



MAGICTHEGATHERING.COM

ARTICLES

Related links

Read other articles

TOURNAMENTS

MAGIC ONLINE

Article Search

One Hundred and Counting



A look back at the first 100 weeks

Mark Rosewater · Making Magic
Monday, November 24, 2003

Welcome to the 100th week of **MagictheGathering.com**! It seems like just yesterday that we started the site. But a lot has changed. We've swapped a few columnists. We've designed two **Magic** cards. We've chosen repeats for *Eighth Edition*. We've answered five hundred "Ask Wizards" questions. And we've added a substantial number of new readers.

In fact, the last part is what today's column is all about. During these last hundred weeks, I've written a hundred columns. (Okay, as a few readers pointed out to me in e-mail and on last week's thread, I've written somewhere between ninety-seven and ninety-nine articles. It all depends on what you choose to count.) Most readers haven't been reading for a hundred weeks. That means that there are a lot of my old articles that many of you might not have read.

Today's column is going to be an indexing of my column during the first hundred weeks. For each one, I'll give you a little synopsis, I'll rate it for quality, and, for those that read it the first time around, I'll mention any interesting stories that resulted from me writing the column.

My rating scale will be one through five:

- ***** (5 stars) This is as good as it gets. One of my crème de la crème. If you're going to catch up on any old articles, these are the ones to read.
- **** (4 stars) While not my absolute best, this article is one of my better pieces.
- *** (3 stars) One of my bread and butter columns. Nothing spectacular, but nothing too shabby either.
- ** (2 stars) At best a failed experiment. At worst, a ho hum read.
- * (1 star) The only real reason to read this is to say you've read every column. Not my finest hour.

So let's hop in our Wayback Machine and travel back to the beginning of 2002.

Week #1 (January 1, 2002) – ["In the Beginning"](#) (**)

Technically speaking this wasn't an official "Making **Magic**" column. It was written as my first column, but we decided to start the site of January 1st, a Tuesday. That meant there wasn't going to be a Monday column for the first week. This piece ended up as the site's very first feature. If you weren't around for the site's original launch, this column will give you a chance to see how I pitched the site on its very first day.

Week #2 (January 7, 2002) – ["A Nightmare to Remember"](#) (***)

This column was my official first "Making **Magic**" column. In it, I introduce myself and explain how Richard Garfield designed the strangling mechanic (which appeared on the nightmare creatures in *Torment*; remember that the first three weeks of the site were preview weeks for the upcoming *Torment* expansion). The article does a good job of showing the early genesis of the nightmare

and demonstrates how mechanics designed for one set can end up in another. Also, note that this column was during the first theme week, Nightmare Week.

Week #3 (Monday January 14, 2002) – “[Make It Black](#)” (*)**

In this column, I explain how R&D ended up deciding to make *Torment* a heavy black set. Two little trivia notes: first, this is my first column with a dialogue, a common Rosewater signature writing quirk (although this one is written out in prose, I hadn't gotten to the script like format yet) and two, in this column I introduce “You Make the Card” which officially premiered two days after this column.



Week #4 (January 21, 2002) – “[Finding a Good Mechanic](#)” (*)**

This column was the start of Madness Week. Unfortunately, Mike Elliott had a feature that week talking about how madness was designed. I ended up tying into madness by talking about how keywords are created. If you read my column to learn about design, this is a good column to read. I define what keywords are. I talk about the difference between development and design. And I start peeking for the first time into the mindset of the designer.

Week #5 (January 28, 2002) – “[When Cards Go Bad](#)” (**)**

I believe this is the best column I've ever written. It's probably the best known of my columns, so if you haven't read it, I strongly urge you to. In it, I explain the age old question “Why does R&D make bad cards?” Historically speaking, this column really helped me find my feet as a columnist. I got an overwhelming positive response to this article (partially due to the fact that it's the most linked article I've ever written) and continue to get responses to it every week from people reading my old columns in the archive.



Week #6 (February 4, 2002) – “[Here's Looking At You Squid](#)” (**)**

This is the first column where I tried a very light tone. It was Cephalid Week so I figured why not. The column is explaining where all the common creature types (elves, goblin and merfolk) went in the *Odyssey* block. And while I eventually do talk about cephalids, the majority of the column is actually about dwarves. I'm fond of this column as it was my first attempt to be silly in my column. As faithful readers know, this was only the beginning.

Week #7 (February 11, 2002) – “[Split Decisions](#)” (**)**

As a designer, the favorite mechanic I ever created was the split cards. This column tells the tale of how they came to be. The story is quite interesting and takes a few turns I don't think many readers expected. If you like the split card mechanic, this is a must read.

Week #8 (February 18, 2002) – “[Enemy Mine](#)” (*)**

It was Color Hoser Week so I talked about some of the rules behind designing color hosers. This was my first column to drum up significant backlash. There are a number of readers who get quite upset whenever I explain some of the rules of design. They feel that R&D is too restrictive in its rules and that it's shifting the game away from where they want to see **Magic**. One of my ongoing themes in this column is the importance of structure in design, so obviously, I believe rules like the Color Hoser ones are very important to keeping the game healthy.

Week #9 (February 25, 2002) – “[Rare But Well Done](#)” (**)**

This is my follow-up article to “When Cards Go Bad”. I wrote it because so much of my mail on the first column had the line: “I know R&D has to make bad cards. Why do they have to be rare?” This column explains how we decide rarity and explains why and how “bad” rares get made.



Players want "no bad rares," but they don't want "all the good cards to be rare." There's no easy compromise.

Week #10 (March 4, 2002) – "Designing Under the Influence" (*)

It was *Legends* (the expansion not the mechanic) Week, so I decided to talk about all the *Legends* cards that influenced my design of other **Magic** cards. While the idea sounded good in theory, the execution left something to be desired. Much of the influence was blatantly obvious and even the less obvious stuff wasn't all that interesting.

Week #11 (March 11, 2002) – "Timmy, Johnny, and Spike" (****)

After "When Cards Go Bad" this is probably my second best well-known (and most linked) column. In it I explain the three major psychographic profiles R&D uses when designing and developing cards. The article even starts with a test to let you know which type or types you are. Another must-read column.

Week #12 (March 18, 2002) – "The Write Stuff" (**)

It was Flavor Text Week so I wrote about my top ten favorite flavor text pieces that I wrote. This is another column that generated a lot of negative feedback. A lot of players had issues with how R&D had been treating flavor and this column served as a catalyst for that discussion.



Week #13 (March 25, 2002) – "Add Text To Flavor" (***)

This column was a response to the backlash of the previous week's column. In it, I tried to explain many of the decisions that go behind our flavor text creation and selection process. If this is something you care about, I recommend giving this column a read.

Week #14 (April 1, 2002) – “[Tweak In Review](#)” ()**



My column started with a fake [April Fools column](#). But it wasn't Egg Week, it was Land Destruction Week, so I talked about how designers tweak basic effects (like land destruction). The article is a little on the dry side but it does demonstrate the many different tricks the designers use to keep bringing back the basic game effects that need to show up in most sets.

Week #15 (April 8, 2002) – “[With Trends Like These](#)” (*)

I used this column to talk about the trends in the mechanics submitted for the first “You Make the Card”. While I think the insight was valuable for me as a designer, I'm not sure it was quite as interesting for all of you.

Week #16 (April 15, 2002) – “[Some Enchanted Card Type](#)” (*)**

It was Creature Enchantment Week so I spent my column talking about the highs and lows of creature enchantments. I spend most of the column explaining how R&D keeps trying to improve them, most often with little success.

Week #17 (April 22, 2002) – “[R&D R&R](#)” (*)**

This was the first column where I gave a peek of life in R&D. These columns have always proven very popular with a slate of e-mails all asking how they can get a job in R&D. This column also is the first glimpse of Richard Garfield behind the scenes. He's a funny, smart, creative man, but don't believe everything he says.



R&D at work: Mark, Mike Donais, David Eckleberry, and Skaff Elias work through a new TCG.

Week #18 (April 29, 2002) – “[Wishes Come True](#)” ()**

It was Wish Week so I explained the origin of the Wish mechanic. I tried something a little different with this article. Something I promised to never do again. As such, this article seems to be beloved or hated.

Week #19 (May 6, 2002) – “[Phantom of the Soap Opera](#)” ()**

I spent my column explaining how Judgment's phantoms were designed. If you really like the nuts and bolts stories of mechanic design, I recommend reading this, but if not, you can pass this one on by.

Week #20 (May 13, 2002) – “[Through the Riftstone](#)” (*)

This column was supposed to be called “Birth of an Incarnation” as it talks about the design of Judgment's incarnations. This is the one and only time Aaron Forsythe changed the name of my article (you'll notice my column is used as the subtitle). This column is also the only time I've plugged another Wizards game (Star Wars TCG – you see, the incarnations were called jedi in design).

Week #21 (May 20, 2002) – “[Keeping It Simple](#)” (****)

My column this week was about the importance of simplicity in **Magic** design. In it I explain some key reasons behind a lot of the trends in **Magic** design and development in recent years. If this kind of thing interests you, I recommend giving this column a look.

Week #22 (May 27, 2002) – “[Tokens Of My Affection](#)” (***)

It was Token Week, so I spend the whole column talking about the design of tokens and cards that affect or create tokens. This is another one of those columns where I take a narrow topic and dive in real deep. This column is everything you wanted to know about tokens and design but were afraid to ask.



Week #23 (June 3, 2002) – “[Day of Judgment](#)” (**)

I use this column to look at the design of five *Judgment* cards, one in each color (*Solitary Confinement*, *Mists of Stagnation*, *Morality Shift*, *Shaman's Trace*, and *Grizzly Fate*). This column is a little “phoned in”, but it does demonstrate the many decisions that go into creating a single card.

Week #24 (June 10, 2002) – “[Common Courtesy](#)” (***)

It was Common Week so I spent the entire column talking about why commons are the backbone of the game and why they're the hardest cards to design well. This is one of those columns that helps readers to see how many different things designers have to think about when designing a card.

Week #25 (June 17, 2002) – “[I've Got Mail](#)” (***)

This is my first mailbag column. I think these columns are important as **MagictheGathering.com** is very much about giving the players a voice. My mailbag columns tend to be all over the map, but it does give the readers a larger sense of the different concerns various **Magic** players have.



Week #26 (June 24, 2002) – “[The Game Of Life](#)” (**)

It was Life Gaining Week, so I, of course, talked about Life Gaining. I talk about how popular life gain is with a certain segment of the audience using actual data we had collected. This article got a very negative reception as many players just didn't want to believe that the players I described existed. Ironically, my mailbox was full that week with players writing in to say: “Hey, that's me!”

Week #27 (July 1, 2002) – “[No Two See The Same Game](#)” (***)

This column was written in response to a letter I got about the Selecting *Eighth Edition* promotion that **MagictheGathering.com** had been running. This column explains many of the common misconceptions players have when looking at the game, the largest one being the inability to understand that other players value different things. I find it interesting that many of my best columns are created in response to letters.

Week #28 (July 8, 2002) – “[Zen And The Art Of Cycle Maintenance](#)” (****)

It was Cycle Week so I talked about the design of card cycles. The most interesting part of this column though is a short detour I take into explaining the importance of aesthetics.



The most famous of all cycles, the Alpha "boons" were an attempt to define the colors. Blue was defined as insanely powerful, and white was defined as timid. Ten years later, we're still working on that.

Week #29 (July 15, 2002) – “[Playing To Type I](#)” (*)**

This is one of the columns where I took the bulls by the horn on a hot topic: Wizards' support of Type I. In the column, I explain both why Type I gets less attention and how it could get more. This column created the second largest amount of mail I've ever received on a column. The message was clear. There is a very dedicated Type I crowd who wanted to see more support. As a result, Wizards has made some changes (in everything from Organized Play to card design) to put a little more focus on Type I.

Week #30 (July 22, 2002) – “[Squirrel Of My Dreams](#)” (**)**

This is another fun, silly column on a topic close to my heart – squirrels. (Hey, it was Squirrel Week, what could I do?) If you don't laugh reading this column, then you're really in a bad mood.

Week #31 (July 29, 2002) – “[When Bad Things Happen To Good Cards](#)” (***)**

This column was written in response to the public's reaction to *Llanowar Elves* leaving *Eighth Edition* (it lost out in a poll to *Birds of Paradise*). In the column, I explain the philosophy behind why good cards have to be rotated out. This is another important article as it explains why R&D does something that purposefully upsets players.

Week #32 (August 5, 2002) – “[It Happened One Nights](#)” (*)**

It was *Arabian Nights* week, so I spent my column admiring some of the innovations found in *Arabian Night's* design. Damn, that Garfield is good.

Week #33 (August 12, 2002) – “[Codename of the Game](#)” (*)**

This column tells everything about codenames you'd ever want to know. Why does R&D use codenames? What have all the codenames been? Where did they come from and what did they mean? It's all in the column.

Week #34 (August 19, 2002) – “[Free Play](#)” ()**

It was Alternate Play Cost Week, so I used my column to show the evolution of the mechanic. This is

another one of my slightly dry by historically relevant articles. So for all you **Magic** historians out there, this column's for you.

Week #35 (August 26, 2002) – “[When They Were Young](#)” (*)**

Every once in a while I like to take some time to look back at the design of older cards. This is one such column. In it, I take a look at early design versions of cards from *Tempest*, *Urza's Destiny*, and *Odyssey* (three sets I served as lead designer and thus had very early card lists). While this column isn't super illuminating, it does show you a few things you might not know about some rather famous cards.



Odyssey was codenamed Argon, and was followed by Boron and Carbon.

Week #36 (September 2, 2002) – “[Alpha Mail](#)” (*)**

This is my second mailbag column. Once again it covers a wide variety of topics. This one gets a little funnier than the last mailbag column.

Week #37 (September 9, 2002) – “[Wait There's Morph](#)” (**)**

This was the beginning of the *Onslaught* previews. The design of morph made for such a good article as the story behind its creation is very interesting. This is definitely one of the columns that gives you a much better sense of what goes on behind the scenes in R&D.

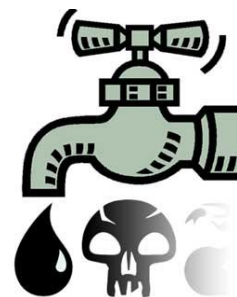
Week #38 (September 16, 2002) – “[Cycling Cycling](#)” (**)**

I was supposed to talk about cycling, but instead I wrote a column about why R&D brings mechanics back. This was one of those columns that I forgot about until I reread it for this article. I was surprised by how much I liked it for a column I had essentially forgot I wrote.

Week #39 (September 23, 2002) – “[Tribal's In Your Court](#)” ()**

This column is a humorous look at how the tribal theme came to be. While the column is funny, I wish in retrospect that it had a little more meat.

Week #40 (September 30, 2002) – “[The Leak That Was](#)” (**)**



I don't think I wrote a column that created more ill will than this one. I was frustrated by a bunch of recent leaks, so I wrote a column about how I felt leaks were hurting the game. My readers made it clear that I was in the minority on the issue. That said, I still believe every word of this article as strong today as the day I wrote it.

Week #41 (October 7, 2002) – “[Mons Made Me Do It](#)” (***)**

This column has the distinction of being what I consider my funniest column (It seemed only appropriate as it was Goblin Week). In addition, it holds the record as the column that created the most mail. I don't want to ruin the article for you. All I can say is read it until the end. This article, incidentally, did teach me that my readers really enjoy humor (well, good humor).

Week #42 (October 14, 2002) – “[Creature Feature](#)” (***)

This was my follow-up to “Tribal’s In Your Court” where I talked about how the designers created tribal cards. It’s clearly better than the first article, but still is a little dry to earn anything over three stars.

Week #43 (October 21, 2002) – “[It’s Not Easy Being Green](#)” (*****)

This was the first theme week in our Mega Color Theme Week Cycle (one we’ve yet to finish, by the way – but we will). The first week was Green Week. During each color week, I explain the philosophy of the color and explain how the mechanics of the color tie into its philosophy and flavor. The most controversial section is the part where I list famous characters that fit into the color. And to answer a very common question I get (because I claimed each of the Simpson clan fits one of the three colors), Maggie is the green Simpson. She is very instinctual in her actions and simply does what she was born to do.

Week #44 (October 28, 2002) – “[Take This Job And Love It](#)” (****)

This is the second column about life in R&D. This one rates slightly higher than the last one as it includes one of my all-time favorite behind the scenes stories about the card [Dragon Mask](#). I promise if you read this column, [Dragon Mask](#)’s flavor text will take on a whole new meaning.



Week #45 (November 4, 2002) – “[To Infinity And Beyond](#)” (**)

It was Mana Engine Week, so I chose to talk about infinite combinations in **Magic**. Unless you’re the kind of player who likes to build decks with infinite engines, this is probably a column to skip.

Week #46 (November 11, 2002) – “[Mistakes? I’ve Made A Few](#)” (***)

While I spend numerous columns examining my successes, it felt only fair to use one to examine my failures. I got some resistance to this column mainly because some readers felt my mistakes weren’t actually mistakes.

Week #47 (November 18, 2002) – “[Beast of Show](#)” (***)

It was Beast Week, so I decided to use my column to explain the consolidation of creature types. Like flavor text, this proved to be a topic that a minority cared very, very strongly about.

Week #48 (November 25, 2002) – “[Getting In The Game](#)” (****)

This column was about how an individual player could impact the game of **Magic**. I feel very strongly about this topic, so all I’m going to say is go read it. And when you’re done, act on what you’ve read.

Week #49 (December 2, 2002) – “[There’s Always Two Maro](#)” (*****)



It was My Favorite Card Week where each columnist talked about their favorite card. Mine was obviously **Maro**. This column tells everything (and I mean everything) you'd every want to know about **Maro** from where its name came from to how it got its flavor text and why its art is a rarity in **Magic**. No article I've written gives a better overview in all the many facets that go into creating a **Magic** card.

Week #50 (December 9, 2002) – “[Mail Bonding](#)” (*)**

This is my third mailbag column. Not much new to say, but if you liked the other two, I'd read this one as well.

[Week #51 \(December 16, 2002\) – “\[In A Teapot\]\(#\)” \(*\)](#)**

It was *Tempest* Week, so I used my column to reminisce about the very first set I ever designed (lead design no less). The format for this article was a listing of cards each with a behind-the-scenes story.

Week #52 (December 23, 2002) – “[When Cards Go Bad](#)” (***)**

The last week of every year is Best of Week where each columnist picks their favorite column of the year. I chose my bad card article as it was both the best written and best received of my 2002 columns. This is another column that fuzzies up the math. Do I count this article as one column or two?



These cards fall on an important part of the learning "slope," and consequently keep getting printed

Week #53 (December 30, 2002) – DOWN WEEK – NO COLUMN

This is another week that messes up my 100th article claim. As the whole office was off two weeks for holiday, Aaron used the first week for Best Of and then had a down week with no updates.

Week #54 (January 6, 2003) – “[Trigger Happy](#)” (*)**

It was Morph Trigger Week so I explained how Morph triggers were designed. This is also my first, and thus far only, column to have required reading.

Week #55 (January 13, 2003) – “[Phage Against the Machines](#)” (*)**

This was the second week of *Legions* previews so I talked about how I designed [Phage the Untouchable](#). I used this column as a chance to poke fun at my common practice of writing asides. This column is also famous for one of my biggest blunders. In the original version of the article, Aside #19 talked about a combo using Phage, [Volrath's Shapeshifter](#) and [Kamahl, Pit Fighter](#). The problem was that I hadn't realized development changed “damage” to combat damage” and thus the combo didn't work. (You'll notice that its since been changed to a combo with Rorix that does work.) I got a lot of mail about the original mistake and then our abrupt editing of said mistake.

Week #56 (January 20, 2003) – “[Lions and Tigers and Bears](#)” (**)**

In this column I answer the following: Why R&D uses themes in set design? Why does R&D use super-themes? (And what are super-themes?) and Why is *Legions* all creatures? If you're interested in where **Magic** is heading long-term, this is a must-read.



Week #57 (January 27, 2003) – “[Frames of Reference](#)” (***)**

Ever since my bad card article, I've gotten the rep as the guy that explains why Wizards does things some players don't like. This column was my explanation of why we chose to change the card frames. I thought this column was honest yet informative and does a good job of explaining some of the bigger issues we have to think about. As one would expect, this column generated a large amount of feedback, both positive and negative.

Week #58 (February 3, 2003) – “[The Great White Way](#)” (***)**

It was White Week, so this is my take on white's flavor and philosophy. As with my other articles on color philosophy, this column got a very positive response. And once again, yes I know we still have to do Black Week and Red Week. We are going to do them. I promise.



Week #59 (February 10, 2003) – “[A Day In The Life](#)” (***)**

This is what I consider to be my most innovative column. (And one of my funniest and most informative to boot.) I had always wanted to do a column in the style of Choose Your Own Adventure. And then it hit me, I'm always getting asked about what it's like to work in R&D. Why not just let the readers walk in my shoes for a day. This column takes a little bit of time to work through, but I promise you its worth it. And definitely go through the day more than once. I packed a lot in it. Oh and one last thing, try and talk to Skaff.

Week #60 (February 17, 2003) – “[Banned on the Run](#)” (*)**

It was Banned and Restricted Week, so I decided to talk about Wizards' philosophies concerning banned and restricted list. As a bonus I talk about the design of some of my contributions to the famous lists.

Week #61 (February 24, 2003) – “[Bursting With Flavor](#)” (**)**

I used this column to discuss a topic near and dear to my heart, flavor. I talk about why flavor is important and how it interacts with its cousin function. If you want to have some understanding on where the game is heading long term, this is another good column to read.

Week #62 (March 3, 2003) – “[I cc: Dead People](#)” (**)**

This is by far my favorite column title. I liked it so much in fact that it inspired me to write this column. You see, it was Zombie Week and I wanted to come up with an interesting way to talk about the evolution of zombies as a creature type. So I decided to create a fictional character, Ga'Aark, the union representative of the zombies. This column is a collection of letters Ga'Aark sent me (and Richard before me) giving his opinions on how each expansion treated zombies. This column got a great response and showed me that there is a significant readership that likes offbeat writing techniques. Others hated this article with a passion so I don't do this kind of thing every week.

Week #63 (March 10, 2003) – “[Inquiring Minds Want To Know, Part 1](#)” (**)**

This column came about because I thought it might be neat to have an interview by my readers. The way this worked is that I asked for questions several weeks earlier. I then picked as many interesting questions as I could and used them for an interview. I had so many interesting questions that I wanted to answer that I ended breaking up the interview into two parts (and even then, both parts are long). If you ever wanted to know more about me as a person or about how I think about a variety of topics, this is a must-read. Lastly, I think this is one of the best interviews I've ever had the pleasure to do.



Week #64 (March 17, 2003) – “[Danger, Will Robinson!](#)” ()**

It was Card Drawing Week so I talked about R&D's penchant for constantly underestimating card drawing. I'll be honest that this column is a little dry, but it does demonstrate the pure power of card drawing.

Week #65 (March 24, 2003) – “[Inquiring Minds Want To Know, Part 2](#)” (**)**

This was the second part of my interview.

Week #66 (March 31, 2003) – “[This Land Is My Land](#)” (*)**

It was Non-Basic Land Week, so I wrote a column about the rules behind non-basic land design. This is another column that really pissed some readers off for one of several reasons: 1) They didn't like a particular rule. 2) They didn't feel a certain rule needed to exist. 3) They didn't think any rules should exist.

Week #67 (April 7, 2003) – “[Rules of the Game](#)” (***)**

This column was created in response to me being frustrated that every column about design rules led to pages and pages of players complaining about how rules hurt design. This was my column explaining how the exact opposite is true. Rules are vital to good design. Don't believe me? Read the column.

Week #68 (April 14, 2003) – “[Jamuraa, the Merrier](#)” (***)

It was *Mirage* week so I wrote a *Mirage*-themed column in the same style as my *Tempest* column. If you're a fan of *Mirage*, I urge you to read it.

Week #69 (April 21, 2003) – “[Design 101](#)” (****)

This column was my attempt to explain some of the basic mistakes I see from rookie designers. If you've ever made your own **Magic** cards, I recommend giving this column a read.

Week #70 (April 28, 2003) – “[Dragon Racing](#)” (**)

It was the beginning of the *Scourge* previews so I chose to talk about designing dragons. To be sneaky I hid the preview card (it was the first day of the previews and was thus the first preview card revealed). See if you can find it?



Week #71 (May 5, 2003) – “[Birth of a Notion](#)” (***)

Scourge previews continued as I talked about the design of landcycling. My favorite part about this column is that the story behind it is funny yet 100% true.

Week #72 (May 12, 2003) – “[The Bigger. The Better](#)” (*)

It was the third week of the *Scourge* previews so I talked about the design of the “size matters” theme. I also introduce the *Scourge* design team, a practice that I started here that I now do for all design teams. I'll be honest that this wasn't one of my finest hours as a writer.

Week #73 (May 19, 2003) – “[Keyword To The Wise](#)” (****)

Ever notice how the number keywords has been rising over the last few years? This column explains why.

Week #74 (May 26, 2003) – “[Soldiers of Fortune](#)” (****)

For years I have been a guru of **Magic** trivia. I decided it was time to bring some of that expertise to my column. As this was Soldier Week, I used this column for soldier trivia. Be careful, some of these questions are quite hard.

Week #75 (June 2, 2003) – “[Format Matters](#)” (***)

This column explains why **Magic** has splintered into so many different formats and why I believe this is crucial to the well-being of the game.



Week #76 (June 9, 2003) – “[Top Down And Goal](#)” (***)

This column is about top-down design, the practice of designing mechanics to match a card's flavor. I actually do a top-down design in the column to show how the process works.

Week #77 (June 16, 2003) – “[R&D-Lightful](#)” (***)

This is another behind-the-scenes in R&D column. This column won't tell you much about **Magic** but it does give you an insight into the people who make **Magic**. This column incidentally resulted in the largest number of "How can I get a job in R&D" letters.

Week #78 (June 23, 2003) – “[Instant Winners](#)” (*)**

It was Instant Week so I talked about, you guessed it, the design of instants. This is another technical design column for those of you that like knowing the nuts and bolts of **Magic** design.

Week #79 (June 30, 2003) – “[You Make The Card, Too](#)” ()**

This column talks about the mechanics submitted for the second "You Make the Card". At the end of the article, I show the twenty-five cards that made the final cut and how R&D decided which ten of those twenty-five to include in the Top Ten for player voting.

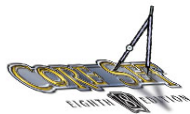
Week #80 (July 7, 2003) – “[Good To The Core](#)” (*)**

Eighth Edition previews began so this column I talked about the creation of the *Eighth Edition* promotion (the set has a "never before used in a base set" reprint from every **Magic** expansion save *Unglued*). I talk about how different cards were selected and even explain how *The Cheese Stands Alone* almost ended up in Eighth.

Week #81 (July 14, 2003) – “[Let's Start At The Very Beginning](#)” ()**

Continuing with our Eighth Edition previews, I talked about what kind of cards were important in *Eighth Edition* to help the new player.

Week #82 (July 21, 2003) – “[Small Change](#)” ()**



During the third week of *Eighth Edition* previews, I talked about how *Eighth Edition*'s card mix reflected some of the recent changes R&D has made in the color pie. This article created a little controversy from some players who didn't like R&D's meddling with the color pie or disliked the entire idea of a color pie altogether.

Week #83 (July 28, 2003) – “[Magic Moments](#)” (*)**

It was Tenth Anniversary Week so I shared some of my favorite memories as a player. If you want to get some sense how I experience **Magic** as a player, I recommend you give this column a look.

Week #84 (August 4, 2003) – “[In The Bag](#)” (*)**

This was my fourth mailbag column.

Week #85 (August 11, 2003) – “[True Blue](#)” (**)**

This was the third week in our Mega Color Theme Week Cycle – Blue Week. I, of course, talk about blue's flavor and philosophy.

Week #86 (August 18, 2003) – “[The Value of Pie](#)” (**)**

After each color week, I always get a few letters from players who seem to dislike the concept of the color pie. This column was my defense of the color pie. In it, I explain why exactly the color pie is so fundamental to **Magic** and how it helps the designers and developers make a better game.

Week #87 (August 25, 2003) – “[The Making Of A Legend](#)” (**)

It was Legend Week (the mechanic, not the set – we’d already done that) so I talked about the design of a number of legends I’d created. Nothing spectacular but if you like any of the legends in question, you might enjoy hearing about how they came to be.

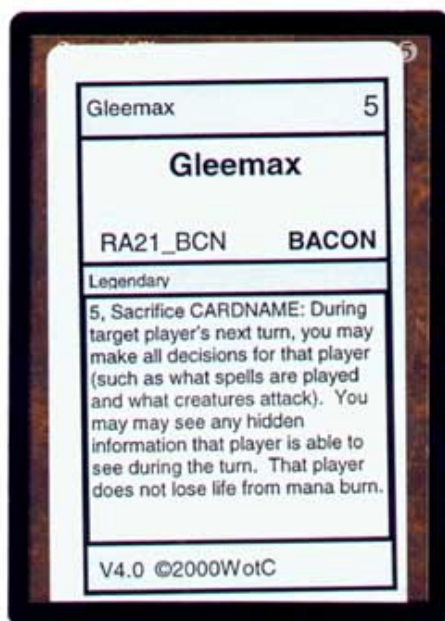
Week #88 (September 1, 2003) – “[Someday My Imprint Will Come](#)” (****)

Mirrodin previews began with a bang as I premiered *Soul Foundry* and the imprint mechanic. The card has a good story many years in the making.



Week #89 (September 8, 2003) – “[Equip Of The Iceberg](#)” (****)

Mirrodin previews continue with this article dedicated to the design of equipment. The mechanic went through a number of chances, so if you are at all a fan of equipment, you should find this column very interesting.



Week #90 (September 15, 2003) – “[A Mind Is A Wonderful Thing To Waste](#)” (*****)

The only *Mirrodin* story better than the design of *Soul Foundry*? The design of *Mindslaver*. This is the card I wouldn't let die. Read all about it.

Week #91 (September 22, 2003) – “[Bacon Bits](#)” (***)

This column is a collection of various stories about *Mirrodin* design (codenamed Bacon, thus the title).

Week #92 (September 29, 2003) – “[Domo Arigato, Mr. Roboto](#)” (**)

It was Artifact Creature Week so I talked about the difficulties of designing artifact creatures. In addition, I talked about the design of a number of artifact creatures in *Mirrodin*.

Week #93 (October 6, 2003) – “[Come Together](#)” (****)

In this column, I talk about a different kind of shift the game can take. In short, I explain why and how sets get made that feel like “R&D is simply handing players decks” and how *Mirrodin* is a swing in the opposite direction.

Week #94 (October 13, 2003) – “[One For All](#)” (****)

This column I tried a little mind experiment that designers try from time to time. The column presents a very odd deck construction and then walks through the many answers. This article was beloved by some and passionately hated by others. I don't think any color has polarized

readers more than this one. If you're not into theoretical deck building, this might not be the column for you.

Week #95 (October 20, 2003) – “[Dear Diary](#)” (****)

This is another column where I try to tell a story in an untraditional way. To explain how a common card ([Welding Jar](#)) made the journey through *Mirrodin* design, I let you all read [Welding Jar](#)'s personal journal.



Week #96 (October 27, 2003) – “[Afraid So](#)” (**)

This column has a great opening joke and then talks about why R&D needs to scare players from time to time. (Hey it was Halloween week and I was trying to stay in theme.)

Week #97 (November 3, 2003) – “[Baby Stories](#)” (***)

This column takes a look at some of the common cards as they appeared in the very first *Mirrodin* playtest.

Week #98 (November 10, 2003) – “[Make No Mistake](#)” (****)

This column talks about many of the classic blunders made during **Magic's** ten years and talks about the lessons we learned from each one. For an added bonus of fun, I purposefully included a number of mistakes for the reader to find.

Week #99 (November 17, 2003) – “[Up, Up and Away](#)” (*)

It was Flying Week, so I try to explain why flying was first created. One of my least favorite columns in recent memory.

Week #100 (November 24, 2003) – “[One Hundred and Counting](#)” (***)

To celebrate the 100th week of **MagictheGathering.com**, I indexed all 100 weeks of my column. A little dry but a great resource for readers who haven't been around since the beginning.

Whew!

This column was a little longer than normal, but I hope it proves useful for the many of readers that might not have had a chance to see some of my articles the first time round. Also, I love feedback on any of my articles even if they are from way back when. Feedback of any kind for any article is always valuable.

That's all I have for today. Join me next week when I discuss a keyword that R&D chose to abandon.

Until then, may you read an old article in a new light.

Mark Rosewater

Interact
Rant, rave and share



[Discuss "One Hundred and](#)

Explore
Similar articles



[Skullclamp, We Hardly Knew Ye](#) ...But

Today

Continue
Other recent articles



[Elf Assault](#) A new take on
Elves
Nate Heiss

Counting" on the message boards



Respond to Mark Rosewater via email

Consult More articles by Mark Rosewater



Gimme a Break The rules about rule breaking

4 days ago



Cog Wild The origins of cogs and gears

11 days ago

▪ All [Mark Rosewater](#) articles

enough is enough
Aaron Forsythe



Trading Online Don't get ripped off
Chad Ellis

3 days ago



Deus Ex Machina The fate of cogs and gears in development
Aaron Forsythe

7 days ago



Multiplayer Madness Are you missing out?
Chad Ellis

10 days ago



The Keystone of Fifth Dawn The little Bauble that could
Aaron Forsythe

2 weeks ago

▪ More [Behind the Scenes](#) articles

Today



Skullclamp, We Hardly Knew Ye ...But enough is enough

Today

Aaron Forsythe



Standard Comes to the GP Circuit Bye-bye Clamp, hello new Standard!

Yesterday

Alex Shvartsman



Cruel and Unusual Three bizarre ways to punish your opponent

Yesterday

Mark Gottlieb



Witness Protection Program Early ideas for post-Fifth Dawn Standard

2 days ago

Brian David-Marshall

▪ [More recent articles](#)

▪ [Return to Magicthegathering.com](#)

WHAT'S NEW CORPORATE INFO WHERE TO BUY INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT SITEMAP PRODUCTS

© 1995-2004 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
Wizards is headquartered in Renton, Washington, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057.
[PRIVACY STATEMENT](#)