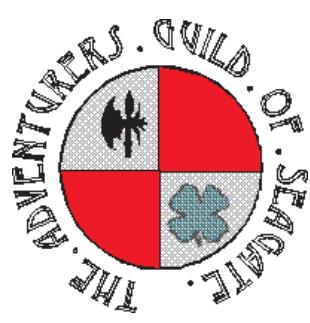


# The Seagate Times



Issue 40 - Autumn 803

## New Country Founded

### Royalist Destinians and Free Bret Peoples Unite

The Royalist Destinians and free Bret peoples have founded a new country called Bretannia, which primarily consists of what was the coastal Duchy of Avenal in Raniterre. It hosts the royalist Destinian navy and is already becoming a major trading and naval power.

The Raniterran church of the seventy-two "saints" has been forbidden, and people are gladly turning to the Powers of Light for salvation. Those who prefer to live under the demonic rule of the King and Cardinal of Raniterre have been assisted in migrating inland. New settlers, primarily artisans from the Isle of St Charles, together with displaced royalist aristocrats and merchants from Destiny, have been encouraged to migrate with generous relocation bonuses. Initially, until normal civil structures have been set up, the Michaeline church is acting as army and police. This has prevented incursions from the neighbours and insurrections attempts from the minority of demon-worshippers who have preferred not to move. The southern jungles are being cleared at a tremendous rate by volunteer labour, and Bretannia will soon be competing with Raniterre as the wheat-basket of the south.

The new-born nation was initially under the Regency of the Queen Mother Margarita, bearer of the unborn King Carlos II, but she is currently missing, along with much of the top floor of her palace. The civil administration is looking after affairs in her absence, in the form of a council of bishops.

For southern travellers, there have been a number of changes to the area. The Isle of St Charles is no longer a must-see, with most of its people and goods having left. Raniterre is only accessible through Bretannia, as a bridge has been built at Guido City (previously Gaviston). The two major coastal ports of Bretannia are off-limits to travelers, as Fort Avenal is becoming a military outpost against the desert tribes, and the royal seat of Pearly Gates is primarily a naval base. Permission to travel must be gained from Guido City, two hundred miles upriver. Demon worshippers will have trouble getting travel passes unless vouched for by upright members of the Church, who they should stay with at all times.

The attitude of the government of this new land towards the Guild is unlikely to be very positive given the involvement of Guild Members in the overthrow of the Royalist government in Destiny. It is suggested that members avoid the area on general principle.

## Carzala Marches Under Fresh Banner

For the past two weeks the Duke's troops have been patrolling the Dark Circle under a new banner and have already reported increased success.

"Following the new banner, these undead don't scare me anymore. And the Captain seems to have been inspired by it and his new surcoat - it's like they're afraid to face him," gushed Trooper Farnsworth on returning from patrol.

Speculation is rife that the acquisition of these new and obviously powerful magical artifacts will lead to further forays into the Dark Circle. Watch this space for further developments.



*The Missing Queen Mother Margarita*

### Elsewhere in This Issue

News in Brief

Interview

Bestiary

Puzzle Column

Rumour Mill

and more...

**Tussock,**  
wonderingly:  
"So you take  
cockatrice  
blood, and  
Strange  
Metal..."

**Faith:** "I'm  
dying here!"

**Scorpion:**  
"Yeah, we don't  
have time for  
you to think!"

# News in Brief

## War Rages in Pasifika

The war between the Pasifikan merfolk and the sahuagin is still going on. We were informed that the sahuagin have pushed the merfolk further south and are now occupying much of the waters around Gwydonia. The merfolk are still holding out around the ruins of Lower Pasifika but we are not sure how long that will remain.

Sahuagin are slave hunters so all shipping in the region is warned to be on guard in case of attack. If the merfolk are driven further back, then the population of the island groups will also be in danger of suffering raids.

It is unknown exactly what has started these hostilities which have been going on for the last couple of years now. It is possible that the rising of Leviathan may have been the trigger, displacing the sahuagin - but it is known that they do desire the richer, warmer, waters in the Pasifikan region that the merfolk dwell in. Currently there seems to be no end in sight to this conflict.

## Missionaries Thwarted - Unable to contact Islanders

The Bishop of the United Church in Ranke has stated that he will continue his efforts to convert the heathen islanders to the Truth, despite the latest 'difficulties'. Missions had been established on Waiheke but, so far, none of the other islands have been reached.

The Bishop would not state why this was, but did refer to 'demonic influences' blocking the rightful passage of the priests. He was confident that this would be dealt to in due course. 'We will just add more resources' he said. 'No demon can stand up to the combined might of the Church'.

From other sources, we were told that the missionary ships had encountered a strange invisible barrier - some sort of 'forbiddance' zone - that surrounded each of the islands. The line was marked by broken water, as if a wind was blowing around the island, and any of the missionary ships trying to cross were blown off at a tangent.

We spoke to an ex-inhabitant of the islands, one of the Guild water mages. Once she had stopped laughing she told us that she believed that the ancestral spirits were deliberately preventing the missionaries getting through in order to protect the native culture and beliefs. She told us that she had heard that the missionaries in Waiheke had already banned and suppressed much of the local culture in such a way that it was in danger of becoming forgotten. Many of the inhabitants, who had not converted, had

fled to the other islands. It was rumoured that other outspoken opponents had simply disappeared.

"And frankly" she concluded. "I bet those so called saviours would react just the same if someone was to come along and try and convert them."

## The Weapon of Magical Devastation

Once again, a Guild Party went to the plane of Kahessire, the last lot having mightily impressed The Great Wizard Zarquon. There had been a rather huge bang in his enemies' territories, and he wanted the design of whatever caused it. Purely for defensive research purposes, naturally.

It was not-so-quickly established that whatever had converted the small town of Glortho into ruins, shards of Strange Metal, and globs of ex-Cockatrice goo was made by a Binder in the industrial town of Asula. It is soon discovered that the head of Asula's Mechanician's Guild is a Chthonic Spirit, and a Binder! Much research is done on Underworld Spirits and the politics of the plane – only two deaths and several curses result.

Eventually it is discovered that the wrong Binder has been targeted - the head of the Guild only wants to take all the souls of the plane to the Underworld, a different binder is the one who made the device.

Unfortunately the fire in the second Binder's house spread to much of the town. Good thing someone summoned a storm, so at least the armament production hasn't fallen off too much.

Anyway, the device-builder was presented to Zarquon in lieu of plans, and the party left the plane. Quickly. Bit of tidying up still to do, there is a really annoyed Hero (left over from a previous trip), plus the Chthonic Spirit's army planning to take over the Eastern continent. Future employment prospects good.



**Tussock,**  
to  
**Faith:** "Don't  
worry, how  
much damage  
can it do?"

**Scorpion:**  
"Dissolve her in  
half."

## Party Save Shoji Empire from Rampant Bureaucracy

A Guild Party was instrumental in uncovering a major plot against the Shoji Empire on the Plane of Harn. They had initially arrived to find out who, or what, was behind the plot to poison the Emperor, but in the cause of their investigations, they discovered that the scheme was far deeper and darker than they had suspected.

The party had strong suspicions that the Seventh Eunuch of the Empire, who had been killed a year earlier, had been assassinated because he had uncovered evidence pertaining to the plot. So their investigations focused around unearthing his notebooks and the data he had collected. In the process they found out that the bureaucracy of eunuchs had dramatically increased. Furthermore some of the border forts, under the control of the eunuchs, were no longer operational as military outposts, but more as centres for illegal trade.

Reports had been falsified to cover up the truth. As they attempted to get to the bottom of this, the party foiled several assassination attempts directed at them. Perhaps the most alarming of these was the spy who attempted to look in on them by hanging upside down in one of the palace ventilation shafts - whereupon his head - the only reachable part - was grabbed by three burly Caledonians. Simultaneously, his comrade attempted to winch him upwards... It was a messy way to die.

Finally the trouble was tracked back to the Third Eunuch who they found have been accumulating wealth at an alarming rate, and building a private army comparable in size to several regiments of the Emperor's own. He was confronted and it was found on examination to be no longer physically a eunuch. Furthermore he was under the control of an ancient demonic entity masquerading as his personal physician, along with many of his officers and underlings. The party, with much difficulty and multiple counterspells, banished this entity, freeing the Empire, the Emperor, and leaving the Third Eunuch to the tender mercies of the Captain of the Imperial Guard.



**Guild Senior Necromancer Dramus**

## Who is? Dramus

This quarter we had the opportunity to meet with guild member Dramus in his magic (of course) tower - currently a tree a couple of miles out of Seagate. Upon entering the tree we were housed in a very comfortable, normal looking, inn served by a Rock Troll, but we won't say anything more about that ...

*SGT: I have heard you are a Fairy King - how did you get such an esteemed title and do you have any other titles?*

Dramus: I am a member of the Royal line on my homeworld of Ky'THaan. Having witnessed the deaths of my father and older brother this would put me in the position of being King to my people, should I ever manage to locate my homeworld. Due to dealings with the Fairy King, I am also a member of his court and I have recently become a fae myself. Many have confused the two and such I am known erroneously as a Fairy King.

*SGT: Is your home world similar to Alusia? From your example, the elves are similar, are there other races present too?*

Dramus: All the Alusian races are present but the social order is very different. Elves and Halflings live in a co-

**Silverfoam:**  
**"Don't tell me the eunuchs have been breeding again?"**

**Faith: "Why don't you read the books?"**

**Tussock: "Because they're in foreign! Hang on, I'm a Rune mage."**

operative society and have little interaction with the other races. The Humans live in city states ruled by Mage Families. Orcs and Giants lived only in the far north. The orcs had been moving south for a number of years and were invading our lands at the time I left.

*SGT: When was that?*

Dramus: About 12 years ago. After a bout of depression following the deaths of my family and friends, I committed suicide. However the method I chose was to channel mana within myself, in order to cause an overload. Instead of dying, a portal was opened and I discovered myself on Alusia. After some months travel I gravitated to the guild, and have been there ever since.

*SGT: Why are you still an adventurer?*

Dramus: I believe in doing good, and helping people whenever possible. Adventuring gives me an opportunity to use my powers to aid those in need and to assist me in my quest to locate my homeworld so that I may return and lead my people to freedom from oppression.

*SGT: I understand you are a Necromancer, which is unusual for an elf to say the least. What is it about necromancy that appeals to you?*

Dramus: My brothers and I were sent to a world where all manner of magics were taught, in order to learn a way in which to save our people, whose forest was being overrun by an Orc horde. The college was not my choosing, however I have come to terms with it and use it like any other source of power and ability.

*SGT: Do you think Necromancers are unjustly maligned?*

Dramus: I do think Necromancers are maligned, however many people do choose to learn it for its dark side. I believe people should be judged on actions not superficial things like college.

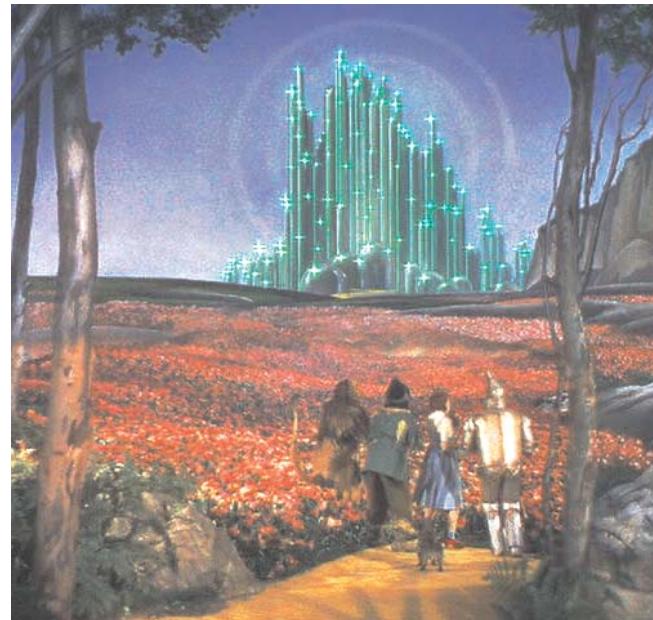
*SGT: Please describe a highlight of your career so far.*

Dramus: There is no greater highlight for me than each time I return to the guild after a successful mission with the entire party intact. I take pride in doing a good job well and keeping my fellow adventurers alive and well in the process.

*SGT: Which places would you recommend visiting, and conversely, any places you would recommend avoiding.*

Dramus: I would certainly avoid the Tower of the Lady of Pain. I cannot recall which plane it resides on, but it is constructed from Cold Iron and exists permanently in an agony field. Not the best holiday destination. Oz on the other hand is a great plane to visit and I recommend it to anyone for a visit.

**Tussock: "Should we eat before we go? Oh no, that's right, we're waiting for ladles."**



*A view of the Emerald City on the Plane of Oz*

## The Adventurer's Guide

### Tips for Success

Don't assume that the first Major Undead that you come across who is trying to take over the world is the target of the mission, even if they do fit the description given.

Always make sure those imperial eunuchs really are eunuchs, and haven't been... regenerated.

Having a couple of indetectable guards on your door doesn't hurt when you're about to interrogate someone important.

Speaking of which - always watch the door!

It's not silly to take a spare set of soft leather armour for sleeping in... A bit of extra weight in your pack is better than getting dead when you're ambushed in the night.

### Answers to Last Issue's Puzzles:

#### Ye Ghods!

1	Plav	Harvest
2	Prussin	War
3	Troon	Sea
4	Yennek	Fertility
5	Deda	Earth
6	Zhayil	Thunder
7	Grond	Death
8	Meriva	Sky

#### Riddles:

First: Air

Second: Pin and Needle

## How not to rescue a Princess

The following scribe notes are herein reported as a lesson to younger guild members:

### Wodensday 14<sup>th</sup> Heat - Getting in a Pickle

The rest of the party is turned into invisible rats, and accompany the disguised Motley and Roke into the Palace by clinging to their legs. Motley is now a junior gherkin-hand. Around mid-morning, the Queen requests a pickle. Motley replaces the selected pickle with the one he had prepared earlier - soaked overnight in oil of extreme youth, and coated in chocolate. He passes the golden pickle-tray to Roke who changes him into a rat, and takes the tray to the Queen. Her chambers are guarded by four dragon-descended Paladins. Her personal bodyguard lets Roke into the room, where the Queen takes the pickle. As he turns to leave, Roke signals the party.

The combat starts well.

*Pulse 1 - Three Brightflare™ Dragon Flames hit the Paladins. Clem the Bear teleports to cut off the exit. Kit and the bodyguard start a martial-art duel. Motley forces the pickle down the Queen's throat.*



Paladins... Love 'em or hate 'em they do look good.

*Pulse 2 - The Paladins charge in. Arwen wounds one by cutting its heart in half. Roke nets the Queen and Clementine, stopping both from teleporting. The Paladins are hit by more Dragon Flames and Necrosis - one dies. Motley sends everyone to a mystical island via hurricane.*

*Pulse 3 - The Queen swallows the pickle and turns into a baby.*

At this point, the prearranged plan goes wrong.

*Pulse 10 - The party starts fainting in the hurricane.*

*Pulse 120 - the bodyguard says "I'm going home!" and passes out.*

*Pulse 183 - we land on the island. Everyone useful is unconscious.*

*Pulse 190 - the bodyguard and three of the four Paladins are now up and active, the Paladins fighting Kit, and getting better as they thump him. The rest of the party is still unconscious.*

*Pulse 196 - Roke wakes up. The bodyguard flies off, to get the Queen of this island.*

*Pulse 202 - Gerard and Motley stir. One of the Paladins' strike chance reaches 300% - Kit is getting wobbly-kneed.*

The fight swings back our way. Gerard & Motley engage a Paladin each.

*Pulse 208 - One paladin is being sat on by Motley - the other is inside a roofed ring of iron. The rest of the party wakes.*

*Pulses 210-220 - Roke gets serious and casts Flash Flood, Earthquake, Immolation, and Necrosis in quick succession. Brightflare uses Dragon Flames and Arwen summons Earth Elementals. The Paladins finally die. Motley, Clem and the Queen are lost at sea in the Flash Flood.*

*We lie back and enjoy the earthquake, but there is no rest for the wicked.*

*Pulse 240 - as the Earthquake ceases and our Quickness runs out then reverses, the bodyguard and her mother the Queen of the Amazons arrive, with their royal guard.*

*Pulse 241 - We start talking, fast. Our line is "We've rescued your daughter..."*

**Darien the Fertility Acolyte:** "You don't just 'poke' people for the fun of it, you know!!"

**Vivian:** "I do!"

**"I think they misunderstood our request for a hot meal" - Silverfoam after the party was served spicy Kimchee for breakfast.**

*Brigetta on  
enemies  
breaking their  
weapons:  
“Fine. Ruin our  
loot, why don’t  
you?”*

*Brigetta on  
traps: “That  
thing tried to  
kill us. It’s  
ours.”*

*Brigetta on  
herself: “I’m  
human.”*

*Veor: “No  
you’re not.  
You’re a bard.”*

# Starflower's Bestiary

## The Ice Dragon - from the Inside

Many of you will be aware that some years ago I gained the ability to transform myself into a silver-blue draconic creature a little taller than my elven self - a drake. This has its advantages - natural armour, flight, claw and bite attacks; and its disadvantages - in that form I can neither cast spells nor handle weapons. I've become used to the drake in me, and about the only apparent effect in my elven form is a most unelven taste for barely-cooked red meat.

That all changed nine months ago when I, with a party of Guild Adventurers, agreed to assist a tree in regaining lost parts of itself. This tree was on the plane known as Riftearth and when I arrived there I found to my horror and delight that the axioms of that plane dictated that one such as I could only be one thing - a dragon. Admittedly a very young and relatively small dragon, but nevertheless a dragon. And even small dragons are big creatures. I dwarfed the rest of the party. My silver-blue colouring and I suppose, my personality, decreed my dragon type - the Ice Dragon. Before long I discovered that I had the ability to cast spells in dragon form. I could change form back to my elf-self, to my smaller drake-form, and as I later learned, to any form I desired for up to perhaps a third of the day. I could breathe a cone of freezing ice, so cold it burned like



fire. I could fly, unnaturally fast... as fast as a high ranked shadow-wings. And I could teleport myself, not just a few hundred feet by means of spell, but as a talent and up to five miles at a time.

I also learned that being a full-sized dragon is damned awkward. A full-sized dragon does not sleep wherever she likes - not if where she likes is a normal sized bed. I slept on the ground or in a hanger for much of the time I was there. I had to change form to walk through doors, wield weapons, or utilise most technologies. Stealth in dragon form is out of the question - especially when it appeared that dragons could sense each other at considerable distance. I have to say that one of the more useful items I brought back with me is a “technomage rifle” a magical weapon I can still use in my drake form.

Rather more scary were the subtle changes - changes of mind and personality. The desire to horde became much stronger - my reaction when the base of operations we had dwelt in for months was attacked shortly after we left was of pure anger. If I couldn't have it, no entity would have it. A dragon's horde is no mere accumulation of random items. A dragon is very much a collector, and things are chosen because they belong in the dragon's collection. Remember this - it may well work with Alusian dragons as well.

As a dragon my attitude to my companions changed. It was hard not to think of them as my pets - even as a potential emergency food supply. I could no longer retain

the role of military scientist in the party because I could not trust my own decisions.

Certainly I felt strongly protective of them - dragons do have strong protective urges where their favourites among the weaker species are concerned. But that meant I would be reluctant to allow them to precede me into danger even when it was appropriate. Neither could they trust me - would you trust something that had teeth that big?

It would have been tempting to remain. But consider - in that world a hatching dragon is but a snack for some of the monsters that dwell there. It is a wonder that unaugmented humans continue to survive even with all their technology. Besides, it would have been a lonely existence. I would have so missed you all, even Dramus. And so I choose to diminish, to return to Alusia, and remain forever Starflower.

# The Puzzle Column

## Any Takers?

The Emir of Adoray (a small fief in deepest Araby) has many beautiful daughters, one good-looking son, and a bevy of extremely ugly daughters. So as to marry them off before they get much older the sheik is offering dowries (to suitable suitors) of jewels and other treasures. Surprisingly, six short-sighted suitors have surfaced...

Can you determine the name of the princess each wishes to marry - and which jewels and what treasure he will receive on their wedding day?

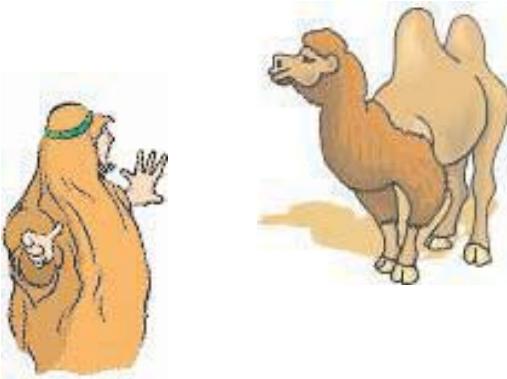
The Emir is offering one man a flying carpet and a bowl of sapphires. Sombare, however, comes with a rug which magically unfolds into a fully equiped tent.

Sombare's sister is being offered to Sheikh Anchiva (along with a casket of emeralds). Sheikh Jello is to marry the Princess Acrida, having been attracted by the offer of a casket which magically generates an endless supply of Turkan Delight.

Sheikh Trembal seeks the hand of the fair (though balding) Princess Fatimi, having been attracted by the offer of seven priceless diamonds. He is not the suitor who was offered the prize of a magical talking camel.

The Emir is offering one suitor a sack of pearls and a trained pegasus, to be awarded at the wedding of his eldest daughter Tufargon.

Sheikh Rotanrul is anticipating the delivery of a barrel of opals on his wedding day, which will precede that of Sheikh Yermudi to the Princess Grizabel. Sheikh Shekels was not engaged to Princess Halitoshia. Rubies are not being offered with the instant oasis.



## Get the Power of Fire and Light!

Fire College Invested Items:  
Dragonflames Rk 10  
Weapon of Flames Rk 10  
Also Rank 8 Weaponry.



Now with added Radiance for Positive effect on dark creatures.

Prices negotiable.  
Please contact Flamis at the Guild.

*"We're here to save you" - I pop him in the sack.*

**Clementine (to a demigod)**

## Spies' Secrets

The Secret Spies' Society are celebrating with a new password system. Each password is always a common word, and because Spies are such clever folk, it is distributed in the form of a conundrum. The Guild was able to obtain a copy of last Tuesday's conundrum. Can you deduce the password?

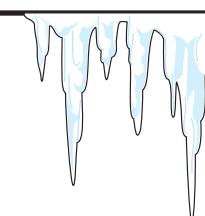
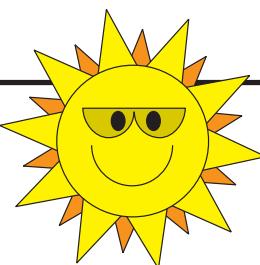
- The password has two letters in common with the word GIRTH, but only one is in its correct place.
- The password has one letter in common with the word SLAKE, in its correct place.
- The password has no letters in common with the word THICK.
- The password has two letters in common with the word DEVIL.
- The password has one letter in common with the word SHOUT, in its correct place.
- The password has no letters in common with the word LUSTY.

### What's Hot

Shoji martial arts  
Emperors  
Beer drinking fairies  
Guild members trying to convert demons  
Chocolate Pickles  
Gabrielites  
Dragon Flames  
Spicy food  
Oz  
Magical banners

### What's Not

Shoji assassins  
Eunuchs  
Pot smoking fairies  
Demons trying to convert guild members  
Greek Paladins  
Michaelines  
Flash Flood  
Sentient food  
The Tower of Pain  
Magical daggers



# The Rumour Mill

## Around the Guild...

You have to wonder what Scorpion was planning on doing with a hatrack in a hallway...?

And whether Dramus would be interested now he's a faery and all?

And why Starflower is so interested in that spiked whip that came back from Shoji?

Why there are so many Caledonians in the Guild these days - and just what is worn under those kilts?

And what is so popular about those Shoji comedies. (Got to admit - they are funny!)

Has Phaeton finally got a love interest?

Where has Father Rowan disappeared to? Has he founded a his own private nunnery... Er... monastery?

Is the Sea Goddess more than just a tax Haven?

Will Tussock ever stop?

And will Faith force her to do so?

Will Drum ever be beaten?

Why didn't they skin Starflower for dragon hide while they had the chance? (Actually, the editor guessed this one... Starflower is intimidating enough without being fifty feet long and with teeth to match).

Why are there so many people practicing with weird weapons around the Guild? For some reason it's crossbows... Over large crossbows, repeating crossbows, underwater crossbows, crossbows which fire balls instead of bolts... And we promise NOT to mention those things they call mage rifles. The editor does not want to know.



"People scare me"

Roke, party spokesperson



## Wiccan Amulets for Sale

### Amulets of Luck

- increase defence and magic resistance.

### Amulets of Jade

- hold undead at bay.

### Amulets of Carbuncle

- reduce damage from poison



Restorative potions also available.

Please contact Thom at the Guild.

## Water College Potions for Sale

### Waters of Healing Rk 11 - 500 sp

### Waters of Strength Rk 10 - 1000 sp



Please contact Aqualina at the Guild.

## Ereworn Trading Company.

Specialists in Alchoholic Beverages.

Contact any of our agents for all of your supply needs.

See Retsum in Seagate.



## The Last Word

The editors would like to express their grateful thanks to all contributors to this season's issue of the Seagate Times. 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  
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