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# My Love of Eggs

Aaron Forsythe  
Latest Developments  
Friday, December 15, 2006



## Last Week's Poll:

Were you happy with "no changes" to the B&R lists this time?		
Yes.	4156	69.5%
No, something needed to be done in Legacy.	461	7.7%
No, something needed to be done in two or more of the formats above.	390	6.5%
No, something needed to be done in Extended.	355	5.9%
No, something needed to be done in Standard.	316	5.3%
No, something needed to be done in Vintage.	192	3.2%
No, something needed to be done in Online formats.	107	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5977</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

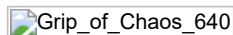
First off, I got some great mail in response to [last week's B&R article](#). The two most commonly repeated concerns were that [Gifts Ungiven](#) should be restricted in Vintage and that either [Goblin Lackey](#) or [Aether Vial](#) should be banned from Legacy. Both items will be discussed for the next round of changes, although there is no guarantee that either will actually occur. Just want to be clear that we are, in fact, listening.

## Eggs-Cellent

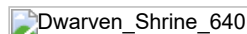
As a developer – heck, as a *designer* – sneaking Easter Eggs into this lovely game of ours was never part of my job description. Such high jinks are better left to those in charge of the “prettier” aspects of the cards, such as names and flavor text. I’ll let them humor you with the clever turn of phrase; my gifts to you come in the form of uncountable X-spells, untargetable 4/1s, and other such blunt instruments.

But as a lifelong *fan* of the game – someone who enjoys fanning through a fresh booster or a rousing game of casual Online Classic as much as the next guy – I simply love the stuff that our Creative people do, especially the hidden gems. As someone who was sucked into the world of **Magic** from my first glance at a card, I feel that every in-joke, sideways reference, and subtle homage is there for *me and me alone*, and I can’t help but think, “That is so freakin’ cool” when it finally dawns on me that the name “[Thick-Skinned Goblin](#)” was stolen right out of the flavor text of [Keeper of Kookus](#). A card that I helped develop and a card I played with in multiplayer games in my college apartment, now all part of the same lineage. Super awesome.

Allow me to gush a little more. Check out these two paintings of red cards by two of my favorite **Magic** artists:



*Grip of Chaos* by Mark Tedin



*Dwarven Shrine* by Matt Cavotta

Are either of these cards in *Time Spiral*? No. Are either of these cards good? Not hardly. But these two red enchantments have art that tickles me to no end. [Grip of Chaos](#) features two of Tedin’s prior creations – [Tetravus](#) and [Dark Sphere](#) – flying about in the chaos, and Cavotta’s Shrine shows off many old school red favorites, including [Ball Lightning](#), [Chaos Charm](#), the [Hammer of Bogardan](#), and the claw of the infamous [Shivan Dragon](#). As Doug Beyer said in his [feature article this week](#), “They [Easter Eggs] give back to you, the dedicated player, as a bonus for the time you’ve spent on **Magic**. They congratulate you on your hard work and promise you another special tidbit if you look just a tiny bit closer. They reward your fandom.”

I just love being rewarded for my own fandom.

## Arcana Rundown

When I started working here, I was the content manager for [magicthegathering.com](#), and one of my duties was making the daily Magic Arcana. In the time since, that particular responsibility has fallen to Doug, and he and I have made a life’s work out of highlighting Easter Eggs. He linked to several in his column, and I dug through the archives to find several of my own favorites. Here’s a non-comprehensive list, worthy of a bunch of clicks and the next few minutes of your life.

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- [Lavamancer's Buddy](#)
- [Treasure Trove](#) (perhaps my favorite of the bunch)
- [Blue's Family Portrait](#)
- [The Original Prophecy](#)
- [Shockatog](#)
- [The Burden of a Talisman](#)
- ["Rend" Renderings](#)
- [Dreams of Rath](#)
- [Allusion-Fest: Black and White Savants](#)



A kind of Easter Egg that I always enjoyed as a player was the discovery that two pieces of art fit together to make a larger whole. Perhaps you've noticed that [Akroma](#), [Angel of Wrath](#) and [Phage the Untouchable](#) have art that links up. Or that all of the [Kamigawa](#) basic lands link up to make five small murals. Here are some more such art-sharing Arcana that you may or may not have discovered on your own:

- [2003 Arena Lands](#)
- [Arena Lands](#)
- [Getting 2-for-1](#)
- [Ice Age Plains](#)
- [Stronghold BioMachine](#)
- [Two Adnates](#)
- [Adam Rex's Nim Mural](#)
- [Wallpaper of the Week: The Brothers Yamazaki](#)
- [Raptor/Sphinx Mural](#)

## Our Own Eggs



As designers and developers, *Time Spiral* presented a unique opportunity to use nostalgia as a way to get our own "Easter Eggs" into the game. The set is riddled with plenty of "Did you realize?" surprises, and not just in names, art, and flavor text. The mechanics of several cards are often links to older cards – some overtly, others more subtly.

Everyone saw that the cycle of no-cost suspend spells ([Restore Balance](#), [Ancestral Vision](#), [Living End](#), [Wheel of Fate](#), [Hypergenesis](#), and [Lotus Bloom](#)) were throwbacks to old-school goodies. Likewise, the [uncommon Totem cycle](#) ([Thunder Totem](#), [Chronatog Totem](#), [Phyrexian Totem](#), [Foriysian Totem](#), and [Weatherseed Totem](#)) was very clear in what older cards it was paying homage to.

The rare morph cycle ([Weathered Bodyguards](#), [Vesuvan Shapeshifter](#), [Liege of the Pit](#), [Fortune Thief](#), and [Thelonite Hermit](#)) is another very obvious set of throwbacks, as are the five members of the [Magus cycle](#) ([Magus of the Disk](#), [Magus of the Jar](#), [Magus of the Mirror](#), [Magus of the Scroll](#), and [Magus of the Candelabra](#)), but did you know that the rare Sliver cycle ([Pulmonic Sliver](#), [Psionic Sliver](#), [Plague Sliver](#), [Sedge Sliver](#), and [Fungus Sliver](#)) were also direct copies of older cards? Check out [Avenging Angel](#), [Psionic Entity](#), [Juzam Djinn](#), [Sedge Troll](#), and [Fungusaur](#).

Even harder to detect are the inspirational throwback cards for the uncommon multi-colored Sliver cycle ([Opaline Sliver](#), [Dementia Sliver](#), [Ghostflame Sliver](#), [Firewake Sliver](#), and [Harmonic Sliver](#)). Development concerns forced us to vary the abilities a tiny bit from many of the original cards, but if you know your stuff you should have recognized [Reparations](#), [Nebuchadnezzar](#), [Ghostly Flame](#), [Fires of Yavimaya](#), and [Aura Shards](#).

Matt Cavotta mentioned in his article that the common Spellshapers in *Time Spiral* ([Icatian Crier](#), [Tolarian Sentinel](#), [Urborg Syphon-Mage](#), [Flowstone Channeler](#), and [Greenseeker](#)) each shaped a pre-existing spell: [Raise the Alarm](#), [Rescue](#), [Syphon Soul](#), [Flowstone Strike](#), and [Lay of the Land](#).

Those may be all the cycles, but they're hardly all the little morsels we threw in as a wink and a nod to our long-time players. I hope all of you enjoy the search through the set for more such nuggets.

## The Big Reveal

This coming Monday is the zero-hour for our three remaining [Great Designer Search](#) contestants. They'll be arriving here in Renton for some interviews, and then the winner will be announced at an exclusive club soiree at a hot night spot in the shadow of the Space Needle.

We'll have all kinds of goodies from that shindig – pictures, video, the whole nine yards, including the formal announcement of the deserving winner – up on our site on **Friday, December 22**. You'll want to make sure to check out who will be joining our team after weeks of grueling competition. Plus, you may catch some video of our celebrity DJ for the party – Efen Ramirez, Napoleon Dynamite's Pedro. Mark your calendars, and check back on the 22nd to put yourself in the middle of the party! I'll be seeing you again with fresh content in 2007. Happy Holidays!

## This Week's Poll:

Who will win The Great Designer Search?

- Graeme Hopkins
- Alexis Janson
- Kenneth Nagle

Remember, check back on the 22nd to see if you were right!

*Aaron Forsythe was a professional **Magic** player and Internet columnist prior to leaving Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to join Wizards of the Coast. His first duty here was Content Manager of this very website, a job that required him to do actual work as opposed to playing games all the time. So when a position opened in R&D, he jumped at the chance. He is now director of **Magic** R&D, and still plays **Magic** in his free time when he's not busy playing **Magic**.*



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