

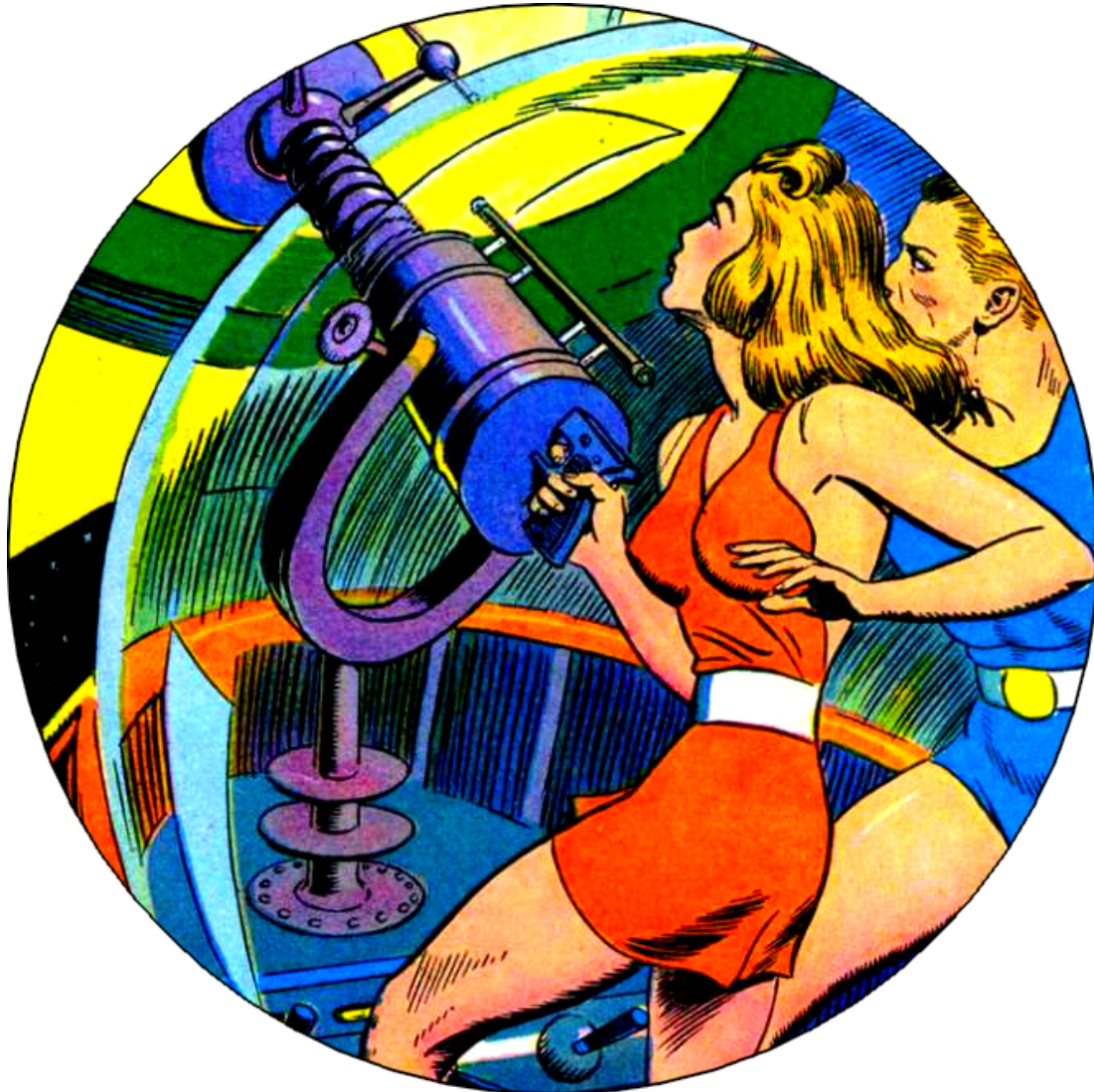
PBM

Issue 22

Unearthed

The Mysterious Realm of Play-By-Mail Gaming

22nd New-Fangled Issue!



January 1st, 2023

What does the New Year hold for PBM?

PlayByMail.Net

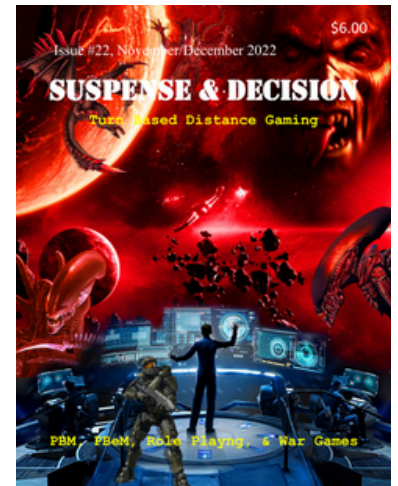
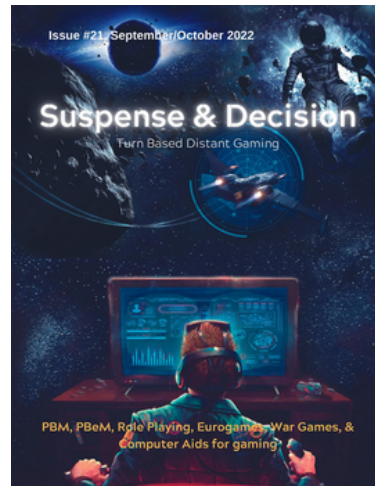
2023

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Happy New Year!

Play By Mail Gaming: The Never-Ending Storm

Editorial



What Are They Saying?

PBM Overlords: Who Will Save Us?

Ex|sles

Postal Roleplaying on The Lonely Coast

Exsles is a Narrative Play-By-Postal-Mail, Roleplaying-style game designed specifically for prisoners, by a former prisoner. It is set in The Lonely Coast fantasy-adventure setting, where players can run a single character or small group of characters starting a new life for whatever reason. The only rule is that the characters are starting over in a new life, with pretty much the clothing on their backs, very little experience, and a past they'd rather not talk about.

"The furthest flung outpost of a mighty kingdom, turbulent waters and forbidding, twisted forests separate the Lonely Coast from the glittering lights of civilisation. Some visitors come in search of adventure while others embrace the anonymity of the frontier. Still others, tiring of civilisation's decadence, come to start a new life. Adventurers are normally intent on battling the ferocious humanoids of the interior or on uncovering the ancient ruins and hidden treasure caches of the Old People lying forgotten in the untamed places of the Tangled Wood."

**- Foreword by Creighton Broadhurst
The Lonely Coast Campaign Setting**

The cost per turn is \$1.50 (and can accept stamps as payment), as an ex-con myself, I know how little money prisoners typically have available for entertainment after toiletries and coffee. Running this 100% hand-moderated game is a hobby, not a business, and it generates as much creative enjoyment and satisfaction for me as it does for the players. I have been running this game since 2017, while still in federal prison, so the game is well-established and runs quite smoothly.

This is a Narrative PBpM, as mentioned above, which means **it isn't about statistics, resource-gathering, or management and number-crunching**; Exsles is about **the story**, as written by both the player and myself, the Game Master. Some players enjoy writing **their characters' story in great detail**, while others simply want to give direction, or even choose from a list of options; **I tailor the game to your wishes**, writing the story of how **your decisions guide your character through the campaign setting**. Turns are processed within two weeks of receipt, and **there is no deadline** for players to respond. Each player is running their character(s) in the same setting, but not directly interacting with other players, unless so desired.

The Lonely Coast
was created by
Creighton Broadhurst
and is being used
with permission from
Raging Swan Press.

For more information, please write to:

David Fair
P.O. Box 88600
Steilacoom, WA 98388



Which kingdom will you rule?



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Play By Mail Gaming: The Never-Ending Storm

CHARLES MOSTELLER

This brand new year that they call 2023 has descended from out of nowhere, and it finds me fighting a raging storm. The waves of life crash all about me, and a brooding thought lives and grows and mutates within me - a curse from a bygone era!

To PBM or not to PBM?



On the one hand, I just want to sound, "Abandon ship! Abandon ship!" and spare my sanity, by just wandering off into the sunset and find other things to do with my time. Surely, there are far more constructive - and infinitely more pleasurable - things to allocate one's time and energy and efforts to.

more of them, looking back over the long span of time that play by mail games have been in existence and entertaining people.

Sons, fathers, grandfathers, and maybe even some great-grandfathers have played and enjoyed a whole host of different PBM games, down through the years. Yeah, it's largely been a male-dominated playerscape, but daughters, mothers, grandmothers, and perhaps even an occasional great-grandmother or two have also been witness to and a part of it all.

Even today, all these many decades after the nexus of play by mail gaming phased into existence, most people have still never played

Then on the other hand, I remember that my favorite game is a PBM game. Play By Mail. I want to do something, but I have no clue what I want to do. And so, I often find myself clinging to the event horizon of this black hole that has formed within myself.

Then on the other hand, I remember that my favorite game is a PBM game. Play By Mail. I want to do something, but I have no clue what I want to do. And so I often find myself clinging to the event horizon of this black hole that has formed within myself.

PBM magazines and PBM newsletters can be willed in and out of existence on a dime. Which is surprising, then, that there haven't been far

a PBM, tried a PBM, nor even heard of a PBM. Just the facts, ma'am! *The cold, hard facts.*

As I sit here writing this, the day after Issue #22 was due out, I'm sitting at my desk just typing away, and a photo of Guy Fieri is on my computer screen, accompanied by an article about him having eaten a piece of fried chicken in South Carolina. My lunch, today, turned out to be about five pieces of candy (pecan

caramel clusters, if you really must know), and five slices of plain loaf bread.

And just like that, it's an entirely different day. I started to just scrap this attempt at an article and start fresh from scratch, but something inside of me wouldn't agree to go that route. Instead, I've decided to just keep on writing, and see what comes of it. At worst, I fail.

For me, and this is just myself, mind you, the never-ending storm in PBM is the fight that I have with myself over whether to play or not play, but also, whether and how to approach the near-omnipresent dilemma of writing about it and "covering" it, from the PBM publication perspective.

Upon his return to what he characterized as "the hobby" in 2018, Raven Zachary was a man on fire. In the weeks and months that followed, he became a blizzard of PBM-related activity. His contributions to the PBM scene have been, in a word, legion.

Perhaps it is because the mind is always in a state of flux. Thoughts come and go, rapidly at times, and not so rapidly at other times. The level of commitment is like that scene in the original Karate Kid movie; wax on, wax off. Do I want to continue this? Do I want to do something else? Or do I simply prefer to be done with it all? There are merits and demerits associated with any and all paths that lie before me.

Play by mail gaming has many times down through the years been discussed in the context of death or dying. Some may even think or say that PBM is synonymous with dying. That might not actually be a bad tagline, if you stop and think about it?

Yet, PBM gaming clearly isn't dead. Even today, there remains fairly substantial player

communities of players of various (though not all) PBM games. When I sit and ponder how PBM restructured itself to become as it is, now, the way it is doesn't really strike me as a surprise.

In Issue #21 of the new Suspense & Decision magazine, PBM enthusiast Raven Zachary lamented over what he termed the inveterate nature of the play-by-mail community. Upon his return to what he characterized as "the hobby" in 2018, Raven Zachary was a man on fire. In the weeks and months that followed, he became a blizzard of PBM-related activity. His contributions to the PBM scene have been, in a word, legion.

Yet, at the root of it all, he's still human. As much as he loves PBM gaming, he gets frustrated by various aspects of it. As I sit here typing this on this glorious Tuesday morning, I find myself wondering whether Raven even realizes that the player community aspect of the PBM scene of today was also in play way back when. The primary difference, I suspect, between now and then (with "then" being the decades of the 1970s and 1980s) wasn't so much that the dinosaurs (PBM players) were all that different than the dinosaurs of today. Rather, there were just a lot more dinosaurs back then, which yielded an impression facilitated by the scale of things.

Today, there are far fewer PBM companies (of the commercial PBM variety), far fewer PBM games (of both the commercial and non-commercial varieties), far fewer PBM GMs

(those strange chaps who moderate PBM games), and far fewer PBM players, compared to what some might view to be the Golden Era of play by mail gaming.

Certain driving forces of growth, and spread of the overall PBM player base, are no longer the dominant forces that they used to be. Just imagine if the force that we know as gravity were removed from the universe as we know it. Now, eliminate a dominant force such as new PBM games created with regularity in the PBM scene. Extrapolate it out, and what would the likely end effect of such be?

New PBM games, back in the day, attracted new players to "the hobby." They also, however, constituted an attractant to lure established PBM gamers away from their existing preferred PBM game(s). In this day and age of PBM gaming, how often do new PBM games come into existence, and how often do they come into existence, now, compared to back then?

When things such as the passage of time and the thing known as "progress," inexorable forces in their own right, exact their tolls upon PBM gaming, how would one assume that the dust in the PBM gaming universe might likely settle?

When things such as the passage of time and the thing known as "progress," inexorable forces in their own right, exact their tolls upon PBM gaming, how would one assume that the dust in the PBM gaming universe might likely settle? In the absence of any notable continuing injection of new PBM games on a regular and recurring basis over an extended period of time, why wouldn't the overall PBM player community not revert to PBM gamers' most preferred PBM games?

Much of the universe as we perceive it is a

void. The play by mail gaming universe is the same way, I think - *only we don't tend to see the void.*

In physics in our universe, there are strong and weak nuclear forces. In the PBM gaming universe, there are strong forces and weak forces. Now, the extent of my understanding of physics isn't particularly great. A PBM personality like Mica Goldstone of KJC Games, for example, would be a far better choice to explain the laws and forces of physics than I could ever be. However, my point is simply this - *that our collective and individual understanding of the forces in play in the PBM gaming universe probably isn't what it should be or needs to be, if our aim is to move the needle substantially one way or the other.*

Raven Zachary comes in, he returns to the PBM hobby that he loves and has never forgotten, and he begins dumping, just dumping, what appears at the time to be an inexhaustible amount of time, energy, and

effort into what now may well seem to be, with the benefit of hindsight, a void. *If only PBM gaming had a lot more people like Raven Zachary, eh?*

Well, once upon a time ago, it used to.

Raven Zachary is a PBM player, certainly, but viewed from another angle, he is also what's known as a creative force. And in the realm of creative forces, there are both strong creative forces and weak creative forces. Whether a given individual is a strong creative force or a

weak creative force depends upon what - *or who* - is being compared.

The weak and strong aspect of creative forces aside, one might also wish to consider that some forces in the PBM universe are enduring forces, while others are not. Using myself as an example to give raven a break, because I have "created" some things that are PBM related, I likely qualify as a creative force in the PBM universe, also - though seen through any objective lens I would fall into the category of weak creative force.

And because I "come and go" as I do, I don't really think that I qualify as an enduring creative force in PBM. Neither do I seem, as of yet anyway, to be a creative force that appears, yet is then never seen again. I probably should fall into the category of recurring weak creative force.

You may be reading this, and having gotten to this point, you may now be thinking WTF?!

Trying to change creatures of habit, and trying to change the habits, themselves, that PBM gamers have and develop, sometimes takes more time than one might prefer be the case.

Basic human nature never really changes. Human beings, even PBM gamers, tend to be creatures of habit. Yet, where PBM gaming is concerned, Raven Zachary's habit is not the same as my habit, which isn't the same as your habit, nor the same as the next fellow's habit - and so on and so forth.

In theory, if you invest a lot of time, energy, and effort into changing the dynamics of the PBM universe, then what you should expect to see come out of that is a very noticeable amount of positive change, right? Yet, if anyone were to ask Raven Zachary how much

time, energy, and effort it would require to change the laws of physics in the real universe, he might be tempted to think that it couldn't be done, no matter how much time, energy, and effort that one - *or everyone* - invests.

Yet, obviously, the real universe and the PBM universe are two very distinct things. And so investments of time, energy, and effort into the PBM universe could very well result in substantial amounts of change taking place, though perhaps not in all such instances.

Was all of Raven Zachary's efforts to change PBM for the better in vain? No, of course not, but what one might do well to keep in mind is that not all change that does or will occur in the PBM universe will necessarily happen instantaneously. Trying to change creatures of habit, and trying to change the habits, themselves, that PBM gamers have and develop, sometimes takes more time than one might prefer be the case.

Raven Zachary wants to change PBM gaming. Me? I want to change it, too - as do a lot of you out there reading this. Most PBM gamers, however, will never read this.

From my little vantage point in the PBM universe, most PBM gamers or former PBM gamers will never write articles for PBM publications. Most of them will also never share a link to any PBM article written in any PBM publication at any point in time, much less all of them or even the majority of them. Most of them will never create their own PBM game(s). A great many of them aren't inclined

to even so much as budge. *And that can be, in a word, frustrating!*

But in fairness, there are anreality awful lot of things about the PBM universe as it is presently constituted that are equally, if not more, frustrating. And that's the same way that it was way back when.

Part of the problems that we face with trying to deal with the realities of the PBM universe are not unique to the PBM universe. Just ask the esteemed Alex Bardy of Tabletop Spirit magazine. For instance, how hard is it to get feedback?

For Raven Zachary, perhaps he sees the inveterate nature of PBM gaming as beyond his ability to change in the way and to the degree that he would like to see it change. Yet, if you were to ask him if trying to change the spots on a leopard was the key to increasing the leopard population in the world, he might just look at you as if you were crazy.

For Raven Zachary, perhaps he sees the inveterate nature of PBM gaming as beyond his ability to change in the way and to the degree that he would like to see it change. Yet, if you were to ask him if trying to change the spots on a leopard were the key to growing the leopard population in the world, he might just look at you as if you were crazy.

David Webber experienced difficulty persuading more people to write articles for Paper Mayhem magazine. Likewise, Carol Mulholland experienced similar difficulty persuading more people to write articles for Flagship magazine. Fast forward to the present day and time. I experience difficulty persuading more people to write articles for PBM Unearthed. And what about Jon Capps? I wonder if he experiences difficulty persuading

more people to write articles for the new Suspense & Decision magazine? Again, basic human nature doesn't change. Generally speaking, it will likely always be difficult to persuade more people to write for any PBM publication. Like it or lump it, that's just the way that it is.

Persuading people to change habits that are deeply ingrained into them is almost always a difficult challenge of the first magnitude. Is the play by mail gaming universe better off with or without PBM publications to help "spread the word?"

Spreading the word, getting the word out, promoting the word - *it remains a difficult and enduring challenge to overcome the obstacles that are inherent to both the PBM universe and to human beings, generally.*

Honestly, I don't know what this new year holds for either myself or PBM Unearthed. Perhaps in the PBM Universe, I am ever-

destined to play the role of an unstable, yet creative, albeit recurring, force. What about you, though? What kind of force are you in the PBM universe? More importantly, perhaps, what kind of force in the PBM universe would you like to be? How do you envision yourself, relative to all of the other forces simultaneously in play in the PBM universe? Or is your role to be part of the PBM void? I would ask for feedback, but that would probably just fall into the PBM void.



Harlequin Games

Crown of Chaos 28

Legends: an award-winning fantasy turn-based game.

Explore and conquer vibrant and original worlds that stretch the limits of imagination and possibility.



North Island 76



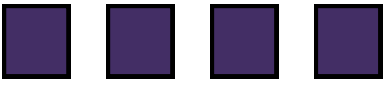


PBM Links



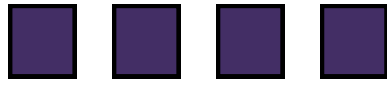
2300 A.D. - The Great Game
Adventurer Kings
Agema
Ancient Empires
Alamaze
Austerlitz
Atlantis Miskatonic
Atlantis: New Origins
Atlantis PbeM
Battle Plan
Clash of Legends
Combat Conditional Podcast
Company Commander
Continental Rails II
Covert Operations
Dark Age
Diplomacy World
Duel2
DungeonWorld Adventures
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
Liminal En Garde!
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

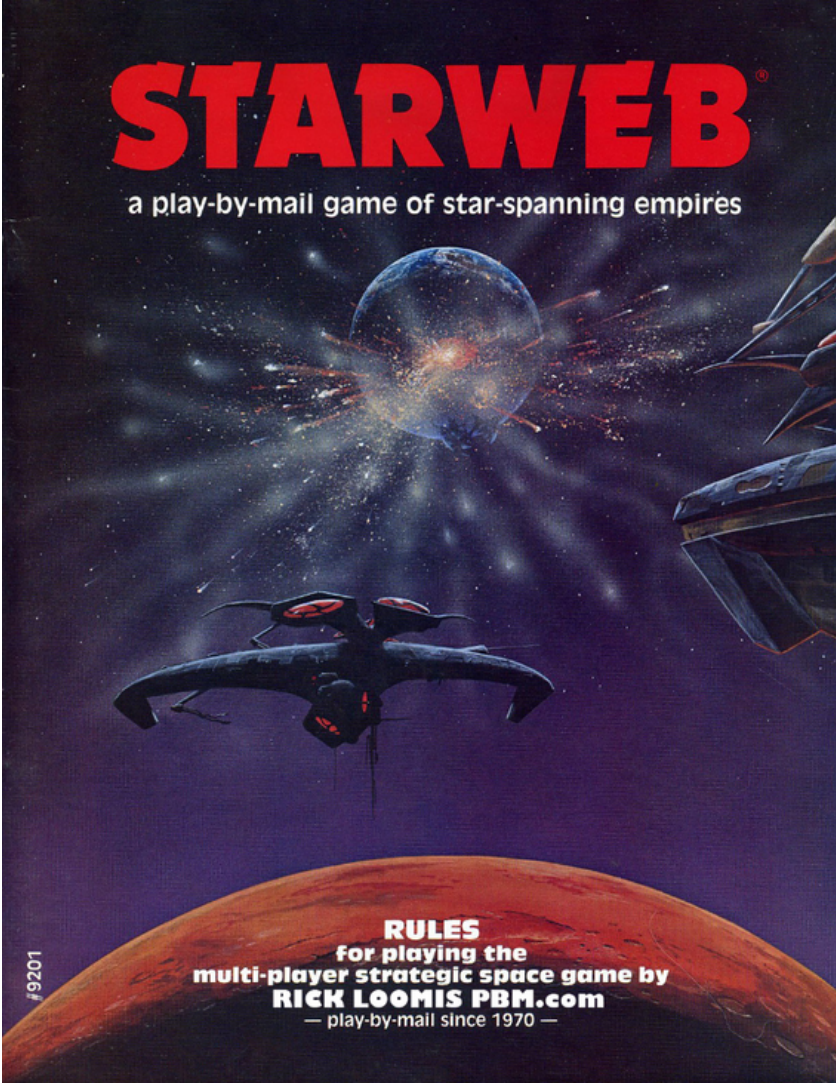


PBM Links

(Continued)



- Rome is Burning
- 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





"All the News From Clans to Print" **Clan News** Global Edition Fun Warnings: The fun doesn't last long.

VOL. DCCCXX... No. 59 820-08, 29 DECEMBER 2022 clannews@outlook.com FREE

The Clutch *You had it in your first!*

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Contribute **Notices** **Turn Deadline**

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

Clan News hour #00 deadline: 9 January 2023 @ 8:00 UTC

Another mysterious message, some comics, and a few trade notices. A selection of great (and bad?) notices in this issue.

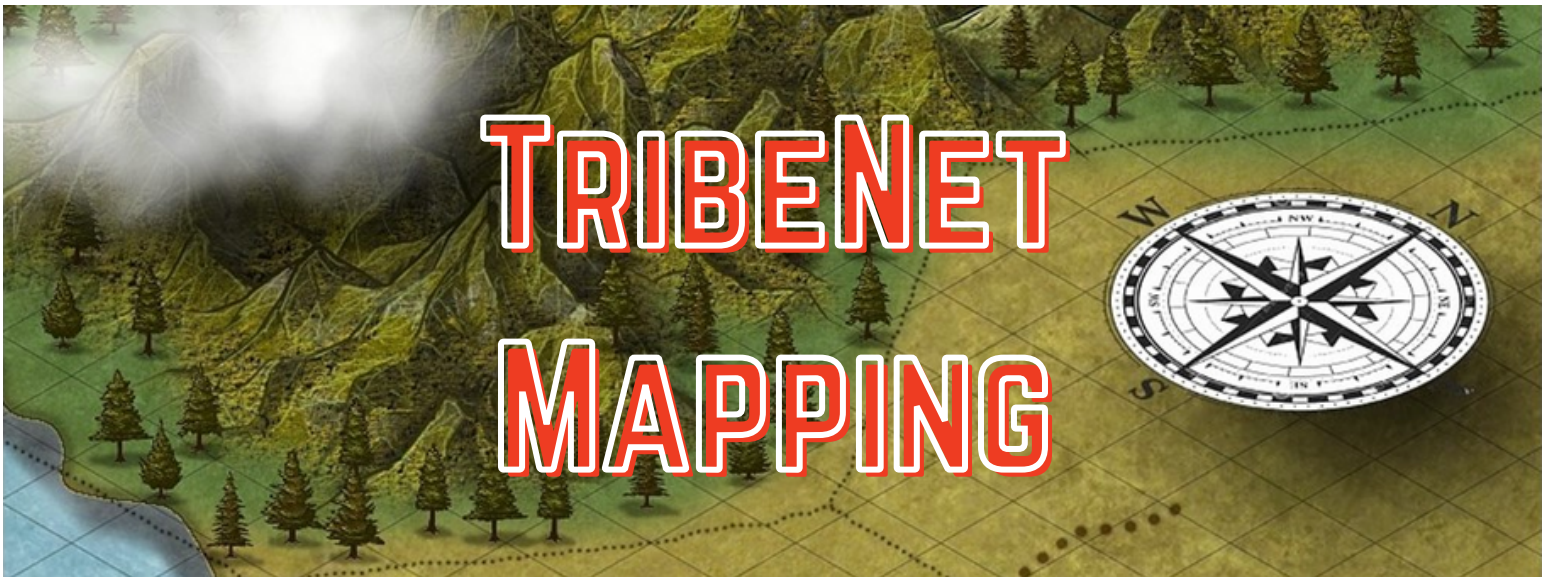
Orders for 820-09 are due on 1 January 2023
 Australian Eastern: 20:00
 UK: 9:00
 UTC: 9:00
 USA Eastern: 4:00 / USA Pacific: 1:00

Clan News: Issue #19 for 820-08 (29 December 2022) Page 1 of 18

TribeNet F.A.Q.



Discord Chat





Agema

agema.org.uk

ROME IS BURNING

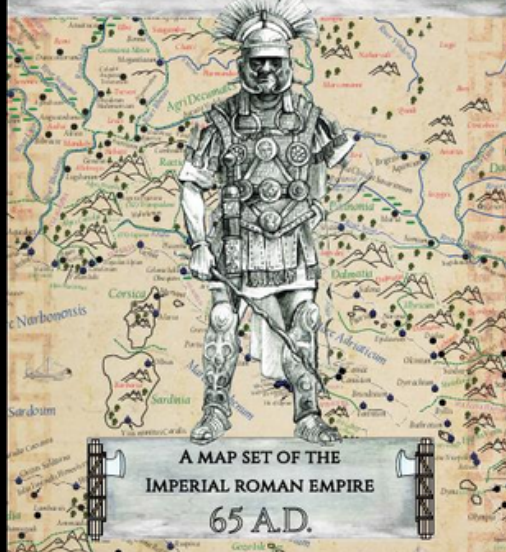
A TURN-BASED GAME SET IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE OF THE 1st CENTURY AD

ROME IS BURNING!

THE RULES



THE ROMAN EMPIRE MAPS



THE ROMAN EMPIRE LOCATIONS GUIDE



PHOENIX:BEYOND THE STELLAR EMPIRE

In Phoenix BSE, the special actions can go from the mundane search for metals or other ores to any insanity you can think of that fits the setting.

I've had long SA storylines fighting in a gladiator arena; infiltrating strange alien bases; attending hunting trips tracking massive dinosaur-like beasts and losing a limb; taking drugs that left all the bones in my body broken; giving a tank to a stone age tribe; creating strange genetic monster hybrid robotic ant queens; communicated with god like ancient aliens; tortured a pirate and so on.

I've also done more practical SAs that help to develop a completely unique type of weapon or ammo.

There was a special action once where the Dewiek leader (group of wolf-like giants) leapt out of a battleship in low orbit, charged a massive alien invasion force single-handedly and inspired an uprising of the locals on the planet to head off certain defeat.

Fang Razorclaw

12/29/2022

* SA = Special Action

KNIGHTGUILD

Our SA's are primarily role playing; and while finding a nice set of armor for your character is neat, it really does not help you 1,000 man clan. You can roleplay getting into the Brotherhood (thieves) or just searching ruins. We have two types of SAs - those for roleplay (tied to a character) and an SA Zero which is for fixing a problem that cropped up.

Geric

12/27/2022

* SA = Special Action

TRIBENET

TribeNet doesn't support special actions (i.e. where players submit freeform instructions to the GM who personally evaluates the outcome based on game universe rules). It does allow players to submit ideas for ways to enrich the game's huge catalogue of research activities to keep things new, but not special actions on a turn-by-turn basis.

Fungus

12/27/2022



in Ilanthor

Old Man found wandering disappears from Cell
Mystery surrounds the whereabouts of a confused and violent old man found wandering the Merchants Quarter a few days past. Originally thought to be another victim of the malicious arson attack upon Torfan's Manse, the fellow was originally treated as an innocent victim of the attack until he was arrested by men of the Watch for violent assault against at least three of their number. The old assailant had been taken to the Keep for questioning and sentence for his disorders, but upon checking his cell was found to be empty despite there being a sturdy iron door and thick walls between himself and freedom.

ISLANDER RUMOURS



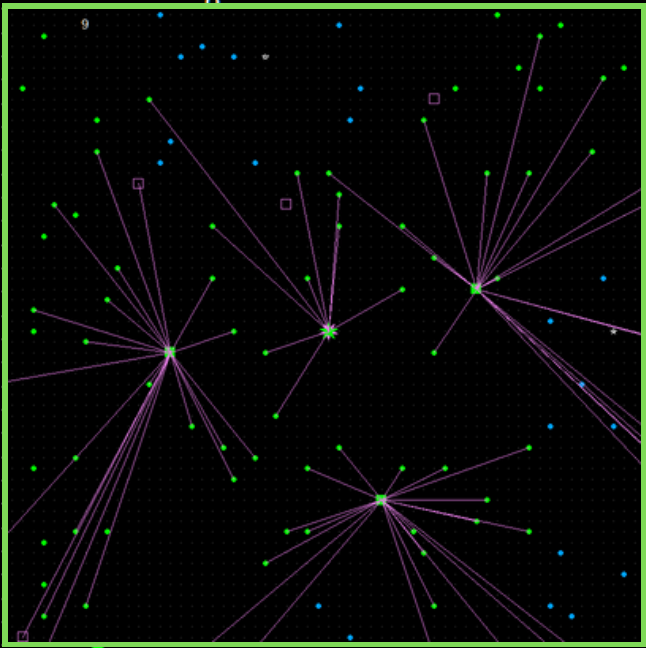
Silver is being offered for his delivery alive and in good health to the Keep Gatehouse and enquiries are ongoing with a number of folk the fellow is believed to have named during his ravings. Arrests relating to these strange events have been made at the Northgate Inn as it is believed that the raving old man revealed a number of closely held secrets that only those close to Ilanthor's regime could possibly know. A member of the watch, made indiscreet by too much Ale, revealed that the disappeared prisoner claimed to be the once famous and long-dead warrior known in many tales as *Vae Victis*.



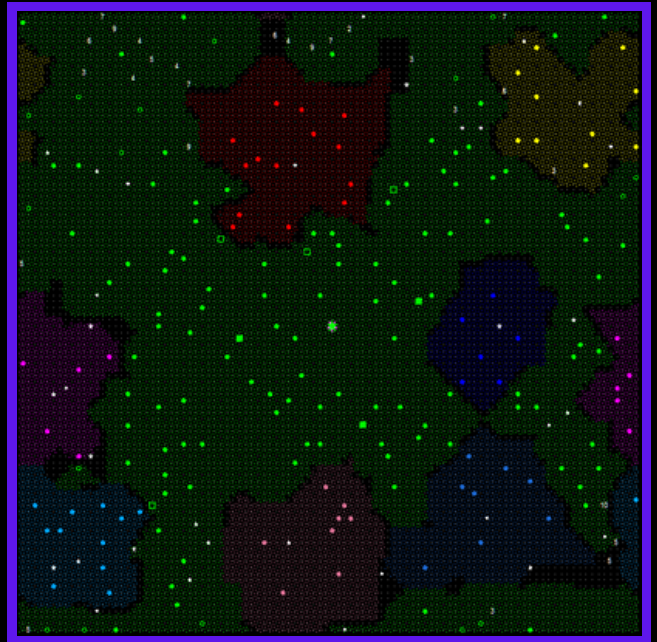
REGIME CHANGE

A turn-based Space Opera roleplaying game, played by e-mail

Explore! Expand! Exploit! Exterminate!



Galac-Tac



Galac-Tac is a
single unit level,
science fiction war game.

Join the PBM fun!

PBM Discord
130 Members and growing!



We live in dangerous times. I'm not talking about war or plague or famine. Those are real world problems. Instead, I am talking about about me, and about PBM Unearthed, and to a lesser degree, play by mail gaming as a whole.

If I were to cut the lights off on this meager undertaking, tomorrow, PBM gaming survives. And that, to me, is a very tempting thing. For what are the actual consequences of this play by mail newsletter failing or ceasing to be? I challenge anyone out there that reads this to answer that.

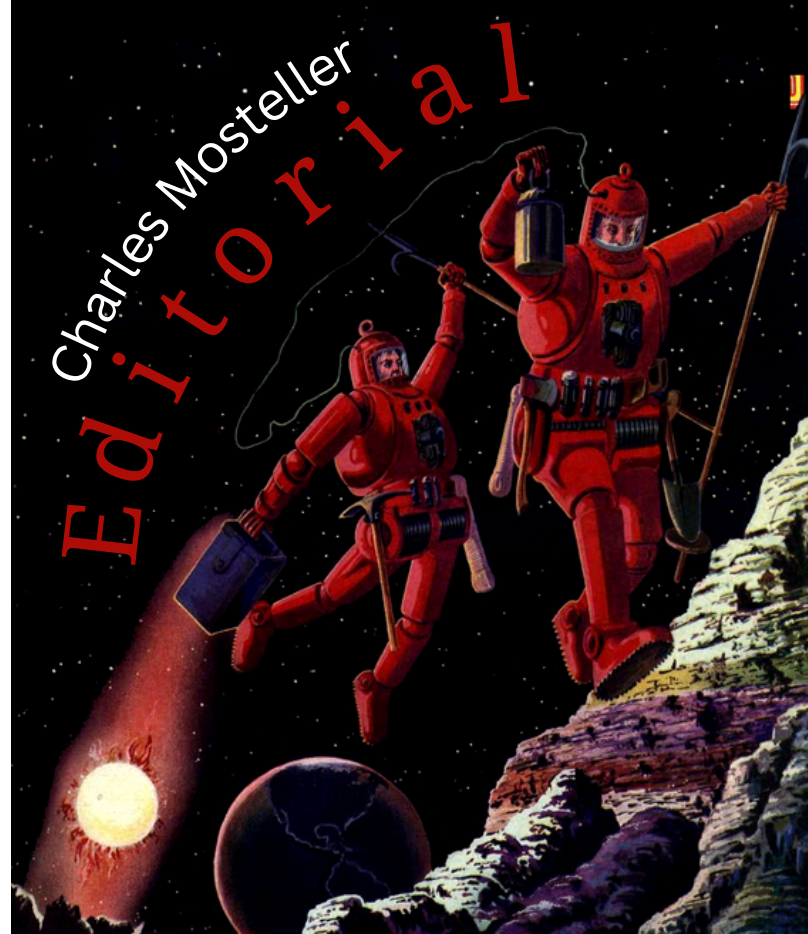
No game will stop running. No PBM company will suddenly cease to be. The Realm of Play By Mail will survive, just as it ever has, ever since it first came into existence. If anything, a collective sigh of relief might be breathed.

In my personal life, a lot of changes are in the process of taking place. In due time, the collective impact of it all is going to hit me like a mountain. Far worse than any of that, though, is the fact that I am restless. I am also dissatisfied with the PBM landscape, as I perceive it from my somewhat isolated vantage point.

But who cares, right? Do I even care? Why not just forget all of this mess, and just find a game or two to play, and enjoy it without any headaches or stress? My dissatisfaction with PBM doesn't actually cause me any stress, though.

In this issue is an advertisement for a "new" PBM game. ExIsles is advertised as a PBpM game - Play By Postal Mail. For some reason, David Fair (pronounced Daveed Fa'ear), who is the GM for that game decided to tack another letter onto the PBM acronym that's been around since way back when.

Do you want to know why this issue exists, at all? Well, you can probably thank David Fair for that.



He had someone send me an e-mail, and he sent a couple of different ads for me to choose from. They say that timing is everything, and you know, they just might be right.

It's probably gets old reading the thoughts of my mind that tend to wander all over the place, and interspliced into and woven across it all, there tends to be a recurring theme.

This may turn out to be the worst issue, ever, of PBM Unearthed. And you know what? I'm OK with that. It doesn't faze me. The prospect of that doesn't bother me, at all. The way that I look at it, as I sit here fairly late on a Wednesday night, is that some issue has to be the worst one, so it might as well be this one.

Did I mention that I received in the mail, today, my turn results for the Kingdom of Nemedra in Hyborian War game number HW-982? It was a peace years turn. Alex Bardy may want to read all about it. I think that he's still out there, somewhere. *Maybe next issue. . .*

This "new" game that's called ExIsles, as it turns out, it's been around since 2017 - which translates into it not really being new, at all. Not from a chronological standpoint, anyway.

But see, that's the thing about PBM games. It doesn't really matter how long a PBM game has been around, because whenever someone finally gets around to actually trying it, for them, that game is effectively still brand, spanking new.

This issue, I put a few new PBM ads together. And for the most part, I use what I have, I use what is placed at my disposal. Clearly, some of my attempts have fared better and have looked better than have others. Somewhere deep inside of me, though, I have a gut feeling that this aspect of my PBM-related undertakings is just about to end. I've probably pulled together more new or refurbished PBM ads in the last six months than some of the PBM industry has put out in the last six years or more. That's just a guess on my part, though, and certainly, I could be wrong about that.

I very much like the fact that ExIsles is a hand-moderated game, and that it's run as a hobby, rather than as a business. I like that its GM has that mindset and that approach, and I really like the fact that he has kept it going for five to six years, now.

And Roy Pollard, GM of The Isles PBeM game, I love the fact that he invests time and energy and effort in creating various visual elements for his game.

I like the fact that Davin Church has made some changes to the Talisman Games website. And I like hearing from Genny White out of the blue. I like to think that, maybe one day, Galac-Tac - *their game* - will begin to see an influx of more and more players. There's so many PBM games out there that are just being sit on, nothing of consequence coming from them, at all.

And honestly, that really does suck. It truly and undeniably does. But that's just the way that it is.

Another thing that I like that's going on in the Play By Mail Realm is Lee Kline of Reality Simulations, Inc. allowing me to make some new ads for my favorite PBM game of all time, Hyborian War.

I like that Chuck over at Rick Loomis PBM has let me make several new ads for them. Are they doing any good? I don't know.

And the folks at Middle-earth Games and Harlequin games - they've let me create a variety of new PBM ads for some of their PBM games that are on offer to the public.

To me, these are good things - *and good times* - but at the end of the day, I still end up asking myself, "*Is any of it doing any good, any actual good?*"

Maybe it is. Maybe it isn't. And that's the dilemma, that's the quagmire, that I find myself in. And a quagmire really isn't where I want to spend my time, my energy, my effort. I want to do something constructive. At the moment, I feel like I'm in the Valley of the Damned.

Regardless, I need to find a way to finish this issue up. I need to get it done. I need to get it wrapped up. And perhaps the best way to accomplish that is by me simply shutting the hell up.

Company Commander

by
Jason Oates' Games



Feudal Lords

Rick Loomis 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>

PBM OVERLORDS

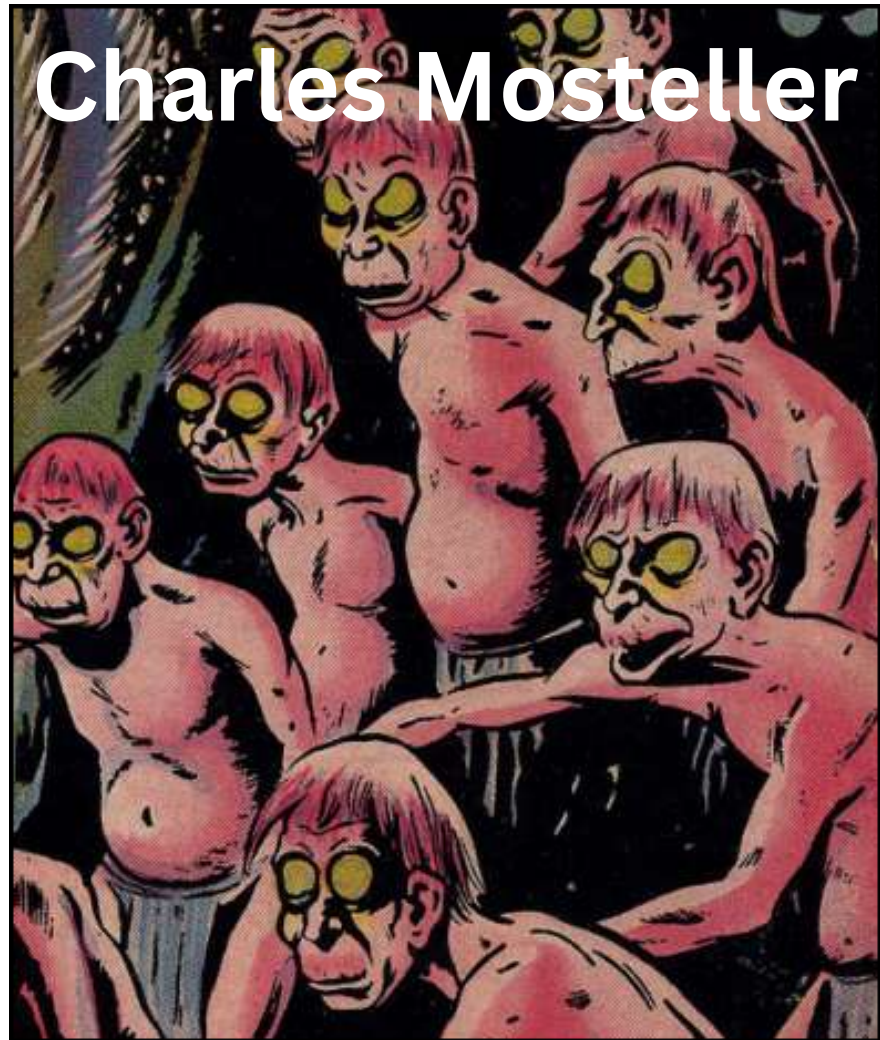
WHO WILL SAVE US?

I hadn't planned to write this article. Heck, the thought of it hadn't even crossed my mind. I was ready to just finish things up, get the proofreading done, and then just wipe my hands of this issue, when all of a sudden, the thought of PBM Overlords came crashing into my mind.

That image over on the right didn't help matters, either. I had it ready to use, but had found no actual use for it, but once the thought of PBM Overlords entered my mind, it just seemed to fit. And so, here we are.

If you're out there, somewhere, and you sometimes wonder when our PBM Overlords are going to arrive and save the day, save PBM's day, then I've got some bad news for you.

You see, they aren't going to arrive, for the very simple reason that they don't exist. PBM's Old Guard is shattered. They're fractured. They've just grown old - *too darned old*. Frankly, there aren't enough of



Charles Mosteller

them, and of the ones that are still around simply don't seem to be up to the task, anymore.

The closest thing that you're going to find to a PBM Overlord, these days, is that creature that stares back at you, whenever you look into a mirror. We've waited all this time, you and I, and no matter how much we wait, no matter how long that we wait, no end to the

waiting ever seems to be in sight. That's not by accident, I'm afraid.

PBM gaming needs new blood. It needs new ideas, new risk takers, new GMs, new companies. It needs new games, new initiatives, and new imaginations unlocked.

It needs new horizons and new frontiers. *It needs new invigoration!*

Why do this? What good does any of this do anybody, anybody at all? Why shouldn't I just bring this undertaking to a crashing halt, and create a new PBM game, instead?

It could be hand-moderated or computer-assisted (as they liked to call it, back in the day). I mean, how hard could it be, right? After all, I've done it once before. Why not try again, now?



And it needs all of that, today. Heck, it needed all of that yesterday, yesteryear even.

Instead, we've got what we've got. We've ended up with what we've ended up with.

You're out there. You're lurking in the shadows. I think that you're working on your own PBM game. What a dastardly thing to do! Such schemes that men have! At least have the decency to share some details. ***Are YOU the next Overlord?***

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