

# skirt!

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**OH, BABY!**  
Great Cloth Diaper Change Saturday at UNF **Story, E-2**



Illustrations by Annie.Liao@jacksonville.com

## Claire Taylor

as Lara Croft from "Tomb Raider"

Claire Taylor has played Dungeons & Dragons for four years, but she's also an avid video game player. Her favorites are "Tomb Raider" — whose main character, Lara Croft, she describes as a female Indiana Jones — and "Left for Dead."

As much as she loves gaming, she cringes when she thinks about the stereotypes associated with the gaming community.

"I think most people, when they hear the word gamer, especially tabletop games, think we're all overweight, that you live with your parents or eat Cheetos off your chest," she said.

Taylor got her husband, Matt Taylor, into the games, and he often plays with her. They play in three Dungeons & Dragons groups, and she's starting a new group from her house, where she'll be the dungeon master (the game organizer in charge of creating challenges). She said from what she's heard, she will be the only female dungeon master in Jacksonville.

"It's fun to be in control," she said. "It's like creative writing that you can actually see as a group and on a table."

When she started playing in St. Petersburg, her hometown, she knew of no other female gamers. But she's come across some in Jacksonville and has seen more come to the games.

She said one of her biggest frustrations as a female gamer is being underestimated by male players, especially in online games — until she beats them.

"With girls, most guys think it's awesome and you wear a chain mail bikini, or that we're just doing it because we want to make the men in the game miserable," she said. "We just want to play and kill things and find gold and treasure."

## Women make up about 40 percent of all video, RPG players and play differently

By Tracy Jones

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Fantasy worlds filled with weaponry, duels and capturing treasure. Ingredients far from sugar and spice and everything nice.

When it comes to role-playing games — in which players take on characters in a fictional setting through a board, video or live-action competition — many think it's a boy's world.

But female gamers are gaining in numbers. According to a recent study by video game industry trade group Entertainment Software Association, about 40 percent of all video and role-playing game players are women, and women older than 18 represent 33 percent of all gamers. Boys 17 and under, often thought of as the demographic holding the majority in the gaming world, represent 18 percent of gamers.

Women also play differently in role-

playing games. A 2009 University of Southern California study found women spend more time online than men, play with more intensity, less aggressively, and are less likely to quit mid-game. It also found female gamers tended to exercise more and weigh less than the average American woman.

Chris Bettis, co-owner of the newly opened Hammer Hall Gaming on King Street, has played Dungeons & Dragons and seen the difference between how men and women in Jacksonville play.

"There's a misconception that females can't play," he said. "In fact, females seem to have more of a mental capacity, while the men just go for the gusto and jump in."

Skirt! recently talked with three Jacksonville women who embrace their love for role-playing games.

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### Amanda Dill

as a warrior from Dungeons & Dragons



### Tea Rorstrom

as Spark from live action role playing

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