

Feb 11, 2013

## Anniversary

As of 22 June 2013, I will have been a professional in the game business for 40 years.

Actually, like most historic events, it is a lot more complicated than that:

The date chosen is problematic. The year is probably correct, but it may have been as early as fall of 1972. My first paid game design was an unnamed simulation of the Salem Witch Trials, done on salary for SimRaD (Simulations Research and Design), which was funded by educational experimentation funding provided by the state of Illinois education department to Illinois State University in 1972-1973. SimRAD's staff consisted of Frank Chadwick, Marc Miller, P. Rich Banner, and my humble self. The game was sort of role-playing, and sort of historical improvisational theater. It was restricted to the village of Salem Massachusetts in the late 17th century, and consisted of a single page of very simple rules and a handful of character cards, one for each player. It went along more or less historical lines, and had several people accuse others to divert attention from themselves. The one person whose card said "You practice witch-craft" was not convicted. Nothing physical is left of the game, as it had only one final copy, and never saw print. Nevertheless, it was my first professional game design, in that I got paid to design it.

The date of 22 June represents the birthday of GDW, which we decided (after the fact) started on 22 June because that was the date Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. Since GDW's first game was **Drang Nach Osten** (later retitled **Fire in The East**), published in 1973, we felt the date was as good as any.

My first game for GDW was **Eagles** a game set on the Rhine frontier between Rome and the German tribes.

The problem was, I wasn't on salary at GDW for a few weeks after the company started.\*

If this reminds the readers of why July 4th isn't exactly the day the American Declaration of Independence was signed, that's because history is sloppy, and tends to happen haphazardly, without regard to clean, convenient calendar dates.

Loren Wiseman  
Editor, JTAS

\* No one was, actually. All income had to be plowed into growing the business. Our first warehouse/shipping facility was Frank and Marc's shared two-bedroom apartment, and the first art department was at Rich's house.