

# BOOMTOWN

VOL. 44 NO. 42

48 PAGES IN FOUR SECTIONS

## *The Boomtown Planet* - Saturday Edition

**Foreword** – In 2005, I released *The Boomtown Planet*, a pulpy RPG that focused directly on the newspaper trade. Why? Well, because game design is something I do in my spare time. The rest of the time I am involved in the newspaper trade. In *The Boomtown Planet* the PCs were reporters, photographers, editors, and a few other things as well. The primary goal of the PCs was to get the scoop. The setting was the city of Boomtown (and its immediate environs), a place that was loaded with colorful characters and plot-hooks.

In hindsight I realize that the first edition of *The Boomtown Planet* (BTP) was a rushed job. It was a late breaking edition, hot off the press. In my desperation to “get the scoop” I made a cardinal mistake – and may all editors forgive me for doing so. I failed to get the full story out there. I left my readers wanting more.

Thank God, this is a business that can forgive those early mistakes, so long as they are corrected in a second (or revised) edition. Gamers are compassionate that way. The newspaper industry on the other hand is unforgiving. You are rarely given a second chance.

I want to thank Dan Davenport and those other RPG enthusiasts who freely offered constructive criticism. I have applied

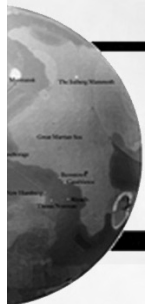
the lessons they taught me, especially Dan through his well-written review at RPGnet, and hopefully it shines through in this newest release, *The Boomtown Planet – Saturday Edition*.

Is it perfect? No. Nothing is. But it’s getting there.

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**A Notice to Parents** - This game is innocent enough, but it certainly isn’t designed with youngsters in mind. The complexity of the mechanics aside, mature themes are found within this text. Read it over and judge for yourself whether you want your child involved or not. If you decide to let your child play this game, then I suggest you sit down and play it with him. Better yet, take the lead role, as the Game Master. Help your child through the difficult bits so he can enjoy the best part of any game, playing.

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# PLANET

BOOMTOWN, U.S.A. SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1933

PRICE FIVE CENTS

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Playtesters - Jay Cottrell, Bill Fenton, Rick Lamoges, Dean Valentino, Shelley Beaudoin, Chris Kent, Paige Lee, Scott Stevenson, Bill Noade, Tony Lapain, and members of the Gladden Gaming Group.

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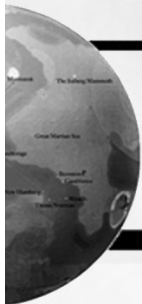
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## *What is Role-playing?*

*Editor's note: the following piece is written as though Maggie Talent, the fictional Managing Editor of the Boomtown Planet penned it. As a result, you may have to use your imagination a bit as some of the terms used may seem unusual. Nonetheless, I hope you enjoy it.*

by Maggie Talent

What is role-playing? This question or a similar question is found in the first few pages of the majority of traditional, pen and paper, role-playing game (RPG) source books regardless of whether they were published on the east coast, the west coast, or beyond.

For those familiar with the "hobby", the question answers itself. The definitive answer, however, often eludes these "hobbyists" as they try to provide it. The definitions found in the source books, and there are many, have slight variations but the core theme remains the same. But, for the layman, even the core theme (the essence of the answer) is confusing.

Is role-playing make-believe? Is it acting? Is it storytelling? Or is it something else – the core of a secret society, perhaps? The answer to all four questions is yes.

The Slow-Flow database, Wikipedia, says that a role-playing game is one in which "the participants assume the roles of

fictional characters and collaboratively create or follow stories. Participants determine the actions of their characters based on their characterization, and the actions succeed or fail according to a formal system of rules and guidelines. Within the rules, players can improvise freely; their choices shape the direction and outcome of the games."

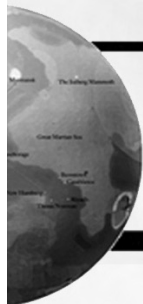
The entry goes on to say there are no winners or losers in an RPG. The games, it says, are played in weekly (or more frequent) sessions that can span months, or even years. If you wish to explore the Slow-Flow entry more completely, you can find it here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role-playing\\_game](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role-playing_game)

Another source of information is John Kim's Slow-Flow database, found here: <http://www.darkshire.net/~jhkim/rpg/whatis/> Kim is a chronicler of RPG information.

Both sexes and all age groups play role-playing games. Men tend to be attracted to the "hobby" more than women, as less than twenty percent of all players are female. The pre-dominant age of gamers, as these "hobbyists" call themselves, is 25 to 35, with 19 to 24 year olds coming in second and 12 – 15 year olds a close third.

All of the information officially provided seems innocent enough. However...

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World wide there are millions of gamers. This is interesting because, despite this, little is known of the “hobby” itself. More to the point, self avowed role-players often give cryptic answers to the question, what is role-playing? It is not that they don’t know the answer, it is that they choose to be very selective to whom the clear answer is given. This leads one to believe that it is a secret society of sorts.

Like the members of all secret societies, role-players meet in small groups, their activities concealed behind the walls of homes or the walls of the public facilities they use. Sometimes these small groups gather together at convention halls where they hold very public, and seeming innocent meetings. They also meet in Slow-Flow

rooms to discuss, in-depth, the vagaries of their “hobby.” Here are several Slow-Flow rooms you can visit yourself: <http://www.rpg.net/>, <http://www.therpgsite.com/>, and <http://www.therpglounge.com/forums/>

So, when it comes to answering the question, what is role-playing, there is little more than anyone can do than offer the lines given by the “hobbyists” themselves. In essence, the must parrot the party line.

The easiest way to learn what it is all about is by joining or forming a playing group of your own and indulging in the “hobby.” It is very easy to join the “hobby” but it is very difficult to leave it. This reporter is a case in point.

You have been warned.

## What’s this role-playing game all about?

The intent of the Boomtown Planet-Saturday Edition is to be first and foremost an enjoyable game. Beyond that, I hope to emulate some of the “romance”, mythology, and high adventure attributed to old-time reporters and journalism in general.

A bit Film Noir, a bit Pulp, a bit Little Caesar, a bit Dick Tracy, and a whole lot of weird – these are some of the elements that I have attempted to infuse in the Boomtown Planet – Saturday Edition. It’s up to you to decide whether or not I succeeded.

I salute the lengthy roll of legendary reporters - which includes the likes of Mike Berger, Arthur Gelb, Homer Bigart, Katherine Graham, Margaret Bourke-White, etc. - who went to great lengths to keep the public informed. I tip my hat to wits like Samuel Clemens who titillated (and sometimes shocked) their audiences.

Newspaper reporters brought people the news before the golden age of both television and radio.

The old-time reporters lived and breathed the reporter’s life. They bled black ink and were blessed with newspaper hides. Man or woman, it didn’t matter, all were referred to as newspapermen, and they were proud...

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...of it.

Now it's your turn, your chance to pick up where they left off; your chance to stick a press card in the brim of your hat, gather up pencil and notepad, and wade into the thick of it. Your readership is waiting. People of all ages and walks of life will eagerly pick up the Boomtown Planet expecting to be informed. Don't disappoint them.

You are a knight of democracy, a custodian of the public record, and a seneschal of the written word . . . or something like that. The uncensored press (free of influences – political or otherwise) is the pillar of your ideals.

So, get out there and get the record.

## Make it your own

I'm glad I got the opportunity to write the *Boomtown Planet – Saturday Edition*. But I don't consider this to be my game. I put my vision down on paper and I expect you to take that vision and run with it. A role-player is creative and critical; he likes things just so, and he has the drive and ability to make things just so. I encourage you to do this with this game.

An RPG is always a work-in-progress. The rules, ideas and concepts found in this book are guidelines only. You know what you like. You know what you want. Make this game your own.

If you don't want to play members of the Boomtown Planet's staff, then don't. Maybe you want to play gangsters, police officers, or thrill seeking adventurers. Why not? That option is open to you. Go ahead. This is your sand box now.

## The setting

*Boomtown Planet – Saturday Edition* is set in the Dirty 30s. It isn't necessary to be a student of history to enjoy this game. It's all in fun. It's fiction.

In this book, I give you a basic outline of the world as it was in the 30s. I touch on some of the main events and key historical figures but the game is very focused.

The core, physical setting of the game is the city of Boomtown. Boomtown, as it is presented in this game, doesn't exist in the real world; it's fiction; it's all make-believe. The details of some of the outlying communities are also provided. I don't, however, provide details on the world-at-large. If you choose to take your game outside the city limits, you're on your own.

Yes, there are strange things in Boomtown. And many of the strange things are "bad guys." Having said that, the strange things are often the least of the characters worries.