

D&D REMAINS POPULAR

In the high-tech world of virtual reality and computer games, one could easily think that Dungeons & Dragons, the popular fantasy role-playing game of the 1970s and 1980s, may have gone the way of some of its mythical dragons, but not so, according to a report last summer in *The Wall Street Journal*. Scott Rouse, a senior brand manager for the game, says it "is alive and well," and estimates that there are still 4 million people who engage in the literal battle of minds.

Wizards of the Coast, a subsidiary of Hasbro toys, continues to publish the three core rulebooks for D&D, recently going to press with a large second printing of the fourth edition of the game's manuals.

The Wall Street Journal argued that, "In reality, D&D was no more harmful than a Harry Potter book. It inspired kids to do many of the things for which J.K. Rowling's novels are widely praised, such as turning off television sets and picking up books." PFO maintains that D&D is harmful for four reasons: it emphasizes violence, it emphasizes occultism, it emphasizes paganism, and it can be addictive.

D&D began with meager sales of nearly \$50,000 in 1975, but by the 1980s sales escalated in the hundreds of millions of dollars. The game's primary inventor, Gary Gygax, died in March.

—MKG

A HAZARDOUS MOON LANDING

The Rev. Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Unification Church, escaped serious injury when a helicopter he was aboard crashed into a mountainside and burst into flames near Seoul, South Korea. The aircraft had 16 people on board, including Moon and 12 other church members.

An investigation is underway to determine the exact cause of the crash; however, according to an Associated Press report, the Sikorsky S-92 helicopter was attempting to make "an emergency landing due to bad visibility during heavy rain."

Also hurt in the accident were Moon's wife and other members of his family. All were treated at the church-affiliated Cheongshim Hospital, about 37 miles northeast of Seoul.

No specifics as to Moon's injury were given, although a hospital official said Moon received an X-ray and his condition was not serious. He was released from the hospital the day following the July 19 crash. The church's website posted a corresponding announcement stating that Moon and the others were "safe."

Moon, 88, claims that Jesus failed in His earthly mission, maintains he has come to complete what Jesus left unfinished, and boasts himself to be the Messiah. He officially founded the Unification Church in May 1954 in Seoul.

—MKG

SCIENTOLOGY FOUNDER SAID "THERE WAS NO CHRIST"

A confidential audio recording made in 1968 by L. Ron Hubbard, the late founder of Scientology, was recently uploaded to the Wikileaks website. The 48-minute "classified recording" reportedly has Hubbard claiming that "There was no Christ," and maintaining that "the stories of Christ are alien mind implants."

According to the website's summary statement about the disclosed lecture, Scientology believes that the earth was populated by an evil "Galactic overlord" known as Xenu and that "human beings are parasitized by alien spirits called 'body thetans'." This teaching, the website explains, is told to fewer than 10% of its followers and is publicly denied. The leaked recording repudiates these denials and is argued to run contrary to Scientology statements that it is compatible with Christianity.

The website earlier had been threatened by Scientology with legal action over the posting of related printed material which included handwritten notes by Hubbard.

Wikileaks is described as "a website that publishes anonymous submission and leaks of sensitive religious, corporate and government documents, while taking measures to preserve the anonymity and untraceability of its contributors."

—MKG

"ANGELS & DEMONS" NOT ALLOWED IN CHURCHES

Movie director Ron Howard, producer and author Dan Brown, and actor Tom Hanks have hit a roadblock for filming some of the interior locations for their forthcoming film, *Angels & Demons*, the prequel of the blockbuster novel and motion picture, *The Da Vinci Code*. The local diocese of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome recently reiterated that two of its churches, Santa Maria del Popolo and Santa Maria della Vittoria, are "off limits" to film crews for the movie, which is now under production. In 2007, the diocese first denied access to the churches; however, at that time production was stalled due to the writers' strike in Hollywood.