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Odds and Ends



Mark Rosewater · *Making Magic*
Monday, August 23, 2004

When I started putting together this week's column I realized that I had a number of different items I wanted to talk about. No single one was particular lengthy, so I decided to do a hodge-podge column with a little of this and a little of that. And yes, for those who've been eagerly awaiting, at the column's end is Extra Pulled #3 with the **Magic** card name chains and a new project for you all to help me out with.

Design of the Times

Last December, I got promoted to Lead **Magic** Designer (which incidentally is now changing to Head **Magic** Designer so as to not confuse the title with the lead designer of each individual expansion). Because we work so far ahead, my design regime doesn't really start until the 2005 standalone, codenamed *Control*. (But have no fear about *Kamigawa*, Bill Rose finished his stint as Head **Magic** Designer with a very cool and interesting block.) When I first got the job, Bill and I put together the *Control* design team. Recently, consulting with Randy Buehler, I put together the design teams for the rest of the *Control* block (*Alt* and *Delete*) and the large expansion of 2006, codenamed *Snap* (followed by *Crackle* and *Pop*).



Bill Rose

One of the things I've decided to do as Head Designer is to publicly announce design teams when I put them together. I want to do this for two reasons. First, I feel the designers deserve the recognition. And second, I like letting the public have some glimpse into the future. So without further ado, here are the current assembled design teams (note that some will not start for a number of months and these teams might change based on designer availability):

Control (Fall, 2005)

Mark Rosewater (lead)
Tyler Bielman
Mike Elliot
Aaron Forsythe
Richard Garfield

This set marks the return of Richard Garfield to **Magic** design (he last worked on *Judgment*). It's also interesting to note that Mike, Richard and I were three-fourths of the *Tempest* design team (Charlie Catino being the fourth) and Mike, Tyler and I are three-fourths of the *Mirrodin* design team (Brian Tinsman being the fourth).

Alt (Winter 2006)

Mike Elliott (lead)
Aaron Forsythe
Devin Low
Brian Schneider

I believe Mike has the honor of leading more design teams than any other **Magic** designer. (Although I've slowly been catching up to him.) This team makes use of two newer designers who both worked on *Saviors of Kamigawa* (Devin and Brian).

Delete (Summer 2006)

Aaron Forsythe (lead)
Brandon Bozzi
Mark Gottlieb
Mark Rosewater



This is Aaron's first lead design. You might also note that we're trying columnist Mark Gottlieb out on **Magic** design for the first time. I've dubbed this design the **magicthegathering.com** design team. Now if only Brandon could get a weekly column. Aaron Forsythe

Snap (Fall 2006)

Brian Tinsman (lead)
Aaron Forsythe
Devin Low
Mark Rosewater

This design team is relatively young (design-wise), but has what I believe is great potential.

As you can see, we have quite a number of very good design teams set up. I can't wait for you all to see the results.

Sweet Sixteen

Here's a quick update on the next **Magic** Invitational. It will again be held on **Magic Online**. We're currently planning to hold the event for a second time at E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo) in Los Angeles next spring.

But here's the interesting part. After the success of features like "You Make the Card" and "Selecting Eighth/Ninth Edition", we've decided to revamp the invite policy to allow more audience participation. We're still working out the details but I can say this. The new invites will not simply be us expanding the number of players invited on the player ballot. Rather, we are going to be creating a series of unique categories that recognize a wider range of skills than previous invite lists. That said, not all the slots will be votes. There will still be a number of invites assigned to particular achievements.



Keep your eye out for further details.

Third Time's The Charm

Speaking of online promotions, I've been getting a lot of mail about "You Make the Card #3". Has **magicthegathering.com** abandoned "You Make the Card"? Heavens no. It's one of our most popular features. And yes, we do have "You Make the Card #3" scheduled for this fall. The reason for the wait was that the promotion takes several months and we didn't want to overlap it with "Selecting Ninth Edition".

I can't say much just yet but I will spill the beans that the third "You Make the Card" installment will have a cool new twist that will have all of you designing the card in a slightly different (but still very true to R&D) way. Once again, stay tuned for further details.

Whittling Away

I've had a number of letters inquiring about the **Magic** Creative Writer position. The short answer is we're working on it.

The long answer is that we had a record number of applicants and it's taking us a while to work our way through it. Here's the quick recap. Five hundred and eight six applicants applied. Four hundred of those passed a screening test and were asked to send in a resume and a creativity exercise. From there, twenty-five applicants were selected to take a name and flavor text test. A small number of those people were then given a phone interview. That's where we currently are. I'm hoping within the next few weeks to have the position filled. Once it is, I'll let you all know who got the job.

What I can say is that I was overwhelmed by both the response we received and the high caliber of applicants. I am confident we are going to fill the position with a very creative person that will

help the Creative Team continue on their upward path. (Speaking of which, I can't wait for you all to see *Champions of Kamigawa*. The Creative Team really hit it out of the park.)

Kibbles and Bits

That's all I got for today. If my column seems a bit short (for me anyways), I've included an Extra Helping below.

Join me next week, when I explain why *Kamigawa's* got spirit.

Until then, may you enjoy the hors d'oeuvres of life.

Mark Rosewater

Extra Helping #3

At the end of my "[Loose Ends](#)" article, I asked my readers to come up with the longest name chain using **Magic** card titles. The trick was the last word of each title had to be the same as the first word in the next title. Before I get to the best chains, let me remind you all that the next assignment is at the end of the article.

I received hundreds of replies. What follows is the ten best based on length. Be aware if two people sent me the exact same thread, I've only credited the first person that sent it in.

#9) Laurie Cheers (56) - tie

Purraj of Urborg Phantom Nantuko Disciple of Kangee, Aerie Keeper of the Mind Stone Kavu Chameleon Spirit Mirror Wall of Lava Burst of Energy Arc Lightning Cloud Spirit Shield Wall of Wood Sage Owl Familiar Ground Seal of Fire and Brimstone Dragon Breath of Life/Death Pulse of Llanowar Knight of Stromgald Cabal Ritual of Steel Wall of Fire/Ice Cave Tiger Claws of Wirewood Savage Gorilla Warrior Angel of Light of Day of the Dragons (56)

Click [here](#) to see the chain spelled out card by card.

#9) Martijn Hennink (56) - tie

Purraj of Urborg Phantom Nantuko Disciple of Kangee, Aerie Keeper of the Mind Stone Kavu Chameleon Spirit Mirror Mirror Wall of Roots of Life Burst of Energy Arc Lightning Cloud Dragon Breath of Life/Death Pulse of Llanowar Knight of Stromgald Cabal Ritual of Steel Wall of Wood Sage Owl Familiar Ground Seal of Fire/Ice Cave Tiger Claws of Wirewood Herald of Serra's Hymn to Tourach's Gate to the Æther Storm Cauldron Dance of the Dead Ringers (56)

Click [here](#) to see the chain spelled out card by card.

#8) Squash (58)

Purraj of Urborg Phantom Nantuko Disciple of Kangee, Aerie Keeper of the Mind Stone Kavu Chameleon Spirit Mirror Mirror Wall of Essence Drain Life Burst of Energy Arc Lightning Cloud Spirit Shield Wall of Wood Sage Owl Familiar Ground Seal of Fire and Brimstone Dragon Breath of Life/Death Pulse of Llanowar Knight of Stromgald Cabal Ritual of Steel Wall of Fire/Ice Cave Tiger Claws of Wirewood Savage Gorilla Warrior Angel of Retribution of the Meek(58)

Click [here](#) to see the chain spelled out card by card.

#6) Nick Branstator (59) - tie

Purraj of Urborg Phantom Nantuko Disciple of Kangee, Aerie Keeper of the Mind Stone Kavu Chameleon Spirit Shield Wall of Granite Grip of Chaos/Order of the Ebon Hand to Hand of Death Pulse of Llanowar Knight of Stromgald Cabal Ritual of Steel Wall of Essence Drain Life/Death Cloud Dragon Breath of Life Burst of Energy Arc Lightning Cloud Spirit Mirror Mirror Wall of Fire/Ice Cave Tiger Claws of Wirewood Herald Serra Avatar of Hope Charm School of the Unseen Walker (59)

Click [here](#) to see the chain spelled out card by card.

#6) Ryan Carper (59) - tie

Liu Bei, Lord of Shu Defender of the Order of the Ebon Hand to Hand of Death Pulse of Llanowar Knight of Stromgald Cabal Ritual of Steel Wall of Roots of Life/Death Cloud Dragon Breath of Life Burst of Energy Arc Lightning Cloud Spirit Mirror Mirror Wall of Stone Kavu Chameleon Spirit Shield Wall of Wood Sage Owl Familiar Ground Seal of Fire/Ice Cave Tiger Claws of Wirewood Herald of Serra Avatar of Hope and Glory Seeker of Skybreak(59)

Click [here](#) to see the chain spelled out card by card.

#4) Chris Plottke (60) - tie

Purraj of Urborg Phantom Nantuko Disciple of Kangee, Aerie Keeper of the Mind Stone Kavu Chameleon Spirit Shield Wall of Wood Sage Owl Familiar Ground Seal of Fire / Ice Storm Spirit Mirror Mirror Wall of Essence Drain Life Burst of Energy Arc Lightning Cloud Dragon Breath of Life / Death Pulse of Llanowar Knight of Stromgald Cabal Ritual of Steel Wall of Ice Cave Tiger Claws of Wirewood Herald of Serra Avatar of Hope Charm School of the Unseen Walker. (60)

Click [here](#) to see the chain spelled out card by card.

#4) Paul Thiessen (60) - tie

Purraj of Urborg Phantom Nantuko Disciple of Kangee, Aerie Keeper of the Mind Stone Kavu Chameleon Spirit Mirror Mirror Wall of Fire and Brimstone Dragon Breath of Life/Death Pulse of Llanowar Knight of Stromgald Cabal Ritual of Steel Wall of Roots of Life Burst of Energy Arc Lightning Cloud Spirit Shield Wall of Wood Sage Owl Familiar Ground Seal of Fire/Ice Cave Tiger Claws of Wirewood Herald of Serra Avatar of Hope Charm School of the Unseen Walker (60)

Click [here](#) to see the chain spelled out card by card.

#3) Oliver (60, kinda 61)

Kinda 61? Huh? Well, Oliver not only sent me a list but he sent me a link that included every chain possible (at http://mtglair.de/mtg_name_chains.shtml.) Many of those chains were 61 cards long. But the one he sent in was only 60.

Purraj of Urborg Phantom Nantuko Disciple of Kangee, Aerie Keeper of the Mind Stone Kavu Chameleon Spirit Mirror Mirror Wall of Wood Sage Owl Familiar Ground Seal of Fire / Ice Storm Spirit Shield Wall of Essence Drain Life Burst of Energy Arc Lightning Cloud Dragon Breath of Life / Death Pulse of Llanowar Knight of Stromgald Cabal Ritual of Steel Wall of Ice Cave Tiger Claws of Wirewood Herald of Serra Avatar of Hope Charm School of the Unseen Walker (60)

Click [here](#) to see the chain spelled out card by card.

#2) Thijs van Ommen (61)

Thijs wins for being the first reader to find a 61-card solution and send it in. And according to computer run searches, 61 is the largest chain available. Yet Thijs is only #2. You'll see.

Purraj of Urborg* Phantom Nantuko Disciple of Kangee, Aerie Keeper of the Mind Stone Kavu Chameleon Spirit Mirror Mirror Wall of Essence Drain Life Burst of Energy Arc Lightning Cloud Dragon Breath of Life/Death Pulse of Llanowar Knight of Stromgald Cabal Ritual of Steel Wall of Ice Storm Spirit Shield Wall of Wood Sage Owl Familiar Ground Seal of Fire/Ice Cave Tiger Claws of Wirewood Herald of Serra Avatar of Hope and Glory* Seeker* of Skybreak (61 cards)

Click [here](#) to see the chain spelled out card by card.

#1 – Brett Allen (88)

An 88 card chain. How'd he do that? Because Brett, like any good puzzle solver, thought outside of the box. The day he sent me an e-mail asking "Do all the titles have to be in the

same language?" I knew I had my winner. (My answer, by the way, was no, but each card could only be used once despite which language title he chose to use.) Here's what Brett came up with:

Regente das Tocas de Mogg Predone Goblin Esploratori Femeref Knight of Stromgald Cabal Ritual of Steel Wall of Heat Wave Elemental de la Tormenta de Lava Burst of Energy Arc Lightning Cloud Dragon Mask of Memory Crystal Golem Soldevi Sage Owl Familiar Ground Seal of Fire Tempest Efrete di Uktabi Faerie Dragon Breath of Life/Death Pulse of Llanowar Elite Archers Elfes de Llanowar Knight of Dawn Elemental de la Niebla de Mosquitos del Yavimaya Elder Land Wurm di Yavimaya Kavv Chameleon Spirit Shield Wall of Fire/Ice Storm Spirit Mirror Mirror Wall of Essence Drain Power Armor Thrull Servitore di Volrath the Fallen Angel de Serra Avatar of Hope Charm School of the Unseen Walker (88)

Because this breakdown is so interesting, I'm not bothering to hide it. Here it is in all its glory:

Regente das Tocas [PT Liege of the Hollows]
Tocas de Mogg [PT Mogg Hollows]
Mogg Predone [IT Mogg Raider]
Predone Goblin [IT Goblin Raider]
Goblin Esploratori [IT Goblin Scouts]
Esploratori Femeref [IT Femeref Scouts]
Femeref Knight
Knight of Stromgald
Stromgald Cabal
Cabal Ritual
Ritual of Steel
Steel Wall
Wall of Heat
Heat Wave
Wave Elemental
Elemental de la tormenta [SP Storm Elemental]
Tormenta [IT Blizzard]
Tormenta de Lava [SP Lava Storm]
Lava Burst
Burst of Energy
Energy Arc
Arc Lightning
Lightning Cloud
Cloud Dragon
Dragon Mask
Mask of Memory
Memory Crystal
Crystal Golem
Golem Soldevi [FR Soldevi Golem]
Soldevi Sage
Sage Owl
Owl Familiar
Familiar Ground
Ground Seal
Seal of Fire
Fire Tempest
Tempest Efrete
Efrete di Uktabi [IT Uktabi Efrete]
Uktabi Faerie
Faerie Dragon
Dragon Breath
Breath of Life
Life/Death
Death Pulse
Pulse of Llanowar
Llanowar Elite
Elite Archers
Archers elfes [FR Elvish Archers]
Elfes de Llanowar [FR Llanowar Elves]
Llanowar Knight
Knight of Dawn
Dawn Elemental
Elemental de la niebla [SP Fog Elemental]
Niebla [SP Fog]
Niebla de mosquitos [SP Fog of Gnats]

Mosquitos del Yavimaya [SP Yavimaya Gnats]
Yavimaya Elder
Elder Land Wurm
Wurm di Yavimaya [IT Yavimaya Wurm]
Yavimaya Kavu
Kavu Chameleon
Chameleon Spirit
Spirit Shield
Shield Wall
Wall of Fire
Fire/Ice
Ice Storm
Storm Spirit
Spirit Mirror
Mirror Mirror
Mirror Wall
Wall of Essence
Essence Drain
Drain Power
Power Armor
Armor Thrull
Thrull Servitore [IT Thrull Retainer]
Servitore di Volrath [IT Servant of Volrath]
Volrath the Fallen
Fallen Angel
Angel de Serra [SP Serra Angel]
Serra Avatar
Avatar [IT Personal Incarnation]
Avatar of Hope
Hope Charm
Charm School
School of the Unseen
Unseen Walker

Assignment #3

This time I thought I'd do something a little more co-operative. And perhaps a bit more visual, as my first two assignments were very verbal. This assignment was inspired by the card *Deflection*.

When I first saw the card in *Ice Age*, I noticed that in the art was the letter "K", formed by the ray bouncing off of whatever kind of shield it's hitting. And it reminded me of a poster I saw once filled with butterflies. Huh?

You see, there was this lepidopterist (a big word for a guy who studies/collects butterflies) who collected butterfly wings whose natural pattern looked like either a letter of the alphabet or a number. It took him years to complete his collection, but once he was done, a poster was made of his collection.



My hope is to do the same with **Magic**. But I don't have the time to look at ten thousand plus pieces of art. That's where you all come in. I want to find each of the twenty-six letters of the English Alphabet and the numerals 0 through 9 in **Magic** card art. Here are my parameters:

1. The art must appear on a **Magic** card.
2. An English letter or numeral must appear in the art, but the letter or numeral cannot be an actual letter or numeral intended by the artist. The key is to find natural letters that were formed accidentally.

For each letter of the alphabet and each numeral (and you don't need to list them all) name the card whose art you feel best shows off that letter or number. I will look at all the submissions and pick the best piece for each letter and number. Assuming we can find all twenty-six letters

and all ten numerals, I will have the project turned into a screen saver that I will share with all of you.

Remember that this is not a competition but a group project.

Lastly, please remember that these Extra Helping assignments take me a while to complete.

Good luck!



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