

THE GUIDE BOOK OF TIMBER VALLEY

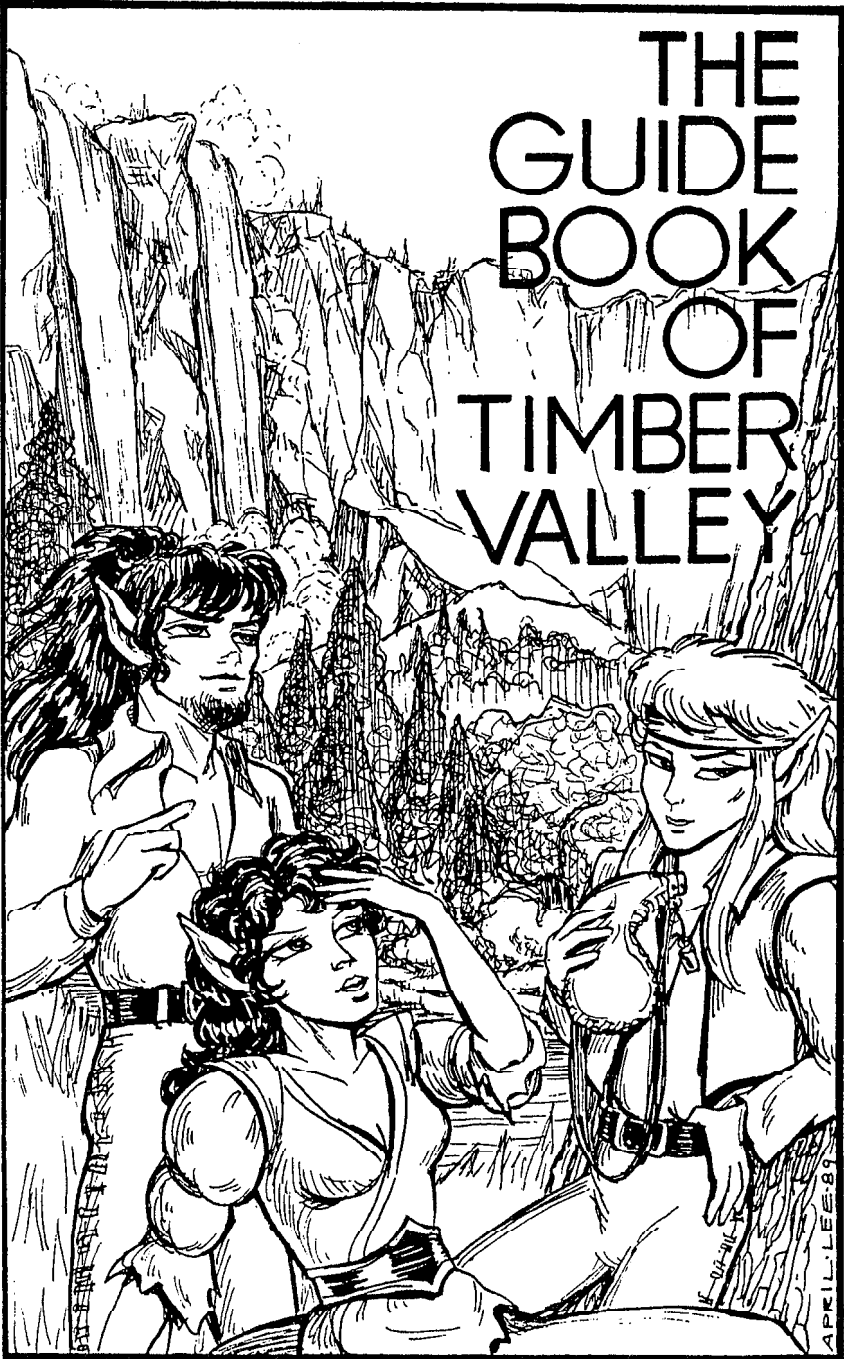


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TIMBER VALLEY HOLT MEMBERSHIP GUIDEBOOK, 2nd Edition, 1989

The Timber Valley Holt, PO Box 30578, Midwest City, Oklahoma 73140.

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Pages 15-16, The Chiefs of Timber Valley.

THE TIMBER VALLEY HOLT
MEMBERSHIP GUIDEBOOK
 2nd Edition

Welcome to the Timber Valley Holt! What you are now reading is our Guidebook, which was designed so that each member can understand our small slice of the ElfQuest National Fan Club. It should help as you develop characters, stories and/or artwork. This is a background of the Holt and the Valley -- guidelines of which are set up to help each member know about the surroundings their characters live in.

The Timber Valley Holt is a tiny part of the World Of Two Moons, created by our friends, Wendy and Richard Pini. We have set up this Holt to follow the rules and regulations of their creation, which have been shown to us in the pages of ElfQuest, Siege At Blue Mountain, and the rule books of the ElfQuest Role Playing Game. Please follow their examples and guidelines, for it is their world in which we participate. Any material which conflicts with what they have put down as law will not be accepted. Do not rely on Earth's mythologies, nor the legends of other fictional worlds, to base your stories or artwork upon.

Please read through this Guidebook whenever you have questions about the Timber Valley Holt. Not everything could be covered within these pages, but an effort has been made to provide you with as much information as you may need. If an answer isn't found in this guide, feel free to write to me -- we'll see if we can come up with a solution together.

Please remember to include a SASE (Self-Addressed, Stamped Envelope) with your letters. You will get a quicker reply if you'll respond to this simple request.

At this time, I want to give my special thanks to two very important ladies for their help and support.

Thank you, Teresa -- There were many times when your enthusiasm and cheery voice have kept me from closing this Holt when my own fire was dim. Your work on this project itself is to be commended! Thank you for all you've done.

Thank you, dear Janice -- I know at times this project has kept me from making other accomplishments, but you believed in me even when I did not. Thank you for your gentle arms, a loving smile, and a shoulder to cry on.

Bright Starlights To All!



Ted R Blasingame
 PO Box 30578
 Midwest City, Oklahoma 73140



Mooncrest

TIMBERS: THE NEWSLETTER

The newsletter (or fanzine) of the Timber Valley Holt is titled, TIMBERS. It is a quarterly publication which primarily deals with the stories and situations of our Holt, which is a chapter of the ElfQuest National Fan Club.

Each issue contains approximately twenty to twenty-eight pages of stories, artwork, cartoons, poems, articles, etc., that are sent in by contributing members. Stories can be from one page to several issues long (see **STORY TYPES**). All are accompanied by artists' illustrations to accent the storylines.

Profiles are given to introduce characters to those who would draw or write about them. These provide necessary information to a character's background, as well as to physical appearance.

The term, newsletter, is actually incorrect, for very little news is printed in the pages of TIMBERS. We are fans of an original graphic novel called ELFQUEST, and are producing stories of our own characters set into that world. Our publication was designed to showcase our tales and is in the format of a small magazine. The term, fanzine, is more appropriate to what we produce.

The Timber Valley Holt was formed late in 1983, when three friends decided they had story ideas for their own part of the World Of Two Moons. Of the three, only one had belonged to other chapters of the national fan club, so had an idea of the types of newsletters being created. They soon began designing their own, and contacted other friends of their intentions.

May 1984 marked the first issue of TIMBERS. Originally, it was set up on standard 8½" X 11" sheets of paper and distributed free to interested prospects for the price of a stamp. However, it was later discovered that the "digest" size many chapters used was actually a more economical way of producing their publications. For the same price, you could put more pages into each issue. TIMBERS #1 was reprinted in the digest size and #2 was released shortly thereafter for 50¢. Since that time, a new issue of TIMBERS has been produced every three months.

In 1986, the Holt Coordinator's position changed hands. The original H.C. had plans to return to college and would no longer have the time to devote to running a Holt. A changeover was made and the newsletter took on a different staff. A new format surfaced and the production time was slowed. One issue was produced approximately every six months for the next two years.

In 1988, the "Holt Hand-off" was rumored again. By this time, the former H.C. had no more special projects and was interested in jumping back into the swing of Holt Coordinating. An offer was made to the current editor and an agreement was made. By June, the original H.C. was back in charge.

Four years had passed since the Holt's first newsletter came out, and the old/new editor felt that some restructuring was due. Help was recruited and several months were spent getting files in shape, weeding out redundant material, and setting up a massive campaign, to find out who of the membership still had interest in the project.

Due to a lull in fandom activity, approximately 15% of the membership stated no interest or didn't respond at all. Of the 85% remaining, encouragement was sent out to bring enthusiasm back up to make this Holt enjoyable again. In October 1988, TIMBERS was back on schedule and enthusiasm was high. To date, the schedule has remained on time.

SUBSCRIPTION & NOTICES

A one year's beginning membership to the Timber Valley Holt is currently \$8. This fee entitles the new member to four issues of TIMBERS, a membership guidebook, character sheets to fill out and return, and maps of the Timber Valley area. Renewing memberships are \$6, which covers the production and postage of the newsletters. Make check or money order out to TR Blasingame. For your own protection, DO NOT send cash through the mail. Due to the increasing price of production materials, the membership fee and/or renewing fee could rise. Current prices are printed in each issue of the newsletter on the "Need-To-Know" page.

On each member's mailing label, there is a number printed directly after that person's name. This number is the last issue number that the individual will receive in their subscription. Notice to this number should be given each time an issue is released. If the number is identical to the number of the issue it is sent with, a renewal is in order before further issues can be sent. Occasionally, a note may be included with the newsletter, reminding the person of the need to re-subscribe, but don't always look for this. Pay attention to the number on the mailing label. It may be all the notice given.

STORY TYPES

For the Timber Valley Holt, there are four general types of stories. Anything sent in will be categorized into one of these groups:

(1) **Lifetimes:** A "Day In The Lives" tale. This can be about anything that happens to one or more characters. The subject can be trivial, or it may be a short occurrence of an important event. "Lifetimes" sizes can be anywhere between a half-page to three pages in length, and will contain a full-page illustration and possibly one inter-story illo.

(2) **Regular:** These are general tales that take longer to tell than a Lifetimes story. As before, they can concern just about any situation. "Regular" stories are no shorter than four pages and can be as long as seven pages per issue, with a maximum two-issue length. These will have one illo placed in the text every two pages.

(3) **Epic:** This type of story is typically long and drawn out, usually concerning events that seriously affect the entire Holt or Valley. An "Epic" may have as many as ten pages per issue, with a maximum four-issue length. One full-page illustration will go with these, along with one illo placed every two pages.

(4) **Super Epic:** (or, jokingly, "The mini-series") This is a major epic that takes up the entire story space of several issues, or, divides up into half-issue parts that span four to six issues. These are not common, as it takes such a long time and a lot of newsletter space to produce. The Timber Valley Troll War may fall into this category, since its subject matter is on a larger scale than anything ever done before. The illustration requirements are the same as the Epic.

WRITER'S GUIDE

When stories are sent in, they should be typewritten on one side or a page, single or double-spaced (personally, I prefer single spacing), and have your name and title of the story on each page -- just in case they happen to get separated. Please number the pages, too. On the first page, in the upper left-hand corner, indicate what type of story you are submitting (see above section on **Story Types**).

If you cannot type, or you don't have access to a typewriter/word processor/computer, hand printed copies will be acceptable, so long as they are legible and relatively clean. Unreadable stories will be sent back to the authors.

Each story will be read and gone over to make sure they do not violate the rules set up by WaRP Graphics and/or Timber Valley, or anyone else's character. Now, while I will correct mistakes in spelling and punctuation during plotting for the issues, I do make mistakes myself (I am not infallible). Please be patient with me if you spot errors that I have made myself.

While editing your stories, I will not correct grammar or sentences for you. I'll make notes on a copy of your manuscript and send to you for the actual corrections. This way, someone won't be terribly surprised when it appears in print with changes they weren't aware of were being made. I may make suggestions, which are no means what you have to do, but my comments are designed to help your story flow better with the format and storytelling of our Holt. If I say you should change something, and you don't believe it needs changing, let me know what your reasons would be for keeping it as is. Let's work together on this. After all, this is all so we can have fun in our tale weaving, right?

Never, never send us your only copy of your story, as sometimes the mail doesn't reach its destination. More than once, I have received mail from the Post Office in little plastic bags. The Postal Service tries to keep its flow going, but occasionally a mishap occurs in the machinery. So please, only send me a copy. That is all I really need.

When writing your story, remember that this is not Earth, however similar it may be. This is not a D&D world and its stories don't apply. Tolkein has no reign over this planet, and this is not Dune, Pern, or Amber. This is the World of Two Moons, as depicted in WaRP Graphics' **ElfQuest**.

Please be considerate of other people's characters when telling a tale, and if you have a need, write to them for any questions you have on their elves or whatever. An address listing for the members will be included in the newsletters approximately every other issue, complete with recent changes, updates, and new entries. So, put your tales on paper and have fun.

GUIDELINES FOR THE ARTISTS

The artists are very important to the holt newsletter and we wish that all who can draw would participate in making TIMBERS look good. In the past issues of the newsletter, artwork has been sent in all different shapes and sizes, according to their contents, thus making the set-up of pages a bit of a challenge. But, to maintain the quality we've been trying to put out, we would like to have all future artwork done in certain dimensions.

When I set up the layout and typing for the newsletter, I work with 8½" X 14" sized pages, working in an 8½ X 11 size area. After all is ready, they are reduced 65% -- to the "digest" format. When drawing your illustrations, I need the originals drawn full size so I can fit them properly into the text. Sending illos already reduced only creates problems for me, as I have to enlarge them to work in my parameters.

General spot-illos can be just about any size, but, unless otherwise requested, all full-page and story illustrations are to follow these sizes:

* **Full-page** drawings must fit into a 6 3/4" wide by 11" high area, and be bordered. Drawings sent without this border make me have to draw it in myself, which may result in some edge-cropping to allow for it. Make us all happy in the end by complying with this rule.

* **Half-page** drawings are to fit into a 5" X 10" area. A border isn't necessary, but is a great help.

* **Inter-story** drawings are desired to fit into a 3 3/4" X 3 3/4" area, but will be accepted up to 4" X 4" measurements.

* **Character Illos** are used in Profiles, so should fit into a 3½"(w) X 5"(h) area.

Please remember this: Never send your only copy of your artwork. Originals need not be sent in -- a good, clean photocopy will be quite acceptable. However, please don't send in poor quality copies of grey, since they don't reproduce well.

Also, do not bother to send in drawings done in pencil or colored inks. They are too hard to print and will not be considered.

Request: If you do not currently have any artwork in our files, please send in 2-3 samples of what you can do, along with a simple statement of what you volunteer for. If you want to illustrate stories, let us know. If you only want to contribute character profiles or spot fillos, tell us.

When sending artwork, please do not send them folded in an envelope. Most artists realize this, but there are a few who do not. The crease lines from folded artwork usually show up in printing. If you have a title for the particular piece of artwork, please write it in pencil on the back. It's also a good idea to include your name, so you can be credited for it. Several art pieces in my files have no names on them.

If your drawing has more than one character in it, please write a small list as to who you've drawn. Everyone enjoys seeing their characters appear in drawings or illustrations, sometimes more than having them appear in a story!

Have fun!

CREATING A CHARACTER

When creating a character for the Timber Valley Holt, sometimes there is a bit of confusion over what to put down under the headings on the Character Information Sheet, or CIS. This section will go through the CIS headings one at a time and do a little explaining. If you are still confused about certain areas, please feel free to write and ask. (NOTE: Any CIS I can't read will be sent back for rewriting.)

MEMBER: That's you! Put your name and address here. Listing your telephone number would be helpful, but is optional.

NAME: This is your character's name, being either a descriptive name (like Nightstep) or a sound name (like Nisse). Also include any nicknames or previous names (if important) that the character has.

SOUL NAME: A secret name that sums up an elf's entire being. Not all elf tribes use soul names. Those with descriptive names usually do. (The Timber Valley native have soul names.)

S/N KNOWN BY: Since knowledge of an elf's soul name gives the holder power over that elf, soul names are only (very) rarely told to others. Recognition includes an automatic exchange of soul names between the Recognized pair. Lifemates who are not Recognized do not know each other's soul name, hoping that Recognition may come to them at some time in the future.

ORIGIN: List the place where your character is from. If a native of the Valley, simply put "native". If your character is a wanderer, but you leave this blank as to where they're from, we'll nag you until we get an answer. The reason is that we want to coordinate all of our wanderers into having viable places to come from. If you've no idea about the origin, write to Teresa. We have several Alternate Source Holts your character might come from.

ARRIVAL DATE: Applicable only to wanderers. This is the date that character arrives at the Timber Valley Holt, as according to the Timeline. [DF stands for Death Flood. GT = Green Time (Spring). HT = Hot Time (Summer). LF = Leaf Fall (Autumn). WF = White Time (Winter).

BIRTHDATE: The date your character was born, according to the Timeline.

RACE: Elf, Troll, Human, or Preserver? What is your character?

GENDER: Male or Female? (It, if a preserver -- they are sexless.)

HEIGHT: Natives average to be about 4' tall.

BUILD: Is the character slender, average, muscular, stocky, buxom, other?

EYES: Give color and specify if they are narrow, slanted, level, rounded, etc.

SKIN TONE: Night-dwellers (including most TVH natives) tend to be fair-skinned. Day-dwellers tend to be lightly to darkly tanned (depending on individual's time spent in the sunshine.)

HAIR COLOR/STYLE/LENGTH: Describe hair as well as possible.

MARKS/SCARS: Most elves won't have scars because of the presence of magical Healing. Include any distinguishing marks or features that aren't covered above.

CLOTHING: Describe the style of clothing, the colors, the materials, and textures. Include differences between warm weather and cold weather clothing.

JEWELRY: Leather thongs, pretty sparkly rocks, feathers, troll-forged trinkets, etc.

WEAPONS: The weapons your character uses for hunting, fishing, and fighting. Please remember that swords are not suited to hunting. They (and other forged-metal implements) tend to be rare, gotten only by stiff bartering with the Trolls. Fire-hardened and carved wood, and shaped wood and stone are more commonly used materials. Common weapons are bow & arrows, spears, javelins, staffs, slings, and thrown rocks. Other possibilities are the arrow-whip, blowgun, crossbow (rare!), whips, nets, maces, and various types of axes.

SKILLS: Here's a batch of suggestions for this much-neglected section: Hunting, fishing, tracking, scouting, stalking, trapping, snare-setting, climbing, running, jumping, swimming, diving, throwing, riding (wolf/pony/other?), weapon-making, weaving, cooking, gardening, pottery-making, tanning, sewing, woodcraft (non-magical), carving, fire-making (non-magical), animal training and care, counselor, trader, story-teller, gambler, musician, midwife, mending (first aid/non-magical Healing), metal smithing, knife-throwing, or whistling. [whew!]

One of the supplements for this guidebook will list statistics of how many characters have which skills. If you see that we have an overabundance of characters with a certain skill, please don't give us another one. (Unless it is a common, needed skill, such as hunting, fishing, etc.)

MAGICAL TALENT: It is assumed that all elves can Send, so don't list it. However, if your character **cannot** Send, please tell us. Common talents are Finding (a homing instinct), Firestarting, Airwalking (gliding/levitating), Healing, Shielding (an off-shoot of Healing), Magical Feeling, Metal Shaping (rare!), Treeshaping, Rockshaping, Self-Shaping (rare!), Storm Sensing, and Control Stare/Mind Stun. (NOTE: Timber Valley Holt adheres to the WaRP and EQ guidelines. so please don't load characters with multiple talents, and possession of magic talents is subject to Holt approval on an individual basis. Those who possess them are few, and those who do seldom have more than one talent. Remember, the World of Two Moons weakens the elves' powers, so a Super-Elf is out of the question.) As with the section on Skills, check the supplemental statistics sheet for overage of certain talents.

FAMILY: Wanderers will have family outside of the Valley. Natives, however, might find family among the already established native characters. **Do not** create multiple characters to live in the Holt with your character. If you need a family, contact us and we'll try to set you up with one of our other characters. (Please indicate deceased characters with a (d) after the character's name.)

MATE(S): Wanderers and natives alike might find love-mates or lifemates among the established characters.

FRIENDS: Who does your elf hang around with? Who did s/he grow up with? Also, who shares their hometree? If having trouble with this one, write to us or the member who owns a certain character. Everyone likes having another friend!

ANIMAL FRIEND: Please distinguish between hunting bond-animal and pets. Usually only those who hunt or do a lot of travelling will have a bond-animal.

Please remember, however, that this is a wolf-dominant society, so be careful of what animals you bring in. If it is a creature that is likely to cause havoc with our pack, it will either be driven off or killed. Unusual creatures will also be subject to Holt approval. (NOTE: When we use the term "bonded", it is actually referring a friendship or alliance with the animal.)

OPINION/KNOWLEDGE OF: HUMANS/TROLLS/PRESERVERS/DREAMBERRIES: What does your character know about these beings/objects? Is s/he hostile, friendly, or indifferent to them? If your character is a wanderer, s/he may or may not have encountered these before coming to Timber Valley.

PERSONALITY TRAITS & OTHER MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION: Is your character friendly, shy, or a loner? Creative, unimaginative, dependable, or flighty? Quiet, moody, or talkative? There is a lot of room for variety. What is your character like? Tell us all about him/her. Things they do/do not like to do, pet peeves, experience, temperaments, eccentricities, and any other miscellaneous information about this character. When someone writes a story, they want to know how a particular person might react in a given situation, so be thorough here.

Undoubtedly, there will not be enough room on the CIS for you to list everything asked for, so it is quite acceptable to put it on another sheet of paper. Also, never send me your **only** copy! Any questions? Write!

WHEN A MEMBER DROPS OUT - (What to do with their character)

There are a number of reasons why a member will drop out of the the Holt. He may not have the extra money to renew -- she may have lost interest, due to the Holt or other outside reasons -- a move to a different address and forgetting to send new location to the Holt -- other projects such as hobbies, work or school may take up their time -- or a myriad of other existing reasons.

Whatever the cause, when a member drops out of the Holt, we still have a character running loose that they had put into our tribe. What happens to that character, now that the owner has gone?

Usually, if it is known ahead of time that "Roger" is not going to renew, arrangements can be made to take care of his character, "Sunbelt". The most common choice would be to have Sunbelt leave the Valley to go travelling on his own. This gives Roger the option of rejoining later with the same character.

However, many times the case will be that Roger will drop out and not even tell anyone what to do with Sunbelt. In this instance, we will write to him and ask for his preference. But, even then, he may not respond. If this happens, we continue attempts to contact him for six months.

If after half a year of trying to get a response still yields nothing, that character then becomes property of the Holt. If Sunbelt has relatives, lovers, or a best friend in the Holt, one of the other members who owns one will be given the opportunity to "adopt" or take control of Sunbelt. Just as often as not, however, there won't be any takers to adopt him. In this case, the Holt has three choices it can take.

(1) Let's say that Sunbelt was a widely used character, and that he often showed up in other writers' stories. In this case, Sunbelt will just become a "non-persona character" (or, NPC) of the Holt. Any writer can still use him in a story, but the editor will be responsible for deciding if he is used in accordance with his character information sheet (or, CIS).

(2) If Sunbelt was a character that had never been used by anyone (in stories and/or artwork), then the name will simply be removed from the lists and treated as if he'd never existed.

(3) Now, if Sunbelt had been someone who usually only showed up in stories as a name in a crowd scene or as someone just walking by in the background, we would not be able to say that "he never existed". In this case, we can hold onto him as a standby if a story arises that needs a character killed off. The Timber Valley Troll War is a good example of this. A war always brings death to all sides of the conflict. Instead of killing off existing members' characters, the "standbys" will be used for the inevitable fatalities. This rids the Holt of excess characters, which are usually many.

If you are interested in adopting a Holt NPC, write to me and we'll see what arrangements can be made. Keep in mind, however, that if you don't use the character(s) you already have, don't expect me to assign you another one to not use.

As a creator of a Timber Valley character, you have an obligation to tell us what to do with your own "Sunbelt" if you plan to drop out of this Holt. It only takes a postcard to tell us, and makes it so much easier for coordinating the files.

The following is reprinted from LODESTONE #28
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"WANTED: HELP FOR HOLT LEADERS - THIS MEANS YOU"

Hard as some folks seem to find it to believe, most Holt leaders have a life outside of fandom. Many hold full time jobs or juggle a load of classes (sometimes both!), spend time with a Significant Other, or are active in church or social groups. No holt leader gets paid for the time and effort he or she puts into running the holt either. Generally, it's the opposite: the holt leader invests a lot of time and money into the holt to keep it going smoothly.

Sure, it's fun, and we wouldn't do it if we didn't love it. But in the past couple of years, some of the larger holtls in ELFQUEST fandom have changed leaders one of them three times! The reason most often given by the resigning leader is "lack of time."

Why? Let's look at a typical holt setup. The Holt Of Some Errant Elves (T.H.O.S.E. Elves) has fifty members and publishes a 24 page newsletter four times a year. With membership in the holt comes the privilege of creating three characters (and frankly, given that privilege, many members will not give another thought to coordinating their characters with those already existing; soon there are 150 unrelated elves running amok in the forest).

The holt leader reads and in some cases edits the character sheets to fit the holt, thinks up and coordinates story plotlines, keeps a timeline, maintains a file of maps, charts, genealogies, lists, holt bookkeeping, and whatever else is necessary.

It's time for an issue of the newsletter. The holt leader puts on a new hat, that of editor. S/he critiques the stories that members submit; in the process s/he will read that story at least twice, making notes on the first draft. Most stories will go through two or three drafts; this can take months, depending on the speed of the writer and the editor and the time available to both. When the story is read, the editor assigns an artist to illustrate it, then types and copyedits, gathers up everything to go into the issue, lays it all out, does pasteup, gets it printed, collates and staples the pages, addresses and mails the finished zines...

...and then it's time to start the next @#%\$!;# issue!

Add to this the problems involved in juggling correspondence (which includes phone calls at all hours) with fifty members, particularly those who forget to enclose SASEs for a reply or who get miffed when the holt leader says that they've called at a bad time.

Well, you DID say you wanted to run a holt. But before you decide to chuck the idea, why not kill two birds with one stone: put some time and enthusiasm into HELPING a holt that you already like (that holt leader will appreciate it!), and make sure you KNOW what you're getting into (the ego feed of having your name in the listing will dry up quickly if you get in over your head and disappoint your members)?

One of the major ways of helping a holt leader is to contribute art and/or stories for the holt zine. Face it, the only way the newsletter will ever come out is if the editor has items to put in it. However, what if you are neither writer nor artist? You can still help out - just use a little imagination.

Are you a calligrapher, or do you have access to an graphics-oriented computer (like a Macintosh or an Amiga?). You can offer to do lettering - send the holt samples of what you can do.

Is your computer compatible with the holt leader's? You can take on some or all of the typing.

If you're a poor typist, but your computer is compatible and you have a letter quality printer or (heaven!) a laser printer - you can print the holt's current issue files. Make sure you know the holt newsletter's formatting needs.

Do you have a database program or a good word processor with a mail merge function? Why not offer to keep a membership list or run address labels for the newsletter?

Are you well organized? Enjoy doing graphics or layout? Offer to produce, layout or update a holt guide or character guide. They're always needed, by every holt, and they're usually out of date if they exist at all. Or, take on some of the work for a holt special project such as a coloring book or supplement.

Do you enjoy mapmaking, doing research, or compiling genealogical charts? Offer your services.

Are you an articulate writer with little time to contribute your own stories?

Offer to act as a preliminary reader, copyeditor or story editor. Don't be miffed if the editor tests you first to see how you would deal with a given story. After all, it's that editor's holt and creative folk you'll be dealing with. And remember, a tactful and constructive sub-editor is his/her weight in gold.

Do you live near the holt leader? You can do any or all of the above, plus help with filing, help with the mail, help with folding, stapling, envelope stuffing and stamping. Even if you can only help once a month, it helps!

Do you have no time, but a dollar or two to spare? Surprise your favorite holt leader with a gift of stamps, envelopes or stamped postcards.

And even if you can offer nothing else, take pen in hand and send a fan letter or thank you note to the leader of your favorite holt. Sometimes the leaders get so wrapped up in the little things that they forget that it's really for fun and the enjoyment of others. An unexpected letter that says "thanks" sometimes puts everything back into perspective. Such a note of encouragement could make the difference between your holt leader hanging in there - or closing the holt (or finding a replacement leader) because of "lack of time."

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MAGICAL TALENTS

Magic is not something easily come by or done casually in the Timber Valley Holt. It is generally uncommon and in any physical realm, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The use of a power does tax an Elf's strength. Power is stored in the elven body, in some yet-unnamed spot, like electricity, food or warmth. It can be flashy, quick and jolting like lightning; smooth as silk with gentle pressure and heat; or it can be so subtle that it goes unnoticed by the unwary or unconcerned. But like food, it can sour, go bad, or be fumbled. The level of power can increase with diligent practice, or make a quantum leap when one is startled or under extreme stress. For the most part the talents are used to benefit the Holt, but not everyone follows the same path, as those in the Valley now know from experience.

ANIMAL BONDING: The animals have to be of a certain minimum of intelligence. Bonding on the WoTM's is not like that of other planets in the fantasy genre. There is no instantaneous soul-deep knowledge of each other; the animals don't tell the elves what their names are. The bond helps the flow of communication and simple thoughts, concepts and emotions can be sent. An Elf can even pull thoughts out of the animal's mind. Bonding is a one on one situation; an Elf can't bond with more than one creature at a time and once the connection is established, it is permanent till one or the other dies. If an Elf loses his bond-friend, though it would indeed be traumatic, he could always attempt to bond again. It is conceivable that if the creature was the survivor of the pair, it too could be a bond-beast with another Elf. Native Timber Folk have less of a chance of bonding than a Wolfrider of Elfquest simply because they are pure blooded elves. Not all attempts at a bond are successful. The animal's will may be stronger than the Elf's, or quite probably the personalities would not blend well enough to become a team. The native Timber Folk have a master and pet relationship with their wolves, and it is usually the hunters who have a bond with the lupine predators.

ANTI-HEALING: Only those with the healing power can use this sub-talent. Instead of restoring health, the Anti-Healer deals pain, draining the life from a subject. An Elf can resist if his will or talents are greater than that of the wayward Healer, who is still being drained of power in the attempt. An Anti-Healer can ensnare a target without doing physical damage. A prime example is when Winnowill trapped Savah, who was traveling out of her body searching for other elves (also see MIND SNARE). This puts the subject in a trance for an hour unless renewed, and this can be done from a distance if the user has the power of Sending as well. Only a Healer can break this hold; if it is another Healer, they must overcome the hold the Anti-Healer has on the subject.

ASTRAL PROJECTION: This talent is dependent on the ability to Send. Once the essence of the Elf is detached from his physical body, the range of Sending is increased 100 times. The average Elf with this power could Send approximately 800 miles, while someone of Lord Voll's strength could reach as far away as 1200 miles from their location, and then travel there mentally. The chances are greater to find a familiar mind than one that the seeker doesn't know. The target Elf will see a ghostly image, but those around him will not see it. Those whose essence is away from their bodies can be trapped, unable to return, with either the magic talents of Anti-Healer or Mind Snare. The body lies comatose, and if the spirit is kept away

long enough, the physical shell will die of starvation. It is quite possible the Elf's essence will continue on without the body, though this is not the most desirable state of existence currently.

BONE-SHAPING: This power is found among Healers as well as non-Healer Sea Elves. It is not native to the Timber Folk, as they have had access to metal weapons and trinkets via the Trolls for some time. There is perhaps only one among the SHOTT elves who possesses this talent. It is similar to the Healing sub-talent of Flesh-Shaping, but it works on non-living matter such as ivory, antlers, shells, teeth, or bones. It is useful to form weapons, tanning frames, jewelry, utensils, and other decorations and tools.

DEEP-SENSE: The user can read and prompt an emotional response along with reading the mental pictures of a subject. It lets him understand the current emotional state of one or more individuals, or seek specific information, especially that which is at front of the Elf's mind. It is possible to resist this if the target's will is greater than the user's.

FINDING: This power allows an Elf to find something he is familiar with or needs. Some elves have the sub-talent of DOWSING, which is locating potable water sources (an easy thing to do in the Valley). This will give an exact direction and a close approximate location. A few SHOTT elves may have the sub-talent of FISH-FINDING, which has a slightly larger range. It can detect living creatures underwater, both horizontal and vertical to the user's location. The Elf also knows which direction the creature is moving and its approximate size and the quantity. With concentration, the type of animal can also be determined. Those with this talent can also teach the non-talented some of the aspects of Fish-Finding. This skill would allow the student to read certain signs to see if fish were nearby, though not the species or quantity. HOMING INSTINCT is the third and final sub-talent of Finding. It is something akin to a Preserver, always knowing the location of the High Ones' Palace. It is usually found among Sea Elves, who could find their home island or territory far out at sea or in an archipelago. A few native Timber Folk have this as well, with a bit of a twist. The talent works best at night so the Elf can use the stars to help guide him. This sub-talent can also find lost elves at sea, but with less of a chance than an Elf with the true talent of Finding would have. Those elves with the power of Homing Instinct can teach non-magical elves the skill of star navigation, and having a good strong dose of elven history increases the skill along with use.

FIRE-STARTING: This magic is extremely rare; it is not one that runs in the gene pool of native Timber Folk, even with the influx of wanderers. In the history stores, it is known as a High Ones' power, and few have heard of it since that time in the Valley. There is one Elf with this power in Black Rock Holt, as they seem to have sacrificed their voices for a larger concentration of the High Ones' magic. It enables the user to ignite flammable objects. Fire-Starting, though useful, is one of the easiest talents to be fumbled, and with disastrous results.

FLESH-SHAPING: This is a dependent power of Healing. Instead of hurting or curing an Elf, a Flesh-Shaper changes the natural shape of the body while healing it simultaneously. It can be concentrated on one limb or encompass the entire body, and it is a painful process. It takes one hour for every foot of Elf or every 10-15 pounds of animal. Any healer can mold another Elf into a different form, but only special Healers can do this to other creatures. There is only one Elf in the Valley with this talent, and she is a native of Black Rock Holt.

HEALING: This talent, depending on the level of power, can heal any wound, or disease by an effort of will. The more an Elf uses this talent, the greater the skill. It is a rare power even among High Ones. It seems to be limited to one individual per native tribe. Any flesh can be healed, be it elven, human, troll, preserver, or animal. The key is the Healer must be able to empathize with the subject, and some may choose not to heal other than their own species. This talent can be resisted if the will is great enough; those who are unconscious have no such choice. Mental disorders can be healed as well, though this is very tricky and usually left to the senior Healer of the Holt. SHIELDING is another sub-talent of healing. It is the ability for the user and the one they touch to resist an attack by sending (see Mind-Stun and Mind-Snare), Anti-Healing, or other hostile magical attacks. It counters what is generally known as a "Black Send" (not a talent but a title).

HYPNOSIS: This power knocks the victim into a stunned state where he can not initiate an act of will. This state is indefinite, subject in duration only to the will of the attacker or till his strength gives out. The target will stand stunned, unable even to feel pain or even his own death; he is totally unaware of his surroundings. He is also prone to suggestion; this power can be used on animals as well as elves, trolls, etc. Also called MIND STUN.

LEVITATION: This talent is known by many names. LEVITATION generally refers to the lifting of an inanimate object or another living creature from one place to another. SELF-LEVITATION and/or GLIDING and/or AIRWALKING is when the power is turned inwards, the talent being used on the one who is generating it. When this power is increased, whether through constant practice or innate ability, it can either let the user lift more weight, carry the same object farther, or increase the speed of "flight". The Valley has an extraordinary amount of Gliders, both natives and wanderers.

MAGIC-FEELING: This is generally quite common, and many elves are born with some sense of magic. but those that are said to have the "power" are those that are unusually sensitive. This is one of the few magic talents that do not drain the strength of the user. In that respect it is like any other sense, like seeing or hearing. The feeler has the ability to sense if an object has been shaped by magic, or if a talent has been used in the area; sometimes he is informed automatically. at others he must focus his attention to get the end results. And like any other magic, it can be fumbled.

MIND-SNARE: This traps an Elf using the Astral Projection talent. The user has the ability to hold the victim until such time as he decides, or he is knocked unconscious. See Astral Projection for more information.

PLANT-SHAPING: Also known as TREESHAPING. The shaper taps the life force of the "green growing things", causing them to grow, die, move, conform to a specific shape, or with a great amount of effort, change the very nature of the tree or plant. It is possible to make a dreamberry bush blossom and bear fruit all year round. Most shapers bend to the will of nature, but some have an artistic bent, and turn nature into an art form. The nature of the Holt and its protective Thorn Barrier is maintained with such strong talents. Plant-Shaping can be used on either living or dead material.

ROCK-SHAPING: Rock Span was created with such a power, as was Fox Perch. It is very similar to Plant-Shaping, except rocks don't grow; only the shape can be changed, crafted by the users talent and skill. It can be used to detect oddities in the rock, either made by magic, nature, or helping hands. There are variations such as GEM-SHAPERS and METAL-SHAPERS. These sub-talents are generally used for jewelry or weapons making, but tend to be rather rare..

SENDING: The average range for sending is between three and six miles, though for strong senders the norm is about 15-20 miles. Sending is the ability to send and receive a telepathic message, using either words, pictures, or emotions. It can be broadcast to a group of elves, or pinpointed to one specifically (which is called a LOCK SEND). Lock sends are not easily intercepted, having a private mental code on it, but those who are exceedingly strong senders can do so. It is considered generally bad manners, however, unless it is an emergency. Some wanderers have lost the ability to send or receive, either due to injuries or the ability dying out with their tribe. There are others whose Holt has lost the ability to speak out loud, like the elves of Black Rock Holt. The entire tribe has a very strong sending ability; so strong they can send through rock and over long distances, due to their harsh environment. Lock Sending can also be used to impart skills, such as combat knowledge or to learn how to use a certain magic skill (if an Elf has an innate ability but doesn't know how to develop it, another with the same power can teach him.), to those that lack them. During the battle, the elves in the Lock Send generally only communicate with each other, as a distraction could be fatal. COMBAT OF WILLS is psychic warfare. Which ever Elf is the strongest in his beliefs and force of will wins the "battle", and the "loser" generally gives in to the winner's decision or wishes.

SHAPE-CHANGE: This talent is found in the High Ones almost exclusively (exceptions are extremely rare). It is the ability to change the size, shape and the very nature of an Elf, and it is self-inflicted. There is a chance, since the World of Two Moons still doesn't favor the descendants of the High Ones, that the Elf may be trapped in the form he has chosen, or will forget that he was anything else but what he is at that time. The longer an Elf is a certain type of creature, the better the chance is that he will stay that way. It is a long and tiring process.

WEATHER SENSING: Generally found among the elves of SHOTT or Sea Elves. It is the ability to predict the weather by feel, scent or sight. It is also a skill that can be taught. It is generally predicted in twelve hour intervals unless an Elf wishes to exert himself. The seers can tell the length and strength of a storm. They can not predict other natural disasters such as ground shakes, fire mountains, or great waves. Spinners (tornadoes) and storms are covered, however.

ALTERNATE SOURCE HOLTS

BITTERCREEK HOLT--This is Ivory's Home Holt. It is a small tribe often plagued by the presence of hostile Humans, and has an uneasy alliance with another tribe of Elves to their north called the Glacier People. Ivory's brother, Black Fire, is the leader of BCH and is courting war with the Humans, asking the help of the Glacier People in this. When Ivory rejected the amorous but violent attentions of the GP Chief's son, Blizzard, her brother flew into a rage, insanity replacing reason, and threw her out of the Holt. The situation is still violent and dangerous today. They are wolf-bonded.

BLACK ROCK HOLT--This is the Home Holt of both Archer and Greeneyes. It is somewhere between 550 and 600 miles away from Timber Valley Holt. In Elven terms it would be a 22-33 day journey, depending on if the Elf was on foot or used a pack wolf. BRH is located in the center of a large jutting peninsula to the southeast of the Valley. The largest geographical feature is Fire Mountain, an active volcano, followed by Moon Haven Lake, a large circular body of fresh water. This region of the WoTM's is a jungle, with dense vegetation and almost daily rains. It is also the home of a large group of Preservers under the direction of the Elves. There are only three seasons for this Holt: RainTime, GreenTime, and HotTime.

The creatures the Elves of BRH bond with most are giant black Spinners, who spin webs/silk, have venomous bites and are led by a golden queen spider. These creatures are intelligent and help protect the Holt and its occupants from danger, along with sharing the hunting duties. Excess food is then wrapstuffed by the Preservers.

The Elves of BRH are smaller in stature than the normal Elven tribe, but they have retained to a high degree the powers of the High Ones. The tribe as a whole has lost the ability to speak out loud, and so have developed the use of Sending. All are strong, long distance senders with a highly empathic nature. Lying is unknown, as is war. They have lost all knowledge of Trolls, but have a trade agreement with a local tribe of Humans built on trust and friendship. They communicate with the Tall Ones in sign language. They live in a generally matriarchal society. Their current leader is Trailmist, known for her good will and sound judgement. She, along with the elders in the tribe, are teaching her Self-Shaper daughter, Changeling, to take over the leadership position someday.

EAGLE MOUNTAIN & SUN PEAK HOLTS--The Eagle Mountain Holt is located in the Skyreach Mountains, almost directly south of Timber Valley. It is situated in a bowl-like area on Eagle Mountain's sloping side. The Holt area is relatively flat with a stone embankment separating them from the steep cliffs below. A natural mountain spring forms a small pool where they get their water from. The Elves generally bond with Timber Wolves or some bird of prey.

One of the signs of the chief's bloodline is bright green silk-like material in the chief's family clothing. No other member of the tribe is allowed to wear this material. The last chief was named Thornwood; his lifemate was Clearshine and his young son called LongKnife.

In DF-40 part of the tribe decided to split off from the main group. The Holt had reached the maximum it could house and feed from available resources, and the departure was an amiable one. Sunblazer led a party of 10-20 to a new Holt sight in another mountainous region nearby and named it Sun Peak Holt. The two Holts were close, visiting and trading freely among themselves. Sunblazer is still the chief at Sun Peak Holt.

A massive tribe of Humans live in the lower foothills of the Skyreach Mountains and hate all Elves with the core of their being. In the Year of DF-15 GT these Humans gathered their warriors, which were many, and set upon the EMH with murderous intent. With the exception of a few scattered Elves, nearly all the EMH was slaughtered unmercifully. One of the survivors was LongKnife, at the time a very young child, who did not know that he is was the last surviving member of the chief's bloodline.

It is not known for certain, but EM legends have it that before their mountain home had been shaped and set up, they used to belong to another tribe of Elves who had their Holt far to the north in the Great Woods and lived in hollow trees.

FOREST RUNNERS HOLT--This small band of approximately 20 Elves live in the Great Woods. They are wolf-riders that follow The Way with a passion, and have little or no contact with other Elves, let alone Trolls, Humans, or Preservers. They distrust magic in the extreme, and often those with a talent are made outcasts. They are very ethnocentric, secretive, nomadic, and fierce. Very little is known about them and the Valley's only wanderer from that area is Sapphire, who hasn't been inclined to speak of her home Holt much.

SAFE-HARBOR-ON-THE-TALON-- (Also known as SHOTT, for short.) The Talon is a small, claw-shaped peninsula jutting out from the Endless Sea of Grass into the

Waters of Forever. A reef protects the Talon from the worst weather. Safe Harbor is located on the Talon, about a season-and-a-half of direct travel to the northwest of Timber Valley Holt.

This tribe consists not only of Elves, but Humans as well, living in peace, prosperity, and industry. This colony has been established about four thousand years and is run by an ever changing council of elders. Elders are not necessarily those that are oldest, but the ones who are craftsmasters or most knowledgeable about a subject.

SHOTT people use crude sailboats and outriggers to fish the waters around their home, even canoes shaped from giant "Boat-Back" shells, using Gill nets and traps to bring in a wide variety of sea creatures. It is also a farming and craft-oriented society, where homes are constructed and many types of animals domesticated. The community is diurnal, the inhabitants of both races having darkly tanned skin. The Humans tend to have hair and eye coloration of Amerinds. Amongst the Elves, however, light hair and eyes are just as common as dark. Mating is generally in two-bonds, with the races sticking to their own kind. There have been attempts at Human-Elf matings, but the differences in lifespans and the lack of offspring has made the practice extremely uncommon.

Clothing is made of various materials: leather, suede, and cloth made from land plants as well as those from the sea. The general design is along the line of "less is more". Ornamentation is popular: carved or shaped bone (including scrimshaw work), wood, shell, dyed leather thongs, cloth ribbons, ceramics, feathers, stones, or beads. Metal is next to non-existent.

Crafts are very important to these folk. They have great skill in weaving, pottery, carving, house building, tanning, bee keeping, boat building, and farming. Swimming is a skill learned by all before they can walk. Aquatic bond-friends help with fishing, while domesticated animals and pets assist in plowing the fields or herding animals. The community honors the High Ones as well as the nature spirits of the Humans' religion. They have no contact or memory of Trolls or Preservers. Dreamberries are unheard of. Weapons are not commonly owned, though hunting/fishing tools are. Meat and fish are eaten cooked or raw, depending on the item and an individual's taste. The tribe speaks both the human and elven languages. Children, though raised by their parents, are often looked after by the tribe in general, especially during fishing runs, plantings, and harvests. They do not use soul names, and have sound names rather than descriptive.

SHOTT Elves are very strong senders. Talents that DO NOT appear among them are: Fire-Starting, Gliding, Anti-Healing, Flesh-Shaping, Metal-Shaping, Mind-Snare, Mind-Stun, and Rock-Shaping. Prevalent powers: Sending, Bone-Shaping, Finding, Homing Instinct, Fish Finding, Storm-Sensing, Water Control, with occasional instances (very rare) of Healing, Plant-Shaping, Astral-Projection, and Deep Sense. Bond animals include seals (furryfins), Sea Otters, Wavedancers, and even once a Deepsinger once. Other animals to watch out for or hunt are: Snapper (large, edible, violent fish), Blacksail (killer whales), Bluefish (tuna/albacore), Boat-Backs (tortoises), Red-Claws (lobster), Sand-Pinchers (crab), Seabug (shrimp), Flying Fish, Giant Lizards (ie dinosaurs), Manytooth (sharks), Manyarms (octopi), Giant-Shell (clams), Seaglider (stingray), Sea Snakes, Skulkers (crocodilians), Stingfinger (jelly fish), and Treenecks (something akin to a Plesiosaur, aka the Loch Ness Monster.)

THE CHIEFS OF TIMBER VALLEY

SILVERSTONE

Male. Became chief of the Timber Folk in DF-4070, and was their leader for 319 years. He was the first to bear the title of "chief". He died after falling through lake ice in a snow storm.

BUCK

Male. Was chief between DF-3751 and DF-3215 (536 years). He was Silverstone's son. He died from food poisoning after eating too many unripe dreamberries.

MISTLIGHT

Female. Was chieftess between DF-3215 and DF-3212 (3 years). She was Buck's sister. She died in a Human ambush.

LONGCLOUD

Male. Was chief between DF-3212 and DF-3005 (207 years). He was Mistlight's son. He died of exposure in a snow blizzard.

HOLLYBERRY

Female. Was chieftess between DF-3005 and DF-2975 (30 years). She was Longcloud's daughter. She was accidentally killed when an archer's arrow flew wild.

CLEARLAKE

Female. Was chieftess between DF-2975 and DF-2650 (305 years). She was Hollyberry's cousin. She died of asphyxiation in a troll passage cave-in.

TWO WATER

Male. Was chief between DF-2650 and DF-2640 (2 years). He was Clearlake's lifemate. He was not a leader and couldn't cope with it, so he appointed the Holt's best hunter to take his place.

BREEZEWIND

Female. Was chieftess between DF-2648 and DF-2451 (197 years). She was appointed chieftess by Two Water. She was killed while avenging her son's death by Humans.

TWINARROW

Male. Was chief between DF-2451 and DF-1762 (689 years). He was Breezewind's brother. He was paralyzed in a fall and later put out of his misery by a friend, at his own request.

LITTLEWIND

Female. Was chieftess between DF-1762 and DF-1493 (269 years). She was Twinarrow's lifemate. She died in strangleweed.

FIREBRAND

Female. Was chieftess between DF-1493 and DF-1066 (427 years). She was Littlewind's sister. She was responsible for having the Thorn Barrier's protection placed around the Holt. She died by a stick through her eye, caused by a fall.

SHEERWALL

Male. Was chief between DF-1066 and DF-1000 (66 years). Since Firebrand had no living relatives, and elder of the tribe, Sheerwall, became chief after her death. He later died of food poisoning.

VINELEAF

Female. Was chieftess between DF-1000 and DF-892 (108 years). She was Sheerwall's daughter. She died from a fall which broke her neck.

CLIFFTRAIL

Male. Was chief between DF-892 and DF-519 (373 years). He was Vineleaf's son. He was killed by a wildcat.

WOODMARK

Male. Was chief between DF-519 and DF-247 (272 years). He was Clifftrail's son. He was killed during a personal fight with the Human chief.

STORMER

Male. Was chief between DF-247 and DF-112 (135 years). He was Woodmark's son. He disappeared one night. Presumed dead.

GREYLOCK

Male. Was chief between DF-112 and DF-8 (108 years). He was Stormer's son. He died in strangleweed.

NIGHTSTEP

Male. Has been chief since DF-8 (32+ years). He is Greylock's son. Presently living as chief of the Timber Folk.

NOTE: There are no special designations which symbolizes the position of being chief of the Timber Folk. In *ElfQuest*, the Wolfriders' chief wore a "topknot" of hair to signify the fact that they were the leader. The Timber Folk have no need for such symbolism. They know who their leader is, and that's enough for them. The fact that both Greylock and Nightstep (the past two chiefs) wore a topknot crest, has no more meaning than Nightway's ponytail. Their hair was long, so they merely tied it up.





KEY

TIMBER VALLEY TERMINOLOGY

Cloudspinner: Tornado.
 Cub: Wolf pup or small Elf child.
 Dreamberries: Small purple berry that grows on a bush. They are alcoholic in nature to the Elves and Trolls and will become highly hallucinogenic when overripe or brewed. They are deadly poisonous to Humans.
 Father Tree: The biggest of the hometrees, large enough to hold most of the Holt, if necessary. Sort of a community tree.
 Grasseater: A horse.
 Greater Moon: The larger of the world's two moons.
 Green Time: Spring.
 Hometree: A shaped tree in which each Elf lives.
 Hot Time: Summer.
 Leaf Fall: Autumn.
 Little Moon: The smaller of the world's two moons.
 Littlestars: Fireflies.
 Moon: A month (sixteen days -- one full passing of the Greater Moon).
 Mump: Troll's term for a young Troll.
 Pincher: Crayfish.
 Pointears: Troll's term for Elves.
 Puffballs: Dandelions.
 Roundears: Elves term for Humans.
 Season: Three passings of the Greater Moon.
 Seasonturn: A year.
 Skyfire: Lightning.
 Skyspinner: Tornado.
 Skyrocks: Hail.
 Skystreak: Shooting star.
 Slaptail: Beaver.
 Sparklefish: Rainbow trout.
 Tall Ones: Elves' name for Humans.
 Treehome: A shaped tree in which each Elf lives.
 Treehorn: Deer.
 Tunneldiggers: Elves' term for Trolls.
 Tunneldogs: Gopher.
 Turn: A year.
 Whistling Leaves: A natural laxative plant with holes in leaves which causes a whistling sound when the wind blows. Mostly found in swampy or marsh areas.
 White Fall: Winter.
 Whitestripe: A skunk.

CLIMATE

The Timber Valley and surrounding Upper World area experiences generally equal portions of each season during the year. On the World Of Two Moons, we are told that a month is based on the Greater Moon's cycle, which is sixteen days. We are not told how long the seasons are, or how many days are in a year on this world, so we will assume a similarity with our own Earth.

There are four seasons this area goes through. The budding of new foliage marks the beginning of the Elves' new year, when the plant life awakens from its winter sleep. This time is called the "Green Time", a term used Spring. This season is pleasant and usually enjoyed by all. The temperatures range on the average between 65° on a cool night, to 80° at midday. (These figures can vary, but this is merely an average). Often, the skies will have lazy clouds floating about when the air is pleasant. The Green Time is also a time of storm and rain. When the cooler air of the northern part of the continent sweeps down to the grass plains region and combines with the warmer off the nearby Waters Of Forever (a sea), storms will form and advance over the lands to dump their rains on the life below. As with any rain, they can range between light mists, showers and drizzles to heavy torrential flash floods and storms. Tornadoes can and do occasionally run about on the Upper World plains. The worst storm know to hit the Valley was the "Death Flood", and is the event used to divide our timeline history. This occurred in the Green Time and that year is known (to the readers) as DF 1.

The next season to roll through is the Summer months, known to the Elves as the "Hot Time". The temperature ranges on an average between 75° at the night's coolest time and into the upper 90°'s by midday. As before, these are only

averages. During this season, the weather does provide occasional rains, which in turn raises the humidity further, but is usually hot and sticky. (Those Elves usually diurnal often become nocturnal creatures to escape the day's hottest weather).

Following the Hot Time is the "Leaf Fall" season, when the plants begin their color-changing preparation to go into their cold weather sleep. After the foliage transforms through myriads of brilliant color, the leaves drop to the ground leaving the branches bare and lifeless appearing (with the exception for ever-green types of plant life). The weather is cooler, with an average temperature ranging between 50° at dark, to the upper 60°s at full sunlight. This is another time of the year that rains are frequent, though the cooler weather makes it rather miserable at times.

Leaf Fall gradually fades as the weather grows steadily colder. It is at this time that the "White Fall" season comes into the region. This has a wide temperature range, usually dependent on how heavy or mild the previous Hot Time was. On the average, the low temperatures often get down into the 10° - 20°s and seldom rise above 50° (though there are exceptions). During the colder part of the season, snows do fall into the Valley. A seasonal snowfall usually doesn't measure up to more than twelve inches, but large and deep drifting will occur.

As the White Fall season goes through its motions, time will slowly warm the region and, once again, the budding of new leaves will signal the return of the Green Time.

NOTE: The figures are given for you, the reader. The inhabitants of the Valley do not have thermometers, nor do they have rulers...

THE UPPER WORLD

The Upper World is what the inhabitants of Timber Valley call the lands outside their sunken territories. The following is a brief description of key points of interest within an eight-of-days' mounted travel distance from the Valley. (Note: the letters in [brackets] coincide with the Map of the Upper World.)

[A] HOLLOW TREES: The site of the original Holt, before the Elves were driven from the forest by hostile Humans. The former hometrees still stand, now inhabited only by woods animals, if anything.

[B] WATCHTOWER: Tall straight pillar of rock rising high out of the plains, made by a powerful rockshaper during the flight from Hollow Trees to see if the tribe was being pursued. Shallow steps spiral up its sides.

[C] BLUE RIVER: The source of fresh water which flows into Timber Valley from the north.

[D] TAR PITS: A treacherous area. the site of death for unwary animals who come to drink at the Blue River there.

[E] TIMBER VALLEY: A large area sunken straight down into the grass plains, with 500-foot sheer cliff walls surrounding a small forest.

[F] PRESERVER MOUNDS: Glossy lumps of wrapstuff varying in size and contents from prairie dogs to buffalo, "haunted" by a flock of wrap-minded Preservers.

[G] BLACK RIVER: Underground segment of the Blue River, which enters the ground at the southern end of Timber Valley.

[H] WHITE CHALK CLIFFS: The Black River emerges from the ground at this place and drops into the sea.

[I] SAFE-HARBOR-ON-THE-TALON: Claw-shaped peninsula settled by a small tribe of sea-faring Elves and their Human allies.

[J] NATURAL RESERVOIR: Formed in the distant past when a rockfall dammed the Blue River. The reservoir is very shallow and its size varies dramatically from season to season.

[K] THUNDER FALLS: Where the water exits the natural reservoir.

[L] STARFALL CRATER: A large, sandy impact crater made around DF-350 GT when a meteorite crashed on the plains. The explosion was visible in Timber Valley, lighting up the sky briefly as bright as day and causing some ground tremors.

[M] BREAKAWAY RIVER: A small, very turbulent branch of the Blue River.

[N] DELTA: A marshy area formed by the silt deposited by the Breakaway River.

[O] CRESCENT INLET: Where the Breakaway River reaches the sea.

[P] BURN SCAR: A place where a forest fire raged in DF 7 HT. The fire ran onto the plains, but the grasslands recovered much sooner than the forest.

[Q] EAGLE MOUNTAIN RUINS: The site of a tribe of mountain-Elves that was nearly wiped out in a war with Humans. A few Elves escaped and set up a new Holt farther away.

[R] SUN PEAK HOLT: The new Holt set up by some of the Eagle Mountain survivors.

[S] GREAT BAY: A bay area almost completely closed off from the open sea. Resembles more of a saltwater lake than a bay.

[T] HAWK ROOST ISLAND: Sharp bare hunk of rock in the center of the Great Bay.

[U] THE ENDLESS SEA OF GRASS: Giant open grass plains. A few spots of trees exist here and there, but mostly wide open space.

[V] THE WATERS OF FOREVER: A saltwater sea. Extent unknown.

[W] THE GREAT WOOD: A large wooded forest area.

[X] THE SKYREACH MOUNTAINS: A mountainous region.

TIMBER VALLEY

Timber Valley is a large area sunken straight down into the grass plains, with 500-foot sheer cliff walls surrounding a small forest. The following is a brief description of key points of interest within the boundaries of this oasis in the Sea Of Grass. (Note: the letters in [brackets] coincide with the Map of Timber Valley.

[A] THE HOLT: Site of the home trees surrounded by a shaped thorn-hedge barrier. **(See related section in this guide).**

[B] TIMBER VALLEY: Valley floor, covered by thick forest and soft grasses, sunken straight down into the surrounding grass plains.

[B1] ELVES' TERRITORY: Half of the Valley claimed by the "Timber Folk".

[B2] HUMANS' TERRITORY: Half of the Valley claimed by the "Ke L'Rhatan".

[C] TWO FALLS: Where Blue River splits just before going over the edge and into a lake below. There are dangerous rocks at the bottom.

[D] BLUE LAKE: The lake formed at the base of Sheercliff by Two Falls. The river continues at its southern end.

[E] BLUE RIVER: The section of Blue River that forms a natural barrier across Timber Valley, cutting the Valley in half from north to south before disappearing into the Black Hole.

[F] ROCK SPAN: Stone archway created by a rockshaper long ago to connect the two sides of the Valley. It was shaped during a peace between the two tribes. **(See related section in this guide).**

[G] TROLL BATH CAVE: Cave with exit between Two Falls, accessible only from the main Troll Kingdom, used for fresh water and the occasional bath.

[H1] TROLL CAVERNS: Main entrance to Troll Kingdom. The full size and extent of the Kingdom are unknown to the Elves.

[H2] TROLL CAVE: Small, rarely used door to the Troll Kingdom on the Human's side of the Valley.

[H3] HIDDEN ENTRANCE: Small, hidden entrance to southwestern region of Troll Kingdom, unknown to the Elves.

[I] FOX PERCH: Rock steps leading up to a stone ledge, shaped by Clearfox, who was killed by Humans while shaping the perch.

[J] THE VILLAGE: Site of the Ke L'Rhatan's dwellings.

[K] SHEERCLIFF: Name given to the walls of the Valley, which are very high and too vertical to climb.

[L] THE RIM: Top of Sheercliff walls, very dangerous to stand near as the edge often crumbles away when weight is put on it.

[M] THE PIT: Place where Humans hold special ceremonies. **(See related section in this guide).**

[N] THE BLACK CAVERN: Mysterious cave that no Elf, Human, or Troll has ever entered ever return. Not connected with Troll Kingdom. **(See related section in this guide).**

[O] THE CLEARING: Unforested area around the entrance to the Black Cavern.

[P] THE BEND: A curve in the Blue River that produces a sudden swift and strong current.

[Q] FOREST MARSH: A swampy area, possibly a leftover of the Death Flood.

[R] SHEERCLIFF PASS: A low part in the Sheercliff that provides a natural winding pathway into the Upper World. The only way in or out of the Valley known by the Elves.

[S] TIOGA'S PATH: Another winding pathway in and out of the Valley. Named for a past Human chief who discovered it. Located on the eastern side of the Valley in a small crevice canyon cut into the sheercliff wall. Very steep and treacherous, and difficult to locate from The Rim. Unknown to the Elves.

[T] SOUL'S REST: Small cave in the Sheercliff where the Timber Folk lay their dead.

[U] RIVERSIDE MARSH: Long stretch of swamp land on either side of Blue River.

[V] COPPERHEAD LAKE: A small odd-shaped lake.

[W] THE BLACK HOLE: Large cavernous hole where the Blue River leaves the Valley and goes underground, to later exit at the sea.

[X] ROCK PITS: Rock pits.

[Y] DREAMBERRY PATCH: Place near the edge of the forest near Blue River where the dreamberry bushes are cultivated by Foxvine. They also grow wild in other parts of the Valley. **(See related section in this guide).**

[Z] THE UPPER WORLD: The huge grassy plain called the Endless Sea of Grass by the Timber Folk. Most of the Valley's Elves know little or nothing about the Upper World, though they were forced into it in the aftermath of the Death Flood. A few, though, have found it fascinating and have explored the Upper world near the Valley. Since the Death Flood, wandering Elves from the Death Flood have joined the Timber Folk.

NOTE: The scale of the map is not quite perfect. Some things are distorted in relative size in order to show their physical appearance more clearly. The size of Two Falls, or the entrance to the Black Cavern are two important examples. Approximate scale: $\frac{1}{4}$ " = 1 mile.

THE HOLT

The site for the Timber Valley Holt was chosen very carefully by the band of refugees who came into the valley from the Upper World. They picked a site about halfway between the Blue River and the Sheercliff that had relatively little underbrush, many stout trees, and a small running stream to provide fresh water. The stream was named Minnowbrook, for the small fish that swim in it in great numbers. It is no more than two feet deep anywhere along its length, and about twelve feet at its widest point. In most spots it can be easily leaped by a walking Elf. The bottom is sand and smooth pebbles, which makes wading in Minnowbrook a popular and pleasant pastime on humid Hot Time nights.

Close to the stream's banks are the Holt Gardens, Silverleaf's pride. Berries, roots, and other edible plant life are grown here during the warm moons to be dried and stored for eating during the lean, snowy season. Goldenbraid also has a small garden behind her tree for growing medicinal herbs and roots.

In the center of the Holt stands the Father Tree, the first tree to be shaped upon the Elves' arrival at Timber Valley. All the Elves of the tribe are born in this tree. It is large enough to hold most of the Timber Folk, if necessary, and Councils are held here during the bad weather. There are several chambers, upper and lower, in the tree, so there is plenty of room. All of the treeshapers of the tribe, past and present, have contributed to the Father Tree in some way.

The Thorn Barrier encircles the Holt. It is a living wall of thorn bushes, erected by treeshapers when Firebrand was Chieftess, and is the Holt's primary defense against predatory animals and Humans. It rises about three times an Elf's height (approximately twelve feet) into the air and is about five feet thick. There are three hidden entrances through the barrier, and the Elves and wolves know how to get through them without difficulty, of course. This wall marks the boundary of the actual "Holt", the place where the Elves live, love and conduct daily business.

Just for your information, according to the Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, a Holt is listed as "a small woods" and a copse, which is "a thicket, grove, or small growth of trees."

In front of the Father Tree's main entrance is the Council Clearing. As the names suggests, this is where Councils are held during good weather. It is also the place where celebrations, dances and other group events are held, and a popular place for Elves to gather at peaceful moments just to sit and converse or work on minor tasks that need doing. Grass grows thickly in the clearing, thanks to the treeshapers.

An finally, a word about hometrees. Making hometrees is not an easy job; it takes time and a great deal of effort. Because of this, the Elves try to make the best use of the available trees before shaping a new one. No Elf, with the exception of the Chief(tess), is entitled to an entire tree. In Timber Valley, the biggest trees are given to families or three [or more, on rare occasions]. Smaller trees house two Elves, either lifemates, lovmates, or friends. The pairings of the native Timber Folk came about naturally, from childhood friendships, Recognitions, and so on. It is more difficult for wanderers, not knowing anyone in their new home. Newcomers are welcome to stay in the Father Tree for as long as necessary, but are encouraged to find someone with whom to share a tree as soon as possible.

Note: There are other trees in the Holt area other than what is shown on the map, but only the hometrees have been depicted to show the arrangement.

NATIVE CUSTOMS OF THE TIMBER FOLK
(& Other Miscellaneous Information)

EATING HABITS: The Timber Folk eat both cooked and uncooked meat -- according to each individual's taste. Though some may prefer their meats cooked over fire, none would refuse to eat it raw should a fire be unable to be built. There are no specific times set aside for eating. A family unit may all choose to eat at once, but an individual's meal time is quite up to themselves. However, celebrations are always accompanied by a holt-wide feast.

CELEBRATIONS: The Timber Folk will celebrate any occasion that warrants it, but there are a few specific times that receive special interest:

* BIRTHS: As Elfin children are rare, this is always a time of great rejoicing. The parents of the newborn are usually given small gifts as tokens of the joy felt by the tribe, and the parties -- both public and private -- are usually abundant for two days after the event. A side note to this should be known, and that being that just before the child is expected to arrive -- about a moon (16 days) in advance -- tradition has the expectant mother temporarily move into the Father Tree. It's

chambers are the largest of the Holt trees and provides the mother's attendants plenty of room. The Father Tree is the birth place of practically all the Timber Folk.

* **LIFEMATINGS:** While there is no real ceremony observed when a couple decide to be lifemates, a celebration is usually held when the two announce their decision.

* **GOOD HUNTING:** If a night's hunt is especially plentiful, a feast is usually held to celebrate. And, if the crop is ripe enough, the dreamberries are often distributed and consumed in large quantities.

* **OTHER CELEBRATIONS:** / The first new leaf sprouting to signal the start of the next Green Time (Spring). / A new alliance between a hunter and a wolf. / A plentiful harvest of the dreamberries. / A new talent emerging. Plus many other reasons to throw a party. Chief Nightstep is well aware of how much celebrations keep up the morale of his folk, so he encourages them at any time.

DARTERING / TRADING: Not everyone in the Holt has the same skills, so a small amount of trading is usually done to acquire items or services needed. Generally, if someone needs a new tunic or cloak, but isn't a tanner or weaver, this elf might trade a new bow or set of arrows that s/he might have made for the new clothes. Worth of items can be decided by both parties. However, trading is a courtesy, not a requirement. Items that are hand-made (rather than grown or just picked up off the ground) tend to have more worth. True, Redlace may have done a great deal of tracking before he found and killed the fox for its pelt, but the wooden stool Silverhair made and then carved intricate designs into required more skill and patience and could be considered to have more value. However, if Silverhair was inclined, he might trade off that stool that took him so long to finish, for something as simple as Redlace's headband. It all depends on the individuals involved. As said earlier, trading is not a requirement with the Timber Folk. If Wavesong needs something, but doesn't have anything of "value" to Freshwind to trade with, Freshwind may easily just give the item to Wavesong, expecting nothing in return.

CHILDREN: When a child is born into the tribe, he or she belongs to the entire tribe. Obviously, direct guidance is the responsibility of the child's parents, but teaching lessons, skills, manners, use of a talent, etc., can fall to anyone in the tribe. If a child's parents are lost, usually a relative takes him/her under his/her protective wing, but the tribe still has a strong hand at the rearing. The chief has overruling authority over every child in the Holt, but usually allows the parents to handle their own control over the young ones. The chief can override any decision parents make concerning their children, but rarely uses this power. As with most societies, the child's parents have final say on what they can or cannot do, even though the cubs are considered to belong to the whole tribe.

LOVE/LIFEMATES: A Lovemate is someone who is someone else's lover. Most tend to stay with one lover at a time, but there are those who can handle even more. Sometimes lovmates will share the same hometree for a time, while others will flit from one sleepfur to the next. A Lifemate is someone who mates for life with their lover. The Timber Folk are generally monogamous. Once a person takes a lifemate, it is for the entire lifespan of both partners. A person can take another lifemate if his/her mate dies. In the case of Recognition, the two affected individuals often become lifemates, in order to care for the child to be born. However, if one of the persons is already Lifemated, it is the decision of everyone involved as to who becomes whose lifemate, if any change is to occur.

MODESTY: The Timber Folk live in tune with nature, and nature is the basis for their existence. One aspect of the elves' personal make-up, however, is the fact that nudity is natural to them. They are not prone to embarrassment if someone happens to see them without their clothes. Granted, someone may feel uncomfortable and awkward if their breeches catch on a limb and tear so that flesh is exposed, but it would not be uncommon to see someone walk over to the Minnowbrook, strip down and openly bathe in the water. If someone wished to lay in the grass in the Council Clearing, wearing only their contented smile, crowds are not going to gather to see the sights. Clothing is worn to protect the skin from branches, thorns and other objects. They also add and enhance a person's personality. Though nudity may be a natural aspect of the natives' lives, they do value privacy during lovemaking, and will hide away from curious eyes. Their lives may be shared, but their times of privacy are honored.

DEATH RITES: Though the Timber Folk know that a lifeless body is no more than an empty shell, the memories and sense of loss is so great that a certain respect is given to the one they used to know. Life is precious to the Elves, especially since births are rare among them. The ceremony is quite simple. A litter is usually constructed to transport the body to its final resting place. The person's possessions are distributed among his/her living relatives or friends. To the west

of the Holt, there is a small cave in the Sheercliff wall known to the Elves as "Soul's Rest". It is to this place the dead are taken. When the body is carried to this place, anyone may accompany the group, though the chief of the tribe is usually the leader of the party. No ritual is observed, except that the body is laid to rest inside the open cave, wearing only the clothing nature has given them. In time, the body will provide nourishment to creatures who happen to venture inside the cave. After the deceased is placed here, the party returns to the Holt to continue in their own separate lives.

THE WOLF-FRIENDS

After the High Ones - the firstcomers - were scattered away from their palace/ship long, long ago, many of them followed the animals they found to learn to live in this harsh new world. The concept of killing was foreign to them -- the animals taught them how to survive.

As fans of the ElfQuest, we know that several groups of elves studied the habits of the wolves. Through time, an alliance was formed with the lupine beasts and the generations of elves began to understand their teachers, and adopt their ways. Through ElfQuest, we know of the descendants of this group -- they are known as the Wolfriders. We've been given glimpses of their history through the pages of ElfQuest, Siege At Blue Mountain, Journey To Sorrow's End, Blood Of Ten Chiefs, Wolfsong, and the rule books of the ElfQuest Role Playing Game and its companion publications.

In the Timber Valley Holt mythologies, our pre-history was much the same. However, there was a time when the wolf-riding tribe split between those in whom still flowed pure elfin blood and those who had become part of the world by an ancestor who gave them a blood kinship with their lupine friends.

One group of the pure-blooded elves followed a pack of wolves far away from their wolf-blooded, elfen companions. They travelled great distances and spent years travelling before settling down and claiming their own territory. Down through many millennia, they lived, thrived, and survived. In this vast amount of time, they had to pack up and leave their home on several occasions to find new lands when either Humans or natural catastrophe drove them out. Time brought changes as it passed, but the elf/wolf alliance remained strong.

They were not bonded with a physical bond, as some of their ancestors had been long ago. but were allied as friends and equals. Neither was the master over the other. They participated in their hunts together, they relied on one another, and shared in their kills. When one needed help, the other gave freely.

Now, thousands of years later, the relationship between the wolves and the Timber Valley elves is much the same.

Note: There are many more Elves in the Holt than there are wolves in the pack. Because of the large difference in numbers, usually only those who hunt and provide ride the allied wolves.

THE TROLL KINGDOM

One year after the Elves descended into the Valley and set up their Holt, a hunting party discovered a large smooth-worked slab of stone on a set of old hinges set into the Sheercliff wall near the lake. Though their tribe hadn't met any Trolls in several hundred years, they recognized the handiwork and proceeded to attempt a contact with those who might have constructed the door. They were successful in their first meeting, but only chief Silverstone was invited in to the Troll King's throne room.

The Elf chieftain offered gifts of soft furs and fresh meats to the King and soon convinced the Troll that a bartering system set up with the Elves would benefit both tribes. The Trolls would rather have not bothered with the Elves, but the trading would prevent the need for the tunnel-diggers from having to go outside their domain.

The Kingdom of the Trolls consists of a large underground network of caves and tunnels that begin at the door opening the Elves discovered, and continue throughout a large portion of the area to the north of the Valley. Actually, their domain was vastly larger, but due to an incident in their distant past, the region collapsed upon itself, creating the large area now known as Timber Valley.

There are many openings out into the Valley, but only two are known to the Elves. The second opening is located directly between the twin waterfalls that cascade into the Valley from the Blue River above. This entrance is accessible only

by way of the Kingdom and is used mainly for fresh water and the occasional bath. There is another main entrance on the Human's side of the Valley, but it is so rarely used as to be almost forgotten. This one is unknown to both Humans and Elves.

The Trolls have been sighted by the Humans on occasion, but no real contact has been made -- other than one incident many years ago concerning the Human chief's son. [see Timeline, DF-47 GT]. The Trolls are known to the Humans as creatures of legend that are mysterious and to be avoided.

In size, the Trolls average around four feet in height, which is similar to the Elves, but are far bulkier and muscular than the point-eared forest dwellers. Their skin has a grayish-green cast and they don't smell all to good. They bath rather infrequently, so sensitive noses usually wrinkle when one is near.

If they chose to be, the Trolls could be totally self-sufficient, but their "business" relationship with the Elves has dampened that possibility. They are generally diggers and metal-smiths, but skills and hobbies are as varied and complex as any culture. They also have a working knowledge of simple mechanics, something that eludes the Elves. Personality-wise, they are a little arrogant toward the Elves, believing themselves superior. Among themselves, the ranks and positions are many.

Throughout the Elves' history of being in the Valley, the Trolls have always been craftsmen to trade with, and fellow gamblers. The bartering system set up between them has lasted so long, that it would be almost unthinkable for it to end. However, the peace of the Valley is about to be disrupted.

A Troll from out of past legends has anonymously returned to the Valley. Through the assassination of the current King, this Troll has set herself up as Queen and is planning a full-scale slaughter of Humans and Elves in her Valley. A rebel faction of Trolls revolt and gain allies of both Humans and Elves in an attempt to overthrow the mad Queen and set things right again. Throughout this upcoming storyline, deaths of known characters will happen; old enemies will become allies and territorial boundaries will change. The above information is rather simplified, to be sure, because this war will be complex and it would be difficult to go over it thoroughly here. Watch the pages of the newsletter for updates and the actual story. Obviously, this section of the GUIDEBOOK will be obsolete after the events of the War, but circumstances afterward won't be covered until the proper time, either in the newsletter or in an updated Guidebook.

THE TALL ONES

The natural enemies of the elves are the Humans. It was because of this race of beings that the elves were forced from their original home. Though the tribe in Timber Valley is not the same one that drove the elves into flight, the hatred is still there.

Ambushes, feuding, kidnappings, murders, and skirmishes occur between the two races frequently and, though efforts have been tried to end the hostilities, no real peace has ever persisted.

The Humans' average height is 5' to 6' tall. They are light to darkly tanned, with a hair color dominance of brown and blondes, and eye colors of blue and brown. Because of their much larger size to the elves, the Timber Folk refer to them as the "Tall Ones" (as well as many other uncomplimentary titles). In their own language, the Tall Ones call themselves the "Ke L'Rhatan", which means "Forest People".

Leadership in their tribe is by one person, rather than a council of elders, and his/her word is final say. Succession rarely occurs by way of bloodline, but by a challenge of rivals near or after the Leader's death. Leadership is designated by a beaded necklace with three golden nuggets dangling in the front.

Just opposite of the elves, the Tall Ones move about in the daylight and sleep at night, except for their hunters, who may go out for prey at any time. To be a hunter of this tribe is to hold high status. For a hunter not to bring in food is a disgrace and an insult. To be a provider is an honor. Because of their physical health and high status, it is common for the greater hunters to participate in the challenge for the place of leadership in the tribe.

Their spiritual leader, the shaman, also holds a high status. This position can be held by either male or female, and is succeeded only by the shaman's personal appointment. One of the duties of the shaman is to see that their sacred duty to rid their land of spirits is carried out. The shaman has no authority to go over the leader's rule on anything, but can be very influential on a decisions in dealing with any situation. Generally, it is the shaman, rather than the leader, who keeps up the constant feuding with the elves. Peace with the point eared beings is not what they desire.

In recent years, there has not been much contact between the Humans and elves. Both the leader of this tribe and the shaman are getting old and their attitudes have softened somewhat with the passing of years. There have been several small incidents where a Human and elf have befriended one another in private, but without knowledge of the rest of either tribe. In the future, this may serve to create an peace between the two races, but only time will tell if this will ever happen.

The Humans' village is composed of a number of grass, mud and/or wooden huts. The size of the dwellings depends on the families living in them. However, the largest structure, which is located in the direct center of the village, is for supplies of food, clothing, weapons, etc. At night, several large fires are kept burning, as well as torches placed at random about the village. It is hoped that this will serve to drive night-loving spirits away from their homes.

Their clothing is similar to those early American Indians wore. Some may be simple in design, while others are elaborate. Beads, lace, fringe, and other items adorn their clothes in an effort to make them appear more pleasing. Leather skins, hides, furs, and woven cloths are all part of their garments.

The language of the Tall Ones is very different to that the elves speak. While the Timber Folk's language is soft and musical, the Humans' tongue is harder and a bit guttural. To date, no Human has ever learned the language of the spirits, but several elves have managed to learn the tongue of the Tall Ones. (Very few of the Timber Folk have bothered to try to understand their enemy's tongue).

ROCK SPAN

A geological feature of Timber Valley is that it is split down the middle by Blue River. Due to the long running hatred between the humans and elves, it is the designated boundary between their two territories. Earlier in the history of Timber Valley, a newly elected human chief made possible a truce agreement with the Timber Folk. There was much cause for celebration, and as a friendly gesture, the elves' strongest rockshaper spent many long days and nights beside the river's banks, drawing solid rock from the ground until it formed a sturdy stone bridge that spanned the distance between both sides of the river's shoreline. The two territories were connected, making the truce ever more evident. It was named Rock Span.

The truce lasted for twenty-three years until one mischievous elf decided to play a harmless prank on the human chief. With the good-natured relationship between the tribes for the last two decades, the elf saw no harm in the joke. However, the prank didn't work as planned, and the chief died as a result! The humans couldn't believe that this could happen, with the strength of the truce, but there were some who still distrusted the elves from earlier times and instigated their people to take revenge. A small war broke out and the territorial feuding began again. Another truce has not been held since.

Rock Span was made from good, dense rock and has weathered nearly 4,000 years remarkably well. Though the truce was long since broken, Rock Span still exists as a tribute to that strong rockshaper. From generation to generation, elfen rockshapers contribute to the stone bridge, adding small shaped designs into the archway. This is sometimes done at risk, for humans have been known to watch the place for an opportunity to kill an elf.

THE SACRIFICIAL PIT

Only a few miles from the Humans' village is a natural open pit that has a depth of about twenty feet, a diameter of ten feet, and contains numerous broken and sharp rocks. In warm weather, this pit is inhabited by several groups of poisonous snakes. A nasty place indeed. It is at this location that the humans hold many of their rituals -- specifically, the sacrifices of captured "spirits" (the elves).

This ritual always takes place at dawn, when the sun comes out to chase away evil beings who prefer darkness. Some amount of cruel torturing usually occurs, before the victim is then tossed into the open pit amidst heavy drum-beating. If the drop alone doesn't kill the weakened elf, the poisonous snakes will finish the job. It is not a pleasant way to die, to be sure.

THE BLACK CAVERN

"The Black Cavern. A mysterious cave that no elf, human, or troll who has entered have ever returned."

The Black Cavern is, in appearance, a normal cave in the Sheercliff wall, one of many in the Valley. The difference is not apparent until someone enters into its black maw. Within a score of normal steps, rounding a corner in the passageway, the air begins to smell slightly odd. It is not distinguishable at first, even to the keen-nosed elves, but it grows in strength as one goes farther down the corridor. The odor is sickly sweet, and makes breathing a little irritable. In the rock walls, small veins of a dark mineral run along the passageways -- it is this material which emits the traces of gas. As the individual spends more time in the bad air, the person becomes light-headed and forgetful.

The unseen gas that the person has been breathing affects the brain, dulling it so that rational thought becomes very difficult. If the individual has been communicating with a friend on the outside (an elf, that is, by way of sending), the companion may "hear" jumbled words before the link is broken. It is at this time when the person on the outside believes his friend to have "disappeared". No amount of sending will generate a response from the disoriented victim inside.

As the person numbly ambles further down the corridor, the air begins to take on a sulphurous tint and a person's lungs will feel as if they are burning. At the end of the long corridor, the tunnel intersects with an underground molten pool of mud and rock. It is from here that the sulphurous gas is emitted. It is also in this room that the oxygen content in the air is so low that the victims of the cavern succumb and dies of asphyxiation.

Although the mechanics of this cave system is naturally fatal to oxygen-breathing life, and can be understood by you, the reader, the inhabitants of the Valley are unaware what transpires after entering the passages of this cave, and therefore mysterious and feared as a "magic death trap".

The Black Cavern has no magic, and it is mysterious only because those familiar with it do not know the reason why none ever return from its tunnels.

THE DREAMBERRY PATCH

With all the plant life in the Valley, there is one bush that is held in high regard by the elves and trolls. It is the dreamberry bush. This rather ordinary-appearing plant produces small purple berries that taste pleasant, but which also acts on the body like a mild alcoholic. This property is natural, not needing a fermentation period.

Depending on the "dosage", the berries have varying uses. A few may produce light-headedness and a general dreamy feeling. During times of story-tellings, a few dreamberries are often prescribed to enhance the images the storyteller sends to his/her listeners when telling the tale.

In larger quantities, they can cause drunkenness and induced sleep. Menders (Non-magical Healers) often mix them with other herbs in a broth to calm a patient and help them to relax. However, when brewed in a wine form, they are slightly hallucinogenic!

Although they have pleasant effects on elves and trolls, the effect on humans is quite different. Dreamberries are fatal poison to them. The juices rapidly attack the human nervous system and death will occur within moments. There is no known cure which can be administered quickly enough to thwart the poison.

The elves of Timber Valley get their main supply of dreamberries from a large garden patch near the shore of Blue Lake. It is tended by Foxvine, who is probably the biggest lover of the "little squishers". He spends quite a bit of time with the Dreamberry Patch, making sure the plants are in the best of health. If an impatient elf attempts to pick of the bushes before Foxvine says they're ready, they'd best be prepared for verbal (and sometimes physical) abuse. Foxvine is very protective of his treasure! However, when the crop is at its best, Foxvine will generously supply dreamberries to everyone, ever proud of the result of patience and understanding of these delightful little bushes.