



**THE
INTERNATIONAL
ELFQUEST FAN CLUB**

HANDBOOK



WELCOME TO THE HANDBOOK

by Richard Pini

You are holding in your hands (if you've printed this out) or reading (on your monitor screen) the **International Elfquest Fan Club Handbook**, a guide that will, we hope, answer your questions about the general workings of the Club. It contains material which originally appeared in the *Lodestone*, the newsletter of the previous incarnation of the Elfquest Fan Club, as well as information gleaned from your questions and comments over the last twenty years plus.

In preparing this handbook, I've drawn heavily on earlier editions from the earlier Club; that information worked well then and I have every hope that it will work well now. I have tried to anticipate the kinds of things you might like to know about — like choosing your own elf-name, getting involved with or starting a local Holt, and so on. What I have not done is to try to answer all the questions members ask about the story of *Elfquest* itself, about things that have happened in the past or might happen in the future. Since Wendy and I began the *Elfquest* saga, the number of stories and characters has grown beyond our wildest imaginings; there've been tales told from the beginnings of the Wolfriders all the way through the future of the World of Two Moons (called in those times, Abode). Warp Graphics has published (or overseen the publication of) dozens of issues of various *Elfquest* comics, a revised (and thick!) edition of the *Elfquest Gatherum*, a *Wolfrider's Guide*, several paperback novelizations and short story anthologies...

These — and the official Elfquest web site — are the sources for information. If you cannot find the answers to your questions there, then chances are either that they will be answered in a future story (long time readers know how we hate giving away surprises!) or the information is something we ourselves don't know yet, because it hasn't been revealed to us as storytellers. *Elfquest* remains poised, ready to delve into new areas of the tale — there are several directions to go in. We're not completely certain which direction we'll take, or how far, but speculation sure does make good fodder for discussion!

Naturally, as with any part of the Fan Club, the *Handbook* is produced as a

service for you, the member, to use. It is likely that there may be topics missed in this edition that you would like to have some information about. If you find or feel that I've glossed over something, write and tell me. You can use the ground mail address (**Elfquest Fan Club, c/o Warp Graphics, 515 Haight Avenue, Poughkeepsie NY 12603**) or the email address (**rpini@elfquest.com**). I can't promise individual replies, but I can promise that I'll read every letter.

THE INTERNATIONAL ELFQUEST FAN CLUB

A few words about the Fan Club itself. Once upon a time, the club was set up much as most other fan clubs: You sent in a fee, and you received some goodies, along with a newsletter. Presumably in those days, when you joined, it was either at the insistence of a friend who was already a member, or as a result of reading about the Fan Club in *Elfquest's* letters pages or in an advertisement. Now we're taking the next step and making the Elfquest Fan Club an online experience, available to all without cost.

Since the Fan Club began, it has grown into a worldwide network of *EQ* fans. Many local clubs (called Holts) have come into being, some of which have their own newsletters. Members now create their own stories and artwork based on the *EQ* world that Wendy and I have created. Groups of fans have gotten together at conventions to meet and discuss the *EQ* story. It's a wonderful feeling to know that the Club has brought people together who might not have known about each other before... which goes a long way toward answering the question "why start a fan club in the first place?" After all, it is a goodly chunk of work to maintain. What is the purpose of the Elfquest Fan Club, anyway?

Well, when we came up with the idea, all these years ago, we were inspired by the success of other fan clubs that had grown up around such favorite fictions as *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and the Darkover stories of Marion Zimmer Bradley. We knew that lots of people were reading *Elfquest*, and that many of those readers were happily stoking their own imaginations and coming up with their own art and stories of the *EQ* world. Some of these efforts dealt with characters and situations already created in the comic series, while others dealt with brand new places and figures.

Creative energy is a wonderful thing, and it can be even more so when it has focus and direction — such as a club, a worldwide gathering of people where friends can be met and ideas exchanged. The Elfquest Fan Club has served as the "marketplace" for members to show off their wares to other members, to talk about their ideas, and to see what others are doing. At the same time, it gives us a look at what's going on out there in *EQ* fandom beyond the boundaries of Poughkeepsie, New York — allowing us to share in the activity, too. Feedback is very important to us.

Another reason is that the Club acts almost as a kind of container — a sort of creative Crock-Pot where ideas and talent can find an outlet for expression. Some day, if everything goes as Wendy and I hope, we'll be looking for helpers of one kind or another to keep the *EQ* momentum going. *Star Trek* could never have been done by Gene Roddenberry alone — even though it was best when his vision guided it. We can hope too...

The online International Elfquest Fan Club is the latest such organization started up by Warp Graphics since *Elfquest* began publication. There were, as

has already been mentioned, earlier Clubs, one of which ran for several years in the early and mid-1980s. It was a good Club, and people enjoyed it, we think. It went into “financial cardiac arrest” toward the end of the 1980s, but long time readers and then-members have not forgotten it. We made some changes to the organizational structure of the next “print-based” Club that avoided the previous problems while keeping all of the benefits. Now, with the inclusion of the Elfquest Fan Club on the World Wide Web, we hope that the ease of communication between and among readers and fans will spark a new explosion of interactivity.

We like to think of the Elfquest Fan Club as a kind of telephone network — communication flowing not only between you and us, but also among yourselves. That exchange is what this club is all about.

NEWS, NEWSLETTERS, FANZINES, THE WORLD WIDE WEB, etc. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CLUB

One of the best things about the old EQ Fan Club was the creative energy that the members brought to it. People wrote stories and poetry and drew illustrations and comics based, for the most part, in the World of Two Moons. Once upon a time, there was a quarterly newsletter produced by Warp Graphics called The Lodestone, which was sent to the members of the Club, and which contained submissions from you, the Club members, as well as news notes from Warp.

Because of the way the old Club was structured, after a while, the newsletter became a financial liability, and we had to discontinue it. Soon after, the Club itself was dissolved.

However, even though the Club went away, a curious thing happened. Chapters of the EQ Fan Club, called Holts, had sprung up all over the world, and some of these Holts were publishing their own newsletters or “fanzines.” Even after the “official” Fan Club died, the Holts continued to keep the spark of fan/reader activity bright. Many of these Holts thrive today, and still publish their newsletters and ‘zines. Many new Holts have come into existence that exist solely on the internet. I heartily encourage this sort of thing!

The new International Elfquest Fan Club, as part of its online organization, will not publish a newsletter. However, Warp does oversee the production and publication of a Club newsletter, called “Sendings.” This fine publication has been coming out for some years, and is available to anyone — within the Club or not — by separate yearly subscription for the print edition. A free online edition also exists, containing many tantalizing samples from previous print issues.

You see, it’s my hope that this incarnation of the Elfquest Fan Club grows to take full advantage of the Internet, that vast interconnected web of electronic circuits that allows communication between people all over the world. There may be certain “central” aspects to the Internet, but in reality, it’s very diffuse and spread out. That’s its power. Communication and information flow freely wherever they will. Using the same analogy, there is a “center” to the International Elfquest Fan Club, and that’s right here in Poughkeepsie. However, I think it’d be plain wonderful if more and more groups of people — Holts — sprung up and fostered Elfquest creativity and energy and discussion

all over the world.

The **World Wide Web** — a vast, library-like structure overlaid onto the Internet — has already given Elfquest a start on this “global” dream. The central Elfquest web site is located at <http://www.elfquest.com> and there are literally hundreds of other web sites, constructed by Elfquest readers internationally, that function as electronic “newsletters” in their way. (The Elfquest web site maintains a list of links to all Elfquest-related sites, and we work to keep it as up-to-date as possible.) It’s fascinating!

The point is, while Warp Graphics is — and must be — the “here” where the storytelling and informational buck stops, I don’t intend that it be a bottleneck. There’s already a lot of *Elfquest* activity buzzing along phone lines and microwave links and on paper. To paraphrase the corn chips ad, “Let’s make more!”

YOUR CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Your membership in the Elfquest Fan Club is about as easy to obtain and maintain as possible: If you’re a fan of Elfquest, you’re a member! You have access to all the resources that we have so you can create your own branch of the Elfquest world.

To make it as simple as possible for you to get the latest news about all things Elfquest, we’ve set up a free email “newsletter” that you can join right from the home page of the Elfquest web site at www.elfquest.com. Just go there, type in your email address, and hit the “join” button. You’ll be on the list for all announcements that we make — no worrying about snailmail address changes or lost mail.

(However, It is important for you to resubscribe if you change your email address/internet provider! This will only take you a moment, and it will insure that you keep getting Elfquest news.)

COPYRIGHT, TRADEMARK, ELFQUEST AND YOU

I have often made an effort to outline some of the more important points about copyright and trademark law and how it applies to *Elfquest*. I thought I’d put a section on these topics here in the *Handbook*. I feel it’s an important enough subject to merit the room.

Basically, the copyright (literally, the “right to copy” a work — which can be a work of art, a work of fiction, works of music, etc.) protects the creator of that specific work and gives him/her the *sole* right to make copies of that work. This, in theory, guarantees that the one who creates a work is the one to benefit from it. In a general way, it is something like a patent on an invention. Trademark, on the other hand, is more general in that it protects a “mark” or general image which is useful and valuable in business. For example, an individual, specific drawing of Superman is copyrighted by DC Comics, which means that no one can copy that specific drawing. However, the *likeness* of Superman — the image of a male figure in a red and blue body stocking with its distinctive chest shield device on it, etc. — is trademarked by DC Comics, which means that no one can make any image, no matter how done, that resembles that figure.

Since *Elfquest* (including the story, the art, the characters, the world) is the invention — the creation, the work — of just two people (Wendy and Richard Pini), the copyrights and trademarks to *Elfquest* belong to them exclusively (actually, to Warp Graphics, Inc., the business entity for them). This means they are the only ones in the world who have the right to make copies of any of the images, characters or concepts contained in *Elfquest*, or even to create new images or stories based in the *Elfquest* world — unless they give written permission to someone else.

Now, “copies” doesn’t just mean a tracing or photocopy of a drawing in one of the *Elfquest* comics. As defined by Copyright and Trademark Law, “copies” means anything that looks like or relates in any way to the characters or concepts of *Elfquest*. It means freehand drawings, airbrushed t-shirts, homemade buttons — quite literally almost everything from *Elfquest*, whether or not it is directly copied.

What does this mean? Technically, it means that the only people who have the legal right to draw or write about or create anything to do with *Elfquest* are Wendy and Richard.

Well, it would be a dull Fan Club if no one else could create a story or drawing based on the *Elfquest* world, and we don’t intend it to be a dull Fan Club. Fan Club members do have permission to play in the World of Two Moons. But the copyrights and trademarks that belong to Wendy and Richard (Warp Graphics, actually) need to be protected; otherwise a lot of harm could be done, to them and to *Elfquest*. These things are valuable, and are Warp’s livelihood. So what follows are just a couple of rules — guidelines, really — to help you in your creative efforts that touch upon *Elfquest*.

***If you create a story or piece of art or sculpture — or any one-of-a-kind expression; multiple items like prints are absolutely forbidden — that has to do with *Elfquest*, you must put somewhere on it a notice of copyright and trademark that indicates that the EQ-related things in it belong to Warp Graphics. For example, let’s say you draw a picture of Cutter, perhaps for a fan magazine that you produce in print or for the web. Or, perhaps you’ve written a piece of fan fiction involving *Elfquest* characters. The picture itself or the story itself is yours, should be signed by you, and can itself be copyrighted by you; but you must also include the following disclaimer:

“*Elfquest* is a registered trademark, and its logos, characters, situations, all related indicia, and their distinctive likenesses are trademarks of Warp Graphics, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.”

If you incorporate any Warp-published *Elfquest* art in your work, you must also add the following words:

"*Elfquest* art copyright 2001 Warp Graphics, Inc. *Elfquest*, its logos, characters, situations, all related indicia, and their distinctive likenesses are trademarks of Warp Graphics, Inc. All rights reserved."

***The work you have done must not be sold. Not to friends, and especially not at conventions. We know this is a harsh thing to say, but we have

learned that allowing even one *Elfquest* item to be sold — other than the ones Warp Graphics creates or licenses — hurts us, financially and especially legally. So take this as the final word, and please don't write or ask permission to make or sell *EQ* merchandise. Warp can't and won't give it. Nor can Warp grant licenses to people who would like to create an *Elfquest* computer game, for example, or to produce T-shirts. Warp Graphics will allow — and encourages — fans to do not-for-profit stories and artwork and such for their own or other magazines (with the appropriate disclaimer), and there is never a problem with doing *Elfquest* costumes.

(There seems to be an entire sub-category of questions having to do with tattoos, or skin art. Many people have written to ask if they can have permission to have a tattoo of an *Elfquest* image. The answer is "Yes, it's all right." Tattoos, perhaps more than anything else, fall into the "one-of-a-kind" category. We certainly don't imagine you're going to mass produce and sell pieces of your own skin!)

***In the matter of T-shirts and buttons — there have been cases in the past where people have made shirts out of designs that belong to *Elfquest*. We know there are stores that will transfer or airbrush any picture you bring in onto a T-shirt. We know it can be pretty, but it's wrong, as well as illegal, and we ask that you not do it. We ask that if you see these items (or any others), being sold at conventions or other venues, please don't support that dealer, and try to get his/her card or name and address to let us know. I will take it from there. If you have a question about whether or not an *Elfquest* item is legal, write me — email is best; I'll answer.

STARTING A HOLT

The International *Elfquest* Fan Club is headquartered here in Poughkeepsie, New York and people call us "The Holt" with a capital "T" in honor of the Wolfrider's first forest home. One very pleasant side effect of the number of people who have joined the Club has been the birth of "little" holt all over the world. We think this is wonderful, and encourage it to the fullest. What are these secondary holt?

They can be anything you want them to be. There are no special rules to be followed in setting one up, and no special list of things you must do when it's set up. A holt is a group of people — any size group will do — who get together now and then to share with one another. What do they share? Some of them talk about the *Elfquest* storyline, some make up stories about what may happen in the future, or about characters they've made up themselves. Some talk about other things in addition to *Elfquest*, like role-playing, other fantasy worlds, costuming, you name it. People meet at each others' houses, or in parks, or at conventions. In fact, conventions are a great place to have a meeting, because you can schedule the use of a room, you can get your meeting posted in the list of convention events, you can put up posters and flyers to attract new members — it's great fun!

Some holt are quite large, with dozens of members; others are tiny — but they all have fun. Some holt like to put out their own newsletters or magazines (which we love to receive), but it's not necessary. Some holt are very

organized, with weekly meetings, while others just get together on occasion. You see, it's the people coming together, not the structure, that counts.

In fact, not everyone in your holt has to be a Club member. The Chief or Chieftess should be, but beyond that, the more the merrier!

We do ask one thing, though: once you have formed a holt and it is up and running, let us know its name and the name and address (physical or web) of someone to write to, so we can list it in the online directory that we maintain.

Many of you have written in for more detailed information on how to start up a holt, so the following are reprints of two letters compiled by members of two of the larger holts to answer just that request. The advice is equally applicable to online holts as well as physical ones.

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•So you say you want to start a holt, but haven't the foggiest idea how.

First, you need to know what you're getting yourself into.

Running a holt is a great deal of work. You must be willing to sacrifice most of your free time, be prepared to work with stubborn people you'd rather avoid, lose a lot of money to keep the club going, write mail sacks full of letters, generate massive paperwork (and keep track of all of it!), constantly support and encourage people, and lose sleep. If you are willing to do all that, then you have nothing to worry about, and you'll soon have all the headaches we promised. On the other hand, if you're having second thoughts, find a friend who might be willing to split the workload with you. There are plenty of other clubs out there who would kill for an excellent assistant; join a holt close to you.

Your next question is: are you in a good spot for a Holt to grow? To determine that, your first step is to check the listing to find out if you are close to an existing one. If **YES**: please join this club right away! Find out who they are and what they are doing. Are they having membership trouble? If so, then you will, too — remember, you'll be pulling from the same local interest pool. Above all, be friendly and open. Tell the Chief/tess what you're thinking of and get thoughts/advice. It might be better for you to simply join this organization as an assistant. If you've determined that you still want to form your own holt, try to have marked differences between your holt and other close tribes. Offering a choice is better than hurting the other group. Work together!

If there is no other group in your area, then nothing is standing in your way. Join a few other clubs just to see what they are doing. It will give you ideas for your own group.

Another consideration: are there indeed enough *Elfquest* fans in your area who would be willing to join a holt? People who like *Elfquest* and those willing to work at it are different kinds of people. Your club should have a core group of creative regulars who are willing to pitch in and do the majority of the work. If **YES**: Get all their names and addresses immediately! Start a file system. If **NO**: You're going to have to do a bit of digging. Make up flyers saying that you're starting a holt. Use the name *Elfquest*, and perhaps even some *Elfquest* artwork. Make sure your address is on it, perhaps a phone number, so people can contact you. Put these flyers up at school, comic shops, hobby stores, wherever you can think of that *Elfquest* fans might see them. Make sure you tell your friends!

An important consideration, and one that many people don't really take into account, is the money and time involved. Will you have enough of both? You can't really plan on getting any investment back (flyers, newsletters, stamps all have a cost attached), and asking friends is dubious, at best. If you have enough of both, go to it. If you don't, well, without funds, you're extremely limited as to what you can do, but it is possible. Simply start off at a slower pace. If time is your problem, it's probably best to join another club, since time is the single most important thing a holt-founder must have in abundance.

A final question for you before your holt is started: What, exactly, do you want it to be? Do you want a writers' club or an activity club? Writers' clubs are those in which every member creates a character and writes stories or poetry or puzzles, does artwork, etc. Writers' clubs most definitely require newsletters to show off all that creativity! Activity clubs are those where everyone is local, and there are meetings for costuming, gaming, nature walks, etc. In an activity club, newsletters are more an option, but still very good things to have.

Dues will have to be considered (remember the money factor?). The amount should not be too much, but enough to help offset existence costs. Hand in hand with this you need to think about the number of people you want to be part of the holt. Will you have a membership ceiling? Perhaps it sounds silly now, but some holts have had upwards of 100 members. Do you want that kind of long-reaching responsibility? And — of necessity — you need to know what are your guidelines and membership requirements? To keep your club from diving straight into chaos, there have to be some "house rules".

Now that you have a basic plan, get your friends talking. Most directions you choose to take are up to you. If you need ideas, other clubs are usually more than happy to give you advice and tales of their own beginnings. Choose one time and one place to hold your meetings, be they weekly, monthly, whatever. If you are doing a writers' club (and they are often done by mail to encompass members all over the country), take some hints from other, well established clubs. First, don't let everyone have a "lone elf survived from a destroyed holt". It's an old and overused concept. What you're creating is a tribe, so everything should be interwoven. Also, "magic pocket" characters, such as Madcoil, are too easy a way out. The World of Two Moons isn't the land of *Dungeons and Dragons* — it's *Elfquest*. Pockets of bad magic are rare things to run into and should be treated as such. And finally, set up a strict series of rules and stick to them! Every storyline, even when it is spread out among many writers, must have an inner core of consistency to be believable. Decide which way is your "Way."

From here, all you need to do is start playing, writing and talking. Once you're established, let Warp know you are alive! You'll need to be put on the holt list. If you have a newsletter, please make sure you mail a copy of Warp in Poughkeepsie. Good luck!

• "Wanted: Help for Holt Leaders — This Means You"

Hard as some folks seem to find it to believe, most holt leaders have a life outside of fandom. Many hold full time jobs or juggle a load of classes (sometimes both!), spend time with a Significant Other, or are active in church or social groups. No holt leader gets paid for the time and effort he or she puts into running the holt either. Generally, it's the opposite: the holt leader invests a

lot of time and money into the holt to keep it going smoothly.

Sure, it's fun, and we wouldn't do it if we didn't love it. But in the past couple of years, some of the larger holts in *Elfquest* fandom have changed leaders — one of them three times! The reason most often given by the resigning leader is "lack of time."

Why? Let's look at a typical holt setup. The Holt Of Some Errant Elves (T.H.O.S.E. Elves) has fifty members and publishes a 24 page newsletter four times a year. With membership in the holt comes the privilege of creating three characters (and frankly, given that privilege, many members will not give another thought to coordinating their characters with those already existing; soon there are 150 unrelated elves running amok in the forest).

The holt leader reads and in some cases edits the character sheets to fit the holt, thinks up and coordinates story plotlines, keeps a time line, maintains a file of maps, charts, genealogies, lists, holt bookkeeping, and whatever else is necessary.

It's time for an issue of the newsletter. The holt leader puts on a new hat, that of editor. S/he critiques the stories that members submit; in the process s/he will read that story at least twice, making notes on the first draft. Most stories go through two or three drafts; this can take *months*, depending on the speed of the writer and the editor and the time available to both. When the story is ready, the editor assigns an artist to illustrate it, then types and copyedits, gathers up everything to go into the issue, lays it all out, does pasteup, gets it printed, collates and staples the pages, addresses and mails the finished zines...

...and then it's time to start the next @#%\$!/?# issue!

Add to this the problems involved in juggling correspondence (which includes phone calls at all hours) with fifty members, particularly those who forget to enclose SASEs (self addressed stamped envelopes) for a reply or who get miffed when the holt leader says that they've called at a bad time.

Well, you *did* say you wanted to run a holt. But before you decide to chuck the idea, why not kill two birds with one stone: put some time an enthusiasm into *helping* a holt that you already like (that holt leader will appreciate it!), and make sure you *know* what you're getting into (the ego feed of having your name in the listing will dry up quickly if you get in over your head and disappoint your members).

One of the major ways of helping a holt leader is to contribute art and/or stories for the holt 'zine. Face it, the only way the newsletter will ever come out is if the editor has items to put in it. However, what if you are neither writer nor artist? You can still help out — just use a little imagination.

Are you a calligrapher, or do you have access to a graphics-oriented computer (like a Macintosh)? You can offer to do lettering — send the holt samples of what you can do.

Is your computer compatible with the holt leader's? You can take on some or all of the typing.

If you're a poor typist, but your computer is compatible and you have a letter quality printer or (heaven!) a laser printer — you can print the holt's current issue files. Make sure you know the holt newsletter's formatting needs.

Do you have a database program or a good word processor with a mail merge function? Why not offer to keep a membership list or run address labels for the newsletter?

Are you well organized? Enjoy doing graphics or layout? Offer to produce, layout or update a holt guide or character guide. They're always needed, by every holt, and they're usually out of date if they exist at all. Or, take on some of the work for a holt special project such as a coloring book or a supplement.

Do you enjoy mapmaking, doing research, or compiling genealogical charts? Offer your services.

Are you an articulate writer with little time to contribute your own stories? Offer to act as a preliminary reader, copyeditor or story editor. Don't be miffed if the editor tests you first to see how you would deal with a given story. After all, it's that editor's holt and creative folk you'll be dealing with. And remember, a *tactful* and *constructive* sub-editor is worth his/her weight in gold.

Do you live near the holt leader? You can do any or all of the above, plus help with filing, help with the mail, help with folding, stapling, envelope stuffing and stamping. Even if you can only help once a month, it helps!

Do you have no time, but a dollar or two to spare? Surprise your favorite holt leader with a gift of stamps, envelopes or stamped postcards.

And even if you can offer nothing else, take pen in hand and send a fan letter or thank you note to the leader of your favorite holt. Sometimes the leaders get so wrapped up in the little things that they forget that it's really for fun and the enjoyment of others. An unexpected letter that says "thanks" sometimes puts everything back into perspective. Such a note of encouragement could make the difference between your holt leader hanging in there — or closing the holt (or finding a replacement leader) because of "lack of time."

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THE WORLD OF ELFQUEST

Because there are many creative folks out there who enjoy making up stories and drawing visualizations of things relating to *Elfquest*, we feel it useful to give some pointers to the world in which *Elfquest* takes place. It's very important that stories, whether science fiction, fantasy, Western or detective, have guidelines to follow so they are consistent, logical and enjoyable to read. *Elfquest* is no different.

There are *The Big Elfquest Gatherum* and *The Wolfrider's Guide to the World of Two Moons*, two thickish volumes published by Warp Graphics that are much more "in tune" with the canonical *Elfquest* universe. We recommend these references most highly.

Aside from the Fan Club Handbook, there are other sources of *Elfquest* information. If you can find them (they are out of print) the rulebooks and supplements for the *EQ* role playing game from Chaosium, Inc. contain much more detailed information than we could possibly print here. We recommend them as additional sources. However, keep in mind that the information contained in these books is not strictly part of the *EQ* universe. They do allow a certain flexibility that is necessary to role-playing, but may lead you in directions that Wendy and I would never go in.

Also, on the *Elfquest* World Wide Web site, there is an entire bibliographical section that lists just about every publication (most, alas, out of print) that

anything *Elfquest* has been printed in.

Finally, if you have online access, you can subscribe to any of the several *Elfquest* mailing lists and newsgroups, and become part of yet another “community” of kindred souls. Just send an email to:

equest-1-subscribe@elfquest.com

...and before you know it you’ll be interacting with hundreds of folks in dozens of discussions.

Before we start in here, though, it’s wise to have one thing straight. This section of the *Handbook* (as well as any information given in any of the *Elfquest* games), is just a guide, and can’t possibly answer every question that you will come up with, nor will it answer such questions as have to do with stories of *Elfquest* that Wendy and I are yet planning to tell. Of necessity, things here must be generalized. However, if there is a question on some point, we do have the final say on what’s what in the *EQ* world. This is true both for what you may glean from this *Handbook* and what you may come up with using the *EQ* sources that are available now or in the future. To avoid any problems with conflicting concepts, drop a note to ask first; we’ll do our best to answer in a timely way. Email works very well for this.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS: The elves of *Elfquest* don’t kiss, although they do nuzzle, embrace, touch and express affection and intimacy in many ways. And even though they may do very nice and/or interesting things with lips meeting lips, it’s not kissing. Only we humans have need of a word to define a certain (sometimes overrated) thing we do with our mouths.

They don’t say “I love you” — they *feel* it and the words aren’t needed. The only endearment, as far as we know, that the Wolfriders use is “beloved”. Children are called by the terms “kitling” or “cubling” by both Sun Folk and Wolfriders; the Go-Backs are probably too rough and ready to use endearments. Romantic human-talk like “darling” or “sweetheart” just doesn’t belong in elfin relationships. “Lovemates” are unRecognized lovers; “lifemates” have made a long-term commitment to each other and can be Recognized, but need not always be.

There are no “marriage” ceremonies, at least among the elves we’ve seen so far. Lifemating just happens, usually without fanfare. Lifemates can have children if not Recognized, but that’s very rare. Recognition guarantees offspring. Lifemating can be for life, as it is by choice for the Wolfriders, but in other tribes/groups the relationship can be looser, and there can be matings of more than two individuals (Recognition, however, only happens between two). This leaves a great deal of room in the development of characters and situations, always within the bounds of taste — though as we all know, taste is an individual thing. As in the *Elfquest* comic, nothing should be done solely for shock value; there should be logical reasons for things.

Any emotion that you feel — joy, anger, frustration — can be felt by the elves, too, but try to react to those feelings the way elves would. Would it make sense to feel jealousy in a tribe where anyone could mate with anyone else? Would it be logical to feel frustrated or frightened by wasted time when you know you can live essentially forever?

Try to feel the differences between the way a human or an elf think of time. Elves are potentially immortal (except for the Wolfriders — and even they will live a loooooong time). If an elf lives a sheltered life, as the Sun Folk do, time

could be almost meaningless. Leetah (in the days before the Wolfriders arrived) might work on a single needlepoint for a century. The Gliders of Blue Mountain, throughout their long history, surely came up with strange and bizarre ways to pass monotonous time (look at someone like Egg). Humans, being mortal, have a greater awareness of time's passing. They might be more desperate about things and feel more stress. Their feelings about death are different, too, for the same reasons.

TECHNOLOGY: This is a tricky question, and the answer depends greatly upon what time period in which you set your story. Up until about 1992, *Elfquest* tales were set exclusively in the "past" - which is to say, in a time period for the World of Two Moons which would correspond roughly to prehistory up to about the 1300s.

However, with the introduction of storylines such as *Jink*, *The Rebels*, and even *Rogue's Curse*, the timeline has expanded to include past, present and future. While, for the sake of ease in story telling, we treat the evolution of society and technology as very roughly equal to how it happened here on Earth, there will be differences. On Earth, there was a period we call the Dark Ages, there was a period we call the Renaissance, there was an Industrial Revolution... On Abode (which is the humans' name for the World of Two Moons), these things may have happened differently. For one thing, we've yet to see just how a character like Two-Edge, a master tinkerer and inventor, may have influenced events. As story tellers, we're all in uncharted territory here.

With respect to stories that happen up until the period of *Kings of the Broken Wheel*, there is no advanced technology anywhere on the world. This is a limit we have placed to avoid mixed-up confrontations such as appeared in the movie "*Wizards*". Somewhere an elfin tribe might have learned to harness water power, but there is no steam power, no engines. For a rough guide, consider the level of technology that existed on Earth around the time of the pyramids. Somewhere there might be sailboats, but no paddlewheelers. Some tribe somewhere might have discovered paper.

As far as metalworking goes during this period, the trolls have their forges and can smelt ore and make alloys. The trolls are clever, and have devised various mechanical devices, such as water-powered triphammers and gates opened by chain-and-pulley. The Sun Folk can only work the pure metals they find, more or less like the Aztecs. Somewhere, there could be elves who shape metal the way Redlance shapes plants and Ekuar shapes rock, but that still would not give rise to any advanced metallurgy.

On a side note to the question of technology during this period, we prefer it if people stay away from having other, "advanced" races visit the *Elfquest* world; it makes things very, very tricky. As in the *Star Trek* episode, "A Piece of the Action", an ill-advised visit can have potentially disastrous results! It really makes no difference if these "other" races come from another world, another dimension, or just another part of the *EQ* world — it's a difficult concept to do well, and we prefer to keep this world at the level of technology and culture that it is.

(NOTE: This is not to say that a well done satire or humorous or "what if" piece couldn't be done by throwing the elves up against some other well-known fictional characters, but that's different, not a serious addition to the *EQ* mythology.)

ON MIXING MYTHOLOGIES: This has already been mentioned above, but a few more words are in order. This world is not Earth — never has been, never will be. There are no classical earthly fantasy creatures inhabiting it: no unicorns, dragons, dwarves, goblins, witches, warlocks, vampires, magicians, and so on. (While we use the terms *elf* and *troll*, we avoid the obvious interpretations of these beings). In other words, we want to stay away from standard Sword and Sorcery clichés. This is not a *D&D* world! There can be fantastic creatures in it — look at Madcoil — but these creatures have to be part of this world from the start. And it's best to go easy on the creation of new lifeforms; otherwise that, too, becomes a cliché.

It is possible for elves and trolls to crossbreed, Two-Edge being a prime example. However, it is impossible to have an elf-human or troll-human crossbreeding. The *Elfquest* characters and the humans are from two different places, and there is no intermixing possible. The Preservers are sexless. We may see things in the future that will raise questions in your mind, but we'll answer those when they come up.

LITERACY: The characters of “the past” don't have books, writing or any sort of alphabet — there's no need for it. The Wolfriders have a purely oral tradition, telling tales of their history, while the Sun Folk have art and symbolic representation. The Gliders captured a kind of history within the symbols on the Great Egg, and the Scroll of Colors within the Palace is still a symbolic device (as well as being the only one of its kind, please). Symbolism is about as far as we're comfortable going in *EQ*. Remember, the elves live a long time, and their memories can, if stimulated and exercised, stay sharp all that time. So as long as an elf can remember all that happened, why does he need to write it down? Savah is the “history book” for the Sun Folk, and if she's forgotten anything, probably no one cares about it anyway! Within the Wolfriders, there is a “storyteller” function - Pike has that duty now, and uses dreamberries as a pleasant “jolt” to the memory centers.

All elves speak the same language, although with different accents, so they can all understand each other. The humans' language is also common to all human groups. By the time of the current stories (somewhere in the Middle Ages equivalent for Abode) we've established it that most elves *can* understand most humans, and vice versa. Linguistically, it may not make the most sense, but from a story telling point of view, it simplifies things immensely. Once upon a time, the elves used to be able to talk among themselves without humans understanding them; now, they resort to sending for their private communications.

The elves use certain terms in referring to everyday things that are different from the terms we use. (Again, this may depend on the historical period within which you're working.) For example, we (and the Sun Folk) say “year” but the Wolfriders use “turn of the seasons”. Their counting system is based on eight, so while they can still understand what “ten” is, they might also call it “eight-and-two”. The best guide to this sort of thing is *Elfquest* itself, the three *EQ* novelizations, and the *Blood of Ten Chiefs* anthologies. Use of strange or new terminology is determined as much by whether or not it works well in the reading of it as anything else.

POWERS AND “MAGIC”: Consider the elves' powers to be basically of the mind. Elves can “send” — a kind of telepathy. Sending can be to many minds

or to one. An elf could read another's mind while the second is sending, but that is such an invasion of privacy that it is abhorred. (Which is not to say that an evil character like Winnowill wouldn't do it.) Some of the powers that we've seen include sending, healing (a psychokinetic manipulation of internal organs), levitation, hypnotic control, shaping (wood, flesh and stone) and Suntop's "magic feeling", a kind of sensitivity to magic and its use. But flesh-shaping and "anti-healing" are facets of healing itself. There is no precognition (forecasting or telling the future). The *Wolfrider's Guide* contains a much more comprehensive listing.

There are limits to these powers. Sending has a range limit, although the better one is at it the further one can send or receive. Levitation can be tricky — some elves can levitate objects, but not themselves, while others can float themselves. Healers can heal themselves; they can heal poisons as well as wounds, but that takes a long time as a poison permeates the body while an injury is usually local. A healer can conceivably heal a troll or even a human, but there are two problems. First, the healer's mind must "go into" the injured body, and to go into either troll or human would be distasteful and/or difficult. Second, a strong enough will can keep the healer's influence out, and keep the healer from healing. An "anti-healer" might try to cause damage to an elf's internal organs, but if the other elf's will is strong enough, it can block enough of the "anti-healing" to receive only pain, but no damage. Also, remember that heavy or extended use of any power will drain the user and leave the elf weakened. Someone like Venka can block the powers of someone like Winnowill very well.

Neither trolls nor humans have any powers themselves, although the underlying philosophy of *Elfquest* is that we all have a kind of power of spirit or love within us. Also, there are no magic stones or other talismans that are used with or to focus magic powers; they don't exist in this world. Skywise's lodestone isn't really "magic", just magnetic — but to an elf with no experience in that sort of thing, that's "magic" enough.

Magic on the World of Two Moons is a bit different from the standard variety — rather than a supernatural force, it is more a "natural" kind of energy that the elves manipulate. If you think of "magic" as "energy", then it becomes easier to understand, and the things that can be done with it become more clearly defined. Also, just as a battery can go bad, so can magic energy that has been sitting around too long — that's how Madcoil was created.

THE PLANET ITSELF: As we said earlier, this isn't Earth, so don't get caught thinking that things that happen (or have happened) on Earth must happen here. There are two moons, for example, so tides can be interesting. Eclipses are infrequent compared to Earth. The constellations over this world's night sky have nothing to do with our star patterns. By the time of story lines such as *Hidden Years*, *New Blood* and *Shards*, elves have traveled to different lands on this world. New tribes are being discovered.

The geological history of this world can be likened to that of Earth; there have been ice ages and periods of great volcanoes and mountain building; just make sure that what you come up with makes sense. Depending upon the time in which you set a story, this world may be still young and largely unexplored; with no centers of civilization, no cities. - or it may be populated with thriving human civilizations, who have begun to explore the other worlds of the sun's

system.

FINALLY, A REQUEST - Please do not try to alter, rearrange or second-guess what has already happened or will come to pass in the *Elfquest* saga. Let us spin that tale. You have, essentially, the whole history and area of the *EQ* world to play in. One word of kind caution, however. If, for example, you decide to do a story about Huntress Skyfire, keep in mind that, right now, you know only so much about her and you run the risk of being contradicted when we finally do reveal things about her. Guessing and “what ifting” are fun as long as everyone understands the rules of the game.

Again, all of the above is meant to be a guideline for your creativity. We really want to see the things you come up with, and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to write and ask. Questions of general interest will be answered for everyone in the *Elfquest* letters pages, Fan Club pages, or on the Fan Club area within the *Elfquest* World Wide Web site.

FINDING YOUR ELF NAME

One of the nicest things about *Elfquest* seems to be that people really get into the spirit of it to the point that they take elf names for themselves as the characters have. With that in mind, and to help out those who have written to say they're having some difficulty in choosing an elf name, there are a couple of different ways to go about it.

First, keep in mind that taking an elf name (or a troll name, or whatever — the ideas apply to all names) also means that you are taking on the identity of the name — the persona, the spirit. This means that the name should fit you in some way, and reflect some aspect of your personality.

One way to develop a name is to think about things you like to do. Do you have favorite hobbies? Could one of those be incorporated into your name? Are you a “Woodcarver” (whittling), or a “Snowflyer” (skiing) or a “Brightmint” (coin collector)? The possibilities are endless.

Another way to find a name is to take some favorite characteristic of yourself, psychically or spiritually. A tall person might be a “Skytoucher”. Someone with a bubbly, happy personality might be “Brook”. Again, look at yourself or ask friends (although you should be prepared for off-the-wall suggestions!)

A consideration in your choice of a name may be whether you want a descriptive name or a sound name. “Cutter” is a descriptive name; it describes a talent. “Leetah”, however, is a sound name; it captures in sound some aspect of her personality. If you want a sound name, you might think of sounds that appeal to you — the sound of running water, or wind in tree branches. Then try to spell out in letters the “sound of the sound”. There's your name.

Names can be changed. Several of you have written to ask if Suntop, for example, will ever have another name. The answer, most likely, is yes. Characters change, so their names sometimes change with them: One-Eye, for instance, didn't always have one eye, so he must have had another name earlier on. Redlance only became “Redlance” after he saved Bearclaw from the longtooth; before that, he was “Redmark”. If you feel the need to take another name, feel free.

We've found that certain words tend to find their way into names with great

frequency, to the extent that they're becoming overused. Try to avoid using BLACK, BLADE, DARK, DREAM, FEATHER, FIRE, FLOWER, MOON, NIGHT, SHADOW, STAR, SUN or WILD in your name — unless you've got an original twist. These words are easy to use, it's true, but you want your name to be yours alone.

As mentioned earlier, along with your name you take on the persona of the name's character. As time goes on you might want to flesh out that character and turn it into a "real" elf. Don't feel obligated to give your elf-character a special "power". Not all elves have them. Most all the elves do have *skills* of one sort or another, which is a very different thing. A skill is something you can work on developing right along with your character, and that's worth something! If you do decide your character has a power, then keep the power within the bounds of powers that exist in the *Elfquest* world. Very few of the powers that can be used in a game of *D&D* belong in *Elfquest*, so stay away from them.

AND FINALLY

As we began this handbook, we'll end it for now — with a request. *Elfquest* is alive — it's growing and evolving, sometimes in directions not even Wendy and I can fully anticipate. This guide, and the Club itself, are for you the members. If there's something you think we've left out of this edition, write to us. If you have a complaint or compliment, WRITE TO US! We can't promise individual replies, but if we never hear from you we won't know what you like and don't like, want and don't want. So help us make the International Elfquest Fan Club the most communicative and sharing fan club in the world! We look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard A. Pinn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.