

PBM

Issue 20

Unearthed

The Mysterious Realm of Play-By-Mail Gaming

20th Intoxicating Issue!



December 11th, 2022

Will you raise a toast to PBM gaming?

PlayByMail.Net

PBM

Unearthed

ISSUE #20

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The Great Scroll of PBM

Will your name be found there?



Send Submissions To:
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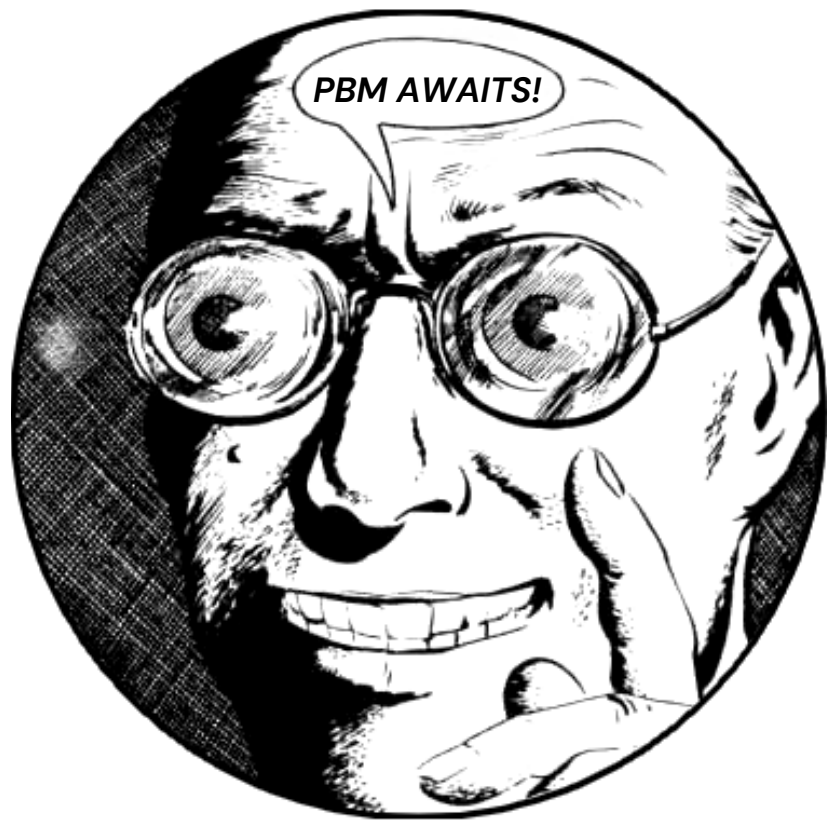


Table of Contents

Editorial

PBM Links Other Links

Survey On Hyborian War

I Don't Know Websites

Rules In Open-Ended Games: TribeNet - A Case Study

What Did They Say? One Two Three Four

Alamaze Game Variant - Steel #5642

Comic 1 Comic 2 Comic 3 Comic 4

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Feudal Lords

RickLoomis PBM



Feudal Lords simulates the struggle for kingship in a mythical period of English history. In the year 801 A.D. following the death of King Arthur, Britain is left without a legitimate successor to the throne. Can YOU unite Britain and become the new King of Britain?

- Up to 17 players in each game.
- 46 fiefdoms controlled by player or non-player computer opponents.
- Each player represents the head of a noble family and controls one fiefdom.

<http://www.rickloomispbm.com/feudal.html>



Which kingdom will you rule?



HYBORIAN™ WAR



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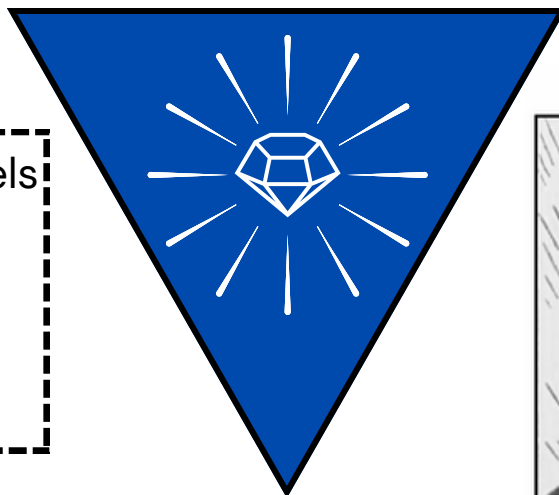
www.reality.com

Quest of the Great Jewels

The Third War of the Great Jewels is over, having ended with the intervention of the Powers-That-Be, but not before most of Zorphlia was laid waste and the greater part of its inhabitants destroyed. The Powers-That-Be have sealed the Great Jewels (talismans of immense power) and many of the lesser talismans in the Forbidden Cities, and set enchanted armies to guard them. Only scattered remnants of the four peoples remain. Can you marshal your forces and come forth to be the sole ruler of Zorphlia?

The object of the game is to accumulate the most victory points or to acquire all three of the Great Jewels in a limited number of rounds of play. Each type of player is awarded victory points for achieving different objectives.

Quest of the Great Jewels is a multi-player, computer moderated, play-by-email fantasy wargame.



Azoni – builders of great citadels.

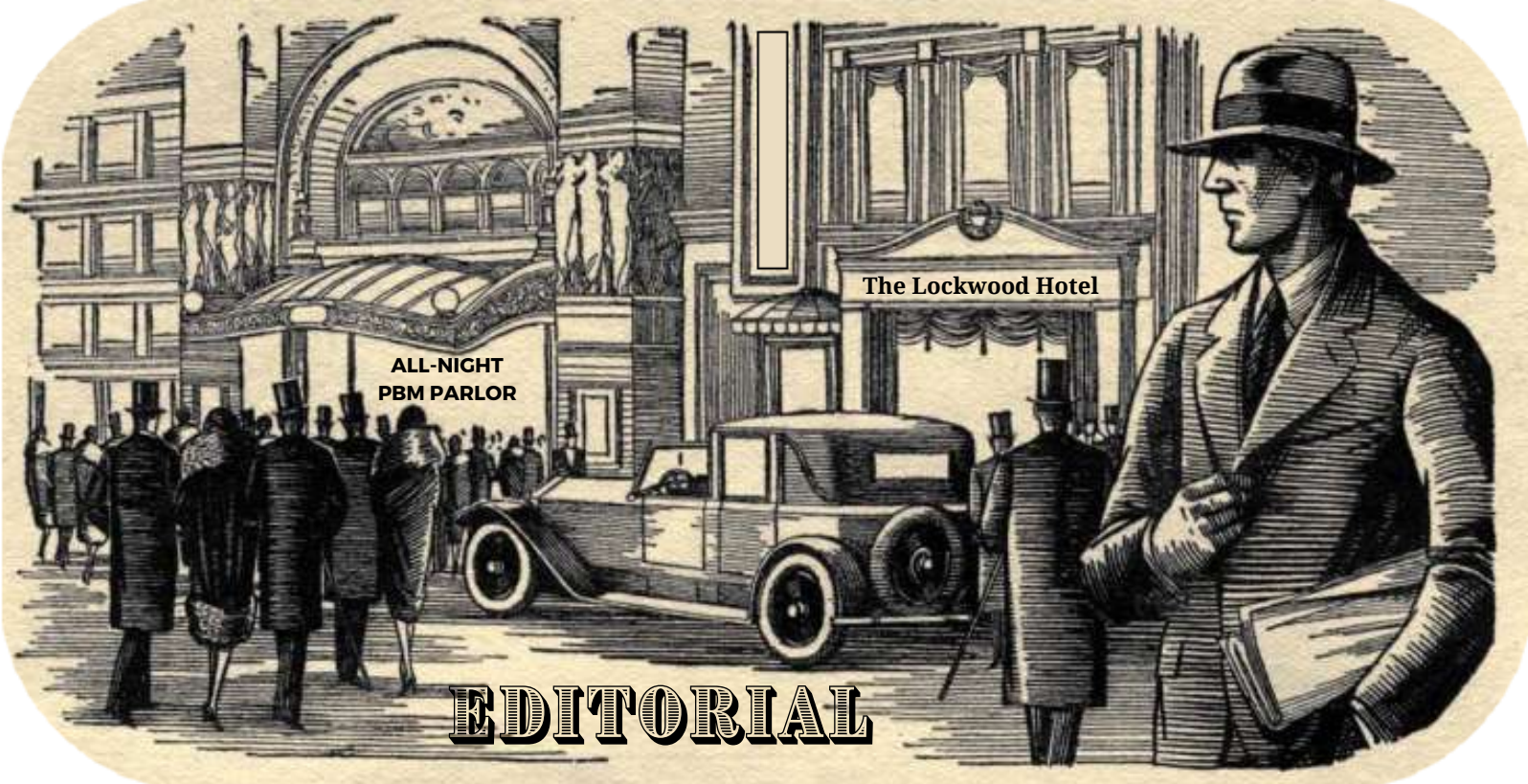
Quntag – emperors of vast provinces.

Rilris – hoarders of the treasures and talismans.

Slenth – destroyers and ravagers of the land.

ONLINE
ONLY

Be sure to join us on our Facebook page!



Welcome to Issue #20!

As Christmas draws ever-closer, do try to not allow stress and frustration to get the best of you. Shopping is fine and dandy, for those who enjoy such things. Not everyone does, though.

Going in debt for presents that you can't afford makes no real sense. Christmas isn't a make-up day for all of the times that you came up short over the course of the past year. Make it easier on yourself - *and on others* - by remaining calm and at peace with the world. Being at peace with yourself is sometimes the greatest present that you can give.

The truth is that we tend to make Christmas hard, when it shouldn't be hard at all. We allow our priorities to become turned upside down, and what

do we gain in the process?

Peace on Earth, good will towards men. If we're not at peace with ourselves, then our ability to spread peace becomes all the harder to achieve. The world is much too big of a place for any of us, as individuals, to bring peace to all of it. Instead, try and focus upon your little neck of the woods - yourself, your family, your friends, your loved ones, and perhaps even a few that you otherwise don't really know.

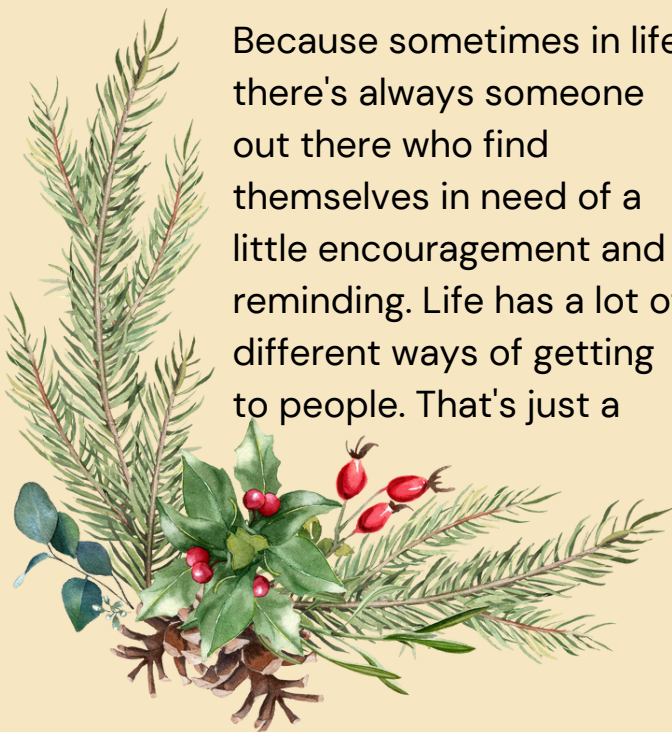
I hope that this holiday season brings much cheer into your lives, and that you take time out to reflect on what is really important. And for each of us, that might vary quite a lot, although we all tend to share in common certain basic things that we consider to be fundamental to a happier life.

On the PBM end of things, if you're looking for a special sort of present for some in your life that you really don't know what to get for Christmas, you could do a lot worse than getting them set up in a play by mail game. PBM gaming is, after all, an excellent way to take the edge off of some of the frustrations that visit themselves upon us throughout the year.

If you're going to send Christmas cards out to others, time is starting to run short, so get your act together (or you'll end up like me - always wanting to send a lot of Christmas cards out, but invariably only ending up mailing just a few, if that many).

Why bother with going on and on about any of this, rather than stick to some tired script about PBM gaming?

Because sometimes in life, there's always someone out there who find themselves in need of a little encouragement and reminding. Life has a lot of different ways of getting to people. That's just a



fact. While things in your own world might be all rosy and dandy, that's just not the case with everyone. We all go through rough moments in life, and for some, its rougher than for others.

The world doesn't end, if you don't get all of your Christmas cards sent out. It's also not the end of the world, if you can't afford presents, or even if you end up going in debt for presents, when you had planned to not do so.

Neither the world nor life are all about money. Try and keep things in perspective. It costs nothing to be kind. It is a gift that anyone can give, and it's a gift that is always in season.

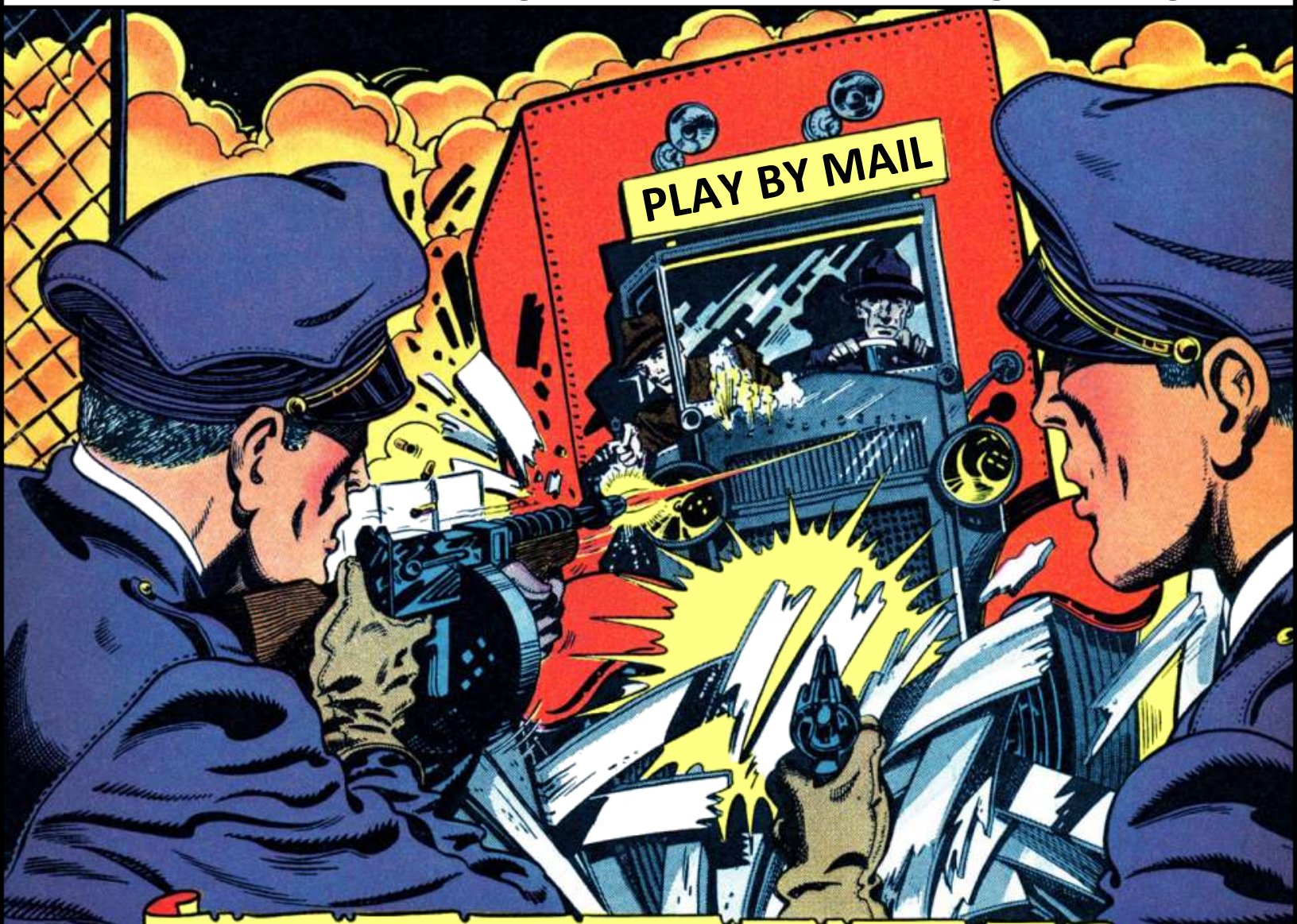
I hope that you enjoy this issue! With any luck, the future will visit more issues upon us. May your holiday be a bright one!



ERESSEA

<https://www.eressea.de/>

The excitement is gonna come busting through!



Nostalgia. Entertainment. Fun!

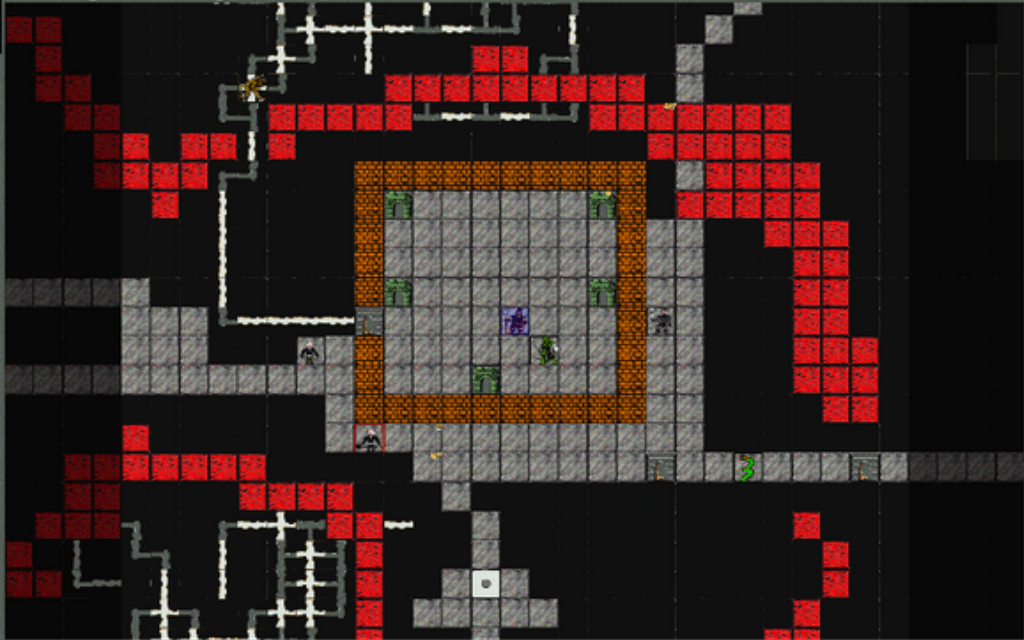
DON'T LET THE FUN POLICE STOP YOU!

DUNGEONWORLD

The Largest PBM Adventure Game Ever Made!

[Last Character](#) [Next Character](#) [Write Message](#) [Messages](#) [View Items](#) [View Creatures](#) [View Terrain](#) [View Turn](#) [Other Details](#) [Main Menu](#)

Runeforge Guild Dungeon: an Open Cave Area



Sir Lorgrim Axehand (10468)
Cave Dwarf Leader

Gold: 29523

Alignment: Good
Hostility: Neutral
Vision: 14
Move Rate: 6
Current: 159 out of 1
Attack: : 33
Experience: 1524
Damage: 16 to 19 (

Statistics
Appearance: 25
Willpower: 20
Dexterity: 27
Strength: 30
Wisdom: 26
Intelligence: 10

Build Orders

Character Orders		Defences	Dam.Red.
1		Nor 83	2
2		Fire 50	6
3		Cold 47	1
4		Alch 51	6
5		Magi 46	1
6		Ment 23	1
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Terrain Info
an Open Cave Area
MPs: 1
Vis. Adj: 0
Att. Adj: 0
Def. Adj: 0

EQUIPMENT

[1] Head Power Metal Helmet +	[9] Over Hand Steel Gauntlets +3
[2] Neck - Nothing Equipped	[10] Finger Ring of Prot. +20
[3] Body Power Full Plate +5	[11] Back - Nothing Equipped
[4] Waist Girdle of Gold	[12] Left Arm Power Wooden Shield
[5] Legs - Nothing Equipped	[13] Right Arm - Nothing Equipped
[6] Feet Dead Man's Shoes	[14] Attack Hand Power Battle Axe +15
[7] In_On - Nothing Equipped	[15] Not Used - Nothing Equipped
[8] Over Body Malakin Robe	[16] Defence Hand Soulstrainer Net

BACKPACK Account Balance 250.0 Turn Due Monday 28 November

Potion of Heali [1] X 12	Ivory Token [6] X 5	Rations Portion [11] X 6
Healing Ointmen [2] X 9	Ring of Prot. + [7] X 1	Potion of Heali [12] X 1
Double Healing [3] X 1	Giant Fiery Gem [8] X 1	Magic Button [13] X 1
Teleport Home S [4] X 1	Mirror Fragment [9] X 1	Empty [14]
Re-Teleport Scr [5] X 1	Skull Sceptre [10] X 1	Empty [15]
Empty [16]		Empty [17]
		Empty [18]
		Empty [19]
		Empty [20]

Other Info

Last Slept: 2 Last Ate: 0

Sector Info

A screen capture from Madhouse's DungeonWorld Nexus View Editor





I Don't Know...

Richard Lockwood

I don't know...

...what other PBMs day to day lives are like. I hope that you guys have full, exciting lives, packed with great jobs, lovely partners, fantastic, overachieving kids... but at the back of your mind, there's a nagging doubt.

I know there is in mine. What's happened to Ælthric and Natasha?! Both Sean (Ilkor) and Roy (The Isles) have had personal issues to deal with lately, and it's not my place to go into them, other than to say; "Guys, your health and well-being is more important than any silly old postal game!"

That's a downside of my favoured type of PBM, the SCHMRPGPBM (I will get that to catch on!), in that every turn is very GM intensive. For most strategy games, the rules are baked into a computer, and it's simply a case of entering, either manually, or by file, the orders, and have your computer spit them out.

SCHMRPGPBMs are different. There's a hell of a lot of work that goes into each turn. Having run one, I know this,

and that's why I'm constantly astonished as to how Sean (Gads) and Roy can keep it up. (If you'll pardon the expression). Every turn is individual, and, while you can CTRL-C / CTRL-V descriptions of places, temples, star gates, markets, brothels etc, the actions of a player character are unique. And require personalised moderation. As a GM, you need to be able to deal with turns that come in first or third person text, and reply accordingly; you need to have records (much easier now that turn replies are word processed) of EXACTLY what happened last turn, (I once (as a GM) had a character stuck in the hold of a ship, the only light source being a flickering lantern. He used that to his advantage in his turn, only for me to tell him it was actually just a candle... Turns were handwritten then, and I just took notes, not remembering that it was actually a lantern... It didn't seem important at the time!)

As I've said before, hand moderated games are interactive fiction, whereas computer moderated games are wargames. One isn't any better than the other, it just depends on your

gaming preferences. (Although I've played a hand moderated wargame before - the most bizarre Yaldnif, but that probably deserves an article of its own).

SCHMRPGBPMS are an exercise in writing, in helping to develop a world, the legends and history of that world. Look at Saturnalia, Æs, Calvana, The Isles. All about the storytelling, rather than the spreadsheets of some of the excellent wargames. (Hey, I'm a computer programmer and maths geek in my day job, I'm not knocking a good spreadsheet!)

Wargames you can win, rôleplaying games, you try and stay alive and make history.

Anyway, where was I going with this...?

Oh yes. With computer run games, you have your weekly / fortnightly turnaround, and it's mostly automated. With your hand moderation, you have to take into account the possibility of your GM catching COVID-19, or having a very sick dog, and so your turn might be delayed.

At the end of the day, particularly if your GM is running a game for free, you might not get your turn back in the expected seven days (or whatever). But your GM's physical and mental health is more important. Let's face it, we do this for fun. Let's not forget that.

Let's love the RPG-ers.

Cheers,

Rich. (And Hans, although he hasn't been to any new pubs recently!)

ILK DARK RISING

ONLINE
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Game Variant - Steel #5642

12-player - 40 turns - single player victory

SO	The Crown Islands	The Hidden Realm of the Sorcerer	uncledarkseid
LY	Darkover	The Vile Culture of the Lycans	Lord Garth
UN	The Diamond Coast	The Underworld Cult of Secrets	Canticar
DE	Krynn	The Seven Hells of the Demon Princes	Zarashand
DU	Triumvia	The Domain of the Great Druid	Strylian
DW	Zanthia	The Dwarven Lords of the Mountains	Vball Michael
FT	Nyvaria	The Expanse of the Free Traders	Runigruth
LI	The Sword Coast	The Empire of the Lizard Kings	Windstar
GI	Pellinor	The Giants Above The Trembling Ground	Blackstaff
AT	Zamora	The Legendary Civilization of the Atlanteans	Harry O
AL	Mythgar	The Experimental Studies of the Alchemist	Percolay
TY	The Untamed Lands	The Evil Reign of the Tyrant of Gor	shaun toley



Alamaze is a turn-based strategy game that features more than 100 distinct commands covering the aspects of ruling a kingdom in a fantasy realm. There are commands for military engagements between kingdoms, wizards to cast a myriad of magical spells, political figures to assume control of another's region, an array of magical artifacts to assist efforts, and a streamlined economic system to manage the necessary details of ruling a kingdom.

With the advent of the 4th Cycle: Maelstrom in 2019, then further enhanced in 2022, Alamaze now consists of 32 fantasy kingdoms, 130 magical spells, 102 military units, 67 artifact encounters, and a rare resource called Mithril. The map consists of 13 different regions, each providing special considerations for your kingdom during gameplay



**PBM COMPANIES ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR NEW WAYS TO
PROCESS TURN RESULTS FASTER. THIS IS WHAT DRIVES
ALL TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES AND DEVELOPMENT.**



Rules In Open-Ended Games: TribeNet - A Case Study

Peter Rzechorzek

I am sometimes asked whether there are any “hidden” rules in TribeNet, and in particular, whether there are rules known to some players but not others. The short answer to this question is “No,” but the question itself does prompt some reflections on the nature of rules in open-ended games.

If you take classic games such as chess or drafts/checkers, the rules for these games completely enclose, define and delimit what you can and can't do in the game. There is no room for the bishop in chess to generally move diagonally, but on occasion leapfrog a square because the player has special dispensation from the match referee. Were the Bishop allowed to move this way, you would not be playing chess.

And though there may be exceptions, board games in general follow this sort of static model. One advantage of this is that players (assuming they have read and understand the rules) know pretty well exactly where they stand. I say “pretty well,” because we are familiar with rules, no matter how well the author thinks they are written, that allow a degree of interpretation and consequently, disputes.

But generally speaking, with a board game, you can anticipate outcomes on the basis of the rules on the one hand, and the flukiness of the dice on the other.



Some PBM/PBEM games strive for this level of clarity and precision, enabling players to confidently know that a particular action will produce a particular consequence, and this confidence is important for planning and strategy. I would suggest that where games have clear objectives and win conditions, it is easier to formulate and lock down the rules.

But open-ended PBEMs are a different kettle of fish, especially if the game contains elements of RPG. I will talk specifically about TribeNet, as this is the game I know. In TribeNet, the rules set up broad parameters of play, while embracing flexibility as the game evolves into new, and often unpredictable, areas. In a way, this simulates what happens in real life, as our plans, which can seem neat and clean in the abstract, encounter the unpredicted (and likely unpredictable) that require us to revise, modify and reject. And in life, this is an ongoing process that many would say is what gives life its spice and meaning.

Let me tackle this from another angle, for which I will recruit Proust to make the point. Look around the room you are presently in, and try to describe it. It might have a desk, a computer, white walls, a tee shirt on the floor, a view of the city, a photo of your girlfriend, etc..

Putting what we see into words constitutes the “description” of the room (at least as it is at this particular moment). And I can put you, my cyber friend, into this room via this description. Indeed, I can share the description of this room with a number of people, and we can play together in this shared environment with this description as a platform.

But let’s suppose one of the players PMs me, and asks, “Is my girlfriend smiling in the picture?” Yes, I say, and hastily add this fact to the description of the room. The following day, the same player asks, “What colour is her hair?” To which I reply, “It’s black” and hastily *No wait!* I can’t keep finessing these fine details into the description of the room. If I did, the description would be unending. A judgement needs to be made – *that is, there are just some things that don't need to be included in the rule book.*

Reality is just too detailed to be captured in words. You never will (Are there any grey hairs on her head? Yes. How many? How long are they? Does she still dye her hair...?). The world is organic, and any game that attempts to capture the nature of organic reality in rules is going to fall short.

So here is the issue. The player that knows the colour of the girlfriend’s hair has privileged knowledge. It’s a hidden (from other players) rule, if you like. Something said in an off the cuff way that has little to no impact on what others do – *or does it?*

Now let me circle back to the original question about hidden rules in TN, and give you an answer relating to a feature of the TN world. In the TribeNet landscape, Players/Clans will at some stage find what are called Special Hexes on the hex map. These might be local villages, a merchant, a request for something from an NPC, a find, a hint or a host of other things.

These are often organic encounters. For example, in one month a hex might not be a Special Hex, but next month, a local trader decides to set up shop in this hex and sells goods at a certain price. The next month, the price is increased by 10%. These Special Hexes are “unlocked” by and for the player only when they find them, and thus, any of the details of any particular hex are not broadly known by the full playing group. Now, let’s suppose in one of these Special Hexes, a local offers to show the Player/Clan how to make a unique item - for example, a Hatchet. Let’s also suppose the Hatchet requires 4 Coal and 1 Iron to make. The Hatchet has now been defined by a rule, but it is a rule known only to the player that discovered the Special Hex. At a later stage, the details of the Hatchet will become public knowledge, but at the point of discovery, it is private, and in my view, so it should be.

Suspense & Decision

Someone who makes a discovery in the real world does not, despite the power of social media, have this knowledge instantly transmitted to the world's population. This example falls under the general principle of "unlocking." In TribeNet, when you unlock a Special Hex, you are privileged with this knowledge. This is essentially a design decision about how the game mechanics run. It is a hidden rule, but I would suggest, it is not a "hidden" rule in the pejorative sense. Others may disagree, but this is how things are.



Galac-Tac
A 4x Space Game

"All the News From Clans to Print"

Clan News

Global Edition

Fire Warnings: The fire threat has passed.

VOL. DCCCXX . . . No. 58

820-07, 8 DECEMBER 2022

clannews@outlook.com

FREE



Vincent van Goat: the one-eared Clan News mascot

The Clutch



elcome to a new issue of Clan News...our longest yet at 28 pages! Take a day off work to read this one.

I don't expect this to be a growing trend (trend of growth?), we just happen to have many great clan article submissions this turn. I'm planning to do a reader survey in a few issues to help refine what Clan News is and where I should (and shouldn't) spend any time as the editor. There's a lot of content in every issue, but not all of this content is going to be of equal interest to all.



Peter the GM is hoping that players will submit their orders early this upcoming turn so that it won't interfere with his pre-holiday schedule.

I'm always looking for more clans to be interviewed and we could also benefit from more caption contest entries and clan notices. As a reminder, you're paid in-game for being interviewed and submitting any clan notices. If you win the caption contest, you're paid for that, too!

Until next time...don't forget to feed your goats.

Raven Zachary, Yáahl, Clan 540



Image by George Catlin via Wikimedia Commons

In This Issue

	Page
• Xmas Break	2
• Player Map	2
• Monthly Reminders.....	2
• The 123 Caption Contest.....	2
• Tribball League	3
• Creating a City Special.....	5
• Tales from a Mining Community	9
• The Great Adventure.....	10
• We're the Ekawi - Episode 2	12
• Fire Control.....	13
• Clan Interview: 500	13
• Featured Item: Gold.....	14
• Featured Rule Topic: Absorbing/Disbanding Units.....	15
• Featured Skill: Research.....	16
• Featured Research Topic: Stew.....	16
• An Update on TribeNet 2020.....	16
• T.W.D.H!.....	16
• Notices.....	17
• Rumours.....	18
• Notes from the GM	19
• Tribe Talk Discord Tidbits	21
• Clan Ratings.....	25

Contribute

Submit your content to Clan News. Contributors are paid in-game. See the last page of this issue for more details.

Clan News Issue #59 deadline:
19 December 2022 @ 8:00 UTC



Notices

A Tribball Guild, a mysterious message, and a joke. A selection of great (and paid!) notices in this issue.

Check out this month's clan notices starting on page 17 of this issue.



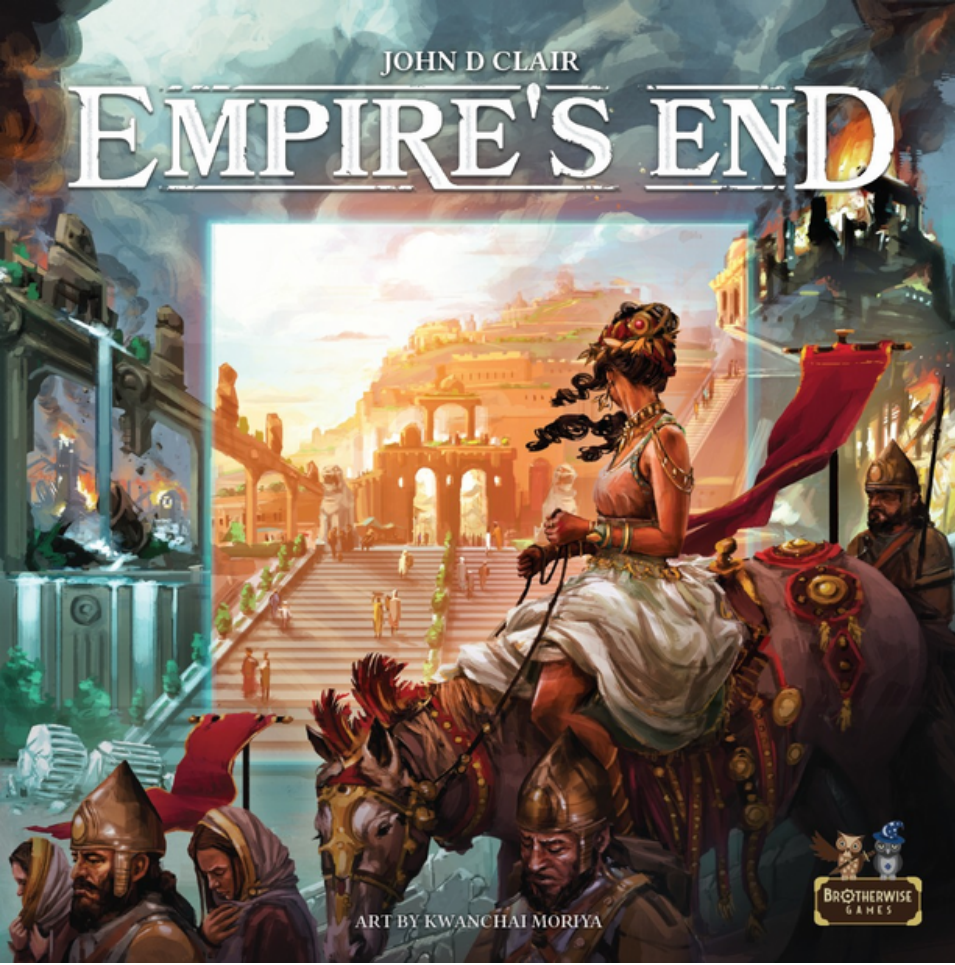
Turn Deadline

Orders for 820-08 are due on 11 December 2022

Australian Eastern: 20:00
UK: 9:00
UTC: 9:00
USA Eastern: 4:00 / USA Pacific: 1:00

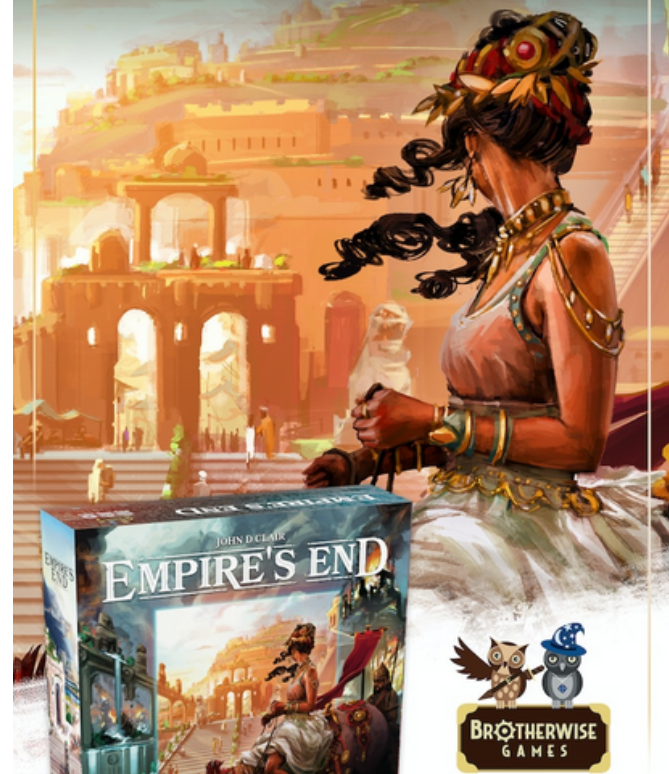


JOHN D CLAIR
EMPIRE'S END



EMPIRE'S END

By John D Clair



In Empire's End, players compete to see whose empire can best survive and adapt during an age of calamity. Weather disasters, manage resources, and face other empires in tests of military might in this reverse-bidding game from John D Clair.



2-4



13+



45-60'



SUSPENSE & DECISION MAGAZINE

The printed version of Issue #22 is in the mail. Had a small snafu at the Post Office, they are now closed on Saturday in our neck of the woods.

We are now putting together Issue #23. It will be the first one with an AI generated cover. Also looking for information from the different game companies for the "Spokesmen Speak" column. If you have an article **to submit**, please do. I would also like any updates for the Games Index.

I will send any game company that offers some information for the Spokesmen Speak column access to the digital library. We are also going to pick one article each issue going forward as a "featured" article - and send the author a check for 20.00. Not a lot, but something.

If you get a chance - fill out the feedback column and send it in. Thanks!

Geric

12/05/2022

LOOKING FOR A GOOD EMAIL GAME

Hi, any good PvP battle system out there that is fun to play over email / fast, without waiting a long time for turns to end and email? So combat should be idle/automatic, so it is computed in seconds by a bot server, and players just select tactics or orders to activate skills etc.

adbenitez

12/10/2022

PBM CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wouldn't hurt for PBM companies to keep us players more informed, though perhaps with a weekly email update or something. So at least we know we've not been forgotten.

TVMike

12/10/2022

QUEST

I've been playing the heck out of this game this week, when I've had the time.

Grendel

12/10/2022

Play By Mail gaming - It's been around a long while, for a reason.

I NEED TO CHECK THIS PBM THING OUT.



HEROIC FANTASYTM

a play-by-mail game of
dungeon exploration
and adventure

**OLD SCHOOL
PBM ENTERTAINMENT!**

JOIN TODAY!

Rick Loomis PBM
rickloomispbm.com

(Note: The background of this block is a scan of a game log with various entries like '(C140) Fyke...', '(C141) Tom: Ogre...', '(C165) Eight of Coins: DEAD Male', etc.)

DUNGEON WORLD

Estates

PBM BURNOUT

I'm so done with writing PBM articles (that is, hobby-related articles, I'm the editor of Clan News for the game, TribeNet). I'm not sure if that burnout will ever refresh. If it does, I agree, it's a cool idea for an article.

SuperNova is the least community-oriented PBM I play. It takes over a year of real world time to run into anyone in the game, at which point it shifts from being a solo game to being a two-person game. When you run into a third or fourth player, this could be years later. Players need to come into this game with a solo mindset. It's also quite spreadsheet-intensive. This is one of those games that you shouldn't join unless you know this is your style of game. I've seen a lot of people try it and quit.

My whole style of promoting PBMs has changed. I generally try to scare a prospective player away from a game in the process of promoting it. I've seen too many people get excited about a game, only to find a turn or two in that it's not for them. Prospective players need to do more upfront evaluation of a game, before they dive in. This is why I was hoping to collect game turns and order sheets of all PBM games being run, so that prospective players could evaluate games on a deeper level before signing up. Players diving in without doing their research is especially challenging for game mentors who spend a lot of energy trying to help a new player, only to have that player quit.

Raven Zachary

12/09/2022

Company Commander

by

Jason Oates' Games





Subscribe to the Middle-earth Newsletter

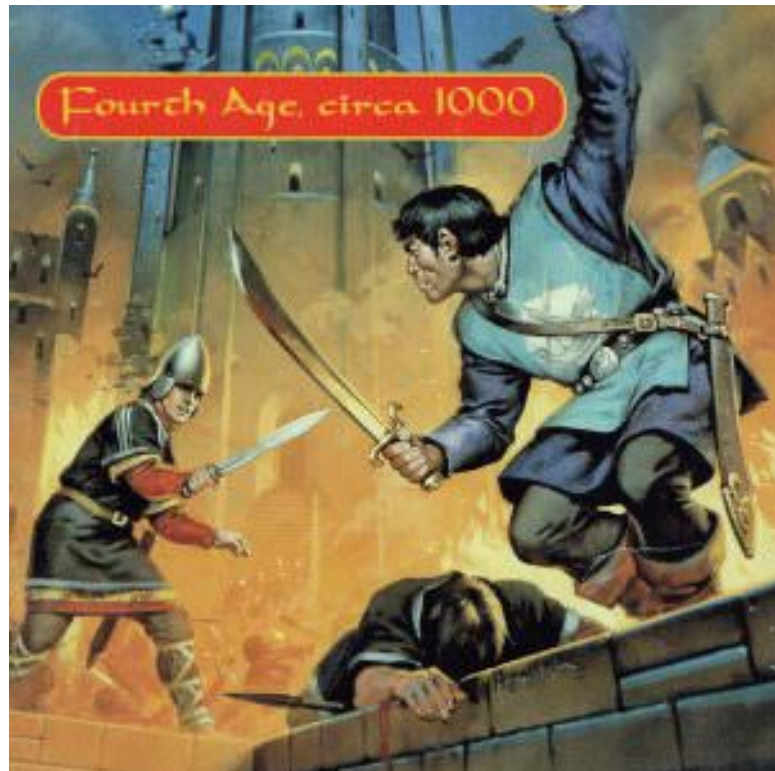
#418: The Mountains of Mordor

A three nation Gunboat game of our Fourth-age module, using the new Mountains of Mordor nation groupings.

This variant pits Dark Servants, Free Peoples and a smaller allegiance of Neutral nations against one another. However, although there are only 6 neutral nations, they have the advantage of Mordor's mountain fastness. Click on the map at the right for a closer look.

(Note that in this game, Neutral nations can start with population centres in the mountains!)

Or [Click Here](#) for more details or to sign up.



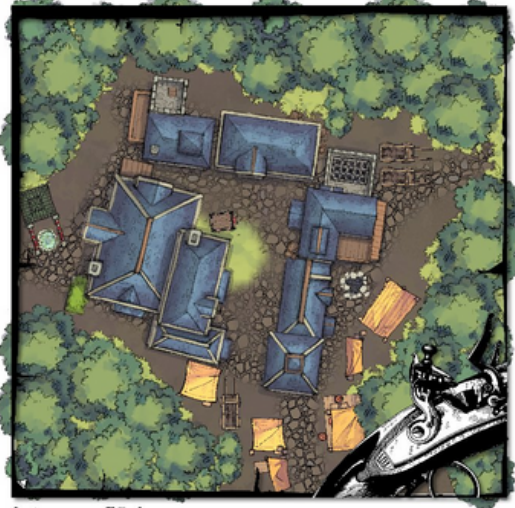


New Players?

We regularly have space for new players from the UK and Europe. Please submit a Character Creation Sheet obtained from the Startup Section and if we feel that your character will 'work' we will get you setup in the game



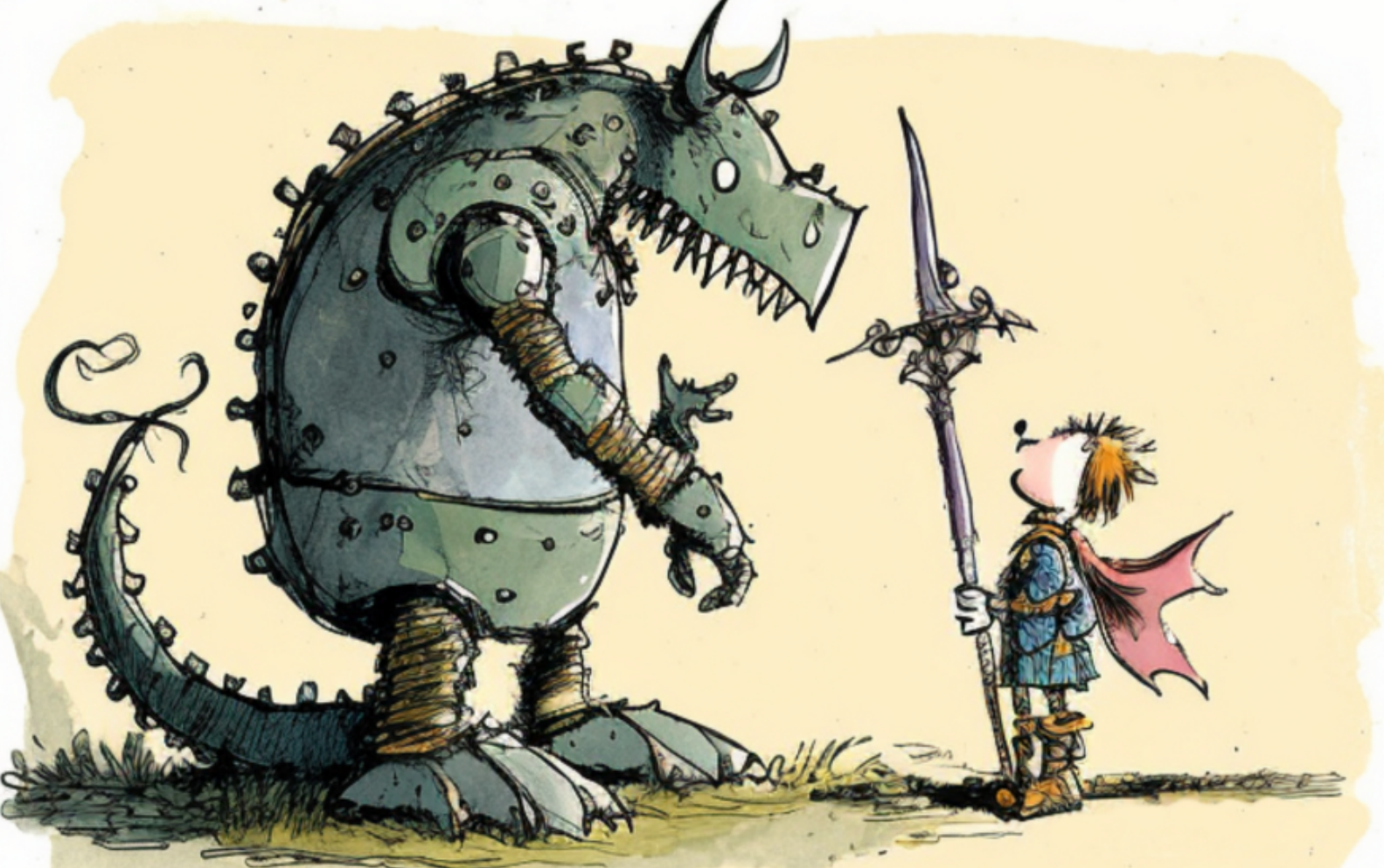
of The Isles...



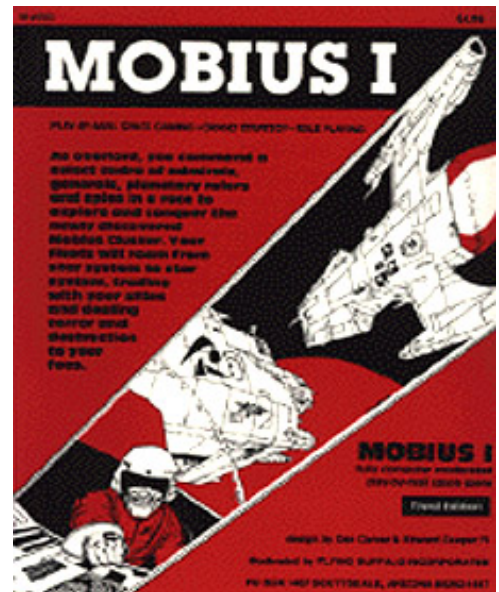
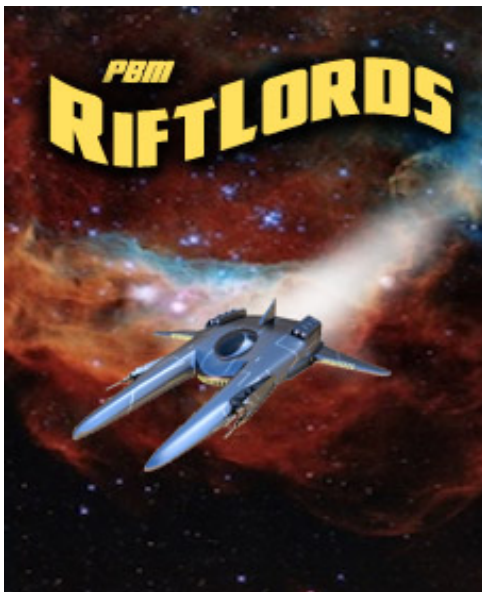
Mercurs Holt

Four generations of the Mercur family have held the Holt, just north of Lighthouse Point. Each new inheritor of the family has added a little more to the farmstead, expanding the Inn and fortifying the Farmhouse so the small Hamlet now is seen as a trading post between Ilanthor and Caldoen rather than an asset for the two to fight over. A Shrine to Lady Luhs has stood at the Holt since its establishment and surprisingly a small enclave of the Goddesses servants have remained at the outpost throughout the eighty years that the shrine has stood. Some say to keep a watch on the Murder Hole, which is kept locked and barred against any seeking to gain entry to the old silver mines that lie beneath. Legend has it that a Cald Clan cast plague-ridden unfortunates into the Murder Hole as a means to quell the hunger for souls of their death-god, but ever since the Holts early days the Murder Hole has been barred and locked in an effort to keep the ghosts below.





Begone Foul Creature! For do you not know that creatures of your ilk do not exist in The Isles??



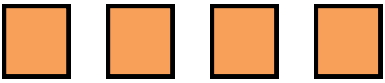
PBM Links

2300 A.D. - The Great Game
Adventurer Kings
Agema
Ancient Empires
Alamaze
Austerlitz
Atlantis Miskatonic
Atlantis: New Origins
Atlantis PbeM
Battle Plan
Clash of Legends
Combat Conditional Podcast
Company Commander
Continental Rails II
Covert Operations
Dark Age
Diplomacy World
Duel2
DungeonWorld Adventures
DungeonWorld Estates
Empires
Engarde!
Eressea
Extra Time
Extra Time: Chairman
Feudal Lords
Fire on the Suns
Flagship
Forgotten Realms



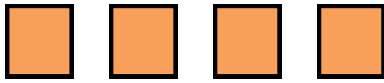
Galac-Tac
Galactic Conflict
Gameplan
Gameplan Baseball
The Glory of Kings
Heroic Fantasy
Hoopplan
Hyborian War
Ilkor: Dark Rising
Imaginary Wrestling Association
It's A Crime
KnightGuild
Legends
Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses
Lords of the Earth
Middle-earth PBM
Mobius I
Monster Island
Nuclear Destruction
PBeM - Spiele
Phoenix: Beyond the Stellar Empire
Quest
Quest of the Great Jewels
Raceplan
Regime Change
REN1493
Renaissance
Riftlords
Rome is Burning



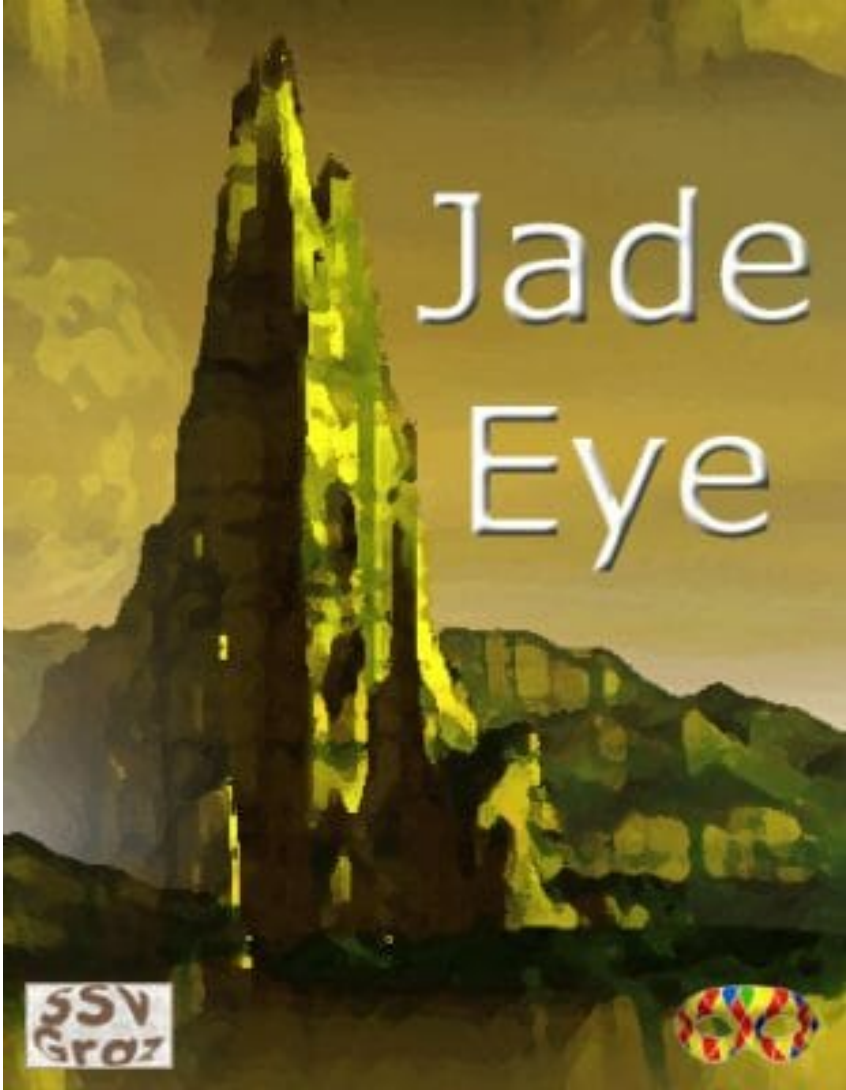


PBM Links

(Continued)



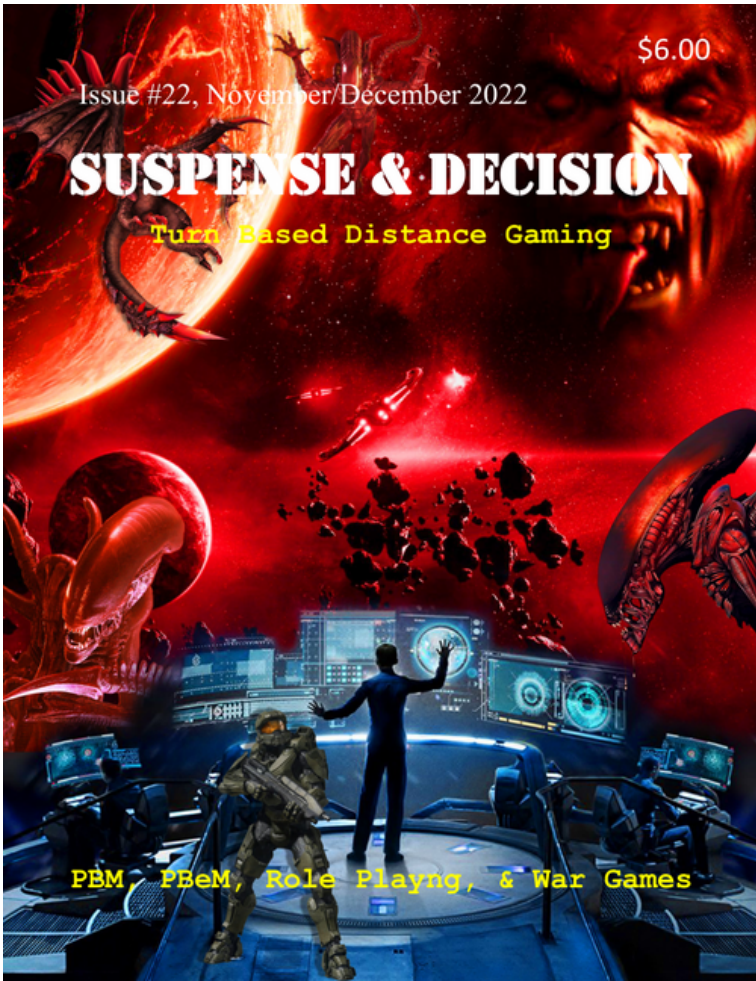
- RSW: Retro Space Wars
- Run Chase
- Scramble for Empire
- Slapshot
- Soccer Star
- Soccer Stats
- Spaceplan
- Star Chase
- Star Fleet Warlord
- Starweb
- Stellar Conflict
- Summit PBM
- SuperNova: Rise of the Empire
- Suspense & Decision
- Takamo
- The Isles PBM
- Throne of Cofain
- TribeNet
- Victory! The Battle for Europe
- War of the Dark God
- World Wide Battle Plan
- Wraith



Other Links

- Tabletop Spirit
- To Win Just Once



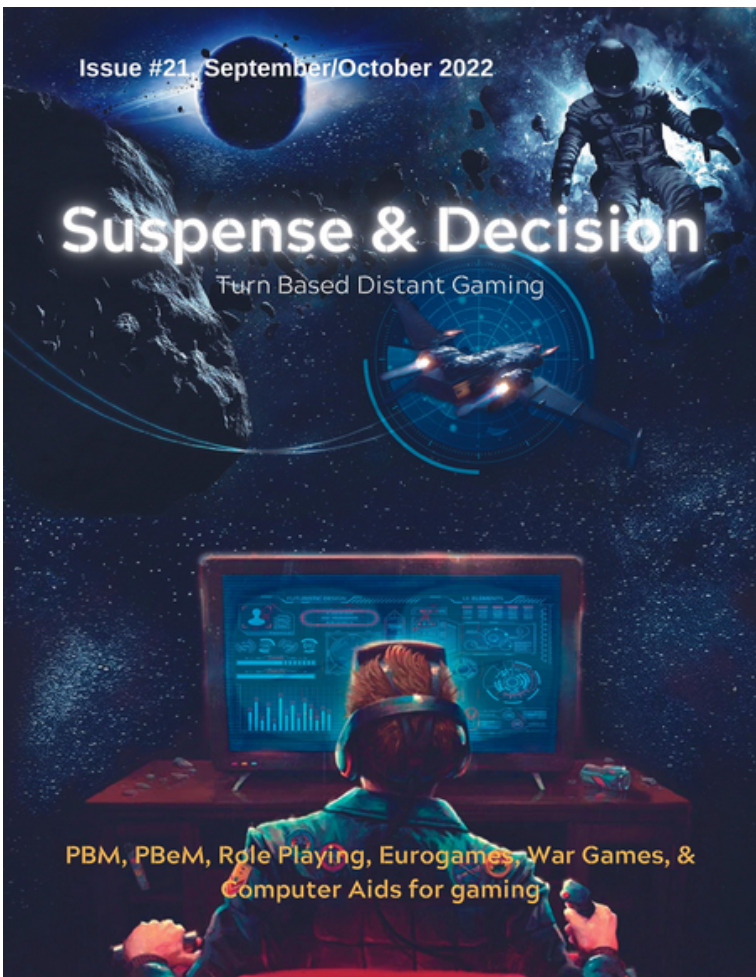


Suspense & Decision

Turn Based Distance Gaming

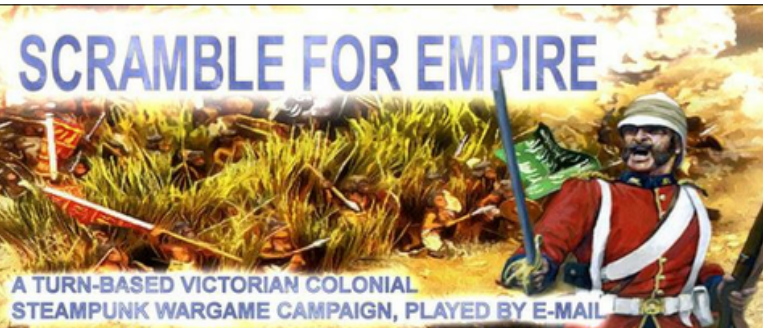
Suspense & Decision

Turn Based Distance Gaming July 2022 Issue #20



Tabletop SPIRIT

Boardgaming, Powered by Passion!



GALAC-TAC

Well, just to let everyone know... in response to a number of very reasonable requests, I've added the capability to review old Galac-Tac diplomatic messages, so you don't have to track them yourself.

Davin

12/06/2022

QUEST

Quest G20 can really fill all your spare gaming time. Runs 24/7 with turns every few minutes. It feels unique in PBM, where you usually wait days, weeks or even months for results.

TVMike

12/10/2022

MONSTER ISLAND

In the past, I've had the occasional two-turn day, if I managed to get the second turn in really quickly.

Mostly not, though. Quite fun when it happened, though.

Fang Razorclaw

12/08/2022

LANDS OF NEVRON: THE TWEEL

I tried to get access to the Fb group, but never heard anything. That was about 6 weeks ago.

Grendel

11/15/2022

MONSTER ISLAND

I sent a final request to reactivate my monster. I also sent a request to start a new one. We will see if they respond.

SaltyMcSalt

12/10/2022



PHOENIX:BEYOND THE STELLAR EMPIRE

Ok. I am signing up, now. Waiting for my email to authenticate...

JasonA1234

12/08/2022

PHOENIX:BEYOND THE STELLAR EMPIRE

I used to be in the CIA, back in the day years ago.

SaltyMcSalt

12/06/2022

SURVEY ON HYBORIAN WAR

TEXT *3 Questions Posed to Ten Players of the Game

There were only 5 replies, as of time of publication.

Q. In your personal experience, what player-controlled kingdom in Hyborian War would you say is the hardest kingdom to play - and why?

ROKer General_Tzu

A couple come to mind. Vanaheim is pretty shitty overall in an area of heavy hitters. Kosala is pretty bad too, but I just began playing them. They have one army, not even close to getting a second IA, and have 25% open field loss ratio. They are sandwiched between massive kingdoms in Turan, Vendhya and Iranistan. You rarely see them survive, let alone thrive. It's a pretty tough kingdom to play and thrive with.

ROKer G-Bear

It has to be Border Kingdom. Your army is mediums and lights surrounded by the best heavies in the game. Your diplomats are surprisingly ineffective even with tribute. Your neighbors see you as easy pickings. Even a well-played Nemedra can do little to protect you, while a poorly played Nemedra will doom you.

ROKer Painmaster

Can't answer cause of lack of experience.

ROKer Crom

All other things being equal, I consider Darfar to be the most difficult position to play. Its court is not entirely without merit but it is lacking in most areas, most distressingly diplomacy. Its troops are not great and are saddled with a high percentage of light armor. With the exception of Keshan, every nation around it desires its lands for either goals or expansion. Speaking of the land, its wealth production is low, so you will be perpetually broke.

ROKer JWS

Since coming back to the game, I have been playing through Kingdoms I have never played. The hardest to play, by far, was Aquilonia. The little diplomacy I had did not survive after the first peace years. Too many enemies. Like a lion surrounded by hyenas.

HYBORIAN
WAR™



DUNGEONWORLD

Q. What one piece of advice, more than any other, would you give to someone who is brand new to playing Hyborian War?

ROKer General_Tzu

The fastest way to learn the game is to get with a proven Veteran and review every single turn with them and ask 100 questions.

ROKer G-Bear

It is all about momentum. Think Hyborian blitzkrieg. Always have follow-on intents to invade, and don't sweat war faction bribes. It is more essential to grab the provinces you need now, than manage your treasury.

ROKer Painmaster

Don't trust anyone.



ROKer Crom

New players should avail themselves of the abundance of online information about HW, particularly on the Road of Kings, but in many other places, as well. There's no reason to abide in ignorance, at all, and doing so puts you at the mercy of better-informed and/or more experienced players.

ROKer JWS

Don't take setbacks personally. Sometimes you are friends, sometimes you are enemies. Your enemies getting the upper hand is a challenge to be met. For me, I don't always care about the ranking, but what I set out to do in the game. Also, don't shy away from the "weaker" kingdoms. They can be a lot of fun.

Q. In your considered opinion, what one aspect of Hyborian War do you think is the best designed, out of them all?

ROKer General_Tzu

Open field battles. No other variable can determine outcomes for a kingdom better than open field battles. You can maintain momentum, get the drop on someone, or gain early game progress. It's critical to success, but also strategically valuable in so many ways.

ROKer G-Bear

Intelligence is simulated the best out of any wargame I have ever played. It is appropriately hard to collect, fragmented, and is valuable if gained and shared at the right moment.

ROKer Painmaster

Total concept of the game....*Kill or be Killed.*

ROKer Crom

For the code of the time, I think the economic system is particularly well done, and is also the least known/appreciated part of the overall game.

ROKer JWS

Replayability. I can play the same kingdom three times in a row, and it is different every time. Different courts or outcomes in the opening gambit, there is always something new. However, most of this is due to the players and their playstyles. I always enjoy seeing what players will do.



ILKOR: DARK RISING

I must apologize for neglecting to give you an update sooner. I've been battling here for the past week. Nothing seems to be going right for me, of late. Hopefully, my run of bad luck has reached the end. I really hope so.

Early in the week I performed a normal 'plugin' update on the website, which broke the site. It took 4 days to resolve / fix, where I had to reach out to the plugin creators to help restore the website, it's settings and, of course, data. I do backup the website, though I really didn't want to go down that route, originally thinking the plugin creators would solve my issue quicker and with less risk.

The plugin issue did open the gate for spammers, which I am addressing now, and removing new adventurers from the game that are obviously bots.

My health is back to 100% fit again, which I'm grateful for, so that's one piece of good news.

South Africa continues to have power issues, with its electricity grid under strain. We continuously have planned power outages, usually once a day for about 2.5 hours. This has become the norm, now, for months, even years. Last night, it was announced we are going into a period of now having 3 planned power outages per day. For how long, we don't know, yet. Today (Sunday), I am without power from 6-8:30am, 2-4:30pm and 10pm-12:30am. These time slots change daily and differ depending on where we are in the country. So, this week I face more challenges, though compared to health and website issues, this is the lessor of the 3 evils.

Gads (ilkor-pbm.com GM)

12/04/2022

Liminal En Garde!

Can I advertise the En-Garde! game at <https://liminalengarde.proboards.com/>? It's a free, single character per player game, rules on site. Based on the original En-Garde! - a swashbuckling game based on The Three Musketeers! Garrett, who now runs the game, is happy to take on more players!

JimW

11/29/2022

Odyssey: Only the Strong

Hi, anyone here ever play Odyssey: Only the Strong back in the 90s? Used to be run in the UK by Gamer's Den. I never played it (it's very similar to Legends, which I've played on and off for years) but would love to see any turns, rules or anything related to it. Have tracked down some info via archive.org, which piqued my interest in it.

advachiel

11/20/2022



Websites



Richard Lockwood

Now,

I think I need to take issue with Charles' critique of PBM game websites.

While he's absolutely right, that many PBMs have websites that look as though they were built in 1997 (and they do), web development technologies have come on by leaps and bounds since then - and using Bootstrap and similar (I'm going to use the word "paradigm." Sorry!) paradigms is available to everyone, getting it to work is a bugger, if you don't do it as a professional. I do, but I've moved more to back end stuff (F'narr, F'narr). Getting a web developer to build you a custom site is bloody expensive, and while you can use excellent online tools to get yours sorted up and running, and available and accessible on all platforms, it's not going to come cheap.

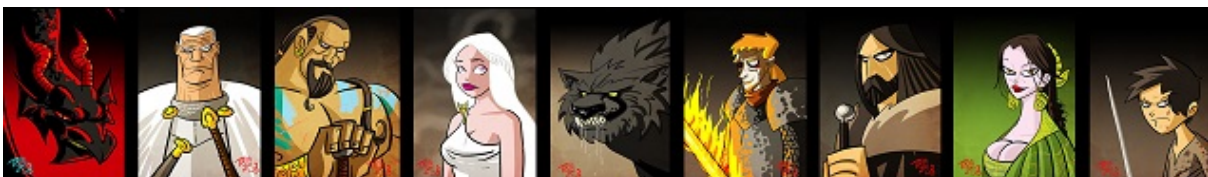
Ilkor: Dark Rising is an excellent example of an accessible website that works on phones, desktops, tablets, etc., but even that fell over the other day, when Gads tried to install a new version of a plug-in. We (his players) we're worried that he'd carked it and we'd never see another turn!

Fixed, now. Good work, Gads.

Anyway, redeveloping websites isn't cheap, getting them up to standards isn't cheap, and if GMs / Companies don't see it as a massive priority, particularly if they're part time, I can understand that.

However, yes, get your current prices just one click from the home page. That's not difficult. The rest of the design can wait.

Cheers,
Rich.





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