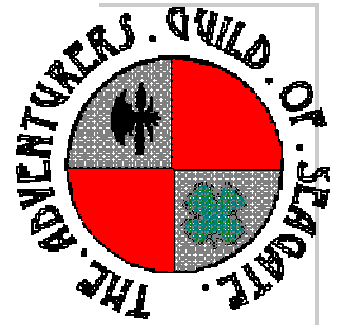


The Seagate Times

Issue 63 – Autumn 809



Ranke Abolishes Slavery! Thousands Set Free!

The Duchy of Ranke has 'clarified' its position on the corrupt and oppressive trade in human misery. It no longer supports the buying and selling of people like cattle, and has emancipated hundreds and thousands of slaves. Very few of these slaves have elected to emigrate, instead accepting offers of seed capital or plots of land to start a new life, either in familiar environ, or the recently reclaimed wilds of Southern Ranke.

Sanctuary, as the major trading port of Ranke, and as perhaps the greatest canker on human civilisation this side of Caulder, will also be enforcing this legislation. There has already been quite a shake-up in the fortunes of Rankene nobility, and Sanctuary trading houses. For example, the Al Carion slave-trading cartel is no more, with the near-simultaneous seizure of its slaves and sacking of its ancestral Arabique city Wasyrat, and a co-incidental razing of its Rankene land holdings by Ormond. The Rankene Merchant Princes of Vigiles and Alden have also been rocked to their financial fundamentals.

The charming young Duchess Meredithis wishes to assure Ranke's trade partners that it will continue the traditional feudal practises of debt-bonding and indentured servitude, like most of the other baronies. These laws allow the owner of a debt to encourage an idle debtor to work to pay off debts owing, and this debt may be on-sold. Sanctuary has been a major local trading market in contracts concerning debtors, indentured servants, paupers, and other layabouts, and this practise adds to the efficiency of the open labour market. Landlords right across the baronies can breathe a sigh of relief, knowing that seasonal workers are available for large harvests, and that if their militia needs to be called up in self-defence, willing and efficient workers can be shipped into

the fields, and whisked away again when the triumphant heroes return. Without the open labour market, starvation would be widespread, and food would be left to rot in the fields in times of bounty.

Ranke Attacks Arabie

The Arabique town of Wasyrat, known as a major trading port for slaves and illegal spices, has been attacked and sacked in a surprise raid by a makeshift Rankene armada. The secret fleet of ocean-going vessels left port in late spring, apparently bound for Southern Ranke, although it was feared they would raid Ormond or Aladar. The three thousand troops from the sixty nine surviving vessels assaulted and breached the walls of Wasyrat within a day of landing, due in large part to the support of most of the senior Sanctuary Mage Guild, and some Stepson field operatives. Although the Queen was captured and the palace secured with ease, the house-to-house searches and subsequent manumission of the slaves, took several weeks, partially due to the complexity of organising their transport for resettling.

On the passage home, several of the ships stopped in various ports in the Isles of Adventure, and most of them failed to rejoin the fleet. Despite this setback during the return journey, General Alar of the Third Command, and High Admiral Hadradithis, cousin to the Duchess, pronounced the attack a 'unquestioned moral and military success', and a 'financially self-supporting venture'.



Elsewhere in this Issue:

News in Brief

Bestiary

Puzzle Column

Rumour Mill

and more...

*Kilroy:
"I've been thinking..."*

A Slave Market in Arabie

News in Brief

Seagate Times reporter imprisoned!



On a recent visit to Alfheim our field reporter Glitterwing Stargazer was placed under house arrest pending investigation and execution for spying. Intervention by a local party of guild adventurers were able to apply leverage on members of the Elven court to have her released. Eidolon has been assured that 'Journalist' is not the same thing as 'Spy' despite them doing almost exactly the same things. Apparently tensions in the elven capital are riding rather high at the moment.

(We apologise that we have no interview for you this season because our pixie reporter was otherwise detained, locked up in a birdcage in Alfheim – Ed.)

Dwarven Over-production Causing Problems

The book 'Eidolon' a treatise on methods of governance by Calial of the Philosophers department of the Guild has been over published by a group of dwarves using their newly invented mechanical device "The Word Replicator".

A small error in elven / dwarven translation resulted in several thousand copies being made, rather than six. Still, the author assures us that it is purely a theoretical exercise and shouldn't be of concern to anybody.

Ormond and Ranke in Tussle Over Border

In late Spring and early Summer, the joint Rankene / Mordeaux protectorate of Ormond accused Ranke of military manoeuvrings in preparation for an invasion. Its neighbours Mordeaux, Aladar, and Bowcourt did not share its concerns, and so a suddenly isolated Count Mollan called up several hundred knights and yeomen, to man his southern border.

It appears that some of the bolder knights disguised themselves as Tuscan raiders, and attacked and razed several large hamlets and villages around the Rankene city of Ilsig. Unfortunately for these overly keen nobles, Ranke had, up to that date, no interest in attacking Ormond.

Once the border raid had occurred, Ranke was forced to divert several hundred troops that were being shipped to Southern Ranke to keep the peace through the Ilsigi province. These troops, along with some of the more disciplined Ormond militia, undertook joint patrols for the remaining of summer, ensuring that the unrest on both sides of the border was well and truly suppressed.

Lizette:
"Does anyone else resurrect?"

Sau Rus (the necro):
"I can get them up again, but they won't let me call it resurrection."

Royal Wedding Bells?

Courtiers in Aquila, Bowcourt, and Ranke have been working overtime, sounding out their counterparts as a prelude to possible negotiations for a Royal Engagement. Duchess Meredithis of Ranke is one of the few eligible women of sufficient rank and wealth to be considered as a worthy match for good King Ulric. She is proving to be an astute and moral ruler of an often troubled land, and has doubled crown revenue without raising taxes, abolished slavery, brought Sanctuary into line with central government policy, successfully prosecuted an overseas war on moral grounds, and brought order to the lawless wilderness of Southern Ranke, all before her 16th birthday. If anything, she may prove to be a little too strong-willed and independent for Ulric and his Regents to handle.

However, as the two teenagers are within a year of each other, both raised to rule from an early age, and appear destined for greatness, their marriage could help to cement the new Western Kingdom as a glorious empire for centuries to come. With the abolition of slavery and the newfound approval of the Church, Ranke has done away with both the main political and religious reasons why the Kingdom has been keeping Ranke at a distance. Rankene insistence on a guarantee of continuing independent rule has proved to be the major sticking point in its negotiations to re-enter the Kingdom, and a Rankene Queen may be sufficient to smooth over any ruffled feelings.

Do not be surprised if Ulric and Meredithis happen to meet at some of the harvest balls around the major courts this season, and 'fall in love'.



Duchess Meredithis of Ranke

Palace Slaughter ‘Just a Wet Run’

If we needed any proof of the dangers of keeping several women locked up together, we have it in a salacious scandal that rocked Sanctuary over summer. One of the Prince’s concubines went mad in the heat, and went on a rampage, slaughtering her rivals, maids, eunuchs, and even several of the palace guard. What adds spice to this sad and tawdry tale is that it seems that the killer was our very own Clarissa. Initial reports had it that a demon was responsible, and the level of carnage shocked even hardened killers Serendipity and Dalran. To add a fresh twist to ‘girl runs wild with knife’, it seems that two weeks later to the very day, Clarissa slaughtered a dozen more people in the Wasyrat palace, and dumped the body fragments at the feet of the invading Rankene army, with her compliments. It appears that slaughtering her rivals, servants and protectors is just a pleasant form of practice for Sanctuary’s number one femme fatale.

More Branches Found On Celestial Tree

Not one, but two distinct lost-long branches of the Celestial college, both utilising the power of the Moon, have been discovered by keen amateur researchers at the Guild. Unfortunately, both branches are family secrets passed down through single bloodlines since the War of Tears, so will not be available to the guild unless we can encourage one of their younger Adepts to join us.

Other requirements for becoming a Lunar mage appear to include being elven, with grey eyes, and the ability to do celestial mechanics in your head. Abilities that distinguish them from other celestials include long-range teleportation, speaking via moonbeams, and ‘old-fashioned’ whitefire. The differences between the two branches appear primarily philosophical at this point, although one is more powerful during the Full Moon, and the other during the New Moon.



Farwey Fulcrum

The Duke of Petrenco on Farwey lost contact with his favourite Dwarven trading partners. This was probably due to the large undead army currently occupying a good portion of the trade route. As his army was dealing with the small undead army leaking through his other border, he approached his favourite source of problem solvers, and a Guild party was hired.

Unsurprisingly, the dwarves had withdrawn fully underground after extracting a heavy toll on the



Clarissa
D’Ornay

spectral creatures, golems, ghouls, skellies and goblins, and were holding them nicely. The party blasted through the undead army’s after-guard and rear-guard to discover that the dwarves were distracted from dealing with the spectral balrog that had taken up home in the Heart of one of their mountains. The party managed to negotiate its departure with the pair of shadow dragons that had put it in place. Check back in another 101 years for further contracts with the dwarves.

Food Flowing Again

On Iska, grain shipments were not coming down the river. So a bunch of us were employed to investigate. We discovered that upriver a deadly sickness was raging, caused by poisoned river water. The local Caliph had blockaded the river in an attempt to stop this ‘sickness’ from spreading. The poison got worse the further we went upriver. We tracked the source to a bunch of desert goblins who had somehow created these slugs that lived in the river, and extruded poisonous slime. This slime had the side effect of making those who died from it more susceptible to becoming undead, enabling the goblin to create a rather large army of zombies.

We found the slugs and wiped them out, which put a rather large crimp in the goblins’ plans. With the slugs gone, and some help from the Guardians, the river started flowing clean again. Since we had identified the river as being the source, the populace were told to get their water from artesian wells so they all got better. The Caliph lifted the blockade and the grain transports started moving again. There’s still a huge bunch of undead roaming around, but with the blockade no longer needed, the caliph’s army can deal to them.



Sooty:
"You are what you eat - if you eat something tough and inedible like Guild 'C' rations, then you get to be tough."

Lizette:
"Can I quote you on being a 'C' class adventurer because you are what you eat?"

Demand for Royal Census Census committee formed

The Royal court of Eidolon has formed a Census committee, tasked with enumerating the many inhabitants of Alfheim. The stated reason for this census is that the crown would like to know exactly who and what is living in Alfheim and how they can be made to pay taxes. Currently most taxes are in the form of duties and tariffs on various goods as they move about within and without of the Empire. The Elven court feels a more direct form of taxation is called for to 'aid and improve our glorious Queendom'.

Lady Quinae, head of the new committee gave this statement; "In these modern times it has become apparent that our infrastructure is less than adequate for the purpose of meeting the demands being placed upon it. We need to upgrade our existing infrastructure and emplace new assets required in these modern times. A census will inform us of where these assets are needed and from where funds can be acquired to purchase them. With the erection of these civic works all Alfheim will be modernised and become fully prepared to meet the demands of the 58th millennium."

Reaction to the announcement has been poor

"Once again the tyrants of Eidolon have set out to bleed the honest woodsman and hunters of elven society to fuel their exorbitant lifestyles. Any attempt to enumerate us, pin us down and extort us will be met most forcefully" Clarice of Free Elvandar

"Why do they want to know where I am and tax me for it? They should know and I'm already doing my bit for queen and country. I won't be paying for the 'privilege' as well." Nellia of the Southern Rangers.

"Will I have to go back home? I've met someone here. And I think we shall stay." Hastriel, newly of Ladlaugh

Alfheim Expectant!

Following the successful re-enactment of the Rites of Spring many elves are expecting to give birth this season. Most of the new couples have chosen to remain in Ladlaugh province to give birth and raise their children. Being slightly overwhelmed in demands for midwives the rapidly expanding province has sought the aid of the Beltan Expeditionary Force. Increasing in population by two orders of magnitude has strangely not seriously discommoded the local court. "Oh no. It's been quite simple," said Lady Beryllia, "If you would just examine this simple chart and register you can see how we've been able to reallocate lands to the new arrivals. In my opinion we should be able to accommodate expansion for some time yet to come."



Water College Potions for Sale

Waters of Healing Rk 14 - 400 sp
Waters of Strength Rk 10 - 1000 sp
Please contact Aqualina at the Guild.



Restoratives for Sale

New Supplier. Honey-flavoured!
Up to Rk 6 currently available.
Please contact Grizelda at the Guild, or at the village of Thorn's Landing. Only 800sp.



Lucius' Greater Enchantment

Are you feeling outdated and under powered?
What you need is a Greater Enchantment!

Only 200sp per cast rank plus the materials cost.
Contact Lucius in the guild kitchens for a Rank 19 greater.



You decide what you want!

Earth College Scrolls For Sale

Scrolls of the following spells can be obtained from me, at the Guild, for up to a week after the Guild meeting. Otherwise contact me at Bolton Manor. The spells are:

Trollskin rank 12 - 1500sp
Armour of Earth rank 15 - 1500sp
Strength of Stone (Endurance) rank 13 - 1300sp
If you want actual invested items or scrolls of other spells, please contact me. Basalic



For sale:

A non-magical, non-caster, set of drow half-plate. Suitable for a medium level non-mage adventurer. Protects reasonably well (AP 7) but can be a little cumbersome (AG -1). Wasn't officially valued. I'd like at least 4,000sp for it.

Contact me at Bolton manor.
Basalic



The Adventurers' Guide

Tips for Success

Shape-changing in an enclosed space too small to hold your alternate form is a recipe for pain.

Only summon elementals when the whole party is present and ready.

When you're fairly sure you know where the main bad guy is hiding, then target that area... generally discourages him from summoning more nasties, especially if he's down... or in a counterspell.

Movement is your friend... just don't get too far away from the party, unless you're absolutely sure that you can handle you find all by yourself.

More Things I Learned NOT To Do By Watching Lizette on Adventure

Attempt to fly in an enclosed space largely occupied by a waterspout when I'm not actually all that good at flying.

Try of heal random sick people just because I can, even when these people don't know much about what healers can do.

Land on the edge of a cliff.

Refrain from using my funky toys at the critical moment just because the ammo is expensive.

Do not mention Lizette this often in the Seagate Times... it will only serve to encourages her.

Recipes for Adventurers

Bubble of Methane

"A special treat for unwelcome visitors that you find at your chum's place" or "How to gate crash a siege."

Ingredients

As much material as can be transmuted (iron or other dense metal seems better than straw)

Some heavy material as ballast (can be a second bit of iron or some stone)

A Bubble of Force, cast at low rank or short duration, you want it to end before the transmutation does.

A magical Trap (with a delay trigger)

Transmutation (that's the Mind kind not the Binder)

Igloo of bound ice

Means of propulsion

Source of ignition, preferably on the other side of the target .

Shipwrights and Sail Makers Wanted

Count Aryan of Ebola is hiring Shipwrights, Chandlers, Sail Makers, Blacksmiths, and Carpenters to work on the new Ebolan Merchant Navy. Contracts are offered for 3 or 6 months, the work is in the new Ebola shipyards, transport and accommodation provided, standard craftsmen rates.

Guild Member
Mechanicians with skill in Ship Design or Siege Weapons are welcome to work with the masters leading the construction.



Preparation:

Load Transmutation into the magical trap, target of trap is the iron which is to be transmuted into methane.

Cast Igloo several miles away.

Check all members of the kitchen staff can fly as a team (a mixture of 30mph Wings, being a dragon, and slipstreaming by whim was most recently used)

HINT: choose a start point so that the target is down hill of the bubble.

Method:

1. Set up magical trap, trip delay trigger.
2. Place iron, magical trap and ballast together and enclose in the 5 ft bubble of force.
3. Trap will trigger. You now have a pressurized bubble of methane to roll towards visitors.
4. Various methods may be used to do the rolling, Illusionary animals are known to work. Obviously a smooth floor or similar is easiest to roll over.
5. Shelter in the Igloo, and wait for the pressure wave to pass.
6. Fly down to where the unwelcome visitors were, help your chums deal with the visitor's cohorts.
7. Pop inside for a chat.

HINT: fight towards any chums that show up when they heard the bang, as you want them to know you are friendly.



Sau Rus:
"Small rabid creatures only attack McLeods, a well known fact."

Lizette:
"You can get decaffeinated restoratives?"

Grizelda:
“Undead
chickens do
NOT lay
eggs.”

Sau Rus:
“I don't
know. I've
never tried.”

Starflower's Bestiary

Zealously Zorching Zombies

Zombies are simple enough monsters. They are nothing more than corpses animated by magic, generally of the necromantic variety. This means that zombies are most often found in the company of either necromancers or ancient necromantic artefacts. They may be distinguished from skeletons by being mostly covered with continually rotting flesh, since they have been created from the relatively recently deceased (or the well-preserved). Very fresh zombies can barely be distinguished from the living, except by the pallor of their complexion, and their lack of intelligent response.

Not surprisingly zombies are most often encountered in or near graveyards, crypts and the like. Now, you'd think that people would take to cremating the dead to prevent those naughty necromancers messing with the remains of their dear departed, but that is not always practical (you need a lot of trees or a good fire mage). Still, there are plenty of places where humans insist on burying their dead, in spite of having alternatives available, with the inevitable result. Granted, they do usually insist on burying them in consecrated ground, which does tend to slow the necromancers down a bit. There is also the question of non-human zombies. Zombie dogs, zombie cattle, zombie sheep... they can all be created, and usually animals are not buried in consecrated ground. Worse still are zombies created from monsters; zombie ogres, zombie trolls and the like. People forget that necromancers can make zombies (or skeletons as the case may be) from most any deceased entity, not just humans.

You'd think walking corpses would be easy to deal with, even for peasants, but such is not the case. These are undead after all, so they are inherently scary, to humans at least, and they can only be hurt by silvered weapons or magic. Given that you average peasant is lucky to own a decent dagger, there isn't much chance of them having silvered or magical weapons, and without that, the zombies will eventually overpower them. Zombie tactics are very basic, very simple, but very effective.

They can overpower adventurers too, simply by weight of sheer numbers. They will close on you en masse, and they will get you down. You drop your big sword, and all you have is bare hands, or daggers. It may take a lot time, but eventually they will wear you down and kill you. But they will not eat your brains. That really is a myth.

So, what should you do? First, avoid combat with large masses of zombies. You are an adventuring party, not an army. If you can get them with ranged weapons or magic, without getting into melee, then by all means do so. Second, equip yourself with magical or silvered weapons. There's a reason they were handing out silvered daggers to beginning adventurers a little while ago. There was a reason I personally expended a wish to make my natural attacks in either form count as silvered. Mind you, I'm not fond of facing small hordes of zombies and the like, even in drake form. They taste disgusting... Third, you need the right magic. Fire mages are pretty good at dealing with masses of undead, as long as they have those big area effect spells, but there's no real substitute for a good white necromancer to take hold of the front row of those zombies and throw them back at the next row. Nothing like zombies to take down zombies. And when you're done, dispose of the remains properly. Cremation is good...

Sooty:
“I can
command that
many men.”

Sau Rus:
“I can raise
that many
men.”

Lizette:
“I can count
that many
men.”



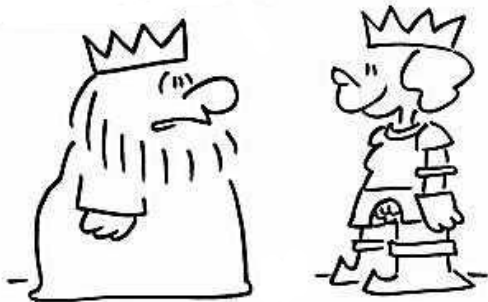
The Puzzle Column

Adventurer Training

After a disastrous outing wherein the activities of our five stalwart adventurers resulted in all-out war and the near destruction of the plane where they were supposed to have bartered a royal wedding, Guild Security has sent on training courses to improve their diplomatic skills. Can you identify which adventurer was sent on which course, the venue and the length of the course?

Adventurers: Holly, Kitty, Madelf, Photon, Starfire.
Courses: Diplomatic Analysis, Feudal Infrastructures, Objectives Evaluation, Resource Management, Strategic Implementation,
Venues: Alphonse's, Castle Chilton, The Feisty Frog Inn, The House of the Rose, Seagate Guardhouse.
Length of Course: 1 day, 2 days, 3 days, 4 days, 5 days.

1. The course entitled Objectives Evaluation lasted one day longer than the one attended by Kitty.
2. The course held at The Feisty Frog Inn was scheduled to run for two days.
3. Photon was enrolled by Guild Security on the 4-day course which was not at the Seagate Guardhouse.
4. Madelf's course at Castle Chilton was shorter in duration than the one on Resource Management.
5. Holly came away unconvinced she was any wiser after attending the Feudal Infrastructures course; the course attended by Starfire was shorter.
6. The Diplomatic Analysis course took up 3 days of valuable training time.
7. The House of the Rose was booked for the course on Strategic Implementation, although what that has to do with that establishment's normal business activities can only be imagined.



"KNIGHT SCHOOL?--I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO NIGHT SCHOOL!"

Get the Power of Fire and Light!

Fire College Invested Items:
 Dragonflames Rk 10
 Weapon of Flames Rk 10
 Also Rank 8 Weaponry.
New Dragonsmite!!!
 (ask for details)
 Prices negotiable.
 Please contact Flamis at the Guild.



Aqualina:
 "He's covering his rear?"

Sau Rus:
 "No .. More like covering his geas."

Riddles

First:

I'm the part of the bird that's not in the sky. I can swim in the ocean and yet remain dry. What am I?

Second:

I went into the woods and got it. I sat down to seek it. I brought it home with me because I couldn't find it. What is it?

Third:

I am weightless, but you can see me. Put me in a bucket, and I'll make it lighter. What am I?

Answers to Last Issue's Puzzles:

Adventurer Pie...

Madelf, The Blushing Brigand, beef, dog
 Holly, The Shy Elf, venison, wyvern
 Photon, The Feisty Frog Inn, pork, lizard
 Kitty, The Fine Stein, rabbit, rat
 Starfire, The Dog and Flagon, game, goblin

Riddles:

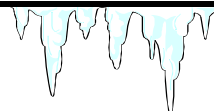
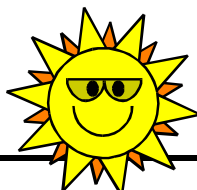
First: hurricane,
 Second: stars,
 Third: fire

What's Hot

Ranke
 Waterspout
 Controlled Zombies
 Bunny Boiling
 Dark Elementals
 Squibbons
 Thigh-high Dresses

What's Not

Slavery
 Confusion of Tongues
 Uncontrolled Zombies
 Pacting
 Solar Flares
 Family 'Issues'
 Swiss Cheese Minds



"I think we just proved that Lizette likes living on the edge" - Aqualina (after Lizette deliberately landed near the edge of the cliff).



The Rumour Mill

You heard it here first...

Apparently Kilroy had a thought while on adventure. We hope it doesn't go to his head.

Maybe it has. Kilroy may soon be leaving us for the Sanctuary Mages Guild. "They have a uniform, and it's black! Even I looked good!"

Of course, flying in a wall, then being trodden underfoot wouldn't have helped.

You have to wonder why the Privy Chancellor of Alfheim is so frightened of Isil-Eth that he thought she'd sent a Guild Party to kill him. On the other hand, we're all a bit scared of Isil-Eth.

On the third hand, she IS pregnant, and that might explain a lot.... Of fish.

And now we hear that Braegon, once one of our best Healers has turned sadistic! Several witnesses have seen him sticking needles in his patients! Guild security denies all knowledge and refuses to investigate!



Letters to the Editors

Dear Editor,

On learning that Brother Phaeton had run foul of the terms and conditions of his pact I thought it might be of benefit to your readership if I put quill to paper and offered a little advice on the subject of Pacting.

Thorn's Advice for Young Adventurers; Pacts

- Pacts are overrated. Stay free and work for, or with, whomever you want.
- Powers dislike others meddling with their tools or their territory. Being Pacted just complicates life for you and everyone around you.
- Powers often use the base desires of greed and power to lure individuals to Pact.
- Even the "Good ones" grant gifts for signing Pacts.
- Powers do not give out these gifts from the goodness of their heart. They are not that altruistic. They get something in return and believe me they are getting the better of the deal, even if you can't see how.
- Don't be tempted to sell yourself for that Cool signing gift the Power is offering. Its a short term gain; think long term.
- Long term being Pacted to... is going to hinder you.
- Long term, working as a free agent, it is possible to be paid in equally cool gifts for your services, not your soul.

Thorn

*Gerald:
"I'm thinking,
the Balrog is
only Titan-
sized..."*

*Pent:
"Dwarves do
it with
Mountains."*

Dear Editors and Seagate Guild Adventurers,

I'm looking to get Water College Investment and was wondering if anyone has any information that would aid in that quest. Furthermore, if it looks like that adventuring is involved, is there anyone who is interested in coming along? (not this season though, maybe the next one). I'm also thinking of questing to get even more skilled in trident.

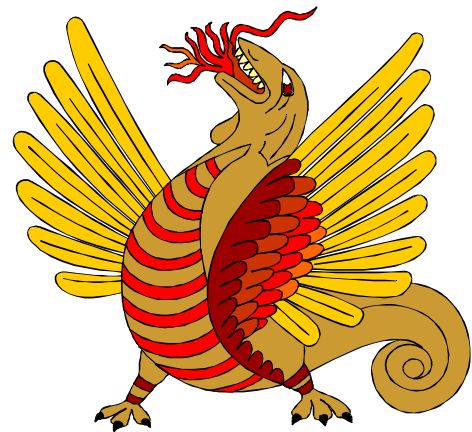
I'd like to know what market there is for Water Investments. Please let me know your suggestions about what I should be concentrating on.

Aqualina.

The Last Word

The editors would like to express their grateful thanks to all contributors to this season's issue of the Seagate Times, especially to new writers. We remind you that we reserve the right to edit all contributions and to determine what shall and shall not appear in print. Please note that opinions appearing in this document are not necessarily those of the editors or staff of the Seagate Times.

T'ana Silverwind, Editor in Chief, Seagate Times
Ariel Glitterwing-Stargazer, Chief Reporter and Astrologer



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Or check the dqwiki at:
http://www.dragonquest.org.nz/dqwiki/index.php/Main_Page