But if you ask me...

A procedures manual for the IFGS

Advice by Scott Nicholson and others on various facets of the
International Fantasy Gaming Society.

Please Note:
The information contained in this manual is not
official information for the IFGS. This information,
unless otherwise noted, is ONLY the advice
of Scott Nicholson and others.

Any losses, deaths, curses, pregnancies, or lawsuits caused by
the use of these suggestions are not the responsibility of Scott
Nicholson....so deal with it yourself.

Scott Nicholson
P.O. Box 2337
Norman, OK 73070

(405)447-6126

Table of Contents

Introduction:

While answering some questions for Patrick O'Brian over the phone, I realized that there was a need for some written help. Provisional IFGS chapters that are not close enough to participate in games run by full chapters may not know what procedures to use in certain situations. While I do not claim to be an expert on IFGS, I have had some experience.

I have been involved with IFGS since January 1989, when I played in Norman's first game "The Misty Pass Colony". Since then, I have been on the board, served as PR and SC chair, sanctioned many games and written about 14 games. I have attempted to write down helpful things that I learned through my IFGS experiences.

You may agree with some things that I say and disagree with other things. That's fine...I'm doing this because nobody else has. So, the information in here is not official. It's all my opinion.

A note to anyone reading this....
I have attempted to write this in a question and answer format. I did this for several reasons:
1. If you have a different answer to one of my questions, send it to me. I will then compile all the replies and put it together with my own for another printing.
2. If you have a question that is not covered, send it to me. I will answer it or find someone that can.

My address is on the back page. If you send something to me, please send me your name, address, and phone number (if you don't mind it being printed). What this will do, as well as give answers, will give people with questions several places to turn to for answers.

How to be a Player Character...

The Player Characters(PC) are those who the games are run. These people (hopefully) don't know what is going on in the game.
These people are the ones who pay for most of the game, and thus, the game should be for them.

How do I become a PC?

You start out by contacting your local IFGS chapter. They can tell you about the next event. For most tavern games and weapons tournaments, you can just show up and play. Other games have some form of sign-up.

The most common way to register for a game is through a draft. The draft for a game will be held about one month before a game runs. At the draft, all people interested in playing in the game will have their names, classes, and levels written on some sort of lists. These lists are usually grouped by class. The people chosen to lead a team through a game - the Loremasters - will take turns selecting people from this list until all the PC slots are filled.

Another way that PCs get into a game is through an invitational game. In these games, the Loremasters are selected and ask people to be on their teams. Invitational games are harder to get into as a novice, due to the fact that the loremaster needs to know the people before he can ask them to be on a team.

The best way to get on a team for either type of game is to contact the loremasters for a game. Usually, the flyer released for a game will have the loremasters' name and number on it. The more loremasters you talk to, the better your chance is to get on a team.

Another way to get on a team is to play a Non-Player Character(NPC) in other games. By doing this, you can meet other people and find out about other games before the flyer is released. Also, by NPCing, you get points which can be used to raise a character to a higher level.

How do I make a character?

First, you need to come up with a concept for your character. One way to do this is to look at your favorite characters in books, movies, and other situations. Another way is to decide on a character class, and think of a typical example from that class.

After finding a generic concept you need to "flesh out" your character. Write out the answers to the following questions:

Who were my characters' parents and what did they do?
What was my character like as a child?
What does my character do when he is not adventuring?
List 5 adjectives to describe your character.
Does my character speak with an accent? How heavy, what type, and can I keep it going for 8 hours?
What deity does my character believe in, if any?
What would my character be doing in today's world?
What one thing would my character want to achieve in life?
Write out all your character's important statistics (age, height, weight, shoe size, blood type, etc...)
What would my character like to wear?
How does my character feel about death and what happens to him if he dies (This will help your fighting attitude)?
What is my characters' favorite animal, color, food, music, etc...

You may feel silly writing these things down. By writing them down, however, you will help yourself to really think about your character.

It is suggested that your first character be either neutral or good. Since first impressions are very important, playing a chaotic-evil Drow your first time out will cause people to see you a bit differently than you might want to be seen.

Speaking of other races, your character can be from other races, planets, times, etc...   However, one important thing must occur. You may have NO improvements to the current rules system. It may make sense that if your character had weapons built in (like claws), you would not be affected by a DROPSY spell.. However, you can not have ANY sort of improvements. If you wish to have detriments (such as not being able to cast certain spells, not being able to fight with your left hand...) you can. But they cannot give you any extra abilities.

How do I design and make a costume? What if I can't sew?

In order to get an idea for a costume, look at pictures and watch movies. Attend medieval fairs and ask people there where they got their costume ideas. Look in the encyclopedia and your local library for costume ideas. A costume does not need to be complicated to be good. A simple costume will be easier to

maintain and you won't have to worry about it getting wet in the rain.

If you can't sew, you have several options. You could find someone in your local chapter that can sew and pay them to sew a costume for you. If you have a Mom that can sew, she might love the opportunity to make a costume for you.

If you can't find anyone to make a costume for you, here is an inexpensive alternative- go to your local fabric store and find the "Bargain Bin". Go through the material until you find about 2 yards of 30-inch wide fabric or 25 inches of 60-inch wide fabric. Make sure the edges of the fabric are not frayed. Take it home and fold it in half width-ways. Find the middle point of the folded edge and cut about four inches on either side of that point. Cut down about 8 inches from that point. Cut off the triangular flaps that you have made. Put this over your head. Find a belt, scarf, or a length of rope and put it on over the tunic. Voila! You have a costume which you can wear anything under!

A word about capes... even though they look neat, and it seems that all adventurers wear them, I have found they just get in the way. Also, if you make a robe that is not cut all the way down the front, make sure it is big enough to not hamper your movement...but not so big that you will step on it.

What do I need to do before the game?

Before the game, you should contact your loremaster to find out what time you are having fighting practice and when you should be on course. You should also make two copies of your character history...one for your GM and one for the Game Producer.

Also, before the game, you should take time to write out the spells, incants and abilities that you can perform in a small book. Some GMs won't allow you a rulebook on course, so it is good to have something written down. It is good for all classes to do this, so you can know EXACTLY what an ability does. It's also good to be very familiar with all spells up to and including the highest level allowed in the game, and recommend to look over the higher-level spells.

The night before the game, you will want to gather all of your equipment(discussed in the next section) in one place. This way, in the morning, you won't be trying to gather everything.

What do I need to take to the game?
You NEED the following: Water, Food, Safe Weapon, Costume, Representations for items, Spell components and spell book, Good

footwear, Whistle, Raingear, Sunscreen, and something to carry it all in.

You may want the following: Pouch for carrying gold reps, Rope, Beanbags (always good to have some Holy Water, Acid, and Oil), Toilet Paper, NPC bribes(candy is best), Duct Tape (you can NEVER have enough Duct tape!), extra socks, extra bag (for carrying loot), book and pencil to write down information in game (I have found it is nifty to buy a blank book for each character.), mirror, arrow reps (people will either mark the ends of dowel rods or mark chits in a pouch and pull one out to see if an arrow hits or misses), and much MUCH more.

I would suggest using a side-bag and fanny-pack. With a backpack, you can either have it on both shoulders and someone has to get stuff out for you, or you have it on one shoulder and drop it when you come to an encounter. Then, if you have to run away, you leave your bag behind. A side-bag can be left on during a combat. I would not suggest dropping your stuff when you enter an encounter. You would rather have it on you if you need something quickly (such as that potion of Athelas).

How do I roleplay my character?

        That list you made earlier will help. By looking over that, you can start conversations about things on it. Before going into character, close your eyes and breathe quietly. Picture yourself in a medieval world surrounded by wizards, knights and horrible, smelly creatures. When you open your eyes, don't see your friends....see fellow heroes, ready to do battle with all that is evil (or all that glitters...).   Try to keep in the world your character is in...don't think of out-of-game stuff.
        Don't be afraid to look stupid. You have an excuse...you were roleplaying. Do what your character would do and not what you would do. Most of all...have fun, but don't get too carried away. It's only a game.

How should I cast?

        If you are playing a caster, practice your incants. I would suggest having an incantation that is 8/14/19 seconds long in practice. You WILL speed up during a game, and you don't want to come up short on your incantation time. Have a definite verbal and semantic beginning. When you cast in game, make sure it is at least loud enough that the people right around you can hear it (i.e., at least speak your incantation in a normal speaking

voice).

Develop an incant you can remember. If you don't, you will probably forget it when you have to cast. Repeat your incant while you drive, study, wait in line (who knows...the people in front of you may get scared and leave).

As far as the content of an incant goes, use passages from songs, books, plays or movies. Foreign language is good...nonsense language is better. Say a nursery rhyme backwards (or a heavy metal song forwards). If you can't come up with anything, then counting works just as well.

Scott's Evil Trick - *If you count, time your counting so it is not seconds. By counting to four over a six-second period, you can trick an NPC into rushing you just as you blast him.*

How should I fight?

This is tricky. As a PC, you have to find the correct balance between surviving and roleplaying. Your character's attitude towards death can help you determine a fighting style. I almost always fight defensively. As a PC, you have a limited amount of healing. You can't afford to exchange blows with an NPC...they don't have to worry about the rest of the day. Others fight offensively, believing that if the opponent is taken out quickly, that opponent can't do any more damage.

Be aware of your surroundings in a fight. Don't get separated from your teammates....but don't be too close (or you will be targeted with area-effect spells). If you get hit with a knockdown, remember that you can ONLY defend during that time..and count your knockdown time.

Don't be afraid to throw daggers or other beanbags. These are great for disrupting casts, and are free damage. If you see an enemy has just begun casting (and is not in Concentration), charge him and hit him with a weapon. Chances are he won't get off the spell. If you are fighting a mage in Concentration, run around him. In order to cast a spell, you must have your target in sight the entire time. A mage must lose sight of you if you run around him. Watch out, however, for a mage centering a spell on themselves.

What should I do after a game?

After a game, you should take the time to thank your LM, GM, GD, GP, and anyone else that helped to put on the game. The game was done for you, so thank those that did it. You will be asked to fill out paperwork. After doing this, make sure and file your

copy of the paperwork somewhere. You will be really upset if you lose your copies.

If you have time, help the staff clean up after the game. They will REALLY appreciate it, and might even ask YOU to loremaster their next game. (Then you'd have to read the next section...)

How to be a Loremaster...

The Loremaster(LM) is the character that is the leader of the party. As the Loremaster, you are the one challenged to lead a team through a game.

How do I get to be a LM?

The best way is to know a Game Designer. The GD is the one that chooses the LMS for a game. If you don't know any GDs, call one and talk to them about their upcoming games. By showing great interest in their game, they might ask you to LM.

How should I choose my team?

If the game is an invitational game, it is much easier to choose a team. Try to invite characters that will not kill each other. Get both neutrals and goods on your team (for those pesky Repulse Good spells). It's a good idea to have both genders on your team as well.

As far as individual classes go, these are the bad levels (in my opinion) for classes (i.e., don't take a character at these levels. The level below is very close, and the level above offers much more.):

Fighters: 1,4
Rangers: 3,5
Knights: 5
Magic Users: Take the highest level possible.
Clerics: 6 (But take the highest level possible if it's not 6).
Druids: 3 (Either take the highest or lowest level druid).
Rogue: 6 (Odd levels are best, though)
Monk: 1 (2-5 are weak, 6+ are strong).

If you have to "double up" on a class, the good classes for doing this are Magic Users, Knights(in 6th edition), and Clerics (at higher levels). If you have to drop a class, I suggest (in order of preference : Monks, Rogues, Fighters, Rangers, Druids.

In a draft, it will be much harder to get "the perfect team". Just do the best you can. DO NOT pre-choose a team before a draft. This looks very bad, and will ruin your chances as a future LM. Don't choose people for their items, either. You will enjoy a game a lot more with a person that introduces their character as "My character is like..." and not "My character has...". Remember, this is a livescale ROLEPLAYING system.

What are my responsibilities before the game?

Your job is to assemble the team, organize several team/meetings and fighting practices, make sure the team knows when the game is, make sure the GM/GD have character histories for everybody on the team, and help out novices with costumes, weapons, fighting, rules, and other things. It is also your responsibility to make sure that everyone has paid and turned in character histories before game day.

Always have at least one team meeting before a game. You should discuss marching order, fighting lines, signals (for detect Magic and Good/Evil), possibly some code words (to signal that a fight will begin soon), costumes (to make sure everybody wears a different color), and coordinate what people will bring. One fun way to do lunch in game is to have everybody bring one thing (such as bread, meat, drink, brownies) and have a picnic. This really helps you to stay in character and eat as a team instead of individuals. It is also VERY good to coordinate commands for "Retreat" (run back to the beginning of an encounter) and "Run Through" (run through to the end of an encounter). Those commands are helpful, but can cause problems is somebody gets them confused.

If you would like pictures, it is your responsibility to get a photographer. As an LM, I always buy the film and develop it myself...therefore, I get to keep the pictures.

Also, as an LM, it is a good thing to make sure the GD will allow all of your team's items before the game. Thus, allowances can be made for possible problems.

Lastly, choose someone on the team to take over in case you die. This will make things run much more smoothly in case you buy the farm. (He's an ex-LM.)

What are my responsibilities during the game?

During the game, you should be the leader. You were chosen to lead a group, so lead it. Make sure your team will follow a command given hastily in battle. You should do your best (especially in novice games) to make sure everybody has fun. As the LM, you are responsible for your team's survival or demise.

In order to be an effective team leader, consult your team. Make it a point to speak directly to each person on the team at least once per hour (preferably much more often). Always ask at least three other people on your team before making a decision about something. Many times, the player that is quiet has the solution to an encounter. Encourage people to voice their opinions. The more solutions that can be thought of by a team, the better.

I have heard people say that the PCs should always start a fight. I agree when the encounter is obviously a fight (such as orcs, trolls, people that are very hostile, etc.) While it is true that the side that starts the fight has an advantage, I have found that if the opponent is not openly hostile, it is better to let them start the fight. There will be times in game where a team doesn't have to fight and can roleplay through an encounter. If you are faced with a bandit encounter, consider paying them if they ask a reasonable amount. (Figure that each 100 gold you spend is equivalent to one spell point). You might miss a few items, but you will have more points when you need them. After paying, if the bandits attack you, kill them and take your money back.

Don't be afraid to run through an encounter. If you are fighting wild animals, chances are they won't have treasure and won't be worth your time to kill (sometimes, however, the wild Pink Panda Bears gather a treasure hoarde in their lair...) If your team is falling apart, call for a truce with the enemy. If you can get the fight to stop, all combat spells will be down. If things are going really poorly, and you need to get through an encounter, offer to fight their champion (This can be tricky, though...). You might be surprised what you can get a group of NPCs that have been fighting all day to do with a little roleplaying.

After a fight, several things need to be coordinated. (This can be done before the game to speed things up a bit). One or two people should search all the bodies and line them up. One person should line up all the weapons near the bodies. One or two people should stand guard. One person should check the status of everyone on the team. All items and gold found in an encounter should be lined up with the weapons. The MU and Cleric should then detect for Magic and Evil down the line of people and stuff. I have the MU savvy everything we found at least once - you never know when something may be designed to be used later on. Any magical bodies should be re-searched to find the source of the magic. Then, either bury or burn the bodies, break the weapons, and move on.

What about treasure division?

Treasure division is always a pain. It comes at the end of the game, when everyone is exhausted. People have been working with each other all day, and now they have to fight over items. Try to encourage your team to stay in character, even in treasure division. I have seen people play humble, subservient characters all day long, then when treasure division comes around, Gollum comes out (itemsssss my preciousssss.....).

Here are several methods I have seen used for treasure division:

1. Calculate the approximate gold value for everything. Divide that by the number of PCs to determine a share. Group the treasure into shares and draw lots for share selection.

    Adv: Quick and even treasure distribution

    Dis: The LM has to make the call as to what goes with what.
       Luck plays a big part.

2. Group items into major items, minor items, and gold. Take the average value of the minor items to be one unit. Figure out how many units each major item is. Draw lots, and allow each person to take x units the first round, where x is the number of units for the largest item. Then, going in reverse order of lots (i.e., the one who went last now goes first), each person chooses fewer (either x-1, x/2, 3,2 or 1) units depending on how the treasure is. When you get down to less units than PCs, make a smaller unit and ask people to put in gold to make up for items that are over-unit.

    Adv: Slower, even treasure division

    Dis: Luck plays a part.

3. Figure out what a share will be. Figure the minimum cost for each item (suggested- Half of blue book). Hold an auction for each item, starting with the most desired one. Every person has their share in gold value to bid with. After running out of gold value, people may bid with their own gold or items (where the worth of the item is figured by the group). Any new items are auctioned in this same way. After all the items are gone, give people the amount of gold they have left to bid, then divide the rest of the gold evenly.

    Adv: Fairly slow, More items get distributed

    Dis: People with stuff get what they want, others get larger
       treasure share.

4. Fight it out. Whoever is left keeps everything.

Whatever method you use, make sure and decide on it before the game. Sometimes, the treasure in the game will merit its own style of treasure division.

What should I do after the game?

Thank your team for playing, thank your GM, thank your GD, thank your game-staff. Make sure and fill out the paperwork for your GM. Help clean up, if you can. Answer any questions that

your novices may have, and explain anything in the game that was confusing to them (if you understood it...). Invite them personally to the after-game party.

How to be a Non-Player Character...

The Non-Player Characters(NPC) are the "actors" in the game. They are the ones that make the script come to life. NPCs are there to put on the game for the PCs.

How do I become an NPC?

The first thing you need to do is contact the Game Producer for the game you are interested in. The Game Producer may relay you on to an NPC coordinator, whose sole job is to cast the roles in a game. If you have a preference for a roleplaying of fighting role, make sure you tell them. Also, if you cannot attend both days of an event, you should let them know. It is normally assumed that an NPC will be there for both days. If you do not hear back from them by a week before the game, you should contact the NPC coordinator (they might have lost your number--- after all, they're only human).

What should I do before the game?

Read your part. Get a copy of the encounter (and the storyline) if possible. Research your part using the version of the rules that are in effect for that game. Familiarize yourself with all spells and abilities that could be used by the PCs. This will also prepare you for additional roles that may occur unexpectedly due to a shortage of game staff.

Practice fighting safely. Contact people in your local IFGS chapter to help you learn how to fight safely and effectively. These same people can help you with weapon construction. If you don't have your own weapons, borrow one or tell the NPC coordinator, and they should be able to procure one for you.

It is usually the NPC's responsibility to bring their own costume. If you don't have one, borrow one or call the NPC coordinator.

At an IFGS event, all people are required to sign a safety waiver. If you are underage, you need you parent to sign one of these before game day. There will also be a nominal NPC fee, so you should find out what it is and bring enough money for it.

What should I bring to the game?

You will need your costume, safe weapons, food, water, sunscreen, a rulebook, good shoes, a whistle, and spell components if you are playing a caster. You may want toilet paper, extra money for an aftergame party, a book, a blanket to

sit on while waiting for the PCs. As an NPC, you can bring along a small cooler to keep your food and drink fresh. Do NOT bring alcohol. The IFGS does not allow alcohol or other recreational substances during a game. If you smoke, ask the NPC coordinator if smoking is allowed on course.

How do I roleplay?

Think about your part. If you have a part that does not have much information in the script, you may one to come up with ideas of your own about your NPC part. Give your character a personality...it will help you to roleplay and help the PCs to enjoy the game. Try a funny accent or interesting speech patterns (like Yoda).

During a combat, you can STILL roleplay. If someone hits you with an arrow, roleplay like some just hit you with an arrow. Do a similar thing for spells and melee damage (even though it may be a bit harder to act like you REALLY got hit with a Lightning Bolt, due to a lack of worldly experience). When you die, you can ham it up (a bit). You'll never have a chance to die more than once in real life...you can practice in IFGS. Also, if you die in a spectacular manner (don't hurt yourself of anyone else...) the PC's will enjoy themselves that much more.

Should I fight differently than I would if I were a PC? How?

Take your damage (which is something you should do as a PC...but I won't go into that). As an NPC it is your job to die (unless specified otherwise). You will die. You will enjoy dying. You will do this several times. Get used to the idea. The PCs are supposed to win.

Don't hit PCs on the ground. Don't throatslit a downed PC. Don't do "machine gun" damage (i.e, 444444444444444444444444(breathe..) 444444444444444444444). Hit someone once, wait, and then hit them again. This allows the PCs to have more fun. They can then count their damage and pull back to heal if they need to.

When casting, make sure you have line-of-sight on your target for the full casting time. Also, as an NPC caster, make your incants grandiose and your gestures LOUD (or something like that...). Don't cast for less than the required casting time. Give PCs the benefit of the doubt if they hit you as you finish a spell.

I guess the point I am trying to get at is that the PCs are paying for most of the game. Be considerate and treat the PCs like you would want to be treated as a PC.

What should I do after the encounter is over?

If you are dead, stay that way. Even though it may be hot, just lie and roast in the sun until the PCs move you into the shade (remember the sunscreen...) Nothing is more disconcerting after a hard fight than to have the NPCs jump back up and mill around and talk. This is VERY bothersome. After an encounter, either lie there or go out of the encounter site and stay quiet. The PCs are still trying to roleplay and continue the game. Again, be considerate.

After all the teams have left the encounter, help clean up the encounter site. Make sure there are no trash, cigarette butts, or personal belongings left in the encounter box. Take your stuff back with you. Try to leave the land in a better condition than you found it.

How to be a Gamemaster/Scorekeeper...

The Gamemaster(GM) is the staff member that travels with the
team. The GM describes situations that do not have enough props,
adds "color" here and there, enforces the rules, and in general,
is the one in charge on game day. GMs usually have one or two
Scorekeepers(SK) along for assistance.

How do I get to be an SK?

        Contact the GMs for the game your are interested in as a
SKeep. Usually, a GM will be more than happy to have an extra
SKeep. If you do not know any GMs, you can call the Game
Producer, who can put you in contact with the GMs.

What should I bring as an SK?

        You should bring food, water, a whistle, comfortable shoes,
sunscreen, a pen and mechanical pencil, paper, clipboard,
rulebook. You may want to bring items off the GM list in case
your GM forgets things. You will also need to bring some money
for the NPC fee. It is good to have a large backpack or sidebag
to carry things that the team has used (such as potions and
beanbags).

How should I prepare as an SK?

        Know thy game and rulebook (including hits and misses). You
should be very familiar with the game. You could take your game
copy and highlight things that are magic, evil, good, and other
important things. If you are lucky enough to get character
histories, you should read over them and be fairly familiar with
them. Be prepared to carry a radio...you probably should wear a
belt.

What should I do on game day as an SK?

        Listen to your GM. Different GMs will have different
philosophies about the role of an SK in a game. Your
responsibilities MAY include the following:

   oKeeping track of life/ability points/items/abilities/stuff
     for some or all of the PCs.
   oCarrying the radio, safety kit, and other equipment for the
     team.
   oRunning ahead to the next encounter to make sure it's clear

for the team to continue.

oDuring a combat, you should watch out for people getting into unsafe areas. You should also help people call damage from spells and arrows (since, in combat, people have a hard time hearing things).

oYou should not make calls about the rules, ranges, or other game-related things. That is the job of the GM.

How do I get to be a GM?

Contact the Game Designer or Game Producer for a specific game. It is good to have SKeeped at least once before attempting to GM. Experience with PCing, NPCing, and GDing helps greatly.

What are my responsibilities before the game as a GM?

Contact the Loremasters for the teams you are GMing. You should attend all the team meetings (if possible). This will help you to get to know the characters, and make the game enjoyable for you and them. You should collect character histories at the team meeting, and find out what the marching order is for the team. This will help you assign SKs to the team. You can also tell the team about your rules interpretations, and answer any questions they might have.

Get some SKeeps. You will want them, and they go great on toast.

Know the game script well. You could mark the script in various colors, marking what is good, evil, magic, important, and what is an encounter description. If would be good to go to the walkthrough. At the walkthrough, image what each encounter should look like. Then, when you are going through with a team, just describe what you saw.

Know the rules well. You are the final arbiter on rules questions. Thus, you should be familiar with ALL versions of the rules system in use.

You should come up with some sort of encounter for the team to do if you are in a lag. You may be stuck sitting around for some time, and you can provide entertainment. However, don't annoy the PCs. This is a mistake made by many novice GMs by providing too much. The best thing to do is something that will bring out roleplaying between PCs. The best time-filling encounter I have ever done was having the team find a dead unicorn by the side of the path. I told the druid that she had heard that by burying the horn of a unicorn, a new one would be born. This allowed the PCs to roleplay, and spend a few moments in peace.

What should I bring as a GM?

In addition to the SK list, you should bring a 60-foot tape measure, stuffed animals, a pad of paper, rope, a pocket-knife, a compass, a whistle, a marker (to make quick, personalized notes with the pad of paper).

Some other things various GMs have brought and used are:

A bag of candy to be nice to the team.
A bag of gummy worms in case the ranger uses "Find Food".
Binoculars or Opera glasses.
A Mailing Envelope for a delivery to a PC.
A wire to make an impromptu lock for the Rogue to pick.
The Quick-Production kit including red, blue, and brown duct tape (for armor patches), extra flags, an assortment of beanbags (for recoverable items that production forgot to put out), a handful of gold reps, and a lockpick.

What are my responsibilities as a GM on game day?

On game day, you are responsible for helping the game to run as smooth as possible. You are there as the final word for rules questions. (In fact, you outrank the watchdog in rules questions. The Watchdog is there to make sure the game is following the intent of the Game Designer and Sanctioning Committee.) It is your job to enforce the rules (on BOTH sides), while helped the team to enjoy the game they paid for.

You should do what you can to bring a game to life. You should gently remind PCs and NPCs to stay in character if they fall out. After an encounter, make sure the NPCs leave the PCs alone.

You are responsible for keeping the game flowing. If your team is "glaciering" (slowing down to a crawl), you need to come up with a way to tactfully get your team moving again. However, should not push a team out of an encounter until they have ample time to achieve what is supposed to be achieved in an encounter. If an informational NPC is not at an encounter site when you get there, you will have to play the role. Don't be afraid to do this...if the NPC gets back, you can let them step back in.

However, if the encounter is a fight, you should NEVER play an NPC's role. One of the things that a GM should do is patrol a fight. During a fight, you should be constantly mobile. I have seen too many GMs that go to a spot during a fight and stand there. As a GM, it is your responsibility to make sure casters are taking their full casting time, items and abilities are used

correctly, and that people take their damage. If you stay in one spot, you can't see much of anything. Be ready to make calls on the effects of spells (range, etc.) If you can't accurately pace off 30, 45, 50 or 60 feet, get a tape measure and have it on your belt.

I have had success in counting knockdowns for the NPCs and PCs. On a knockdown spell that affects more than one person, count "One-knockdown, two-knockdown....". Very few people can accurately judge time in a fight. For this reason, carry at least two stopwatches. (There is a cooking timer that has four separate stopwatches...it is VERY good to use). Things like PHYSICAL PROTECTION and SIMON'S SPELL that have a duration are good to time. You are the only one that will have a good sense of time in a combat, and then only if you have a stopwatch at the ready.   (Plus, stopwatches are WONDERFUL toys to psyche the PCs out with. If a game has a timed puzzle, room, etc. in it, make sure and time the PCs doing other, non-crucial things in the game. This way, the PCs will be desensitized to you using your stopwatch.)

What should I use an SK for?

A lot of this depends on the experience of the SK. If you have an inexperienced SK, you should probably not let them do any more than keep track of points for a team. However, if you have a more experienced SK, let them do savvys, detects, legend lores, and even descriptions of encounters. If you are going to let your SK describe an encounter, meet with him before the game and write out an encounter description for each encounter. That way, the two of you are giving the same description.

If you can get two SKs, turn the entire team over to them. This will free you up to do GM stuff.

How do I bring a game to life?

Describe everything. Unless the prop or costume is exactly what is should be in the exact place that it should be, don't ever say "You see what you see...". Chances are, there will be something that needs describing. When you enter an encounter, describe what bounds the encounter site (walls, bushes, mountains), and where that boundary is, describe any visible exits (this is VERY important to a team), describe the area the encounter is taking place at, describe the NPCs if needed, and describe any things in the room. If the NPCs are not wearing armor patches and should be, describe their armor. If the team is looking at something unimportant, describe it. In real life, things that are important don't have any more detail than

everything else, so describe anything.

Play with all the senses. Describe what things smell like.
Undead will almost always stink. Trolls, ogres, and other EMBB
(Evil-Meanie-Bad-Bads) will stink. Bandits will stink. Caves
and dungeons smell. Pretty much, everything smells. Smells can
help a team roleplay. Don't get carried away, however. Don't
ever tell a team "It smells so bad, you have to vomit." If you
describe what something smells like accurately, people will be
disgusted enough to have their character react in a way that will
amuse you.

As the GM, you are usually the sole source of sound effects.
Rivers russsssshhhhhh, wind whistles, birds caw, bells go
donnnnnnnnnnggggggg, bridges creeeek with each step fire
crackles, etc. Practice sounds in the shower (and really confuse
anyone you live with), and use them. They will add a bit to the
game for the PCs. Also, if you describe sounds of many things
throughout the game, the team will not think anything of it when
you describe an important sound. However, if you only describe a
sound when it is important, the team will use that knowledge.

Describe tastes and feels. Potions will not taste like
water. They may taste like earl gray tea (hot), cough syrup,
Pepto-Bismol (it coats, soothes, and relieves), or other things.
Describing tastes will give the team something else to roleplay with. When a PC
touches something unusual (as in searching dead
creatures), describe what it feels like. If searching an undead,
have them feel the squirming maggots (kinda nasty, huh?), or the
ogre that feels like a dry frog. Things like this really help
roleplaying, as well.

Describe things that have no significance to the game. Have
a black cawing bird circle over the team a times, and
mysteriously fly away. Have an anthill next to the team at
lunch. There is a lot of life in nature...have fun with it.

How should I deal with PCs?

Know thy rulebook. If a PC asks you a general question (and
then intends to apply it to a specific case), find out why they
are asking first. Don't let a team walk over you. Make sure
they know you are in charge. Don't argue with a PC on course.
If a PC disagrees with you, let them state their disagreement and
reason for it, then say either "OK, I see your point" and change
your ruling or "I understand, but my ruling stands. If you still
think it matters after the game, you may file a protest with our
sanctioning committee" if you don't agree with the PC. Then let
it drop. Arguing bring people out of character, and basically

kills the spirit of the game.

Never lead the team. A favorite trick of mine is to tell
the ranger that the trail markers are bits of broken branches,
footprints, etc, and let the ranger "find" the trail. If the
course is not marked, whisper the next few directions in the
ranger's ear and let him lead. Let the first few PCs enter the
encounter site, with you describing it as they go in. If the
encounter has something strange (like flying creatures), describe
(in general terms) what the team will be seeing. This will help
you out considerably because you can tell the whole team at once,
and the team can react as soon as they see things.

If a PC is swinging too hard, not taking damage, not casting
long enough, or not following the rules in other ways, you have
to tell them. If possible, tell them in private. They will take
it a lot better than if you shout across a field. This is your
job (and an unhappy one it can be), and you have to do it.

I always tell my teams to call a Timestop if they are hurt
or confused. If a PC doesn't understand a description or an
encounter, he can make big mistakes. Make sure a team knows what
is going on in an encounter before you continue.

How should I deal with NPCs?

Make sure they are following the script. If they aren't go
up to them and remind them what they should be doing. The script
is what was sanctioned and it is what should be presented. As
with PCs, if they aren't following the rules system, you must
enforce that. However, you should never be on the side of the
PCs or NPCs. You should be neutral, and treat both sides in the same way.

I always try to go back and tell NPCs that they did a good
job. NPCs get very little thanks and even less recognition. You
can do that easily, since you see almost every NPC on course. It
will make them (and you) feel better.

How should I deal with Game Staff?

Use patience and tact when dealing with the game staff. The
people producing the game will have hundreds of problems. You
can make it easier by not bothering them. If you have to deal
with them, be very nice....they are having a bad day.

How do I make up for game flaws?

Sometimes, a huge hole in the plotline will have escaped the
SC and will not be apparent until you are in game. This happens,
and you need to be ready for it. I have found two different ways

to handle this.

The best way is to work something into game that will cause the team to miss the hole. You can use a note or an image from someone in the PCs past, an animal that explains things to the druid, a knight who must do something for his order, a cleric under deity direction, or similar things. By doing something like this, you can direct the teams attention away from the real plot long enough to get around the hole.

Another way to handle this is the direct approach. This is not as good as the above tactic, but will work. You call a Timestop for the team (to get them out of character) and say something like, "You guys have just found a hole in the plot. I'm very sorry it's here. However, this is the way the game is intended to run, so please play along, and the problem will be over soon." Hopefully, the team will then ignore the hole (and be real sarcastic about it...) and the game will continue. This method will work, but should NEVER be done to novices.

How should I deal with game mechanics and out-of-game knowledge?

At times, there will be things that happen to the PC that is a game mechanic. Having the entire team captured or killed, having someone get poisoned, having an NPC pickup die, etc.. are all game mechanics that can anger PCs. If you have one of these in a game, be prepared for the wrath of the PCs. If a PC throws a temper tantrum, you have to take the upper hand. Don't let a PC ruin the spirit of a game. If you need to, firmly remind the PC that this is only a game, and ask him to stay in character. Try to judge if the person needs a few minutes to "cool off" before continuing. Use tact, however. Don't get upset at the player, for that will open you up as a target for their hostilities. This is a very difficult situation, and one that must be handled carefully.

Sometimes a PC will have some out-of-game knowledge. This may be intentional or accidental on the part of the player, but it needs to be dealt with. Usually, the best thing to do is ignore it and let the PC cheat as he may. If someone has obviously read the script (which is fairly difficult to judge), it is best to pull them aside and ask them not to use out-of-game knowledge. Don't accuse them of having it, just ask them not to use it. Usually, this will straighten out the problem.

Should I GM differently for different risks?

You should GM differently for different risks. The higher the risk, the more strict you should be on the PCs. In a high-

risk game, PCs should lose spell points if they miscast or don't cast long enough. Measure out effects of spells if needed, and don't give any slack. Call things as they lay. As the GM in a high risk game, you need to make sure both the PCs and the NPCs perform things as dictated in the rulebook. Sloppiness should not be tolerated. You should only speak when needed, and NEVER answer a question like "Do I think I can....". Let the PCs find out if they can or can't do something by trying it.

For a medium risk game, you can be more lax on the rules. Give the PCs one or two warnings if they don't have long enough casting times or screw up their incants. You can be a bit looser with hints if a team is stuck. Some sloppiness can be tolerated, but don't let things get out of hand.

In a low risk game, you can be much nicer to the PCs. Give PCs the benefit of the doubt in your decisions. For example, if there is a course with yarn that can't be touched by the PCs, don't count it as a touch unless they really touch it. Don't count it if it just brushes them or the wind blow it into them. Basically, GM a low-risk game in a light-hearted manner.

What are the correct procedures to use a radio?

Don't use words like die, killed, captured, murdered, assassinated, etc.. Keep in mind what the general public, police or FCC may wonder if they heard your transmissions. Only talk on the radio to report deaths, and check-in when leaving an encounter to see if the next one is clear. Don't chatter on the line...just say what needs to be said and move on.

What should I do after the game?

After the game, you should get forms from the bank and distribute them to your PCs. Help the PCs fill out forms if they need help. When it comes time for the team to fill out your evaluation, leave them.

If the team does not have a rogue high enough in level to gauge magic value (or if that rule doesn't exist in the version of the rules you are using), don't tell the team the blue book value of stuff. Their characters have no way to find this out, so they shouldn't know. Suggest to the team that they value things at what they feel is fair. The team will whine at you, but stick on this point. The team will have a better treasure division because of it.

How to be a Game Designer...

The Game Designer(GD) is the one that writes the game. The GD comes up with the story, bad guys, treasure, and anything else. The GD is usually the one that selects the loremasters, as well.

How do I begin writing a game?

I would suggest looking at old game scripts. This will give you an idea of what sort of format to use. Talk to other game designers. Each one will have some sort of advice (and all of the advice will be different...). Try to use what advice you can.

In order to begin writing a game, you need to have a very solid plot idea. After coming up with an idea, I let it float about in my head for about a month before putting anything down. By that time, I will have built up enough story to last a full day. Before writing anything, I would suggest taking someone into your confidence and tell them about your idea. This way, you can find out if your idea has been done before. (By the way, don't be surprised if the person you are telling this to has a less-than-thrilled reaction. Most games do not "tell" very well.)

I would also suggest getting a copy of the GD manual. It has some information that will be helpful.

What do I need to write a game?

You need a plot and a working knowledge of the rules. Keep a copy of the newest Blue Book and rules changes beside you. Another helpful tool is a page with just life points, ability points, and bow scores on it for every class and level. (Thanks to Bob Hamm and Donna Leahey for coming up with this idea). You should use a computer or word processor (or use a friends..). This will make changes in the game a piece of cake.

What format should my game have?

The format I use is cover page, table of contents, storyline, game, NPC list, Savvy and Lore summary, Treasure summary, and budget. For the individual encounters, I have designed some macros on wy word processor. For the beginning of an encounter, I use this:

Encounter
Time of Encounter:

Time to Next Encounter:
NPCs needed:
NPC co-ordinator:
Goal of Encounter:
Boons/Banes:
Magic:
Good/Evil:
Gold in encounter:
Gold recoverable:

For the end, I use:

NPCs:

Detect Magic:

Savvys:

Lores:

Treasure:

Props:

GM Notes:

For each NPC, I use:

Name:
Class/Level:
Armor:
Weapon/Damage:
Life points:
Class points:
Alignment:
Treasure:
Special Abilities:
Special Weaknesses:
Background/Special Instructions:

Then, all I have to do is fill in the blanks. I would HIGHLY
suggest doing this if your program can use macros. It will make
your life so much easier.

When you have written your game, go back through it and ask yourself : "Could I remove this encounter without changing the rest of the game?" If you answer yes, either change the encounter to make it relevant to the game or remove it. This is VERY important, and in my opinion, separates a good game from a bad game.

How do I write a fight?

This is the most difficult part of GDing. First, keep your NPCs in mind. While it might be neat for a creature to have a bunch of special abilities, your NPC might not remember them all. Keep things fairly simple. Overall, it's better to be too easy than too hard.

If there are about the same number of PCs and NPCs:
 If I want a hard fight, I will write the NPCs to be equal levels as the PCs with one or two higher leveled people. For a medium fight, make the NPCs about one level lower than the PCs on average. For an easy fight, the NPCs should be about a little more than half the level of the PCs.

This is the best type of fight (although it involves more NPCs than a solo fight). All the PCs can do stuff during the fight, but shouldn't feel overwhelmed. These are also the easiest to balance.

If there are only one or two NPCs:
For a hard fight, these people should be 3 or 4 levels above the PCs with some items or special abilities to use. For a medium fight, make them 1 or 2 levels above the PCs if they have items or special abilities to use. For an easy one, make them the same level and give them one items to use or one special ability.

This type of fight is good for the PCs and bad for the NPC. It is impossible to count damage when you have 4 or more PCs beating on you at the same time. These NPCs almost always stay up longer than they should, just because they have no idea how many life points they have left. Try to avoid using a one-on-many fight very often. It can be very boring for the non-fighting classes.

If there are a hoarde of NPCs:
For a hard fight, they should be the PCs level. For a medium fight, they should be about 2 or 3 below. For an easy fight, they should be 1/3 the level of the PCs.

These fights can be a lot of fun to be in, but are very difficult to pull off logistically. They take a lot of NPCs. The risk tends to higher in these fights, because NPCs have no idea how much damage various PCs have taken. I would not suggest

doing one of these fights unless you are sure you can get NPCs and you have had experience with these sort of things.

NPCs should not be instructed to attack helpless PCs on the ground unless it is a very high-risk game. Being helpless and getting beat on is a bad experience for the PCs (and they are the ones paying for the game...).

How do I design treasure?

This is the most difficult part of game designing. DON'T think "Gee, people will like my game if I put in powerful treasure". The majority of people going through a game would rather have something neat and unusual than a +3 sword. While you should put a few standard(boring) items into a game, the majority should be interesting. Try to keep treasure division in mind when designing treasure. I always try to have one item for each PC. This way, nobody has to feel left out and take gold for their treasure share (although, some people only want gold...so put some of that in a game). Scrolls and potions are good balancers that give a PCs the ability to do something unusual.
Be sensible where you put treasure. Undead and wild animals probably won't have stuff that is valuable to the PCs. Bad guys with items should be able to use them. (However, don't let an NPC use a one-shot that is supposed to go to the PCs.) PCs will feel they earned their items if they had to wrestle them away from the dead hands of an NPC who used it on them. Don't write an item that you would not allow in your own games. It is considered very bad form to write an item you want and hope to pick up in a bar game.
Make sure items have a reasonable amount of Savvys. One Savvy=one property=one spell point. Savvys will drain a MU very quickly and bore them to death as well. You should write some sort of legend lore for each item. Monks don't use this ability often because so few game designers write Legend Lores worth spending the point on.

How do I design mental and physical challenges?

This is the most difficult part of game designing. I have a collection of puzzle books that I delve into for mental challenges. If possible, I change it a little to challenge anyone that has read the same book. It's a lot more fun if the PCs actually get involved with the puzzle (aka Indiana Jones stuff) than if they just do it on paper. Also, everybody can help out instead of one person doing it all.

Keep in mind that the PCs will have a lot of things going through their mind, and mental things will always be more difficult than they seem on paper. Make sure you have a contingency for the PCs if they fail the mental puzzle. There should also be some sort of time limit on it... otherwise, the team will stay all day at the puzzle and cause HUGE stacking problems.

In a physical challenge, safety is the key factor. Original physical challenges that are safe and easy to set up are fairly hard to come up with. However, a simple ropes course can be a lot of fun for a team, and that is about all the physical that some people want. Avoid having the PCs crawl on the ground. That can really tear up a costume, and if it has rained recently, the PCs will really hate you (and it's not fun.).

How do I write a budget?

As you write the game, write the budget. At the end of each encounter, make a list of what will be needed to buy and it's approximate cost. If the chapter owns props, use them. Try not to leave anything out for the budget. At the end of the game, total up the cost for the game (writing everything out). Then add in $50-$100 for food and drink, $50 for phone and copies, and $50 for miscellaneous. (That will serve as a buffer in case you forget something earlier in the game..which you will). This will give you the total game cost. Now divide that by the number of PCs to get the cost per PC. Add your chapter fee and national fee to this and add the cost of the land. Tack on 10% for a chapter profit and round up to the nearest dollar. That will give you your cost for PC members. Add 25% for PC non-members. I then set the NPC fee at whatever it costs them (which will be chapter fee, national fee, and land fee).
On the next page is a sample budget. Please keep in mind that this is how I do my budget. This system may or may not work for you.

Example:
```
        Budget
Enc. 1                  2.00
....
Enc 12                          15.00
-----------------------------
Cost of props           176.50
+Food/Drink             100.00
+phone/copies            50.00
+Misc.                   50.00
-----------------------------
Cost of game            376.50
divided by PCs            32
-----------------------------
Raw cost for PCs        11.77   (Always round up)
+Chapter/National fee    5.00   (This varies in each chapter)
+ Land fee               1.00
-----------------------------
Minimum cost for PCs    17.77
+ 10% profit margin      1.77   (New chapters should use 15 or 20)
-----------------------------
Cost for PCs            19.54

PC member fee:20.00    Nonmember fee:25.00

NPC fee:
Land fee                        1.00
Chapter/National fee            5.00   (The NPCs cover their costs)
----------------------------
Total                           6.00 per day

Total Profit for Game
PC fee (20X32)                  640.00   (Always use the member PC rate
                                          for this....)
-cost for game                  376.50
-Chapter/National fee   160.00
-PC land fee            32.00
-----------------------------
Profit for game                 71.50  (Which is over 10% of the PC
                                         fees.)
```

How do I deal with the Sanctioning Committee?

        Lots of bribe money.

Actually, the SC is volunteering their time to help you, so be nice to them. Be very flexible about your game. Your SC is three minds, and will better represent what is reasonable than you will be yourself. The policy of the SC is to have comments back to a game designer with one month, so don't bug them until a month has passed. Then, you may want to call the liaison and ask about your game.

Even though it may seem the SC is worrying too much at times (they do....) go along with what they say. It will speed up the sanctioning of your game.

Offer the SC their choice of NPC and staff positions. This is a very nice thing to do, and will make the SC have a much better attitude about your game. Don't be afraid to ask for advice. Some people will give it whether you ask for it or not, but most people won't. You can get some good ideas by asking your SC, "You want me to change this. Do you have any suggestions about how to change this?" (Hint-an SC member will be a lot more prone to sanction something he helped you come up with).

Don't try to pull stuff with the SC. Don't sneak in extra treasure or bad guys and hope they won't notice. The SC is there to help you, and they are not the bad guys.

How do I choose LMs?

DON'T PICK ALL YOUR FRIENDS! You will then have nobody to turn to for production help. Try to choose a variety of people from different chapters. If possible, pick some people that have not LMed before. If someone asks to LM, let them. They will appreciate the opportunity.

You should try to get people who are fairly responsible, however. Irresponsible LMs will cause you a lot of problems (and that's not something you need...).

What should I do on game day?

On game day, you should do as little as possible. You SHOULD do that, but you won't. Try to remain calm. Don't carry any sharp, pointy objects around with you. Once game day hits, almost everything will be out of your control. Don't change the game as it is going on. Let the NPCs change the game as they will (and they will....) and go along with it. Try to smile and have fun. The best advice is: Don't get involved with the running of the game.

What should I do after the game?

People will always be emotional after a game and will say some things they don't really mean. Don't take any comments to heart that come up after a game. Wait a week or two for the emotions to die down, then try to find out how things went. For this same reason, don't pay too much attention to the game ratings. People are emotional when they rate the game, and the ratings are not very valid.

After tearing down the course, go to the aftergame and enjoy the stories that people are telling about your game. (This is the neatest thing about game designing, if you ask me...).

After the game, thank everybody that helped. If you take the time to thank people, they will remember you next time you need NPCs. If you are rude to your NPCs, they won't help you again.

How to be a Game Producer...

The Game Producer(GP) is the person most in charge of the game until the game actually begins to run. This person is in charge of getting and assigning NPCs, making props, sorting props, getting a land site, marking a land site, and on and on. This person is basically in charge of coordinating everything.

I'm a masochist. How can I be a GP?

First, find a game to produce. You can produce your own games or someone else's. If you are producing someone else's game, make sure you can work with and depend on that person. Before deciding to GP, you need to realize that many funds will come out of your pocket and will not be reimbursed until after the game runs. If you are low on funds, don't produce a game.

How should I begin?

Get a good support staff. Early on, get an NPC coordinator, Bank representative, Safety Representative, Treasury Representative, GMs and game aides. Make sure these people are reliable and stay in touch with them on a regular basis.

After getting a game to produce and getting the above people, you're ready to go to work. Make a careful list of exactly what you need for each encounter and where you are going to get it. Any props or costumes that need to be made should be begun now. (You can usually find some people to be game aides and do this for you). Anytime you give out an assignment, give out a deadline and write this deadline down on a calendar. That way, things will get done and will not be put off until the last minute.

You should also get some boxes for each encounter site. Get these boxes early and keep things sorted. Tape a list of what is to go in each box to the box itself, and cross off things after you put them in the box. This way, you will always know where everything for the game is.

How do I do everything?

You don't. Delegate the work. Otherwise, you will go insane trying to do it all. The more hands that do things, the less work there is. Do jobs early. In fact, you should work on costumes or other things right after reading the script. If the costumes are done well before the games, you will feel much better.

How do I go about getting NPCs?

Put an article in the chapter newsletter and make announcements at meetings. Talk to people individually, as well. Don't EVER turn anyone down. Always try to make the role sound as good as possible ("Just think about the roleplaying possibilities if you are Skeleton #3!") Be very nice to anyone that could NPC for you.

How do I get props?

A good place to start is the local Quartermaster. Your chapter of IFGS probably owns props that you have never seen before, and that you can use in a game for free. After that, look at any Carnival Supply stores that are nearby. You can get some cheap stuff that's not too bad. You can always look at making things for scratch or just turning things over to GM description. If all else fails, go to the GD's standby - WalMart!

How do I get a land site?

Talk to previous producers to find out how they got land sites. Many times, people will be happy to have us back (but don't wear out the welcome) on private land. Talk to the Boy and Girl Scouts in the area. They may have land that you can rent for the weekend. Check out the public parks, and make sure and let the Parks and Transportation dept. in your city know what you are doing. This way, they won't panic when someone calls them about some crazy fools beating on each other in a park. Always be courteous to mundanes when you are in a public park.

What should I do before a game?

Call (or have a game aide call) everybody involved just to make sure people know all the important details. Make sure that the land site is OK to use. Check over the boxes several times to make sure you have everything. Put everything you want at course in boxes. That way, you just have to remember all the boxes and don't have to remember lots of specific things.
If you think this may be a problem, get ahold of item lists from the PCs. If a PC has an item that you think will significantly affect the game, disallow it. Try to give the PC as much time as possible before the game to deal with this, however.

You will also need to set and mark the course. Walk around the land, and try to get a feel where things should go. Try to have a course go in a circular shape - that way, you don't have to shuttle the PCs anywhere. Use strips of cloth to mark the course. Make sure the strips are visible. They should be close enough to where a person can see one strip from another strip. Otherwise your GM's will get lost and show up at the wrong encounter.

What should I do during the game?

The morning of the game, try to get everything organized. If your NPC coordinator did his job, then you will not have any
NPC problems. If your safety officer did his job, there should be water all over the course. As you can see, a lot rides on everybody doing their own job. You can help ensure everybody pulls through by staying in contact before the game.

Send out groups of NPCs with their encounter boxes after they have gone through check-in. The first team can begin after the first two encounters are set up. As long as encounters can get set up in front of teams and taken down behind teams (another good job for game aides), things will run smoothly. Don't fall to the temptation to get 7 encounters partially set up before team one goes on course. You will make everybody happier if you get one encounter fully set up at a time.

Try to remember, your NPCs are people, too. If they are in a fighting role, make sure there is plenty of water for them and the PCs. Don't keep someone out in the sun too long. They shouldn't have to wait at the encounter site for more than an hour before the first team (and preferably much less).

After an encounter is over, clean up everything and bring it back to home base. Don't wait until the game is over to tear down all the encounters. After all the encounters have been torn down, travel the course one final time, collecting all the trail markers and cleaning up as you go along.

What should I do after the game?

Make sure the course if cleaner than you found it. That is the best way to be able to use a site again. Gather everything you can find and take it home. Don't bother to unpack things until you've had some food and rest - you probably need it.

The next day, unpack everything. Clean anything that is dirty, and return things to the place that they belong. Sit down and write thank-you notes to your valuable staff members. Put a thank-you note in the chapter newsletter. The more you

appreciate the help you get, the more help you will get the next time you produce. (The NEXT time?????...)

How to be on the Sanctioning Committee...

The Sanctioning Committee (SC) is a group of people that works with a game designer to get a game to a stage that it is ready to run. The SC is the "quality-control" for the IFGS. Their goal is to make sure that the game is balanced, will be enjoyable to play, and that it follows the rule system.

How do I get on the SC?

Find out who the SC chair is. (Ask the president of your chapter if you don't know who else to ask). Most SCs have at least one meeting a month. Show up to the meetings. Depending on your chapter, you may have to go through a training period before your are a full member of the SC.

What is my responsibility as an SC member?

By volunteering to sanction a game, you will work with two other people to help the game designer fine-tune his game. You are expected to read and have comments for the game designer on a game within a month of receiving it. (The process of receiving a game and giving comments on it is called a turnaround). You are also expected to attend the meetings. If you don't have the time to perform these responsibilities, don't volunteer for the SC.

How do I sanction a game?

First, read the game from cover to cover. In this first reading, you are just looking for problems in the plot or general structure. If the plot has a hole in it, make a note of it. If it looks like there may be a problem running a part of a game, comment on that.
After looking at general structure, go through the game again. This time, look over each individual encounter. Picture the encounter running in your mind. Try to see how different PCs would handle the situation. Make sure there is ample information in the script for the GMs and NPCs for run the encounter. Look at the fighting encounters to see if they are balanced. See if the treasure is equal to the risk.
Go through the game a third time and look at the nitpicky stuff: NPC's life points and ability points, cost of items, props in encounters, budget, etc. Make sure the GD has accounted for all costs of his game.
When a game is looking in good shape (less than two turnaround until sanctioned), you can give it the status "Intent

to Sanction". At this point, the encounters should be set, and the GD should just be fixing little errors here and there. At this stage, a GD may put out a flyer (after approval by the SC). In order to reach this stage, a game must have a safety officer.

After the budget us approved by the chapter treasurer, and a treasury rep. and bank rep. are found, the game may receive "Sanctioned with Changes". At this point, you should be happy with the game if the GD makes the changes you have requested. After a game receives this, the GD may request a date from the SC. After giving a GD "Sanctioned W/Changes", the next submission should be Sanctioned unless the GD has changed some other things.

How do I see if fights are balanced?

This can be difficult. Try to guess at what state the PCs will be in when they get to this point. Look at the damage and armor (keeping in account that NPCs can cast spells to raise these). See what spells and abilities are usable by the NPCs. Make sure an NPC is not given too much to remember during a fight. Make sure every fight is beatable. Remember that PCs will only spend a fraction of their points in each fight.

Make sure that fights make sense. There needs to be a reason for the fight. Also, the GD needs to write in a sentence or two dealing with the question, "What if the PCs lose?" I have been in several games where this happened and was not expected. Have the GD deal with it in the script.

Sadly, no matter how closely you sanction a fight, the fighting expertise of the NPCs really can change a fight. People with ego problems can raise the fighting level significantly, while novices can either raise or lower the difficulty of a fight. For major NPC roles, it is good as an SC to ask your GD to cast the roles beforehand, so that you can get a good idea of the difficulty of the fights.

How do I judge the overall Mental, Physical, Fighting, and Risk?

Mental:

Mental in game should deal with not only puzzles and riddles, but also the general plot. Make sure that the team has enough clues to figure out the plot in the game. Otherwise, the team will be confused in will have not had fun. If the team could blow the mental puzzles in the game and it still doesn't change the outcome, the mental should be rated low. If there are penalties (i.e., damage) for missing puzzles or for not figuring out the plot, the mental should be medium. A high mental game

goes hand-in-hand with a high risk game. High mental means severe penalties for not figuring out riddles or the plot (i.e., lost life points, lost items, etc.).

Physical:
	The physical rating is very dependent on the course. The physical rating should represent the amount of climbing, running, crawling, pulling, etc. a person has to do. Games should usually have medium or low physical ratings, unless the GD intends to run the PCs ragged. This is the most unimportant of the ratings.

Fighting:
	This rating is fairly easy to judge. Most games will be medium to high in this category. A game should be low fighting if there are only 2 or 3 fights, and they are fairly easy. High fighting should have about half the encounters with fights, or fewer fights if they are very difficult. A medium fighting game will fall somewhere in between.

Risk:
	This is the most important aspect of the game. Many people will decide whether or not to play in a game dependent on the risk rating.
	In a low risk game, the team should not fail of suffer determents as long as they try. Novice games should be low risk, as should any games where there is not much risk in dying or failing.
	In a medium risk game, the team should not fail or suffer if they are fairly smart. One or two deaths overall is not unreasonable for a medium-risk game. Treasure should be easier to lose, and the quest easier to fail.
	In a high-risk game, the team should fail or suffer unless they are smart. One or two deaths per team is not out of the question for a high-risk game. In these sort of games, treasure should have to be earned, and penalties should occur if the quest is not successful. The also should be a possibility of the entire team getting wiped out if things go terribly wrong.
	In a killer-risk game, the team should fail or suffer unless they are smart, lucky, and good. The PCs should be placed up against bad odds. About half the teams should fail and/or die in these games. NPCs should be allowed to act like PCs, and death/dismemberment/curses/failure should wait around every corner. These games are not for the light-of-heart.

	If a game fits into more than one category risk-wise, the SC can suggest that the GD split up the risk. I have seen games

split the risk into risk of failure, risk of loss, and risk of death. This gives PCs a better idea of what they are getting into.

How can I tell if the treasure balances the risk?

On treasure, make sure that the treasure is in splittable increments. Treasure division is hard enough - a GD should make it easier on a team by dividing the treasure into smaller chunks.

Consult your local blue book to determine the ceiling for the treasure. However, don't let the GD put in ridiculous treasure just because they can justify it by the blue book. Don't ever let anything come out of a game that would overbalance another game.

The higher the risk, the harder the treasure should be to get. See that the PCs are not handed everything in a high-risk game. PCs should be able to lose 1/3 of the treasure in a medium and 1/2 the treasure in a high risk game. In a killer game, they should be happy to get away with their lives. Make treasure a bonus for the extremely lucky and smart.

How should I tactfully deal with the GD?

Don't curse or use the word "you" in comments. Try to make sure the GD understands you are commenting on his game and not on his style. Treat the GD like you would want to be treated. Always have at least one good comment for every 4 to 5 bad ones. Make sure you comment on every encounter. If you have nothing bad to say, then say something good.

Give the GD timely turnarounds. I have seen more GDs quit because they would never hear from their SC. You should meet and have comments for the GD within one month of receiving a new submission.

Make sure that the flyer accurately represents the game. Look at the flyer and make sure, by looking at the flyer, you can get an idea of what kind of game it is.

Don't back down. As the SC, it is your job to make sure the rules are upheld. Don't let the GD bully you into letting certain things get through that you do not believe are right. Don't back down on your decision.

For your information, these are a list of some Norman SC policies and a short reason why each was implemented. You may want to consider implementing some or all of these in your SC.

The limit on the length of a one-day major game is as follows:
1 team = 9 hours
2 teams = 8 hours
3 teams = 7 hours
4 teams = 6 hours

unless there is a unanimous decision on the part of the SC to allow the GD to write a longer game.

This was done so that games would not run into darkness. When games ran into night, tempers flared, things went people, and people did not have fun.

Any person with prior official knowledge not intended for PCs may not receive any sanctioned treasure from a game.

This was done because we had a problem with GDs allowing NPCs to bring in characters after they NPCs and make purchases from a game. This problem with this is that the NPCs had prior knowledge of the availability of items in a game, and thus had an unfair advantage over PCs.

A major game must be Sanctioned two weeks before it runs.

This was done to keep games from being sanctioned (and thus poorly sanctioned) at the last minute.

How to be a Watchdog...

The Watchdog(WD) is the person that is the official representative from the Sanctioning Committee to the game. The WD can make official changes to a game, and is the only person that can. The WD is the highest authority on course in many matters.

How do I get to be a WD?

You first must be a current member of the chapter SC. It is preferable that you helped sanction the game that is running. You should not take on the role of watchdog until you have had experience with SCing, PCing, NPCing, GMing, GDing, and GPing. This way, you can realize what effects your decisions may have on various aspects of the game.

What should I do to prepare?

After reading the script, you need to sit down with the game designer and go through the game encounter by encounter. You need to find out what the GD wants the team to do in each encounter. You should come up with a list of possible team actions in each encounter, and see what the GD would like to happen because of each action, if such things are not in the script. These should be written down and at least given, if not talked through, with the NPCs.

Make sure that you know what should happen to a team if they completely fail an encounter. Decide in advance what the NPCs will do and tell those NPCs. This will save you more problems than anything else. Make sure that the decisions you make on this matter fall (in this order) into the advertised risk of the game, the intent of the game designer and SC, and the actions that those NPCs would actually take. A good guideline is if a team loses a fight, the NPCs will either tie them up and leave (low risk), either take their stuff and leave or take them along and make them slaves for X months of real time (med. risk), or take their stuff and make them slaves for X months of real time or kill them (high risk).

What do I need to bring?

You will need a whistle, water, food, game script, rule book (although you shouldn't use it), and a good book. As WD, you should be at the place of risky fights (but not acting like a GM). You may have a lot of time in which to read or help with

production.

What should I do during the game?

You are "the observer". You should take all pains not to GM
or NPC is at all possible. You need to be able to find every encounter on course, and
be able to go there if needed. You
should make notes in the script of changes that you make to the
game as it goes along. A good place to stay is at the risky
fights...not to NPC, but just to watch.

Your overall job is to make sure the game is run as it was
sanctioned.

What can't I do during a game?

You cannot make rules calls. Questions about the rules
(incant times, spell distance, use of items, etc.) are the GMs
jurisdiction, and he has authority over you in this
department(from Hits and Misses).

You can't add treasure. The WD is not there to mess with
things. Your job is to "adjust" the game so it runs as the SC
and GD intended it to run.

How do I tactfully deal with the GD, GM, NPCs, and PCs?

Sometimes, you will have to say no to the GD or PCs. Don't
be afraid to do this. Give the person an explanation if they
want one, but don't let them sway your decision. In making
decisions, think along the guidelines of the SC. A few people
will get angry, but don't let this bother you. (It goes with the
territory).

Dealing with the GM is fairly easy if you can keep in mind
whose jurisdiction the problem lies in. If it is a rules
interpretation, the GM has authority. If it is a game
interpretation, you have authority.

Don't stop an encounter unless it is really necessary (i.e.,
an NPC is using far too many spell points or is deviating from
the script in a completely different direction). If you must
stop and encounter, call a TIMESTOP for the entire encounter,
approach the NPC, and talk very quietly. This way, the ego of
the NPC is intact, and the PC's won't be able to gain any
knowledge from the conversation.

Some people prefer to let a fight continue and just pull out
the people involved to talk about a problem. They believe it is
better to continue the flow of the game and take out a few people
for a few minutes than to stop the entire fight. This is a very

bad idea. Why? Here is an example from encounter that I was in:

The fight consisted of 5 fairly weak orcs which came out and fought the team. After fighting the team for a little bit, a tough fire giant lumbered out and made the fight exceedingly difficult. This caused great difficulty for most teams. For one team, shortly after the giant came out, a PC had a question for the watchdog concerning a sword he had that swung Ice damage. The giant, that PC, the GM, and the WD all went into their own little timestop and let the fight rage on. By the time a decision was made, the orcs were all dead, and the team was able to concentrate their firepower on the giant. This made the encounter much easier for this team.

The moral of this story is to use an encounter-wide timestop to solve problems.

What should I do after a game?

If possible, you should help the production staff. They will be exhausted and ready to go home, and they will appreciate any help they can get in tearing things down.

The next day, you should look at all the things you wrote in your game copy (you did write down all calls and changes made during a game, right?) and write the Watchdog Report. This should consist of a detailed report of any changes that were made to the game and reasons for them, a listing of WD calls that you made throughout the game, and a general report of how the game ran with regards to the SC. This should then be given to the SC chair, who will file it someplace important. (They have a place for these sort of things, one would hope...)

How to do Public Relations...

The Public Relations(PR) committee is a very important committee.
Without it, the chapter would die for lack of people. Thus, it
is very important that the PR chair be active and persistent.

How should IFGS be presented to the public?

        You will find yourself with two different approaches to IFGS
- one for those who play roleplaying games and one for others.
If you are at a medieval faire, park, or other place where there
will be people that do not understand roleplaying games, you
should not compare IFGS to roleplaying games (like D&D...). As
you surely know, many non-gamers tend to link roleplaying games
to things we don't want to be linked to. Instead, here is a list
of things you can safely emphasize and build a good PR speech
from:

o IFGS is improvisational theater where you design your own
roles. Some people know a general structure of the plot and play
pre-designed roles (like the princess to be saved or an old
knowledgeable sage), while others design their own costume and
person to play. These people are the heros of the story, and are
mainly the ones that IFGS events are run for.

o Playing in an IFGS event is similar to walking through a movie.
As a player, you have no idea what the day long adventure holds
for you. The fun comes from having to deal with situations that
you would never deal with in real life. In real life, you could
never save a maiden or fight a horrible creature. In the IFGS,
you can do that and much, much more... (and if you order today,
we will send you a free Ginsu longsword).

o The IFGS is set in a fantasy medieval setting. Combat is a
part of IFGS, just as it was a part in the days of King Arthur.
We use foam covered weapons to simulate combat in a safe,
exciting, and fun way. Safety is the primary concern, and all
weapons go through a rigorous safety check before they can be
used.

        If you are at a science fiction convention or other such
place where most of the people are comfortable with the idea of
roleplaying games, you can discuss the IFGS in terms of fantasy
games. Using the above speeches, and adding a few comparing IFGS
with table-top games, you can develop a second speech for gamers.

After you have done PC for awhile, you will develop a third speech for those mainly interested in fighting. This one is good for people who are watching a weapons practice. This speech should emphasize the physical aspects of IFGS - the SAFE fighting, ropes courses, hiking, etc. Try to let people know that our goal is to be able to return to normal life on Monday without any bruises or pains.

(After being Norman's PR chair for 2 years, my friends knew my speeches as well as I did and categorized them for me - "Ok, here comes PR speech B"...)

What should I say to those with a strong religious standing?

This is VERY sticky. Below are various ways I have handled subjects. I always wait for the person I'm talking to to ask about a particular subject, and then explain it. If you volunteer other potentional problems, you will create more work for yourself.

Roleplaying: In the IFGS, definite lines are drawn between people and their characters. We make a definite time when the game starts and finishes, and we stress that the characters people play are only characters.

Spells: The magic system used in the IFGS is only to enhance the fantasy medieval setting. When you think of the stories of King Arthur, you see wizards casting beams of lightning at his enemies. All magic in the IFGS is make believe. We realize you cannot actually perform spells. One of the attractions of the IFGS is that, for a little while, you can act like someone else with powers other than your own.

Dieties: The IFGS does not wish to offend any practiced religion. Thus, common religious symbols and religions are not allowed for use in any game. Those who play priests are only acting. They are only playing a character that is praying to a deity, and are not actually praying to some unseen force. IFGS is only a game, and all participants know this and are reminded of this.

Other questions should be handled in a similar manner. Keep emphasizing that the IFGS is only a game, and we stress that during our events. Always emphasize that no alcohol or recreational substances are allowed in IFGS, and discuss how IFGS is a family organization. Some people will be too closed-minded to accept any of this, but do the best you can.

What sort of things can we do to get more people?

If there are any medieval faires or science-fiction conventions in the area, attend. If you have about 10 people, you can even put on a con game. Con games are one hour games designed to give people a general taste of IFGS. The games are usually low risk, and are for small teams. The games require few props, and very low overhead. Con games are a great way to give people a taste of IFGS. However, make sure these are cleared WELL in advnace with the people in charge. Many cons have a "no weapons" policy. You may just have to leave all weapons in the fighting areas, and give them to the team as they approach. Make sure and work with the hotel and con staff, so that you will be invited back the next year.

I would also suggest setting up an information table at these events. Have your best "talkers" there with plenty to drink. Bring pictures, flyers, newsletters, a lock-box, gold reps, beanbags, weapons (completed and in-construction), shields, bows, and a video (if you have one). These will give people props to use while talking about IFGS, and give the crowd something to play with. Don't let people come up and start fighting (especially if alcohol could be involved at the con or faire). Only allow mundanes to fight if they have signed a safety waver and paid the national insurance fee, and have been given a brief safety lecture and training. Don't allow people to come up and grab weapons and go at it...this could cause many problems. I only let people that appear to have a serious interest fight...others just want to play around.

Many malls and college campuses have a demonstration area that can be used by non-profit organizations. A busy park is a good place for a PR fighting practice. For these things, bring lots of flyers to hand out. It is good to have one person not fighting at all times, so that they can talk to interested parties.

Many radio stations, libraries, and newspapers will run short announcements for free for non-profit organizations. Take full advantage of these PR oppurtunities.

Other things you can do to help external PR are things for charity.   Visit hospitals or elementary schools (after getting permission) in character and costume. Work up a short skit with lots of slapstick and that kids can yell and scream in. On Christmas, go Christmas caroling in costume. For several years, members of Norman IFGS went to a local MD camp. After talking to the couselors, we would bring wepons and let the kids play with them after doing a skit. The kids really loved it, and we didn't get hurt...much. Things like this usually won't get any new members, but it may get a letter of thanks which can be used to help those that doubt IFGS. Also, these sort of things are a lot

of fun and help the community.

What should we do to help internal PR?

There may be times in IFGS where some internal PR work needs to be done. People will get burned out, groups may form, and other problems may pop up. Try to stop these things before they get out of hand. A multi-chapter pot-luck picnic and weapons practice (or Orcball) may be just what your people need. Organize a roller or ice skating party - in costume. Have a year-end dinner. Have a New Year's eve party. Try to do things that will welcome new people into the group in a context that they can meet the members outside of a game. These sort of things are fun, and help your members to feel good about each other again.

Well, that's it. Again, if you have any additions (questions or answers) or suggestions, please write in. Make sure and let me know if I can print your name and phone number. If enough different people write down suggestions, then we could produce a fine reference material for new and old chapters alike. Thanks for your time, and see you on course!

"Just five more minutes...."

Scott Nicholson

Contributors and their information:

Scott Nicholson
P.O. Box 2337
Norman, OK 73070
(405)447-6126

Owen and LJ Stephens
2525 Classen #A-1
Norman, OK 73071
(405)360-5335