Role-playing contests open door to romance, adventure

By David Prescott

It has been more than a decade since two Chicagoans invented the first role-playing game, Dungeons and Dragons, and created a fire-breathing new gaming industry in the process.

E. Gary Gygax and David L. Arneson introduced their game in 1974, and this year role-playing games are expected to do record business in game shops worldwide.

Manufacturers are introducing a variety of new products. The most significant development in the industry is the more refined, less complicated game-playing systems being introduced by a number of companies. And several companies have designed role-playing games with characters that will appeal to a wider audience.

The Barbara Cartland Romance Game, a new release by Mayfair Games, is intended to attract women players, who constitute a small percentage of the role-playing market.

Role-playing games have assumed new dimensions in character development, ranging from the cartoon characters in TOON, by Steve Jackson Games, to the characters in the "Dr. Who" television show.

Among this year's new fantasy and role-playing games, including new supplements and modules for earlier games, are:

**Barbara Cartland Romance Game**, $17. Easy, 1-5 players, 1-3 hours. Travel through 19th-century Europe, making the decisions as the hero of a Barbara Cartland romance novel.

**BattleTech, FASA**, $15. Easy to moderately easy, 2-10 players, 2-5 hours. Do battle in the wars of the far future commanding 30-foot-tall, 50-ton robots. Supplements: Tales of the Black Widow, $7; the Fox's Teeth, $7.

**Champions, Hero Games**, $12.95. Moderately difficult, 2-8 players, unlimited playing time. The Dr. Who Role Playing Game time. Role-playing action and adventure in the 1920s and '30s.

**Killer, Steve Jackson Games**, $9.50. Easy, 2 or more players, unlimited playing time. A rule book for the assassin-type games popular on college campuses. A completely nonviolent game that transforms water balloons into bombs and cap guns into revolvers.

**Lords of Creation, Avalon Hill Game Co.**, $12. Difficult, multiplayer, unlimited playing time. A science fantasy role-playing game that covers a number of time zones — past, present and future. Modules: Homer of Roland, $8; Yelt Sanction, $8; Omeagakron, $8.


**Masters of the Universe, FASA**, $15. Easy, 1-6 players, 30-90 minutes. Play the characters of He-Man and the other heroes of Eternia as you invade Snake Mountain to reclaim the King's treasure.

**Pendragon, Chaosium Inc.**, $19.95. Easy, multiplayer, 2-4 hours. Take on the chivalrous roles of knights of King Arthur's round table.


**RuneQuest, Avalon Hill Game Co.**, $38. Difficult, multiplayer, unlimited playing time. A role-playing game of the Dark Ages of Fantasy Europe. Recipient of Omni magazine's Top 10 Games of the Year Award. Modules: Monster Coliseum, $10; RO [Gamemaster's Box], $15; RuneQuest [Players Box], $20.

**Sandman, Pacesetter Ltd.**, $12. Easy, 2-4 players, 2-3 hours. Players wake up on a train and find that they are on a surreal nightmare in which, in the morning, their train is where they are. Pacesetter is offering a $10,000 prize to the first player who can correctly identify who and what he or her character is.

**Star Trek, FASA**, $12. Moderate, 2-20 players, 4-6 hours. Explore the universe by assuming the characters of the Players' "Star Trek" television series. Supplements: The Romulans, $10; the Triangle, $10; the Ship Construction Manual, $10; the Ship Role Action Manual: Klingons, $7; the Ship Recognition Manual: Federation, $7; the Ship Recognition Manual: Romulans, $7; Modules: The Outcasts, $7; A Matter of Concern, $7; Where Has All the Glory Gone?, $7; The Tapes, $7; The Twilight, $7.

**TOON, Steve Jackson Games**, $8.95. Easy, 2-4 players plus game master, 20 minutes per player. A cartoon role-playing game that allows the players to become any character in the wildly popular subject of the comic strip, or "TOON".

**Traveller, Game Designers' Workshop Inc.**, $12. Moderately difficult, 3 or more players, 2-3 hours. Science fiction adventure in the far future. Supplements: Zudani, $7; Oroyne, $7; the Solar System, $7; Twilight 2000, $12.
