to your immediate left.

SOCIOLOGY: Estimate the sociological problems that might accompany the end of the world. Show how boy meets girl theory developed. Construct
an experiment to test your theory.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: 2,500 riot crazed students are storming the classroom. Calm them. You may use any ancient language except Latin or Greek.

PHYSICS: Explain the nature of matter. Include in your answer an evaluation of the impact of the development of mathematics on science.

POLITICAL SCIENCE: There is a red telephone on the desk behind you. Start World War III. Report at length on its socio-political effects, if any.

MATHEMATICS: Give today's date--in metric.

CHEMISTRY. Transform lead into gold. You will find a tripod and three logs under your seat. Show all work including Feynman diagrams and quantum functions for all steps. You have fifteen minutes.

EXTRA CREDIT: Define the Universe. Give two examples.

100 FUN WAYS TO ORDER A PIZZA

Although there are 100 ways in this section, we will be publishing only 60 this month and 40 next month due to space considerations.

1. If using a touch-tone, press random numbers while ordering. Ask the person taking the order to stop doing that.

2. Make up a charge-card name. Ask if they accept it.

3. Use CB lingo where applicable.

4. Order a Big Mac Extra Value Meal.

5. Terminate the call with, “Remember, we never had this conversation.”

6. Tell the order taker a rival pizza place is on the other line and you're going with the lowest bidder.

7. Give them your address, exclaim “Oh, just surprise me!” and hang up.

8. Answer their questions with questions.

9. In your breathiest voice, tell them to cut the trash about nutrition and ask if they have something outlandishly sinful.

10. Use these bonus words in the conversation: ROBUST FREE-SPIRITED COST-EFFICIENT UKRAINIAN.

11. Tell them to put the crust on top this time.

12. Sing the order to the tune of your favorite song from Metallica's “Master of Puppets” CD.

13. Do not name the toppings you want. Rather, spell them out.

14. Put an extra edge in your voice when you say “crazy bread.”

15. Stutter on the letter “p”.

16. Ask for a deal available somewhere else. (e.g. If phoning Domino's, ask for a Cheeser! Cheeser!)

17. Ask what the order taker is wearing.

18. Crack your knuckles into the receiver.

19. Say hello, act stunned for five seconds, then behave as if they called you.

20. Rattle off your order with a determined air. If they ask if you would like drinks with that, panic and become disoriented.

21. Tell the order taker you're depressed. Get him/her to cheer you up.

22. Make a list of exotic cuisines. Order them as toppings.

23. Change your accent every three seconds.

24. Order 52 pepperoni slices prepared in a fractal pattern as follows from an equation you are about to dictate. Ask if they need paper.

25. Act like you know the order taker from somewhere. Say “Bed-Wetters’ Camp, right?”

26. Start your order with “I'd like. . .” A little later, slap yourself and say “No, I don’t.”

27. If they repeat the order to make sure they have it right, say “OK. That'll be $10.99; please pull up to the first window.”

28. Rent a pizza.

29. Order while using an electric knife sharpener.

30. Ask if you get to keep the pizza box. When they say yes, heave a sigh of relief.

31. Put the accent on the last syllable of “pepperoni.” Use the long “I” sound.

32. Have your pizza “shaken, not stirred.”

33. Say “Are you sure this is (Pizza Place)?” When they say yes, say “Well, so is this! You've got some explaining to do!” When they finally offer proof that it is, in fact, (Pizza Place), begin to cry and ask, “Do you know what it's like to be lied to?”

34. Move the mouthpiece farther and farther from your lips as you speak. When the call ends, jerk the mouthpiece back into place and scream goodbye at the top of your lungs.

35. Tell them to double-check to make sure your pizza is, in fact, dead.

36. Imitate the order taker's voice.

37. Eliminate verbs from your speech.

38. When they say “What would you like?” say, “Huh? Oh, you mean now.”

39. Play a sitar in the background.

40. Say it's your anniversary and you’d appreciate if the deliverer hid behind some furniture waiting for your spouse to arrive so you can
surprise him/her.

41. Amuse the order taker with little-known facts about country music.

42. Ask to see a menu.

43. Quote Carl Sandberg.

44. Say you'll be able to pay for this when the movie people call back.

45. Ask if they have any idea what is at stake

with this pizza.

46. Ask what topping goes best with well-aged Chardonnay.

47. Belch directly into the mouthpiece; then tell your dog it should be ashamed.

48. Order a slice, not a whole pizza.

49. Shout “I'm through with men/women! Send me a dozen of your best, Gaston!”

50. Doze off in the middle of the order, catch yourself, and say “Where was I? Who are you?”

51. Psychoanalyze the order taker.

52. Ask what their phone number is. Hang up, call them, and ask again.

53. Order two toppings, then say, “No, they'll start fighting.”

54. Learn to properly pronounce the ingredients of a Twinkie. Ask that these be included in the pizza.

55. Call to complain about service. Later, call to say you were drunk and didn't mean it.

56. Tell the order taker to tell the manager to tell his supervisor he's fired.

57. Report a petty theft to the order taker.

58. Use expletives like “Great Caesar!”

59. Ask for the guy who took your order last time.

60. If he/she suggests anything, adamantly declare, “I shall not be swayed by your sweet words.”

Summer Vacation

I was initially going to write about how pleased I was that this was going to be the longest summer vacation we've ever had. But that's not true any more. Because of the mild winter, the district didn't use any of the planned snow days. Normally any such days would be subtracted from the end of the year. This is no longer true, and so, we will only be able to enjoy a vacation of average length.

But, I am none-the-more disappointed. Vacation is vacation, and I'm happy for it. I have always felt as if I haven't used the given time to its fullest purpose. This year I have a plan.

My sister came home from college last weekend. We have always been very close, and we enjoy doing things together. But, she got a job for the summer and is working from 3-11 p.m. every day. My plan this summer is to advance myself in all possible ways. Every morning my sister and I are going to run to the Hatboro Y.M.C.A. and work out there for several hours. When we get home she'll go to work, and I will proceed to the public library to do some mandatory reading in the comfort of tax-funded air conditioning. If said plan works as it is meant to, when I get back to school, I will be stronger and smarter than I was when I left several months before. When this plan inevitably fails and I start slacking, you will be able to find me online, working for the *Village*, or just goofing off.

The way that I choose to think about things is that, after July 4, the summer is basically over. We're only actually half way through it, but pretty much nothing happens after that.

The editor of *Shoemaker Village*, Stephen Sokolowski, and I happen to have the same birthday, July 6. After which, all statements pertaining to the remainder of the summer are irrelevant as my plans are limited.

One thing I am looking forward to is going back to my aunt's cabin. In an old article, "A Memorable Experience," I wrote about the enjoyment I had when I went last summer. Hopefully, my cousins won't be there this year, and I'll really be able to enjoy myself. And even supposing that that plan falls through because my aunt doesn't stay in the country, she may be taking me to Holland! It would be a

first for me, that's for sure.

In any case, I am looking forward to a prosperous and fun summer. When I get back to school I will hopefully be rested. The funny thing is that while I enjoy my vacation immensely, by the end of it, I am more than ready to go learn again. I guess the most conclusive thing to say would be: take life one day at a time-enjoy it while you're here. Mortality is a strange thing. Well, I'm probably bringing you down, so I better stop now.

From Everyone Here At *Shoemaker Village*, Have A Great Summer!

Summer Vacation

UM and Summer Vacation

Summer vacation is good. It helps students by giving them a break after the long school year. It also allows teachers more time to perfect their studies and get some rest. However, there are some things that the Upper Moreland School District could do to improve their summers dramatically.

First, Upper Moreland (UM) has been, for some time, the school district to release students the latest in the area. This year, school will let out on June 19, which is EARLY by their standards. (In past years, school has released up to June 24.) Last year was an exception (June 13), but overall, Upper Moreland begins summer vacation too late.

This may be due to how UM wastes its money. Reportedly, the school was begun late (September 8) this year, the week after Labor Day due to the improvements of the computer system in the school. This is not bad, because the computer system still needs MAJOR improvements, but they could have done it a little earlier in the summer. For example, the maintenance workers were cutting the grass on Monday, May 18, 1998, on the Lacrosse field where the grass was only an inch high already. The money saved from not cutting the grass could be used to buy a new mouse for this computer! (Try to use Windows 3.1 with only the keyboard and you'll see what I mean.)

Matt Care, an assistant editor to the *Village*, reported that the college where his sister attends, Lehigh University, released on May 15. This is way too early, but it proves the point that UM releases too late. They should let their students out on vacation in the early part of June. This would allow their students to enjoy the weather when it is WARM instead of not starting school until the middle of September like this coming summer.

A better solution to all of this would be to change the format at UM and go to year-round school. Students and teachers alike become bored at the end of the summer and even look forward to going back to school. The current system of summer vacation was begun in the late 1800s when the public school system was being formed. This was to allow children to help their families on the farms during the

summer months. These reasons are why school should go year round. If this type of education were to be instituted, students would most likely go to school for four weeks and take one off. This would probably be better than the current educational system.

But support for this kind of schooling is poor, and the current summer vacation format will be fine for now. However, UM must make a modification to their summer schedule now in the better interest of their students.

The Tomb of the Unknown World

Chapter 1

The sun came up over a dead world. The only trace of life was that which danced over the gleaming and now crystal clear water. Lying alone on his uncomfortable bunk, Captain John Barret allowed his mind to wander away from the present. Soon enough he would land and be reminded all too well of the fickle and tragic thing that some call reality. It didn't seam like that long ago that he was at home with his family enjoying life on the sunny coast of California. It was the information age and the media had become obsolete. One could find out anything over the Internet at the speed of light. People never turned their computers off anymore. He remembered when he had first heard the horrible news.

Washington D.C. had been bombed. He knew what that meant. Among other things it meant that he would be going back to work soon. He was commanding officer in the special forces of the army. The government had been monitoring the activities of a misguided and heavily armored colt in the Middle East. In the history of the United States, very few times has war ever actually been declared. Likewise, there was no cause to interfere with the affairs of another country's problem.

Ten years ago, Russia broke up into separate nations just as the U.S.S.R. did in the 80's. When they finally made a hostile move by invading the Republic of Moscow and stole chemical and nuclear weapons from the national armory it was clear that the time to interfere had come.

Since the turn of the century, the United Nations had been losing power. Even with the strength of powerful nations behind it and the United States recent proclamation to longer negotiate with terrorists, things had never been the same since the split up.

When the military derived their motive we determined that we were dealing with a misguided group of dead fast communists. And before the U.N. had time to decide on what action should be taken, the group had been permanently dissolved when a group somehow infiltrated the building and set off a bomb killing all of the diplomats.

How could anyone in the world have such a blatant disregard for human life and order! The name of the ringleader, Cregon Iscoch, and that of Hitler, were now used interchangeably.

With all of our technology we couldn't do anything. If it had been thirty years ago and we were dealing with China or the former Iraq, we could have locked on a warhead big enough to level the country. But we weren't dealing with an entire army that we could just bomb. Instead we had been put in the position of dealing with radical terrorists at the point in time when the United States had just specifically stated that we would not negotiate with their kind. But millions of innocent lives were in the balance. If we interfered we may have risked hurting a populous of woman and children. If we didn't they may have be killed anyway. And when they bombed Washington it was like a bad dream. The human race and the pride of a nation are a lot alike. We think that we're so secure, and even that technology will save us. But technology improves and when the sun comes up, we're still just as vain as we were the day before.

It seemed utterly amazing that with all of our technology they had managed to level the capital of the most powerful nation in the world. If we were going to stand a chance we were going to have to rethink our defense systems.

He remembered the way things had been the last time he was in a war. It had been years since the Gulf War and still more since Vietnam. That had been a scuffle compared to what we were facing now. In 2003 Sadam Hussein had gone to far and was captured and locked up causing the collapse of the Middle Eastern savagery and creating peace for the time.

It seemed rather trite for him to lie there feeling sorry for himself. He was a good commander and the time had come for him to command again. The problem with war is that once you've killed a person you never really get over it. Unfortunately, it gets a little easier every time until you have no sense of

decency left and you’re more machine than man.

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He stepped off the transport jet and saluted the waiting guards. It was colder than he had remembered. The Antarctic wind bit into him a little. Hurrying into the bunker, he was greeted by comrades. After going through a series of checkpoints and scanners, the guards led him onto the elevator which led to the sub-terranian briefing room. He cringed at the familiar grinding sound of the gears. The doors slid open.

Part of the wall to his left was covered by a huge computer generated map, superimposed with some other numbers and flashing dots. Facing the wall where a hundred or so manned consoles. Two men in admirals’ uniforms approached him.

“Captain John Barret, reporting for duty sir; service number, 2837e.”

“Welcome back Captain,” said one of the men, returning his salute.

“I can't say that I'm thoroughly enjoying myself,” said Barret abrasively.

Knowing him to possess such an attitude and exercising it quite frequently, Admiral B. J. Smeling forced a cough to break the silence and said,

"Yes, well...Ah, John, I'd like you to meet Admiral James Duff. He came here on assignment and what with the chaos decided to stay on a while."

This was an attempt at humor, for everyone knew full well that this was all that was left of enlisted personnel. Duff couldn't have left if he wanted to.

"Nice to meet you," said Barret with a firm handshake, as was the way in which he comported himself.

"Same to you," said Duff.

"Yeh, John and I go way back, don't we John," said Smeling.

"Yeh, we sure do," replied Barret.

They stood looking at each other for several moments. If they were indeed friends, Duff noticed an exchanged glance which momentarily contradicted the statement. Each pair of eyes seamed to stare into the other man's soul. Then, both faces turned to smiling, and they nodded understandingly.

Not knowing what to make of it, Duff continued with the prebriefing.

“You know why you’re here?” said he with a tone of patronage.

“I have an idea.”

“Follow us. We’ll brief you on the way.”

They walked through the room past the field of consoles. Duff slid a key card through a scanner and they entered a small, soundproofed, windowless room. Taking their seats, Smeling turned on a monitor which displayed a miniature projection of the image on the large wall outside.

“Those red dots, they're a shipment of nuclear weapons that we’ve been tracking.”

"I couldn't help but notice that readout there, if I'm not mistaken, that's half a million megatons. Enough..."

"...to turn the entire planet into a lifeless smoldering dead rock," completed Duff.

"If put to their full potential, a genocide of biblical proportion," said the other man.

"We're in way over our heads, and there's no way we can crawl out without finding ourselves looking down a gun barrel," said Duff.

"Yes, but we're missing the underlying point. This isn't about the pride of a nation any more-this is a free-for-all," said Smelling.

"So this is about doing the right thing," said Duff rhetorically.

"There are lives to consider," said Smelling, about the trail off into one of his trademark ramblings.

Before he could, Barret interrupted, saying,

"These weapons-I trust they require a self-destruct command. They can't be blown up by another explosion."

"Well, yes, of course," said Smelling.

"Where are they coming from," asked Barret.

"How are you tracking them?"

"Satellite," said Duff, "but we're sure they'll be making stealth convoys soon enough."

It did seam like the logical thing to do. If they had discovered some new material, it would be invaluable to science, to humanity, and would bring in a fortune for whoever had it.

"We've analyzed the debris from Washington," said Duff. "It's not even close to anything that is now on record." Scientists are still working on it, and I don't claim to know everything yet, but," he looked very thoughtfully at the floor for a moment, like a child that had just been scolded, "we haven't ruled out the possibility of some sort of extraterrestrial substance."

"So, you're saying that what we've got is a bunch of wackos, running around with nuclear weapons, collecting souvenirs from Area 51, and compromising global security?" exclaimed Barret.

The two other men looked at each other and exchanged a glance which seemed to say, "Well...*yes?*"

[Not Yet Titled]

Chapter 1, Part I

Year: 2056

Ah, the price of insight. Greg must have been sitting in the same place for hours. The lab seats, no matter how much the government paid for them, and how "plush" they were, started to hurt after the first two hours or so. Greg starting to get ideas of going elsewhere, but he quickly shook them off. He had work to do, and he was going to do it. Even if it took him all night long. All year long, at this rate. Greg yawned, and suddenly the realization that he hadn't had any real sleep, save for scattered naps with his head down on his desk, in about 48 hours, hit him. He decided to go to the sink next to his desk in the lab, and splash some cold water on his face. That should help to snap him out of his fatigue for a while. Greg dried off his hands on the white ragged towel, which hadn't been washed in weeks, and wiped his now-dirty hands on his white laboratory jacket. He sat back down at his chair, and felt the shock of landing on a now flattened cushion rise up his spine. He needed a new chair if he was going to get anywhere. Perhaps tomorrow. Or this weekend. Come to think of it, the weekend after that might be best. Greg felt around his desk with his right hand, pushing off papers, found a large, light red button, and pushed it. Immediately, a piece of in the middle of his desk, about an inch wide and 10 inches long, popped open, and a screen swished out of the flat oval hole that had been revealed. The screen lit up, and in the center flashed the message, “Welcome to Microsoft Windows 2054! Please touch screen to start.” Greg tapped the screen, not even bothering to read the message for he had done it so many times before, and looked at the screen that came up. His background, which he should really change before anyone sees it, and his touchklik desktop glowed in the dim fight around him.. He scanned the screen for the icon labeled “Project”, and tapped it with his finger. The program immediately came tip, ind the screen was exactly as he had left it when he last worked with it. He felt up the side of the monitor, and came across a small button. The monitors image jumped off of the screen, until the flat picture looked about an inch away from the flat surface. About an inch in front of that. the words, "Packard Bell 3D Monitor Mode enabled" hovered unwaveringly. It disappeared in , few seconds, and Greg scanned the toolbar on the program he was running. He found the button labeled "3D Mode", and tapped it with his finger, which passed though the now floating image. Suddenly the flat grid which had once occupied the bottom portion of the image had jumped out until it was no longer flat and floating but a 3D floating box. The fight blue glowing lines contrasted well with the darkness of the lab around him. The buttons which had once been flat and fused to the main image were now also 3-Dimensional boxes suspended about 2 inches above the rest of the display. Greg looked at them, adjusted his eyes to the now 3D display,, and then found the button entitled "Run". He tapped it with his finger, and a dark blue menu with white writing appeared. 3 choices were displayed: “Run Simulation from Last Start”, “Run Simulation from Run-Time Input Variables” and “Reset Simulation and Run”. & Greg chose the last one. and a white screen popped up with a blue status meter a message that said “Compiling Data, Please Wait.” The status meter reached 100%, and the screen disappeared. The light blue grid enlarged to fill the entire screen, and up at the top of the screen three buttons appeared. “Start”, “Stop” and “Pause”. Greg waved his finger in the air where the “Start” button was floating, and suddenly, in the middle of the screen, a wireframe box appeared. A strange, orange, broken sphere-oval like thing then appeared around the box. It began to twist and turn and expand and contract, and then holes began to appear, exposing the wireframe box within. The sphere tried to regain it's shape, but it was so distorted that it failed. It blew apart, sending pieces of orange flying to the edges of the grid, where they disappeared. The wireframe box within was demolished as well. Greg swore loudly as a gray message box popped up that said “Space-Time Bubble Destroyed, Time Travel Simulation #6,784 failed.” Greg tapped “OK”, and then slammed his head down onto his

desk. He had spent hours reworking the variables on this thing! What kept going wrong! This was sure to work! Why hadn't it? This was getting very frustrating. It looked, however, that the time-space bubble had gone semi-stable for a few seconds before it blew apart. To confirm this, Greg walked over to a large double-door on the side of the small lab. He pulled out his keys, and unlocked them. Thrusting them open, he reached beside him to the light switch, and flicked it on. Suddenly the room was huge, like an old airplane hangar. In the middle of the room, there was a large, upright rectangular thing that resembled an elevator. It had a small, foot high antenna on top, and a light. Greg walked over to the machine, and typed a security code on the keypad next to the doors. They slid open, and Greg stepped inside. The lights inside had come on when the doors were opened, and the startup security panel was lit up on the main control panel. Greg walked over to it, and pressed in a different access code. Upon pressing the last digit in the code, everything inside the machine went on. All of the instruments on the control panel lit up, indicator lights all over the place lit up, and the screens came on, all displaying “Welcome to Microsoft Windows 2054! Please Touch Screen to Start.” Greg touched the large, central, main screen, and all of the screens turned into a specialized touchklik desktop, with two options: “Start Up Time-Machine”, and “Shut Down Main Systems”. Greg touched “Start Up Time Machine”, and a whirr rose from beneath and above him. Satisfied, Greg stepped out of the machine again, and looked up at the light on top of the antenna. It was red, and flashing intermittently. Greg walked back into his laboratory, and sat down at his desk. Once again he felt the shock of flattened cushion on his back. He ignored it, and went back to the 3D image emanating from his screen. He pressed the button on the screen labeled "Reset', and the small wireframe box was once again sitting in the middle of the blue grid. Greg looked up in the top right comer of the screen, and found three buttons floating separated from everything else. One was labeled “x”, one was labeled “-”, and one was labeled “[]”. Greg pressed the “-” button, and the screen disappeared. There was a small bar running along the side on the screen, which now displayed in a button, “3D Time Simu...”. The button next to it read “Time Travel C ...”. Greg touched that button, and the first screen that he had been working on came up. He went back into the main coding for the time travel variables, and started going through each line, looking for things that might not be right.

It had been four hours of looking through the coding before he decided to do something else for a while. It was nearing 11:00 pm, and he wanted to watch the 11 o'clock news. He felt around on the left side of the monitor, and pressed a button. The screen went flat and black for a second, and then turned blue. In the center. the words "Packard Bell Monitor Holographic Television Mode Enabled." There was a list of buttons on the side, with different channel names that Greg uses the most. Greg pressed the one entitled “6", and the whole screen jumped back out. A large, red can was hovering in front of the screen, and there was a face on the flat screen behind it. On the can was the word, “Foldgers.” The words, “A fresh start to every day, it's Foldgers in your cup!” appeared over top of the can, in 3D fancy letters. The screen went blue for a second, and then the words “The 11 o'clock news with William Grossner” appeared in 3D letters, and behind it a 3D picture of the Philadelphia skyline. The skyline rotated behind the title for a few seconds, in fairness to those who are slow readers or still tuning in, and then it snapped to a 3D picture of a news studio. There was a light blue desk that popped about 4 inches off of the screen, and a man that was sitting behind it. He was an older man, perhaps in his 80's, but he looked well nonetheless. He had a full head of white hair, and a definitely amctured yet somewhat rounded and kind face. He had his share of wrinkles, mainly on his cheeks and forehead. When he spoke, however, his voice was smooth, unwavering, and strong.

“Welcome to the channel six 11 o'clock news. I'm William Grossner. In our top stories tonight, North and South Vietnameese peace talks once again dissolve, and the two countries remain separate. The Shuttle Nomad is less than 2 days from Earth, returning from it's second expedition to Mars. The president is under investigation for illeged illegal money laundering, involving several well-esteeined foreign organizations. And finally, the British Association for Scientific Development has made definitive progress in the time-travel project.”

Greg cringed at the thought of the British Associatiation for Scientific Development. The BASD was the group that he was competing with on the time travel project, and he hated them like nothing else.

“The first story we bring you tonite is that of the British Association for Scientific Development, or BASD. The BASD have spent the past several years working on ways of timetravel, and most recently have made several huge leaps in their advancement. A time-travel machine has been constructed in thier laboratory, and although it is not yet functioning, it is helping greatly with thier progress.

“We went to the BASD recently, and were given an exclusive tour, and an interview with the leader of the team, Grahm Harold. Let's go to that interview now.”

Greg was actually eager, in a hateful way, to see what the inside of the BASD laboratory looked like. He was sure that it was much worse than his. He always had pictured it as a small, dirty place, with a small lab area and old-fashioned computer systems. He pictured the machine that they had built as being small, and shoddy, and haphazardly thrown together. On the 3D image emanating from the screen, the picture of a young, dark man appeared. Beneath him were in blue the words "Jim Thomas", and below that a thick blue line, and below that line were the words "BASD Laboratory, London, England." He was inside some sort of lobby-type area, that remided Greg of a Hilton hotel lobby. The man began to talk, and he had the same strong, unwavering voice as the main anchorman, only deeper.

"Welcome to the BASD laboratories, which I'm sure that you have heard of at one time or another in the past few years. They have made a name for themselves in time-travel therioes, and most recently have announced the completion of a near-working time-machine. I'm here in the BASD laboratory main building lobby, with the head of the research and development team, Grahm Harold. Hello, Mr. Harold."

A thin, lanky man, in his early 40's perhaps, looked down upon the much shorter Jim. He wore glasses that were small and oval like, which had been popular over 50 years ago, but had faded out of fasion. The glasses accented his thin face, however, which was shaped like one of the lenses he was wearing, only stood straight up. The man had an air about the way he sttod, with his neck arched in what must have been a most uncomfortable and unhealthy manner. That, along with the heavy British accent, made him seem like the stereotypical Englishman.

"Allo, Jim. It's nice to have ya in our labs taday. Would ya ratha go about the tour first, or are ya goin ta intaveiw me first?" It was obvious that the reporter was having some dfficulting getting through the accent.

Had Greg not been an afficiando of British Comedy, such as the near century old Monty Python, and other, more recent 2030ish British Comedy, he would have had trouble making it through the accent. The reporter started to venture out with a sentence, having finally gotten the jist of what the Englishman was saying.

"Well, Mr. Harold, whatever suits vou the best, I suppose."

"Aright, Jim, why dunt we go on tha tour first, that way if ya have any questions, ya kin ask me then."

"Sure, Mr. Harold." Harold began to walk in the direction of two glass doors, and Jim followed him. The camera followed both of them through the doors, and down a long, completely gray corridor, to another set of doors. Only these doors were metal, and had a control panel in the middle of them. Harold tapped in a code, and there was a large clunk sound from inside the doors. Harold tapped a button on the gray walls, and the doors swished open. The two men, and the cameraman who followed them, walked into the room. It was a huge room, with many people working inside. Some were at desks, working at computers that were the same kind that Greg was sitting at watching the show. Others, with heavy lab coats on, were at long, white tables. Some of the tables had electronics strewn about on them, and others had pieces of metal. A few of the scientists were over in the comer, near the coffee machine, drinking a late night coffee to keep them awake. Greg was astounded at the level of the lab that he was trying to compete with. He, who was expected to do- this basically alone, with other people only when needer for assembling pieces of the machine, and some matenence. The US Government really did put this project at the lowest level of importance, just high enough for them to actually set money and time aside to do it. Greg didn't know how he was going to get the machine done before the British did. Mr. Harold tapped the reporter on the shoulder, and then began to speak once again.

"This, Jim, is our main reserch laboratory, This is where our top scientists play with the computers

an drink all the'coffee."

Both Harold and the reporter laughed.

"But seriously, Jim, in this room right now, are some of the most brilliant minds in all of Europe. They toil endlessly in this build'n ta bring this time-machine ta life. And they be Makin dome pretty good progress with it. Say, wouldja like ta see tha machine itself?"

Jim nodded eagerly, and the two of them, along with the camera trailing behind, unnoticed as usual, walked up to a large silver door. Harold pressed a button next to it, and the door rolled up, much like a large garage door. The three of them walked through it, and came into a huge room. It was white all around, with artificial lighting high above and no windows whatsoever. This room must have been the center of the entire complex, for maximum security. They walked over to a large machine, that looked kind of like an elevator, only thinner, wih an antenna on top and a light on top of the antenna. The light was yellow, and flashing at a steady pace. Greg almost fell out of his chair at his desk. Then he almost hit the screen he was watching this on. Then he finally decided to just watch it through. This was horrible! The British machine looked almost *exactly* like his! What had those Brits stolen from the US Gov't now? Darn British spies! They all watch too many James Bond movies. There had been 32 of them, dating from early to mid 20th century.

"This, Jim, is the compilation of all our work here. It's the time machine itself. It's not workin' yet, though. Do ya see that light up on top? It's yellow, an' flashing. If the time machine was workin', that light would be green, an' not flashing. If the time machine didn't work a'tall, that light would be red, and blinkin" intermittenly. Ya see, that yellow flashin' light means there is a space-time bubble formed 'round the ship. It's not stable enough to actually travel, though. The bubble is only in a semi-stable state. It's a great achievment, though to be able to have the bubble in semi-stable state. That's never been accomplished before for such a long a period of continuous time, in all of the history of knowledge of space-time, and the space-time bubbles that can carry you through it."

Jim nodded to Harold.

"That's very interesting, Mr. Harold. Now, you don't mind if I ask you a few questions, do you?"

"Not at all, Jim."

It was very obvious that the reporter was getting annoyed at the scientist calling him by Jim, his first name, while he had to call the scientist Mr. Harold.

"First of all," started the reporter, "when did your group first conceive of undertaking this massive project?"

Harold thought for a moment, stroking his clean-shaven chin with his thumb and forefinger.

The Knights of the Square Table

Chapter 11

"Ow!" Mike awoke with a start. Something was pushing against his back, creating pain in his spine. As he turned his head, he realized that it was a rock that he had wedged himself against during the night without knowing. It was now the fifth day since they had left the town to travel to the towers. There was dusk in the east, signaling that it was getting toward morning. The days were getting shorter now, the first he had really noticed since they began their travels. It was probably now about five in the morning, and Mike felt rested. It was almost August now. Mike was glad that in only a few months, this dreadful heat that they were experiencing would go away.

There were a few knights walking around on the other side of the camp, talking amongst themselves. Mike overheard their conversation, something about past episodes dealing with Yavin in their village. Mike decided not to go over, because he was tired of hearing about all this death and destruction, so instead, he went the other way for a few feet, but all he could see was wasteland to all four sides. If it had started to rain, they would have no protection. Mike shivered in the chilly morning air.

He didn't know how long he sat on the rock near the edge of the camp, but a while later, as the sun was just rising over the horizon, the lead knight came up to him. "Worried?" he asked, surprising Mike. Mike turned around.

"No, not really," he replied. "Just passing time."

"All this time," the knight replied, "I forgot to tell you my name. It's Sean."

Sean looked around and then said, "I think it's time to go now, do you want to wake everybody up?" Sean produced a primitive trumpet from his belongings.

Mike, being an expert trumpet player in his school band, blew as hard as he could. The sound must have been heard for miles around, because everyone was up and about in less than a minute. Knights began to pack away their furs and supplies, and many went to a nearby stream to refill their water bottles, which were made out of clay that tended to absorb the water during the day. Ten minutes later, after everyone was seated on their horses, Sean told Mike to blow the trumpet again, and they were off. Dave, Mike, Katie, Chapin, Christopher, and Sean rode out in front, and the rest of the knights followed behind.

That day was uneventful, like all the others. The trees were beginning to get even sparser, and at times there was not a living thing in sight. Despite the bleak surroundings, the knights behind them were lighthearted. Mike guessed that they were used to seeing such dreariness.

At the end of the day, the forest was in sight. Sean said that they would be camping there for a few days beginning tomorrow, where there was food and water. Everyone needed rest.

"Where do we go after that?" Dave asked as the day was coming to an end.

"To the east, to the towers," Sean responded.

"Have you ever been there before?" Katie asked Sean.

"No, but I've heard that ever since the fire elemental was destroyed a few years ago, evil things have happened there."

"What do we need to do?"

"I'm not sure," Sean replied. "I guess that there'll be an inscription there, or we'll just have to try things out. But enough speculation for now." "HALT!" he cried.

The rest of the knights came to a stop and Sean said, "We'll camp here for the night. It looks like a warm one, so conserve your water until tomorrow." There were several murmurs of yes, and then everyone dismounted and began to unpack. The party followed.

When they were dismounted, Christopher asked Chapin, "What are we going to do when we get there? Sean expects us to know what to do."

"Don't worry," Chapin answered. "Although I've never been there before, I have some idea of what to do. Go to sleep. We won't fail."

"OK, I just hope you're right," Christopher responded. "If not, the whole world may be at risk."

With that grim perspective, Christopher, Chapin, and the rest of the camp went to sleep. One knight was set to watch for trolls, calks, or whatever Yavin might have decided to throw at them.

Near the middle of the night, as the guard was being changed, there was a loud squawk, and then a

whooshing sound. A large bird swooped over them, making loud, eerie noises and flying about. It stayed over the camp for a while, during which time almost everyone was awakened by the noise.

"What's that?" Mike yelled to Christopher over all the racket, who was lying just a few feet away from him. Having just been rudely awoken, Christopher appeared surprised for a moment, and then replied, "Calks."

"What?" Mike yelled. "I can only see one."

"There's more," Christopher screamed. "They don't travel alone! They're probably trying to find us on Yavin's orders!"

"What should we do?!" Mike panicked.

"They've already spotted us," Christopher screamed. "They already know where we are now, so we should hide. They might be ordered to attack us!"

Christopher ran up to Sean as fast as he could, and said, "We need to get out of here now! If we can reach the pineforest by daybreak, we should be safe!"

"EVERYBODY!" Sean screamed over the loud squawks, "We have to MOVE NOW!"

There was mass chaos as all the knights who had been sleeping for the past few hours hurried to pack away their supplies and get mounted on their horses. But as Sean was just about to give the command to march, the squawking became fainter and fainter as the shadows retreated to the northeast.

"Are they gone?" Sean asked Christopher.

"Yes, but not for long," he replied. "They can be at Yavin's castle and back by tomorrow. And if we're stuck out in the middle of the fields in daylight, we're as good as dead."

"Let's go," Sean ordered. The group began to walk at the fast pace Sean set. Judging by the stars, it was a little past midnight, and pitch black. They did not want to risk Katie holding the Hadar Stone or the calks might find out, so they walked in complete darkness for the first part of the night.

However, at about 3:00 in the morning, it became so dark that they were unable to see otherwise, so Katie took out the Hadar Stone and, by holding it, once again made it light the way with a piercing bright light. Chapin commented that if the calks were to come their way, they would be defenseless, but would have some hope if they extinguished the light quickly, which might give them a few minutes more.

The forest in the distance grew to take up the entire horizon by the time it was dusk. Sean estimated that it would be another hour until they reached there, leaving them exposed to the daylight for about a half hour after the sun rose. Katie put away the Hadar Stone and they redoubled their efforts to get to the forest as fast as possible.

It was broad daylight and they were only a few feet away from the forest when they saw dark shadows looming in the distance. "Calks!" Dave gasped.

"Quick!" Sean said. "If they see us, we're dead!" The group pressed themselves to the limit to get to the forest as fast as they could. They could hear the squawks in the distance.

"Oh, my...." Mike gasped in astonishment as he ran. "There must be thousands!"

"They can't attack us in the forest!" Chapin panted. "RUN!"

As they neared the edge of the forest, several calks broke away from the main flock to attack them.

"AAAAAAAAAAH!" one of the knights uttered. He fell in front of Mike. Afterwards, even Mike could not describe the fierceness of the calks' attack on him. Finally, they reached the forest, but not without the loss of two knights, whose mangled bodies lay in the middle of the field. The calks closed in, threatening to attack anyone who might be stupid enough to leave the forest.

However, nobody took that chance, and the two bodies were devoured within minutes. The group moved further into the forest, where there was a stream, and they got some water. The forest, from what they could tell, was only a few miles across, but enough that there were a few small animals living there.

"So what do we do now?" Katie asked everyone as the sun climbed over the sky from the east. They had settled down as far into the forest as they could get, and made camp. Knights ran about, searching for food and water.

"We wait for the calks to go away," Christopher replied.

"The calks won't give up easily," Chapin said. "They're pretty intelligent birds. If Yavin told them to kill us, they'll stay around the forest until they can get in or we starve."

"Then that means we have to do something," Dave responded.

"What should we do?" Katie asked.

"We can take our chances," Mike said. "Leave during the night. Even if the calks could see us, we could be far away from here before they could attack."

"That wouldn't be a good idea," Chapin replied after a while. "Calks, because they're part of Yavin's force,

have excellent night vision. And if they did spot us, we'd be far from cover. We'd all be killed before we'd be a mile away."

"Have any other ideas?" Christopher asked.

A knight who they has seen in the party before approached them and said, "I do, sir."

"What?" Christopher asked. "And you don't have to call me sir."

"You two are the elementals, correct?"

"Yes," Chapin responded, "but what does this have to do with our current predicament?"

"Well, we could cast some sort of spell around the area, and then escape protected by it, or never even being seen at all."

"Would that be possible?" Katie asked.

"It might, but extremely difficult without the elemental of Fire. Darn, we need to revive him!"

"Then that wouldn't work?"

"Not completely," Chapin said. "We could use our power to help destroy some of the calks, but not all of them. Do you knights have your equipment with you?"

"Yes, only the finest."

"Let's wait for a few days," Dave suggested. "We could see what the calks are going to do, and rest and plan our attack. Maybe we'd have better success then."

"That sounds like a good idea," Christopher agreed. "What about you?"

Everyone else nodded their heads, glad for a temporary reprieve of the troubles that they had to face.

"Then we'll start planning tomorrow," Christopher ordered. "Take the day and night off, and go get some food and sleep."

Mike, Dave and Katie headed for the stream, which wasn't that far from the camp. There was cool, fresh water in it, presumably direct from the mountains. They drank as much as they could. A sign was posted that all bathing take place downstream, away from the fresh water source. From then on, for the rest of the day, they were required to travel further north to get some water.

They ate a breakfast of rations from Kahah, and then decided that some rest would be good for a few hours. When they awoke in the late afternoon, there were several animals, skinned and cleaned, ready to be cooked for dinner. However, since there wasn't nearly enough there for 500 people, it was decided that they would take turns eating the real meat until they were out of the forest.

They met Sean several times during that day, directing the hunting effort in the forest. With his help, by the next morning, they had more food than the last night. After everybody rested again for the night (with the exception of a few guards), they called an assembly with everyone at midmorning. The calks kept everybody on edge through that night.

Finally it was about 9:00, and all the knights, even the ones who were hunting, came to the assembly to hear of what they would do about the calks. Almost as a signal, a calk squawked as the meeting was about to begin.

"Friends," Sean began, "we have been called together here today to decide what to do about the calks that have surrounded this forest, trapping us in this place."

"In order to escape," Christopher continued, "we must do battle." There were several murmurs throughout the crowd in response to this statement.

"Yesterday," Christopher said, "Sean and I took the time to draw up a battle plan to destroy the calks." He pulled a large piece of bark from behind the tall stump he was standing on, and held it in front of him.

The explanation of the battle lasted throughout the morning. Christopher did most of the talking, although he stopped every once in a while while Sean explained a part of the map to the soldiers.

The battle was set for the fifth of August, only four days away. That would give them enough time to prepare and rest, but not too much as to deplete their supplies, Christopher said.

The next few days were uneventful, except for the occasional conversation of squawking that the calks made. But eventually, the morning of the battle came. Since it was to happen at high noon because of the tendency of the calks to fight better at night, there was still time for final preparations in the morning.

Logs were hollowed to act as stretchers. Swords were sharpened and arrows were made out of twigs with stone attached to them. Although the knights already had shields and helmets, makeshift helmets were made out of wood to protect Dave, Mike, Katie, Christopher, and Chapin.

When the sun was at about an hour before noon, Sean ordered all the knights to take their positions. Most of the knights would defend the corners of the forest, while some would remain behind to assist Chapin, Dave, Mike, Katie, and Christopher, and tend to the wounded.

The calks seemed to have stopped their squawking now, since it was almost noon, and most of Yavin's creatures hated the daylight. Christopher climbed a tree in the middle of the forest with the rest of their group to help by casting their spells. Finally, everything was ready.

Katie unveiled the Hadar Stone in the air above the forest, making a piercing light, even in broad daylight. That was to be the signal to begin the attack. She could see many calks hovering on the tops of the trees around her.

There was a cry, and an arrow flew from the north, striking a calk dead. At this, all the other calks awakened, and began to squawk wildly.

Chaos broke loose. Arrows flew. Knights climbed the trees to try to defend their proponents with their swords. Katie used the Hadar Stone to ground one calk, shaking the tree to her right with a loud boom. The body stopped moving on the top of three.

After the initial attack, the calks, realizing what the knights were trying to do, fell back to the perimeter of the forest, concentrating their attack on the westmost group.

"We need help here!" Christopher shouted. Katie held up the bright red stone, which was to signal distress, and pointed towards the west. Chapin transformed herself into the earth elemental at that moment, attacking the numerous birds above her.

There was a loud cry to their left, and reinforcements arrived at the west. Several knights fell from the treetops as the calks unleashed their full fury. Katie, Christopher, and Chapin continued to crush and freeze their enemies from the center of the forest.

"It looks like they're winning now!" Christopher said, pointing to a large influx of calks from the north. They all went to the west, while some broke away to attack the other groups.

"We need to do something quick!" Chapin screamed above the noise of battle. She and Christopher, casting a combined spell, managed to down ten calks at once around them. But this made them lose energy, and the calks shifted their attack towards them.

"They're coming!" Mike screamed. A large black one swooped down, crashing into the tree, sending Christopher flying down to the forest floor below. But even though friendly forces were falling, the calks were falling as well, and the remaining ones were not much of a threat to Chapin with her magic.

Finally the rest of the calks retreated to the north. Chapin, Dave, Mike, and Katie climbed out of the trees down to the forest floor. When they reached the ground, knights came running from different directions with damage reports.

Many people helped heal the injured. The dead were brought to the center of the forest, and buried in a mass grave. When they counted, there were 50 dead knights and 104 injured. A high price to pay, Mike thought to himself. Calks littered the battlefield, but were left where they lay. Christopher was tended to, and a knight said that he would live.

It took the rest of that day and all of the next to repair the damage the calk attack had caused. A small memorial service was held in honor of the dead knights at the end of the second day. Then Christopher and the rest of the original party sat down to discuss what they would do next.

"Now what should we do?" Dave began.

"We have to continue towards Yavin," Chapin responded.

"Yes," Dave said. "But how? The calks will most likely be back with reinforcements, and then we'll have no cover like this time."

"Well," Katie added, "we can't stay here. We'll starve or be attacked, or something."

"She's right," Christopher replied. "Trolls and calks and who knows what else are probably heading towards this forest right now."

"Then we have to leave as soon as possible. I'll tell Sean to be ready by tomorrow morning."

The night was still, and there wasn't a trace of anything living in sight. Everybody slept well that night, knowing that the calks were finally gone, but afraid of what laid ahead. The knights were up early in the morning, as to get a head start on going to the towers.

They left the forest at dawn, traveling to the East. There were no further signs of calks through that day, or the next. The same scenery of barren wasteland was all around them. By the end of the fifth day, they were nearing their goal, the towers. The mountains that surrounded Yavin's great fortress loomed to their left as they traveled eastward.

Finally, the next day, they reached the towers. A storm was blowing in, from what they could tell, and as the towers grew larger in the distance, the sky clouded over, blocking out the sun.

“Looks like it’s going to rain!” Sean shouted to Christopher. “What should we do?”

“Continue on,” he replied. “We should get there before the rain hits.”

So they continued on, ignoring the thunder in the distance. It was a cool day, since it didn’t get too hot up that far north, but nonetheless, a thunderstorm was brewing. Unfortunately, it began to rain before they reached the towers.

“Ride faster!” said Sean. “We must get there before the storm gets bad!”

At that moment, the storm intensified. The wind began to drive the rain in sheets at the party. Then Katie had an idea. She took out the Hadar Stone and wished hard that they would be protected. Suddenly, there was a blue flash, and it stopped raining. A blue dome seemed to be above them, protecting them from the rain and wind.

“Amazing!” one of the knights gasped as he looked up. Everybody hesitated for a moment, unsure if the dome would travel with them, but upon seeing that it did, only picked up the pace. Katie strained as hard as she could while riding on her horse near the back of the pack to try to keep the dome holding.

Christopher joined her, directing his magical powers to help her hold the protective dome intact. With the dome in place, they marched across the barren wasteland towards the three towers. Outside the dome, the wind roared, the rain poured, and it was very dark, but inside, it was like a sunny day.

However, Katie was unable to hold the dome for more than five minutes, and it collapsed a few minutes later, with the rain and wind finally penetrating the weakening dome. It fell apart altogether, and the full fury of the storm was felt by the party.

“Hurry!” Sean cried over the roaring noise. “Only a little more to go!”

They doubled their pace and reached the closest tower. “What do we do now?” Dave asked Sean, who was approaching the tower behind him in the roaring storm.

“There must be a door!” he replied as loudly as he could. “Or else how are we going to get to the top? We can take shelter inside for now.”

“Everybody,” Sean yelled. “Search for an entrance!”

The knights spread out around the massive tower, searching for the entrance. “There isn’t any!” shouted Christopher above the wind after several minutes.

“Wait!” Katie yelled from the back of the knights. They parted to allow her through. “Let me try this!” She held the Hadar Stone high above her head. Then she moved her hand forward until the Hadar Stone rested on the great stone tower. Immediately, a door appeared in the side of the tower with the stone the center of the door. As a result, it was about a foot and a half above the ground.

“Everybody hurry in!” Christopher ordered and the knights, one by one, to enter the tower. They struggled over the high door as fast as they could to escape the pounding rain. A lightning bolt struck within yards of the tower, leaving a burn mark in the ground. It was so close that they didn’t even hear the thunder.

It took over five minutes to get everybody inside the tower because of the sheer size of the four hundred and fifty knight army that was entering. Finally Christopher ran in, followed by Katie, who held the Hadar Stone up to the door again. Immediately, it vanished behind them, leaving no trace of the doorway that stood there a minute ago.

The inside of the tower was a large room, big enough to accommodate most of the knights who were inside. There was a staircase near the door, which spiraled upward around the tower as far as they could see. All of the knights were around the room, some talking amongst themselves, others lying down to catch some rest until the rain stopped.

“Where do you think the stairs go to?” Dave asked Christopher.

“There’s only one way to find out,” he replied.

“Do you feel up to exploring?” Mike asked Dave.

“OK, let’s go.”

Mike, Dave and Christopher went towards the stairs while Katie and Chapin tended to a knight who had fallen and broken his arm in the confusion of rushing to the tower. There was no sign if it was raining or not outside because there were no windows in the tower. They walked up the stairs.

“Be careful, there’s no railing,” Christopher warned. “I’ll go first.”

This proved to be a problem for Dave, who was afraid of heights. When they were one rotation above the floor, everybody stopped to look down. The floor, lit by an invisible source, was about twenty feet below them. They continued upward, Mike almost falling off the staircase when he tripped on a stone that must have broken off the tower with age. However, they had made it safely to two turns and forty feet when the staircase stopped onto a platform that stretched across the tower for a third of the distance. There were three doors embedded in the wall,

one in the middle of the balcony, and the others to the leftmost and rightmost ends. The staircase did not continue on, instead ending at the entrance to the balcony.

"What should we do now?" Mike asked.

"Let's try that one first," Dave suggested, pointing to the door closest to them. Christopher went first, and warned, "Stay back. There might be magic when I open the door."

Mike, Dave, and Christopher stepped behind the door as Christopher opened it. The knob turned as if it was just made yesterday, and opened into a dank and dusty room that looked like it hadn't been inhabited in ages. Cobwebs stretched from ceiling to floor. Strangely, there were no windows in this room either. An invisible source made this room just bright enough to see into.

"This is strange," Dave commented. "Let's try the other." He walked to the far door, and motioning for Christopher and Mike to stay where they were, attempted to turn the knob. "It's locked," he replied after a minute.

Mike went to the center door, and after applying the same procedure, opened the door to find a narrow staircase that wound upward in barely enough space and height for a man to climb it. Christopher had to duck as he entered the passageway first to lead the party up the staircase, which may have only been four feet in diameter and five feet between levels of stairs. At least there was no danger of falling a great distance here.

These stairs stretched on upward for a full five minutes. It was hard and everybody was exhausted by the time they reached the top. It was silent and still in there. Christopher wondered if that was because the rain had ceased or that there was some magic that surrounded the tower, keeping it in its present state for thousands of years.

After about 3 or 4 hundred steps, they came to another door. Christopher tried the knob, but it wouldn't budge. "It's locked!" he cried in despair. He kicked at the door from the narrow ledge, but all he succeeded in doing was almost falling to the level of stairs below.

"Maybe," Dave suggested, "we need the Hadar Stone to open this door like the entrance to the tower."

"That would make sense." Christopher sighed. "Let's start back down."

It took them another five minutes to go down the staircase, and a few more to get down the staircase around the big room at the bottom of the tower. Dave finally sighed of relief when he reached the bottom and didn't have to worry about falling from the stairs.

"We need the Hadar Stone to open the door, Katie," Dave said.

"I'll come, wait and let me get the stone."

She searched for a few minutes among growing unease from her colleagues. Finally, she sighed. "The stone," she cried. "I don't know what happened to it!"

Terror in the Wall

by Steven Conway

The mystery of who shot Jennifer is still up in the air. Dwight went to the hospital with Jennifer to console her. He held her hand until they arrived. He was asked to wait in the family lounge to wait until emergency surgery could be performed. About thirty minutes later, Jennifer's parents arrived in the lounge. Two hours later, Dr. Rich Lounman arrived in the lounge and told them the news.

"Are you Jennifer's parents and boyfriend Dwight?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, what is the news?" the parents asked with wonder.

"The bullet missed her heart by three inches and we were successful getting the bullet of the body," the doctor said,"but we will need to keep her overnight for observation."

"That is good news," the three said in unison.

Unfortunately, Dwight was asked to go back to the mall for questioning. He was in a room for one and a half hours.

"Did you get a good look at the shooter?" Detective Doorman interrogated.

"All I could see was a red shirt and sneakers," Dwight said. "Come to think of it, that is exactly what my friend Larry was wearing today. Larry was with me the whole time. There is no way he could have fired the shots."

"I am afraid that we will still have to investigate and question him."

"If it gets you any closer to finding out who really shot Jennifer, be my guest." After the questioning was complete, Dwight rushed back to the hospital to see how Jennifer was doing. He found out from one of the nurses that she was in room 4W13. He rushed up there as fast as he could and there she was. "Boy, have you had a rough day. I am sure this is not how you wanted to spend your birthday," Dwight said.

"You got that right," Jennifer said.

“Just before the shots were fired, I managed to buy you this CD from Beefy Beef called *Pork*,” said Dwight.

“Oh, thank you. Did they question you yet about what happened?”

“Yes, I gave them as much description as I could about the person who fired the shots. The description matched exactly what Larry was wearing. They are investigating him and questioning him right now. I still say he has nothing to do with it.”

“Sometimes the people who you least expect are the people that are responsible,” replied Jennifer.

“Are you saying that Larry is a criminal?” asked Dwight surprisedly.

“Absolutely not,” Jennifer said.

The phone in Jennifer’s hospital room rang and it was the mall security guard saying that they apprehended the criminal. It was Larry. Dwight rushed right over to the mall again to ask Larry why he would do something like that and to ask him where he got the gun.

“Larry, I trusted you, respected you, and looked up to you,” Dwight said. “Why did you have to something so underhanded and stupid?”

“Nobody liked me at school. I was always the person they picked on the most. I wanted to show our classmates that I had some guts.”

“What you did is the complete opposite of having guts. You just lost another friend.” Larry was found guilty of murder and is now serving time in jail with hard-core adult criminals. Jennifer was let out of the hospital the next day and is now in a serious relationship with Dwight. The Wall is now putting in a top of the line security system so events like this will never happen again.

How the World was Made

by Michael Curry

3,000,000,000,000 years ago there was a Greek god named Ares. He was the youngest of all the Greek gods. He lived in a gold house. He had an older brother named Pluto and a father named Zeus. Ares was the god of nature. He could make any disaster he wanted to such as a hurricane, tornado or a blizzard. His brother Pluto was the god of power. Pluto could turn invisible and make a galaxy turn into a particle of dust with just a snap of his finger.

One day, Ares decided he would make a world. It would have beautiful trees and plants in his new world. Also, it would have a sparkling waterfall with pleasant animals drinking out of it. Pluto overheard what Ares was saying. Pluto stepped into the room I will help you build your new world but first we must asked our father, Zeus the almighty. Ares flew upstairs to ask his father. His father said he would think about it. A half hour later Zeus told Ares he could build a new world. Ares was excited.

Ares started to make the ocean when Pluto came. Pluto made the waters so fast that fish and other animals would die in it. He also made the sun so bright that it would hurt any living thing. Ares didn't know that this was harmful. He made a human being which he named John. He made John so that he could test him in his new world. John was doing fine until he look directly into the sun. His eyes started to see circles and then he was blind. John laid along the river not knowing what happened.

Three days later, hungry and thirsty John went to look for a drink of fresh cool water. He stuck his head in the water. He almost got pulled in by the currents but he kept his balance. Suddenly, John heard a mammoth splash. He knew it was danger. He tried to scramble away but he was too late. An enormous shark took him into another world. John was gone forever.

Ares knew that Pluto had something to do with John's disappearance. Two hours later he discovered the answer. Pluto was trying to destroy Ares's world. That is why all of his animals were dying from the waters and the sun. He was furious at Pluto. Ares used all his disasters at once at Pluto,

but Pluto was able to collect them with his power. Zeus, hearing the commotion and wanting to help, flew into Ares's world. It was too late - Pluto turned his father into dust. Ares was angrier than before. He set all the land on fire and then made it rain. There was fog everywhere. Ares set acid rain on Pluto. Nothing happened at first, but then Pluto gradually got smaller. Pluto turned into an apple which Ares then ate.

Ares was sitting on a tree stump all alone when he heard a voice. He looked up. John was standing there with a huge smile on his face. Ares was so happy John was alive. He destroyed the old world and made an enormous peaceful earth in which we live in today. Ares and John lived happily ever after until the Dinosaur Age.