

# Q&A Spotlight: Return to Northmoor PodioAdventure

By Luke Meyer

luke@spookyouthouse.com

In September 2007, Tim White and Kim Stone burst onto the scene with their podcast, Return to Northmoor. In a world awash in podcasts of all shapes, sizes, and color, Northmoor stands out from the pack by being the web's first PodioAdventure. This new type of podcast walks the listener through an actual roleplaying adventure from start to finish, using actual play to highlight interesting scenes and possible trouble spots. This unique combination allows a busy GM to prepare and adventure while driving in the car, exercising, or sitting in their cubicle.

Tim was more than happy to sit down and answer a few questions about the world's first PodioAdventure.

**TOW:** *I love the concept behind RtN since it finally allows me to use drive time to prep for games. What made you decide on this format?*

**Tim:** I was using my drive time to mentally prepare for my games (sorry, other I-70 commuters, my mind wasn't fully on driving). I was also using my drive time to listen to podcasts about role-playing games. One day it occurred to me to mix the peanut butter and chocolate so to speak, and the PodioAdventure was born! More subtly, I found that my patience for reading pages and pages of published craft was diminishing. As an experienced DM, I wanted an adventure scenario with a rich NPC landscape that cut to the chase, and didn't spell every little thing out.

Finally, when I was writing a lot of scenarios for the RPGA, I found that the lack of interaction between

the people writing the scenario and the people running the scenario was leading to a lot of bad experiences for players. Having someone walk you through how the scenario was supposed to go and then being able to listen to an example of how it actually went really helps the author communicate their intent without having to write up reams of "if/then" text.

**TOW:** *How long and what level ranges will the entire adventure cover?*

**Tim:** Well, in theory, it will run up to level 30, and take about another year of podcasts. We're running a "double fast" experience progression, but since each session covers 2-3 RP/Story encounters and 1-2 Combat encounters, it takes quite awhile to go up through the levels. We regularly give tips as to where more of each could be inserted to best suit your group. The cooperative world-building that we encourage between the players and the DM helps ensure that those inserts are well connected to the characters and the story.

**TOW:** *How do you players feel about becoming internet gaming celebrities? Do they have trouble avoiding the paparazzi?*

**Tim:** I have no trouble, but Kim's internet celebrity status disturbs her sometimes. Then again, she's from a place where they grow paranoia as high as an elephant's eye. As for the rest of my players, they really enjoy listening back over the actual play they get twice as much fun from a single gaming session that way, once playing, and once listening.

**TOW:** *Can we expect a published campaign book in the future?*

**Tim:** Most likely.

**TOW:** *Are you planning on continuing the podcast with another campaign when Northmoor is finished?*

**Tim:** Probably not, as writing, running, producing, editing (audio and show materials), mastering, hosting, and administering is more than I'd like to commit to long-term. More than likely, we'll concentrate on building tools to help other PodioAdventures get off the ground, and release our own "one shot adventure" type episodes via those tools, as well as PodioAdventures of published scenarios.

**TOW:** *Do you think feedback from your early episodes will change the way you run the campaign?*

**Tim:** Definitely - having that dialog between the people running the adventure and the people writing it is key to continuous improvement. Even writing the whole thing with an eye toward someone else running it really affects how you do things. I have to pay much more attention to continuity - my group regularly forgets the entirety of who did what last session, whereas our listeners do not.

We couldn't have done all this without the support, technical expertise and encouragement of the Spooky Outhouse crew, so we'd like to give them a huge thank you!

Visit Return to Northmoor's homepage at <http://northmoor.spookyouthouse.com/>

## Return to Northmoor

