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## Dungeons and Dragons

### Role game defended

Dear Editor:  
In following media accounts of the recent Orangeville trial, I have concerns over the attention the game, Dungeons and Dragons, received. I found the information very one-sided, leaving readers with bad feelings towards it.

I am 37, active in local community activities and a regular church attendee. Recently, for my effort in the community and for working with local young people, the Hamlet of Whitevale presented me with their "Citizen of the Year" Award.

The young people's organization that I look after is a role-playing club in North Pickering called "The Whitevale Gamers". It was organized and is controlled by the older boys and girls and myself. We started about three years ago and now have about 30 members between the ages of nine and fifteen that meet once a week.

Until you have experienced role-playing, you can not appreciate the value or the benefit that they draw from it. I have seen shy children get involved. I have seen ingenious ideas materialize. I have listened to poor readers read scenarios to their peers with enthusiasm. I have seen excitement pour from their faces.

Role-playing games like Dungeons and Dragons aren't new. They have been around since the children first played together. You role played when you were small. You played doctor, cowboys and indians, school or war. Role-playing was the same then, only now our children's world has expanded. They have been introduced to James Bond, The Roaring 20's and Life In The Future. If you follow the theory

that role-playing games turns its participants into potential killers, then our greatest fear should be from actors and actresses who continually role play. This is totally unfounded, in fact, role-playing does more good than harm. For a child with little or no imagination, it gives them a means to develop. For creative children, it gives them an outlet to expand their creativity.

The problem is not with the game but with the child. A child who is emotionally disturbed or has an unstable environment at home, turns to a fantasy world. Just as judo gives hyperactive children an outlet, role-playing games offer a fantasy haven to escape the real world. If role-playing games did not exist, disturbed children would probably turn to street gangs, science fiction reading, survival games, video, arcades, martial arts or some other means to satisfy their need to escape.

Related to role-playing games are miniature lead figures representing characters and monsters. The children spend hours painting and displaying these in creative dioramas. The patience and creativity that this develops is incredible.

In Whitevale, we hold annual March break tournaments and contests during our spring festival, (Harmony Day), that this year falls on May 25. We invite everyone out on Harmony Day to see what the children are doing. I would suggest also, that parents also try a role-playing game with their kids, so they can see what it's all about. Who knows, it may even bring back fond memories of their youth.

Sincerely,  
Lloyd Thomas  
Whitevale



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