

Randy Buehler  
Friday, June 11, 2004

Remember me?

I think Aaron's been doing a really good job with what used to be my column, but I'll be pinch-hitting for him this week anyway. That means I get the honor of sharing some really cool news with you: over the course of the next three months, the readers of **magicthegathering.com** get to help us select the cards that are going into *Ninth Edition*!

When Aaron first suggested the idea a little over two years ago of having a promotion on **magicthegathering.com** where the readers would vote on which cards to put into *Eighth Edition*, I didn't think it would work – these decisions were really important and they would have a big influence on the game. Isn't that what R&D is paid to decide?



However, as I put together the first draft for *Eighth Edition* I kept a running tally of all the decisions that I thought could probably go in more than one direction without hurting the overall set. We knew we wanted Shivan Dragon in the set, for example, but did it really make that much difference from our end if the other dragon was Crimson Hellkite or Two-Headed Dragon? Not really ... we should just put in whichever one would make more people happy. Suddenly Aaron's vote idea was sounding better and better! There were a couple of votes where you guys surprised us (I thought Crusade was a cinch to beat Glorious Anthem

– it had nostalgia on its side plus Crusade is a more powerful tournament card), but a nice added benefit of that promotion was that we got to learn more about what the majority of the audience likes. All in all, *Selecting Eighth Edition* turned out to be a great promotion – you guys seemed to have fun, it was clearly very popular, it drove interest in the set, and the set was better for it too.

So here we are two years later and this time there was no question inside Wizards about whether we should do the same thing with *Ninth* – of course the public would get to have their say again. And this time we have some tricks up our sleeve too. I am particularly happy with the way the art votes are going to go. Instead of just letting you choose between two pieces of art that already exist, we're going to let you play the role of art director. We're going to commission two sketches from two different artists for the same card, and then we'll let you decide which artist gets to paint the final piece.

I know the thing that will probably draw the most attention is the card vs. card choices. Last time we gave you guys a real doozy of a choice when we pitted Birds of Paradise against Llanowar Elves. I don't think any of the votes this time will be quite that evil, but there are definitely lots of good cards that you'll get to decide the fate of.

(By the way, we still believe that the Core Set only has room for one green creature that taps for mana and only costs 1. Having two in the Core Set means Standard would always have a lot of very efficient green mana acceleration, and there would be no room left for us to do any more really good mana critters in expert-level sets. In addition to this, we think Elves are a much more iconic part of green than Birds are, so *(please don't panic until you finish this paragraph)* we're not going to put Birds of Paradise into *Ninth*. HOWEVER ... you showed us with your vote last time how much you love your Birds, so we promise that we will reprint them in "Control," the first set in the block after the

Kamigawa block. "Control" comes out about two months after *Ninth*.)

Here are the details about how this is all going to work: Every Monday from June 14th until September 6th, we'll post 2 or more cards for you to vote on. You'll need to register with the site before you're allowed to vote (this allows us to make sure no one votes more than once). In addition, starting in July we'll start posting sketches in addition to the card vote. Both sketches will be for the same card, and that card will definitely be in *Ninth*. Whichever sketch



wins will be used by its artist to guide the final piece. Finally, there will also be an opportunity for all of you to try your hand at writing flavor text. During August we'll tell you which cards will have player-written flavor text and we'll start accepting submissions. In September we'll let you guys vote from amongst the best submissions to choose which ones make it onto the actual cards.

So that's the big news for this week: get ready because Selecting *Ninth Edition* gets cranked up next week!

Click here if you want to see a full run-down of all the votes from last time.

### This Week's Poll:

**Do you plan to participate in the Selecting *Ninth Edition* promotion?**

Yes

No

Maybe / Not Sure

### Last Week's Poll Results:

Did this article answer all your questions about the banning?		
Yes	10871	85.5%
No	1841	14.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12712</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

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