Supplements D6 / GM CONVENTION

GM CONVENTION

BIGGEST MISTAKE

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INTRODUCTION

"A GM is essentially a god, he can do whatever he wants, make any changes he wants, and bluntly put no need to stick to any real world truths... if I wish to rule the world is flat, I can. If I decide that all of your real life knowledge does not apply to a fantasy world setting where things are different, that is fair... this game is not supposed to be realistic."

-BrianDavion, HoloNet member

Welcome to the very first GM Convention. The purpose of the GM convention is to bring together all of the GM's out there, give them a topic to discuss, then hopefully, the responses that they give will help new GM's with tough situations, or even give older, more experience GM's new ideas.

For the first GM Convention, a simple question was proposed:

What is the biggest mistake that you, as a GM, have made?

The responses that followed were for the most part resourceful, useful, and most importantly, insightful. The GM Convention was widely popular, catching over 400 views, and over 40 responses. I proudly present the GM Convention.

UNBALANCED PLAYERS

To start off the GM Convention, I told my biggest mistake. I got the West End Games Star Wars Roleplaying Game, 2nd Edition, Revised and Expanded. Being an unwise, and a very impatient GM, I quickly scanned the rules, giving no regard to specifics. Then, when it came down to playing time, the players often rolled too many dice, or I would have to flip through the book for a long time, while my players got board. You live and learn.

Other GM's have told their experiences regarding unbalanced players. Gulmyros, a HoloNet member, had a similar experience. He simply allowed the players to have too much cool, overpowering stuff.

"...the...man had a personal weapon that could punch holes in starfighters."

Eventually, the group decided to stop, restart, and do things right.

We can learn from Gulmyros' mistake. He clearly allowed a player to become what we call a Munchkin Player, or a God Character.

Munchkin Player (God Character): a player that is too powerful, and has no competition or challenge when playing.

Others had similar situations. Random Axe, another HoloNet member, states that he pretty much loss the focus of the players because he gave them too much. It was like they were not hungry anymore for the game.

Which brings us to a good point.You always want to please your players, but you never want to give them so much, that they don't want to play anymore. It is better to keep them a little hungry for more, that way you keep their focus.

Talonne Hauk had a situation where, he gave them a cool, powerful tool that he felt would be a one-time use. He decided after the use was over, that he would just take it back. He now realizes he should have done it better, for instance, make the weapon a loan, something that makes the players eventually give up their weapon. So if you do distribute dream weapons, be careful how you take them back.

That brings us to our next point...

BEING WRONG

Donovan Morningfire, HoloNet member, stated that the biggest mistake that he had seen in GM's was the fact that the GM felt that they were above being wrong.

"Rule #1) The GM is always right."

"Rule #2) When the GM is occasionally wrong, refer to rule #1."

As a GM, you will be wrong occasionally. Sometimes, you will mess up in the rules, you might call the wrong thing, whatever. But I feel Jak Knife, HoloNet member, said it best when he said:

"...I worry less about the rules and more about the flow of the game... I now run a fast, loose game while remaining as consistent as possible. If I say something one week, then it is true the next week even if it was not exactly right."

If you mess up, the key is consistency. Let's say an Imperial Star Destroyer destroys a fleet of Rebel ships, and let's say that this would not have happened had you not messed up. Well you have two options:

Go on with your mistake, and make sure you stay consistent

-or-

Tell the players you made a mistake and fix it immediately.

But don't be afraid of making a mistake! If you do, you might land in the same situation Lord Diggori, HoloNet Member did. Trying to be correct on every rule makes the game move slower. It is better to make a mistake and keep the game going, than it is to get boggled down with the rules,

and take too much time. If you ever are in doubt, then follow the D6 rule of thumb:

Pick a difficulty. If the player rolls equal to or higher than the difficulty, s/he succeeds. If the player rolls lower, s/he fails.

There are times when our mess-ups are actually more funny than they are dreadful. Read about the situation HoloNet member DirkGreystoke got in:

"Ten years ago I told a player he could not have a double-bladed lightsaber since they weren't in Star Wars. Now I will never hear the end of it."

This is the same situation that Snicker, HoloNet member, had as well. He thought that the idea of a double-bladed lightsaber seemed

"...silly with a capital S..."

It goes to show you that all GM's are wrong at one point or another.

But how do you handle...

PLAYER DISPUTES

"GMing a game of AD&D, one of the players was a Geologist/Gemologist, and was arguing with me that his player knowledge of something should over write his character knowledge on a subject, because role playing comes before roll playing. I finally said, that I was the GM, and for now until the current game was over, that was my decision, and it was final. He and 2 of his friends walked out. That left me with 3 people on a ship out in the middle of the Med to play games with."

-wolverine, HoloNet member

The player was clearly acting immaturely. ROLEplaying is where you take on a role. It is just like acting. And you wouldn't say something like that if you were an actor, so the GM was judicious in the decision to let the player go.

Wolverine later questioned himself, asking what if the player actually had a point in his argument? Lord Diggori answered it best with:

"Don't be afraid to accept player input just because you're the GM. If it won't destroy your adventure/campaign let him know you'll take his suggestion under advisement. But don't take time out of the session to mull it over. The game is to be played."

Again remember, you are the GM, your decision is final, but be fair. And if you are wrong, fix it immediately or keep going, remaining consistent. And don't be afraid to mess up.

WHEN THE PLAYERS JUST DON'T GET IT

"My biggest problem as a GM is by far expecting the players to react in the same manner as I would, they rarely do."

-Jak Knife, HoloNet member

You plan the adventure perfectly. All the clues are laid out, there is no way the players can miss it. Then the players totally miss everything you try to give them, the adventure isn't good, and you (and your players) feel disappointed. This is when the players just don't get it.

Dr_Worm, HoloNet member, had a situation where he laid out the clues, all the players had to do was talk to this one person, they didn't and eventually he had to just tell them what the clue was for the sake of the adventure. This can absolutely frustrate a GM.

As Gulmyros suggested, it is always good to plan several different ways that the players can get clues like this, that way, the players can actually get the clues, and the adventure can still be a success.

Fab, HoloNet member, pointed out that the players always have a different perspective than you, the creator of the adventure, do. He suggested that you go to a fellow roleplaying friend that does not play in your group, and have him/her examine the adventure. That way, you can get feedback from a third party perspective.

"What I thought would be a logical way forward seemed non-existent to the players."

-Lord Byss, HoloNet member

And finally...

THE ABILITY TO SAY NO

"My biggest mistake was taking on too many players in a game session. I used to be able to not tell people 'No.' So I ended up running a game...with 12 players!"

-Grimace, HoloNet member

When we want to play the nice guy, we often don't have the ability to say no. We take too many players and we can't handle that many. I was surprised by the amount of people that had this same exact situation, like HoloNet member Kobayashi_Maru did. Rigil Kent had to reject players, 7 members was pushing it for him.

So just remember, like drugs, Just say no!

CONCLUSION

The GM Convention, like I said earlier, was a big success. I am sure the GM Conventions to come will also be a big success. On behalf of the HoloNet members, and the HoloNet viewers, this is Matt Richard saying good bye for now and join us soon for our next GM Convention!

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