

PROJECT AON

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

This is a brief coverage of the activities of the collaborative volunteer group “The Aon Project” during the calendar year 2011.

Project Aon originally came into being towards the end of 1999. The first full calendar year of activity was from 1 January 2000 — 31 December 2000. Therefore, the 2011 calendar year was the **twelfth** full year of activity for “The Aon Project”.

There was only *one* new full release this year. May saw the long-awaited release of the twenty-fifth *Lone Wolf* adventure, ***Trail of the Wolf***. One month prior to this, we also belatedly released a PDF facsimile of ***The Lone Wolf 10th Anniversary Calendar*** after some years of confusion as to exactly who retained the rights to the original publication.

This might convey a slowing down or a lack of involvement on the part of the members of The Aon Project, but nothing could be further from the truth. The year 2011 has been marked by a great deal of activity, with a vast amount of work completed that will stand us in good stead for the coming year.

ERRATA SPRINTS

Both prior and subsequent to this year’s single release, volunteers engaged enthusiastically in the intriguingly-titled Errata Sprints. By way of explanation, it is fitting to provide a brief review of the state of the wiki **Errata** pages at the start of 2011.

While many reported problems are easily resolved, some are less straightforward. Between 2003 and the start of 2011, we had accrued in excess of 400 separate reported issues which we had not been able to resolve easily. These were spread across all the books: *Lone Wolf*, *Grey Star*, and *Freeway Warrior*. While we are committed to releasing the newer books, we have found many times that resolving issues in earlier titles makes it easier to implement the same changes across the whole range, thereby also making work easier on those currently unreleased.

In April we began with Errata Sprint 1, though we had no real idea how many there would be.

Each week, a series of issues, often related by an overriding ‘theme’, would be discussed and resolved. As each week passed, more of these troublesome problems were fixed. We paused for a few weeks to work on the release of Book 25. This included implementing the “Note on Standard Usage” for such words as Drakkar(im), Nadziran(im), and Ligan(im). You can find this on the Errata page for Book 25, but it has been standardised and implemented across the books for the upcoming re-releases.

As soon as Book 25 was available on our site, we returned to the Errata Sprints without letting up. Over the summer period, despite various holidays and real world commitments, we increased our efforts and resolved over *one hundred* grammatical inconsistencies in less than six weeks. Of course, these Sprints also turned up other issues which we tackled, sometimes working on as many as a dozen books at once. As is evident, the name ‘Errata Sprint’ is probably something of a misnomer; ‘Errata Marathon’ may have been more appropriate!

After fourteen such Sprints, as well as several ‘Summer Specials’, we are now in a situation where the number of outstanding issues against books already published is zero, which is why we are looking to re-release the earlier books. The Grand Master books in particular will benefit from being re-released with each book containing literally *hundreds* of fixes.

A late decision has been taken to investigate revising certain sections of Books 1–16 based on Mongoose Publishing’s solutions to the many footnotes in our books. Due to this fact, the re-releases will contain substantially fewer footnotes, though we will not necessarily use the same text as the Mongoose Publishing editions. For reference, such changes based on the Mongoose editions will be duly noted in the Errata section for each book.

WEBSITE & EXPERIMENTATION

Something that we have been meaning to investigate for some time was a less ‘fussy’ download page for each book. After some discussion, we have decided upon a **new format** that is in the process of being rolled out across

the books' pages. We have also experimented with adding Amazon affiliate links from each of the books' pages; whether this will generate any small amounts of revenue remains to be seen. In July, we were contacted by Grand Master Joe Dever himself and asked to place the Darkland Banners on our site, as illustrated by the French artist Jidus.

As far as the look and feel of the books go, we have decided to replace the ugly apostrophe glyph with Unicode 'curly' apostrophes. This change will be in the next released edition of each book and has a knock-on effect in that it ensures the PDF versions will look their best.

We have also investigated the potential for an **automatic Random Number Table** written entirely in HTML5 code without the need for a third-party language or plugin (Java, Javascript, etc.), though this is unlikely to make it into the re-releases. Our current XSL files will require a major overhaul to ensure that we create correct HTML5 code instead of our current XHTML 1.0 Transitional code. That said, we would certainly like to hear from anyone who feels comfortable in contributing towards making this happen.

NEW VERSIONS

April saw the release of *Rune War* in the brand new **single-page illustrated** format, something we have been excited about for some time. This new format presents the complete text of the book on a single webpage, fully hyperlinked, and includes all illustrations. Having all the text displayed on one page has also proved to be extremely useful for editing purposes.

In April, we released an **EPUB version** of *Rune War*. This versatile format is used on many mobile devices and we intend to release more books in this format in the near future.

PDF

Throughout the year, a number of the PDF documents were updated to include new information and to correct errors. Between April and August, all four *Combat Heroes* titles were re-released to fix problems reported by eagle-eyed contributor LeRoy McSwain.

In May we revised the 'Battle of Cetza' facsimile of several articles taken from *GamesMaster* magazine issue 4, the *Lone Wolf Articles* document, and *The Skull of Agarash*.

June saw the unexpected but much appreciated

contribution of scans of eight pages previously missing from *Lone Wolf Club Newsletters* 10, 11, 12, and 13. *Late breaking news*: and on December 30th we received scans of the two pages missing from Newsletter 4 *and an entirely new edition that we didn't know existed*—New Year's Special 1985! We are now missing only 10 pages from these rare publications. If anyone holds copies of Newsletters 14, 22, 23, or New Year's Special 1993, **please** get in touch.

In August, and then again in December, we updated *The Magnamund Companion* with some minor changes. Also in August, we added more material to the *Lone Wolf Software* document, mostly reviews from the 1980s of the *Lone Wolf* computer games released on the ZX Spectrum. We also updated the *Lone Wolf Miniatures* file with some exclusive material from Conor McMullin, who sculpted some of the original miniatures.

September saw the text of the *Readers' Handbook* PDF updated to bring it into harmony with the online version found on our website. Other materials received in December were an advertisement for the original range of *Lone Wolf* miniatures from Games Day 1985 and a set of stickers that were probably also from the event. The *Lone Wolf Miniatures* and *Lone Wolf Miscellaneous* files have been updated accordingly, which is what caused a brief delay in the publication of this report.

With regard to our desire to produce PDF versions of the gamebooks, much work has been done this year to finalise the production process.

In line with our efforts to update the *Grey Star* books alongside *Lone Wolf*, the back-end infrastructure used to build PDFs of the released books has been updated to make it possible to prepare PDFs of the *Grey Star* books as well as all the released *Lone Wolf* books (1–24). Draft versions of the PDFs of the released books in Spanish (1–9) have been published on the website.

Finally, the Souvenir font, the typeface used in the original *Lone Wolf* and *Grey Star* books, has been purchased and work has been done to integrate it into the PDF build process in order to provide high-quality PDFs that more closely resemble the original books.

EDITING

As already outlined above, the wiki **Errata** pages have continued to be a boon to the project. Our endeavour is that any proposed change to a book already released should be resolved in six months or less, preferably much more speedily. This is in comparison to our previous schedule in which issues sometimes remained open for a period of about eight years (2003–2011) before finally being resolved. Now the backlog has been cleared, we feel we should be able to keep abreast of reports made against earlier titles.

RE-RELEASE SCHEDULE

The proposed re-release schedule has been revived with a view to getting the most up-to-date and accurate revisions of the books available on our website. The lead-time for each release (sometimes known as the ‘Comment Period’) has been drastically reduced with a view to releasing batches of the books together. This eases the burden on both us and our server.

We do not envision the re-release schedule to hinder the release of the final three *Lone Wolf* books. Indeed, there will likely be a delay between each ‘batch re-release’ as we work on one of the remaining titles.

We are also committed to releasing the three remaining *Freeway Warrior* adventures, namely, *Slaughter Mountain Run* (renamed as *Mountain Run* in the U.S.), *The Omega Zone*, and *California Countdown*.

SOFTWARE

During 2011, the development of specially-written software designed to play the *Lone Wolf* books with automatic bookkeeping gained ever more popularity and momentum. **Seventh Sense** now covers the entire original series of the *Lone Wolf* books from 1984–1988 (Books 1–12).

TRANSLATIONS

Work on the content for the two non-English sites being run alongside the English-language site also continued over the past year.

PROJECTS/WISHLIST FOR 2012

We are hoping for the following projects to be completed during 2012:

- Publication of the remaining three *Lone Wolf New Order* books as a priority.
- Re-release the newly-revised editions of those titles already available from the website, to wit *Lone Wolf* Books 1–25, *Grey Star* Books 1–4, and *Freeway Warrior* Book 1.
- Source scans of the **twelve missing pages** from the *Lone Wolf Club Newsletters*.
- Publish more Spanish and Italian translations of the books.
- Simultaneously release some books in the much-requested PDF format as well as the traditional online edition (tentative).

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Here is a basic breakdown of Project Aon’s financial situation over the previous 12 months (all figures are in US dollars):

Income:

| | |
|----------|--|
| \$235.15 | <i>donations</i> |
| \$ 30.23 | <i>Amazon Associates earnings</i> |
| \$ 3.50 | <i>savings account interest earned</i> |
| <hr/> | |
| \$268.88 | <u><i>total income</i></u> |

Expenses:

| | |
|----------|---|
| \$119.40 | <i>dreamhost website hosting</i> |
| \$ 99.00 | <i>Souvenir font license (one-time expense)</i> |
| \$ 16.33 | <i>projectaon.org domain name registration</i> |
| \$ 10.88 | <i>PayPal transaction fees</i> |
| <hr/> | |
| \$245.61 | <u><i>total expenses</i></u> |

Assets:

| | |
|----------|----------------------------|
| \$432.27 | <i>savings account</i> |
| <hr/> | |
| \$432.27 | <u><i>total assets</i></u> |

Both as a group and as individuals, “The Aon Project” look forward to 2012. In the coming 12 months we hope to release the remaining three *Lone Wolf New Order* books, as well as completely revised editions of *Lone Wolf* Books 1–25, *Grey Star* Books 1–4, and *Freeway Warrior* Book 1. This will be the largest set of updates attempted during a calendar year thus far in the history of the project, and it will clearly require a lot of work. However, with the lion’s share of the effort—the revision

of the actual text of these books—already complete, we feel this is eminently achievable.

Can we say that the end is in sight? Not quite yet; in addition to the three *Lone Wolf New Order* titles there are also the three as-yet-unpublished *Freeway Warrior* books to consider. Nevertheless, in view of the nature of the work already undertaken to get those books prepared for a final round of editing, we anticipate those books should be fairly straightforward to prepare for release once *The Hunger of Sejanos* has finally been released. We encourage all *Lone Wolf* fans to join us in volunteering.

For Sommerlund and the Kai!

THE AON PROJECT TEAM
JANUARY 3rd 2012