

Autumn 2020



GREETINGS GRAND ADVENTURERS!

WELCOME TO OUR FIRST EDITION
OF GEAS' VIRTUALNEWSLETTER!

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Welcome Letter

Greetings Grand Adventurers!

Suffice to say that when I ran for president I wasn't expecting to greet you all via newsletter during a global pandemic but here I am, and maybe that will come as a relief to some of you who have witnessed my tendency to ramble first hand.

Transitioning our society online has been a challenge and I know you are all nervous to see what gaming at GEAS will look like this semester, but I am very fortunate to have an amazing committee behind me and I have the upmost confidence in the measures we have put in place and hope that this transition is as smooth as it can possibly be.

I hope you have all had a summer filled with questing, heists and shenanigans, be it online or with those you have with you at home. I know I have played many a game of Subterra, DND and even got to fulfil my fantasy of parodying the mum culture of the small town I grew up in via charity live stream.

To all those who I have met already, talked to at events and possibly slung dice across a table with, I'VE MISSED YOU! I cannot wait to join your games, play along side you or expose myself for being a terrible PC yet again at the next social.

I'd like to also welcome any new comers who may be reading this and ensure you that GEAS is a place where gamers of all levels and all backgrounds can come together around a table, defeat a big bad and make some new friends along the way.

This won't change because we are all behind screens! We have worked hard to ensure that our gaming events and socials will come along with us to the virtual world and that we have a space on discord just as welcoming as the one around a table on a cold Scottish evening surrounded by gamers yelling at click clack maths rocks.

This year I hope to continue the great work done by the presidents before me. I hope to continue to foster a space of safety, inclusivity and most of all positively affect the gaming community by supporting creators, game masters and players alike.

Welcome to GEAS and our Newsletter!

I hope this provides some insight into how things will work this semester, helps you get to know our brilliant committee and inspires you to pick up some new games !

I can't wait to see / hear you all soon!

For the Glory of GEAS!

Robyn Higgins,

President 2020-2021



Meet the Committee

By Amy Mcmonagle

Questions

What role in an adventuring party would you have?

How did you start playing Table-top Role Playing Games?

What was your first or favourite character?

What was your first or your favourite system?

If you could decide, what would the letters in GEAS stand for?

Robyn Higgins

(She/Her) - President

If I was in an adventuring party i'd like to think i'd be some sort of divine sorcerer but in reality i'd probably be a really bad lore keeper that only knows about cryptids. I got into roleplay when I was in my mid-teens. I worked in a café in a zoo and I ended up playing Pathfinder with a bunch the guys from the kitchen over the summer. I eventually joined GEAS in my second year of uni, bullied everyone into being my friend and discovered that there is a magical world of systems out there for people like me who think numbers are scary. My first character was a stabby half elf and that's all she wrote. My favourite character is a middle aged new age Mum who I played in this fantastic one shot over the summer. Her name was Shukuranda and she believed in essential oils, crystal healing and that caffeine is a gateway drug. She was the most insufferable bitch I have ever roleplayed and my god do I wish I could play her again. I'm not sure I know what my favourite system is but I really love Changeling the Dreaming for its lore and I really love Troika for its weird character creation and bat shit spells. Who doesn't love playing races such as poorly made dwarf or replacing someones respiratory system with gills for an undetermined amount of time ?

If GEAS could stand for anything it would definitely be Gays Everywhere Attempting Some sort of roleplaying.



Sophie Hine (She/Her)

- Secretary



The internet once told me I'd be a 3rd level Human Ranger and I did a multi-day hike this week, so let's just go with that. I'd be the one with basically anything you could want in their pack, but only if you can dig through my collection of cool rocks and useless knick knacks first.

I got my start in TTRPG's when a friend of a friend was trying to start a campaign with members of our class. We got as far as character gen and never actually played a session.

My most memorable character was an Imperial hunting space rabbit.

Trix was a Kushiban, working to take out Imperial cells, after the events of Return of the Jedi. She also embezzled government funds, skipped out on missions by taking tour buses around Mandalore, and didn't believe in using computers.

My first system was D&D, but I realised pretty quickly that it wasn't really my thing. The change of pace that a Trollbabe game gave me was a blessing and cemented my love of RPGs, so for that it gets a lot of love. If GEAS could stand for anything it would be, Geese: Eternal and Sinister

Amy McMonagle

(She/Her) - Treasurer



If I was in an Adventuring party I'd be the support healer! I can be found taking notes in the corner of a bar whilst the rest engage in a bar fight, shouting over a healing word and prepping to break them out of jail the next day. Around four years ago, I think at a 2am get-in with Bedlam Theatre, the director of the show and I were taking a break over a cuppa tea and talking fantasy stuff. Next thing I knew I ended up in a D&D Campaign. Whilst the group are now all based in different countries, I pop back occasionally with a guest PC. My first character died, came back once via your classic deal with a demon, screwed said demon out of said deal when she died a second time and is now scamming angels in the ethereal plane. My favourite character is Trystan, a half-orc soft wizard who just wants to find a husband, adopt some kids, and live out his life as a magical postman. I love exploring and subverting tropes, particularly in relation to gender, and playing Trystan allows me to show the more vulnerable and emotional side of men in fantasy that is often lost to tired tropes and toxic masculinity.

My first system is your classic D&D 5e. My favourite system is a tie between two fully home-brewed ones I've come across at GEAS. There's Alex Kiker's which features a "story point" mechanic which encourages players to develop the story alongside each other and the GM. There's also Angus Barker's (which is a biased favourite) because my tomfoolery led to the development of a new magic class. If Geas could stand for anything it would be: Gays Enjoying Adventuring Shenanigans

Emma MacKay (She/Her)

- Events Organiser

If I was in an Adventuring party I'd probably be a healer since that's my go to role, but it's fun causing some chaos so maybe the trickster in the group working behind the scenes solving problems by causing other problems.

I got into TTRPG's when I started watching D&D streams like Critical Role and Dimension 20 and thought they were really fun. My first character was a cleric named Miracle who I loved, but I don't think I can choose a favourite.

Some of my recent characters include a halfling bard who was so chaotic to the point where if money went missing she was the first suspect even if she was completely innocent, and an 84 year-old ranger with a pet badger that she thinks is a dog.

My first system was D&D 5e, it was the only system I knew before joining GEAS. I like the idea of more simple systems too where you can focus more on the story.

If GEAS could stand for anything I'd want it to be Give Emma All the Shiny-rocks.

Stella Segar (She/They)

- Socials Co-ordinator

I am a fundamentally broken person incapable of meaningful introspection! So, I took an online quiz and got chaotic neutral paladin, but in an ideal world, I'd be the hideous troll NPC who forces the party to solve an overly complex riddle in order to cross my bridge.

I got into TTRP's in my junior year of high school, I was invited to join a game run by some friends who had graduated the previous year. Our game ran for the summer, and then I started writing/GMing a few games for other friends. I actually ended up writing my college application essay about TTRPGs and my specific experiences with D&D 5e. My favourite character is from a game I was in at GEAS during second semester this past year, which was unfortunately cut short. He was a half-elf light cleric named Dirk. The game was set in London in the mid 1980's, and he was a skateboarding street preacher who liked chamomile tea and had been raised in a California new-aged doomsday cult.

My favourite System is Monster of the Week! As an aspiring cryptozoologist/Fox Mulder impersonator, it fills the eldritch abomination-shaped hole in my heart.

If GEAS could stand for anything it would be: Goo, Ectoplasm And Slime :o)



Vivek Santayana (He/Him)

- Wellbeing Officer



If I was in an adventuring party my role would be the sociable skill monkey. I'll be the sort of person who would talk to people and get things done.

I got my start in TTRPG's when I joined a Blades in the Dark campaign at Geas. I never felt welcome in this hobby before I joined Geas, and it wasn't something that was sold back in my home country. But I've always loved collaborative storytelling.

My favourite character is an academic turned Marxist revolutionary who wanted to overthrow the monarchy in Gondor. He got tenure at this lecturing job and was overcome with the guilt of selling out into a bourgeois profession. My Favourite system is Masks: A New Generation by Brendan Conway and Magpie Games. You play teenagers who are coping with the challenges of growing up, including their friendships, the expectations of adults, and their own self image or sense of their place in the world. Oh and they also happen to be superheroes with little self control. The mechanics are excellent at dealing with the relationships between PCs, and the game always has So. Much. Drama!

If I could make GEAS stand for anything it would be Grassroots, Egalitarian, Anarchist Socialism

Alan Jackson (He/Him) -

Webmaster



If I was in an adventuring party I would be the grumpy veteran. I first got into TTRPG's when a friend in primary school started running D&D. So I joined in. The next year I was the GM and it's been downhill ever since.

I have had so many characters. I mostly GM so have sadly few memorable characters. My first system was old school red box D&D but my favourite systems are all the many powered by the apocalypse games.

If GEAS could stand for anything it would be GEAS, escapers anonymous society.

Charlie Kelly (He/Him)

- Compulsion Liaison

If I was in an adventuring party i'd probably be some sort of wizard who is mostly occupied with scheming but will provide healing /cups of tea.

I first became interested in TTRPG's watching Critical Role and a few less serious dnd series. My first time actually playing was in the welcome week one shot session where I played a system called Dread where instead of rolling you use a jenga tower. Despite the fact I knocked over the tower whilst disarming a nuclear bomb I had a great time.

My favourite character is Andronikos and I made him to be Greek hero who actually acts like Greek heroes do in mythology. That being a self obsessed, arrogant jerk. It's been hilarious playing as someone with such a massive ego (the list of titles he uses grows by the session) and the trouble he gets the party into with his big mouth means life is never boring.

The system of my first campaign was Cyberpunk 2020 which I found great to play. A dystopian capitalist state with cybernetics that basically turn you into a superhero. What's not to love?

If GEAS could stand for something it would be: Gloria Exsultansque Aleones Sequantur

(May glory and revelry follow gamers)

Sorry I've got to show off my latin somehow



Emily Booth (She/ Her)

- Legacy Advisor

If I was in an adventuring party I'd be the bard that is actually terrified of combat and only exists to heal and buff up the other party members.

I first got into TTRPG's at my local gaming shop (Knightly Gaming) when I was in high school and was asked "do you want to be the character that prays a lot or the character that goes pew pew?" Safe to say I became the party wizard.

Picking a favourite character is like choosing between children - I'd say either my mafia goblin called Don Gobleone, who had everyone call him Step Daddy, or my hillbilly conspiracy theorist called Hildy, who consistently lied about why her father was in jail and spent all her time posting her latest conspiracy theories to her online forum.

I'm that pretentious player who prefers systemless games, because I'm in it purely for the roleplay. My first ever system was Pathfinder, and considering how bad I am at maths, the fact that I still roleplay speaks volumes about how good the GM was.

If GEAS stands for anything it's Goblins, Eldritch Abominations, Students





GEAS ONLINE



For the new semester, Geas has moved on-line and all of our activities, like weekly games, one-shots, and socials, will now take place on Discord. This can be a little bewildering at first. But the Committee have tried to incorporate features to make this as close to our in-person meetings as possible. This is an introduction to some of the salient features of the Geas Discord:

GAME CHANNELS

One of the most important features is a virtual space to host your games. We appreciate that personal subscriptions to Google Meet or Zoom might be a bit pricey, and we want to provide all our members a space that they can use for meeting remotely to run their games. Discord gives us a free video chat platform that integrates well with the rest of our community and chat functions. On the Geas Discord, we will provide each game an out-of-character text channel on which players can contact each other, an in-character text channel for dice rolls or game-related chat, as well as a voice channel for you to chat or video call. We can also create extra channels for you if you need. GMs will also have moderator privileges on their channels so they can manage messages and members. You don't have to use the Geas Discord, but you do have the option should you need it.

BOTS

Our Discord server will also have two dice bots (one main dice bot and one back-up) that you can use to roll dice in your games. We will also have various bot commands for general server features, like reporting rule breaches, submitting feedback, requesting features, et cetera. You can find a full list of bot commands on the Server.






SAFETY & VERIFICATION

The Discord server also has various moderation features, like members having to verify that they have read and accepted the server rules, as well as features to allow the Committee to moderate the server more efficiently. We hope that this will enable the Committee to ensure that the Geas Discord Server is a safe and welcoming environment, just like what we expect our in-person events to be. Also, all of the Geas rules and policies will still apply: we will be enforcing our game safety policy and anti-harassment policy, and we will also advise GMs and players on how to use safety tools in games. We want all games at Geas, whether run digitally or on-line, to be a welcoming space where everyone is able to participate.



PITCHES

The big question a lot of you might be asking is how we will be running our usual game pitches. We have a system in place which we hope will replicate how pitches worked IRL. First, we will get members to select whether they are new to Geas or a returning player to a campaign. Once pitches get underway, we will start a video call on a voice channel and have GMs come on one by one to pitch their games. Once all the GMs have pitched their games, we'll open the sign-ups for individual games to returning players. Once all the returning players who want to re-join their games sign up, we will open the signups to newcomers, and then after that to everyone else. There will be an automated menu that will pop up and allow you to select which game you want to join, and if that game is full you can move to a different game using the same menu. When you sign up to a game, you should automatically gain access to that games' channels. We will explain this further on the day, and we know that it might be a little tricky to get used to, but if we can bounce back on a critical fail, we can bounce back from any Discord glitches!





POSITIVES OF MOVING ONLINE

Apart from it being rather fitting that we're moving on-line in 2020, the year of Cyberpunk, there are some advantages to this: we no longer have to queue in the Library Bar to get food. And, more seriously, we can welcome back all of our alumni who've moved away! We know that many of our members who are with us in spirit, on our mailing list or on our Discord, haven't been able to come to our events because they're far away. But now that Geas is moving on-line, it gives us an opportunity to come back together and welcome our alumni back to the fold. It would be awesome to see our old members come join us once again. It is fitting that in 2020, the year of Cyberpunk, we are moving Geas on-line. We know that this won't be the same as what we've previously done, but hopefully all these features on our Discord server will make it as close to the full experience as possible.

Article by
Vivek Santayana



geas.org.uk/discord



Socials and Events Online

EVENTS

Hi everyone!

This years one-shot events will be held on the GEAS discord server and there will be themes with each one, starting off with some memes for the freshers one-shot and Halloween in October. The themes for the other one-shots will be revealed after freshers, and don't worry if the game you plan doesn't match the theme! All games are welcome.

The GM workshops will be held over Zoom and we ask that if you're interested you let us know so we can provide you with the room code/link! These will cover topics like GM basics, game safety and getting into character.

- **Emma Mackay**

SOCIALS

In addition to holding several events throughout the year, GEAS also puts on socials! With GEAS being online for the foreseeable future, all of our socials will be held via our Discord server, which can be accessed at: <http://geas.org.uk/discord>

Our first social of the year will be our freshers' social, on September 26th, starting at 7pm on the GEAS Discord. Our online socials will feature a main voice chat channel, and "breakout rooms" for smaller groups to hang out in. Socials are a great way to catch up with friends (or meet new ones), chat, drink, and play a few rounds of JackBox or visit members' Animal Crossing islands.

- **Stella Segar**



System Reviews

For this newsletter we made a call out to our members to send in small reviews of systems that they've been enjoying playing online. These are their responses...



Quest by TC Sottek

Released earlier this year, Quest has very quickly garnered a reputation as one of the most accessible and beginner-friendly RPG systems in recent years. It is an incredibly streamlined high fantasy RPG whose core mechanics are resolved using simple d20 rolls. There is no maths involved, such as calculating damage or even adding modifiers. The core currency of the system is Adventure Points, a resource that does not replenish, which you spend to trigger abilities. But you can earn back your AP each session, with bonuses for good role play. The game is entirely focussed on the story and has plenty of incentives and mechanical cues for role-play beats during sessions. The system may lack complexity and intricacy that many other games use to generate content, but the clarity, versatility and narrative fluidity make the trade-off worthwhile. This is an excellent gateway TRPG, and it lends itself really well to streaming or on-line play.

<https://www.adventure.game/>

- Review by Vivek Santayana

Lady Blackbird by John Harper

Lady Blackbird is a short tabletop adventure that follows the crew of The Owl, an airship, in transporting the Lady herself from the evil imperial homeworld "Ilysium" to the far reaches of the "Remnants" in order to be with her lover Uriah Flint.

Spanning 1-3 sessions (or longer if you really wanted!), the game has a great mix between co-operative story-building and a loose success/fail dice system. The whole adventure is FREE online

<http://www.onesevendesign.com/ladyblackbird/>

- Review by Duncan Henley-Washford





Troika! By Daniel Spell

Troika is fantastically chaotic & it is a very enjoyable system both online & offline. Only a d6 is used, with a roll over or under your stat, depending on the situation. A character can be made in minutes yet the skills you can learn are limitless, making it perfect for one shots & longer campaigns

<https://www.troikarpg.com/>

- Review by Jamie Jupp-Hammond

If you've played a great system online over the summer let us know on Discord! We're always happy to hear about new and interesting systems and support smaller writers and artists

**Reviews Compiled by
Sophie Hine**



Keep your eyes peeled
on social media for
membership perks
that support our
favourite businesses
artists and creators!



This quarter's dice set are Bittersweet
Nightshade by beholdersgaze.com
They are a lovely lavender purple
with a lime green swirl, perfect
for any Necromancer!
We are very fortunate to have
been offered a discount code
with them available via membership
perks on discord!

Membership

Perks