

PBM

Issue 24

Unearthed

The Mysterious Realm of Play-By-Mail Gaming

24th Unusual Issue!



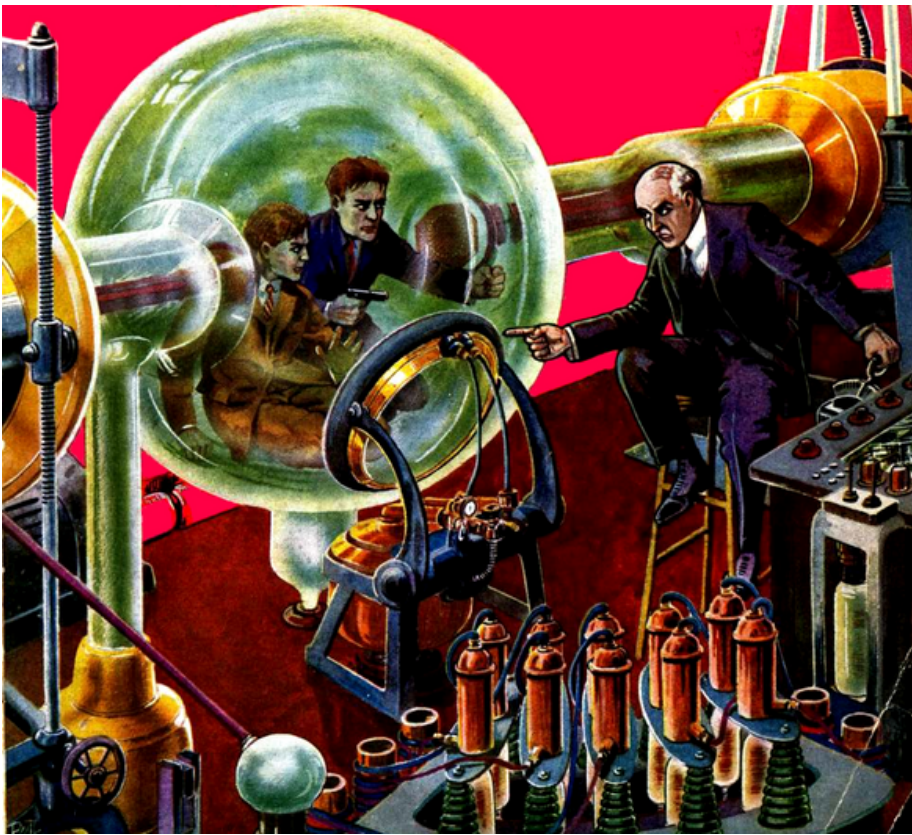
January 15th, 2022

Is time running out for PBM?

PlayByMail.Net

ISSUE #23

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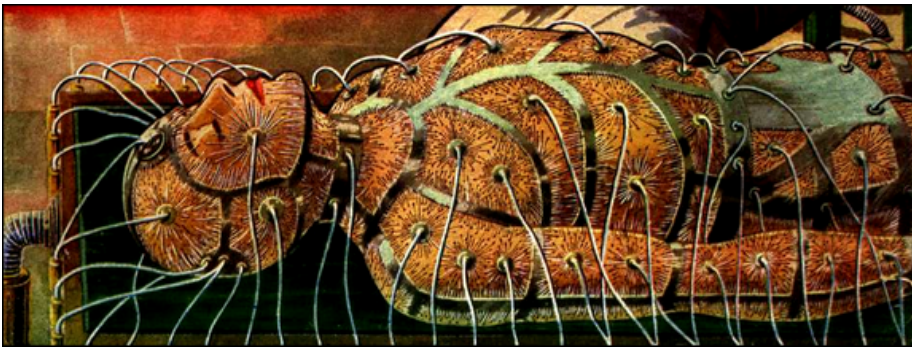
Insanity: The Engine of Progress in PBM

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From PBM Companies & GMs

PBM Comic

The Time Conundrum



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Daemonrift 3

The Armageddon War

Daemonrift:3 is a module of the turn-based adventure game DungeonWorld. Understanding of the rules and style of play are necessary to take part. Daemonrift is a weekly (ish) module.

<http://www.madcentral.co.uk/dungeonworld/daemonrift3/>

The Kingdom of Panmarlon was dying, slowly, painfully.

Eaten away from the inside by the endless stream or corrosive, murderous, terrible demons. It had begun on the day the rift opened, and it would end soon. A last gambit. Heroes from Panmarlon would go through the rift, to the place beyond. And take the battle to the Demons in their own land. What they never expected to find was – other humans. From a faraway world. Stranded there with them...

Daemonrift 3: The Armageddon War

Estimated TWO YEARS duration, weekly turns (mostly).

Fast play suicide mission.



Types of Sign-Up

FREE SIGNUP

One Character, free forever, from a limited set.

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(Only available to people who are not playing a Berenian or Panmarlonian character)

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£20.00 for 20 turns. (Extra characters can be added £5.00 each with 20 free turns.)

Thereafter, turns at usual costs.

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Thereafter, turns at usual costs

BERENIAN CHARACTER OPTIONS:

Standard Berenian Startup Characters

PHOENIX

BEYOND THE STELLAR EMPIRE



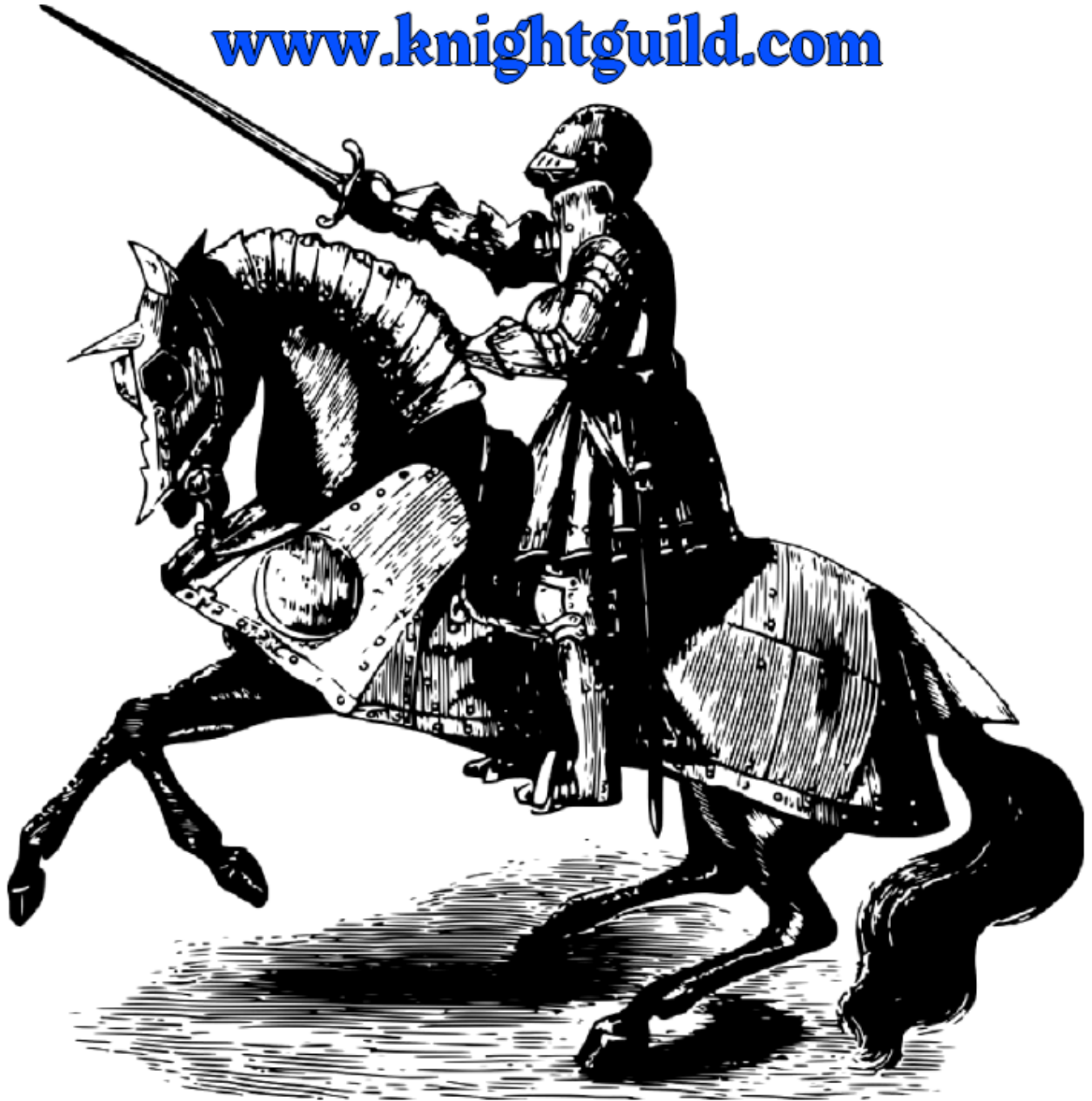
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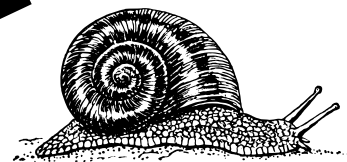


Talisman Consulting
editor@suspense-and-decision.com

"To instill order into chaos."

Charles Mosteller

INSANITY



The Engine of Progress in PBM

It's been said recently, and by more than one person, that a weekly publication schedule for PBM Unearthed is insane. Even still, they both are of the opinion that they enjoy seeing new issues come out. Could it be that a little insanity is *exactly* what the PBM doctor ordered?

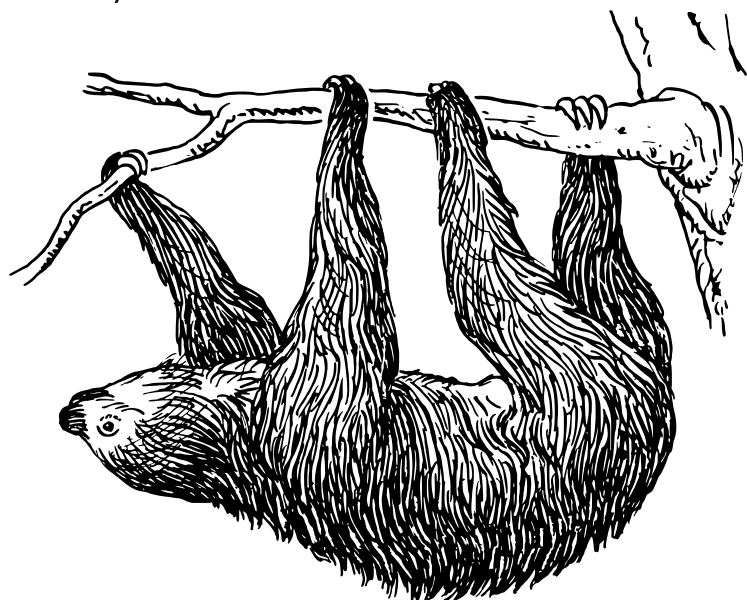
Why, though, is it insane? What about it, *specifically* and *exactly*, makes it qualify as an insane act? Is it more insane to publish new issues at a weekly pace? Or is it insane to read them at a weekly pace? How is it that one is any more insane than the other?

I look at it this way. The Realm of Play By Mail needs to up the ante on what it brings to the table for PBM-interested individuals. No one else has to share that opinion, but it is what I think and what I believe. We live in a day and an age when people are impatient with websites that take more than just few seconds to load in our web browsers. Yet, you think that people *want* to *wait* for PBM publications to publish at what, these days, may well seem like a glacial pace?

For a second, forget what the PBM community of old considered to be the norm for their Paper Mayhem or their Flagship or their Nuts & Bolts of Gaming took to reach their mailbox.

In all of the years since then, has the bar not moved any, on the speed or frequency end of things? Are we all stuck in a time warp? Is a monthly, bi-monthly, or even a quarterly rate of publication a sacred cow that can't be slain upon the altar of efficiency?

Or with all of the technological "progress" that we've made over the last several decades, is it simply not feasible (or dare I say it, not possible) to publish issues with a little more pep in our step, more than a couple of decades into the 21st Century?



Should we perhaps just go ahead and name the sloth as PBM's official mascot, and call it a day? Should we resign ourselves to the status quo?

From my perspective, I simply think that PBM is already far enough behind, as it is, and if it requires a little insanity, in order to fire the engine of PBM progress, then I say that we should go for it.

Sure, we could run out of fuel, or lose interest, or allow ourselves to get sidetracked. There's lots and lots of different possibilities that boil to the surface. That's just how life is, how life always has been, and likely always will be - *for the foreseeable future, anyway.*

If nothing else, then perhaps I have demonstrated that a weekly rate of publication for a PBM publication is possible. That's not to say that it may be the *right* pace for everyone, but I'm inclined to believe that it may just yet prove to be a *better* pace for some people.

Is it easy? No. I would, however, pose a different question - namely, is it better? Is it worthwhile? Does it have any merit?

Personally, I don't have any real interest in leading the charge of the Snail Brigade, though since I still enjoy PBM gaming via old fashioned snail mail, maybe that's what I'm doing, anyway, without even realizing it. Paper format turn results still remain a blast, all these many years since I first began to play my very first PBM game. When I go to send my turn results in for processing, I use e-mail. In fact, I haven't the slightest clue when the last time was that I sent my turn orders in via the postal service.

So, I guess that you could say that I have one foot in, and the other foot out of, postal gaming. I certainly don't hate PBM games in digital form, though I certainly have my preferences, as far as the sending and receiving of turns is concerned.

For publishing a PBM publication, I much prefer the newer methods to the old ways of doing things. To each their own, I suppose.

But it really isn't a question of sanity or insanity. That simply doesn't even factor into the publishing equation. Those who crave a return to the PBM days of yesteryear could do far worse than to find or build a time machine. The faster that issues of PBM Unearthed publish, that's kind of what it's like for me.



If I were publishing PBM Unearthed at a quarterly rate of publication, that would amount to just four issues per year. Issue #24, the issue that you are reading right now, would have taken six years to arrive, at that glacial pace.

Bi-monthly would require four years to accomplish this feat (six issues per year), and even a monthly pace means that publishing twenty-four issues would require two full years to accomplish where we are right now, already.

A faster frequency of publication means that PBM ads find their way before a recurring PBM audience's eyes more often. PBM advertisements are, in one sense, a visual form of temptation. They prey upon people's penchant for nostalgia. Sure, each issue is a roll of the dice, but the more rolls that you get, the better your chances become of "winning." And winning, in this instance, refers to the PBM industry and PBM hobby as a whole winning. Growth is winning, the growth of the overall PBM player base, and frequency of raising awareness of PBM games can play a decisive role in driving growth.

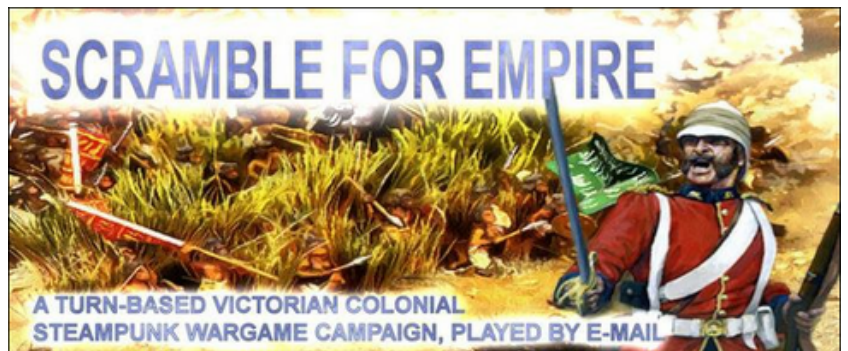
Each issue is also a *reminder* to PBM!



Harlequin Games



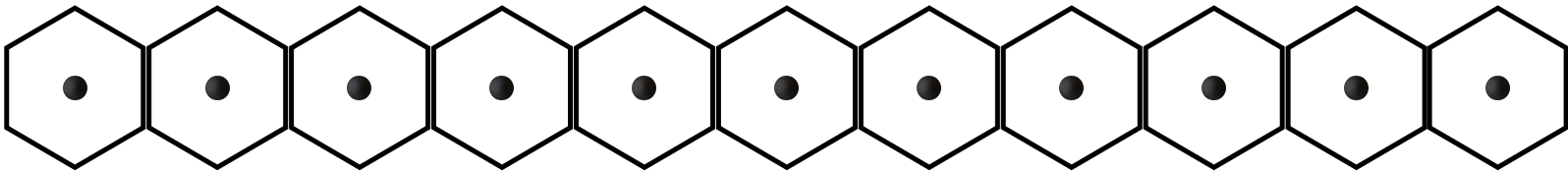
Renaissance



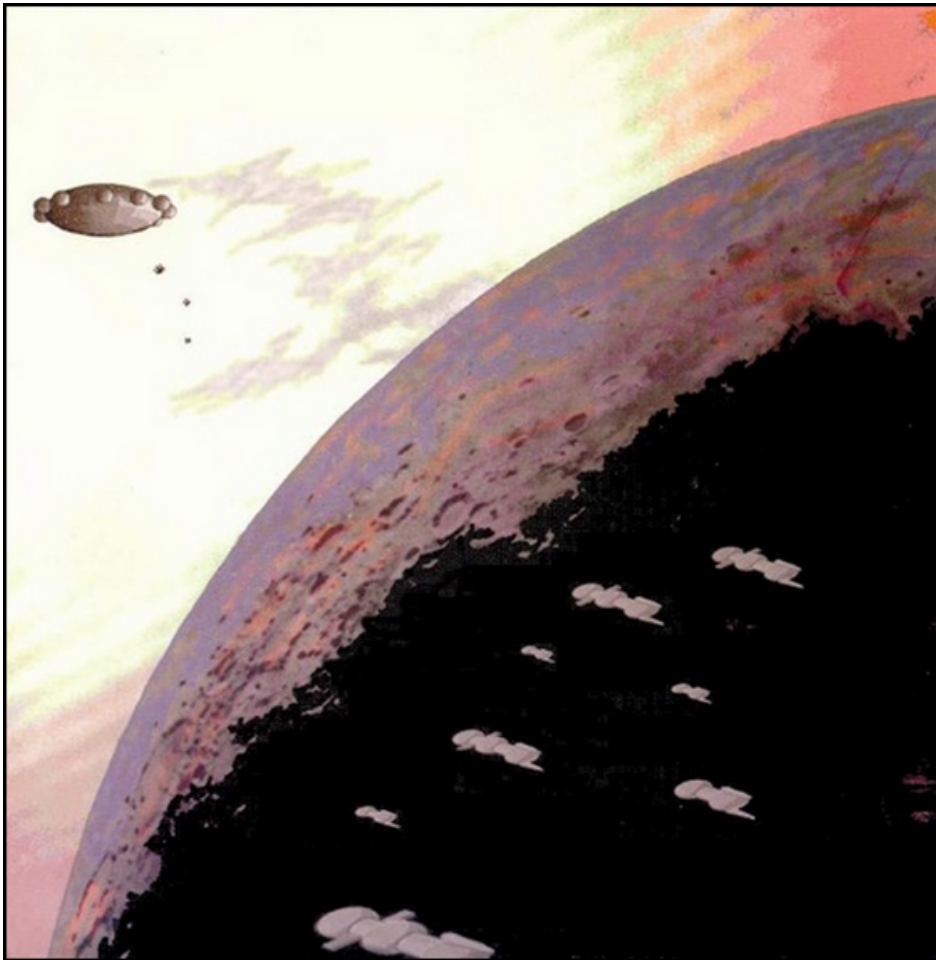
Star Fleet



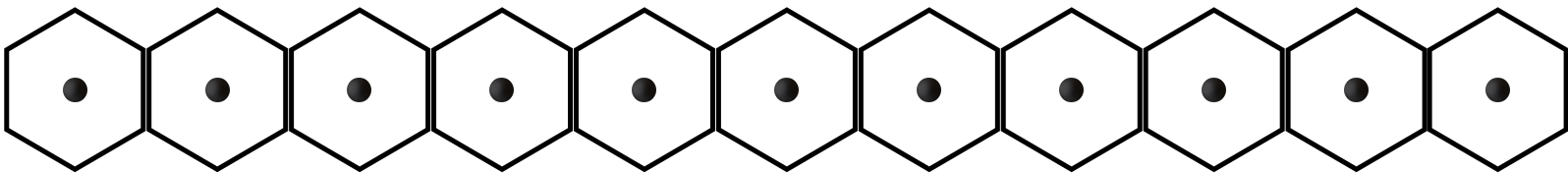
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Strategic Campaign in the High Arena

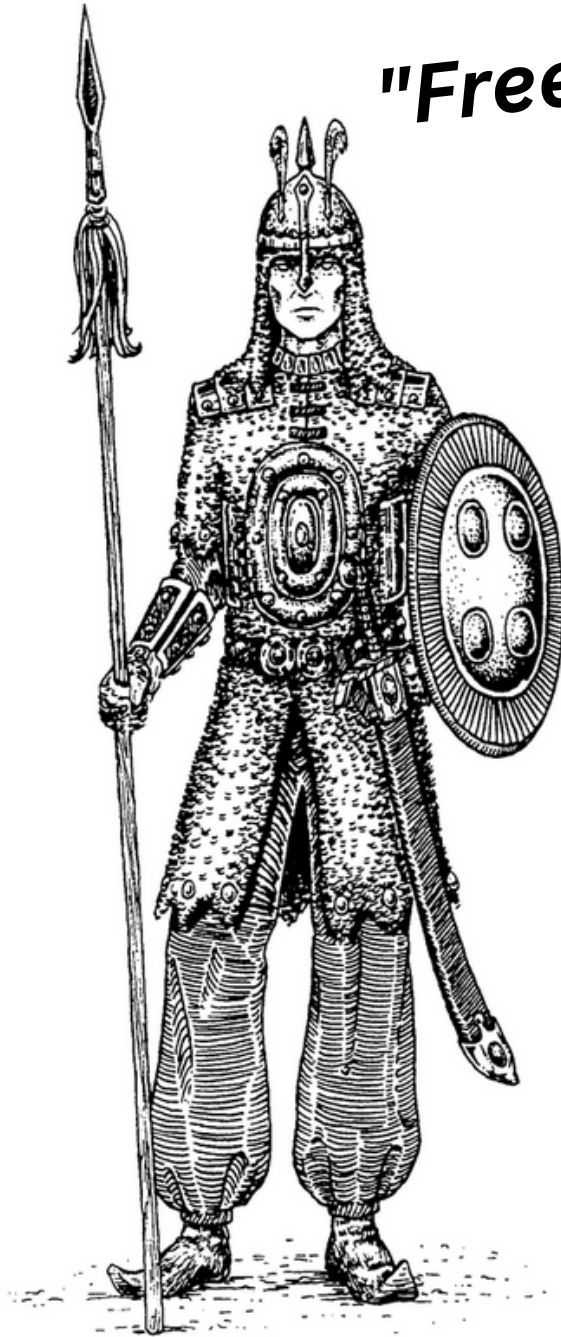


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KINGDOM SET-UP REPORTS

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A Game of Hyborian War

The Saga of the Kingdom of Nemedia in HW-982 continues

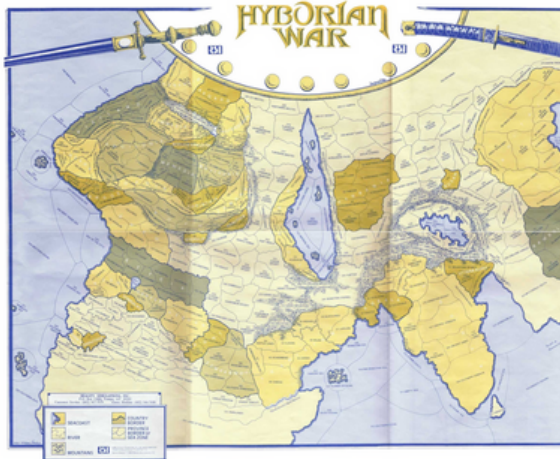
Charles Mosteller



HYBORIAN WAR™

Turn #18

Hyborian War is run by Reality Simulations, Inc.



HYBORIAN WAR™

is a Play By Mail game where you control the destiny of the Hyborian Age of Conan.

Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator character delivered the by-now-famous line of, "I'll be back." Now, I'm the one who's back.

Five turns have passed, since I last authored an article in this series about Hyborian War game number HW-982. Specifically, I play the Kingdom of Nemedia in that particular game. How are things progressing for me in that game, you wonder? So glad that you asked.

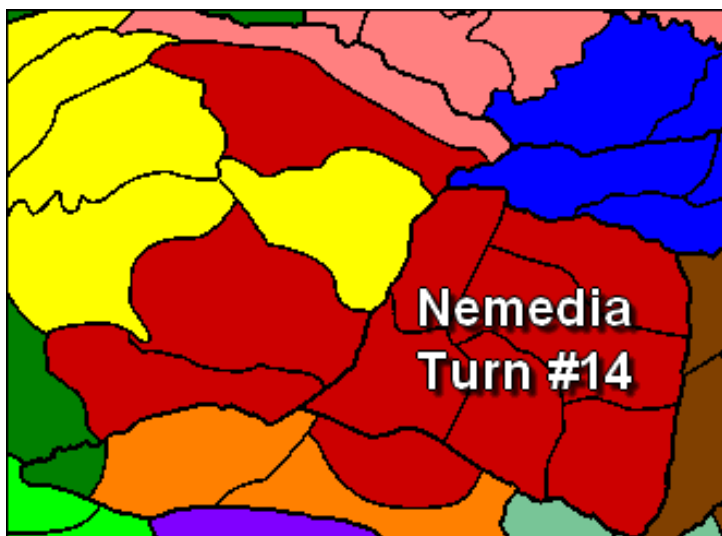
Since that last article in this series appear in Issue #15 of PBM unearthed, Nemedia has conquered (and subsequently lost) the capital of the Kingdom Ophir, Ianthe. Nemedia's forces conquered Ianthe on Turn #14, and then promptly invaded the Ophirian province of the Ophir Meadowlands, which afforded a prepared Ophir a golden opportunity to take his by-then former capital back.

Turn #15 was not without good news for Nemedia, though, as another Nemedian imperial army swept into the Zamoran capital province of Shadizar, wresting control of that province from the hated Zamorans. It is worth pointing out that of the two, Ianthe and Zamora, Zamora proved to be the far more valuable - no surprise, seeing as how Nemedia's kingdom set-up report lists Shadizar as a Major Victory Progress goal.

Various human error mistakes on my part have taken their toll, but mistakes of this nature are all a well-established tradition in the gameplay of Hyborian War. All experienced players of the game make mistakes. All of them! Not that they all care to admit it, of course, but such is their human nature taking true form. Me? I tend to make some kind of mistake or other almost every single turn.

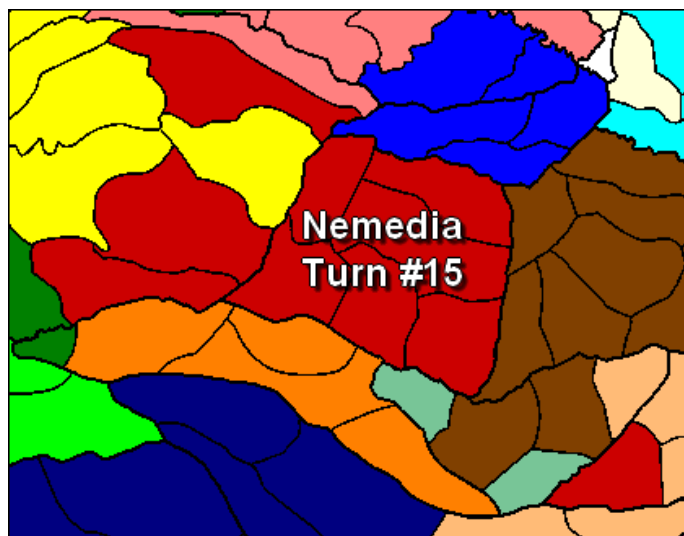
Usually, the vast bulk of the mistakes that I make in the issuing of my turn orders for my kingdom are traceable to me waiting until the proverbial last minute to e-mail my turn orders into RSI. While RSI (the company that runs and processes turns of Hyborian War) does make mistakes, at times, players of the game have a tendency to make RSI their whipping boy, blaming RSI for anything and everything under the sun - *and then some!*

My own long first-hand experience over the years, dating back to the mid-1980s, has been that the vast bulk of errors that take place in games of Hyborian War have been the fault - and the responsibility - of players, and not anyone at RSI.



No further changes to Nemedia's territorial holdings have transpired, since Turn #15. Lost opportunities, no doubt, but the very moment that Nemedia conquered Shadizar from its Zamoran overlords, Nemedia's in-game victory progress has went from GOOD/GOOD to SUPEIOR/GOOD. What this means is that I went from making GOOD progress during the current turn and GOOD progress over the course of the game, to date, to making SUPERIOR progress on the turn, but still making GOOD progress over the course of the game, to date. The first of those two ratings is always an indicator of how well that you're doing on the current turn, no matter what turn of the game it is, and the latter of the two ratings measures your progress from Turn #1 to the current turn.

These days (and in more recent years), I don't really play the game to win, anymore. Instead, I focus more upon having fun, and upon ensuring that other players have a better chance of losing, by way of my decisions and strategy and tactics decisions placing their own kingdoms in more difficult situations to overcome. This approach has proven to make the game vastly more fun to play, compared to just trying to achieve victory conditions that were determined by RSI long, long ago. Whenever players of the game play against whatever kingdom that I am controlling, I strive to ensure



that they have to work for the win, if they really want it. Players playing predetermined roles on well-tread paths is not, I feel, a true and proper test for prevailing to victory in a wargame. Instead, let them pit their wits and their skills and their abilities against less orthodox challenges - and I try to fill that void, where and when possible.

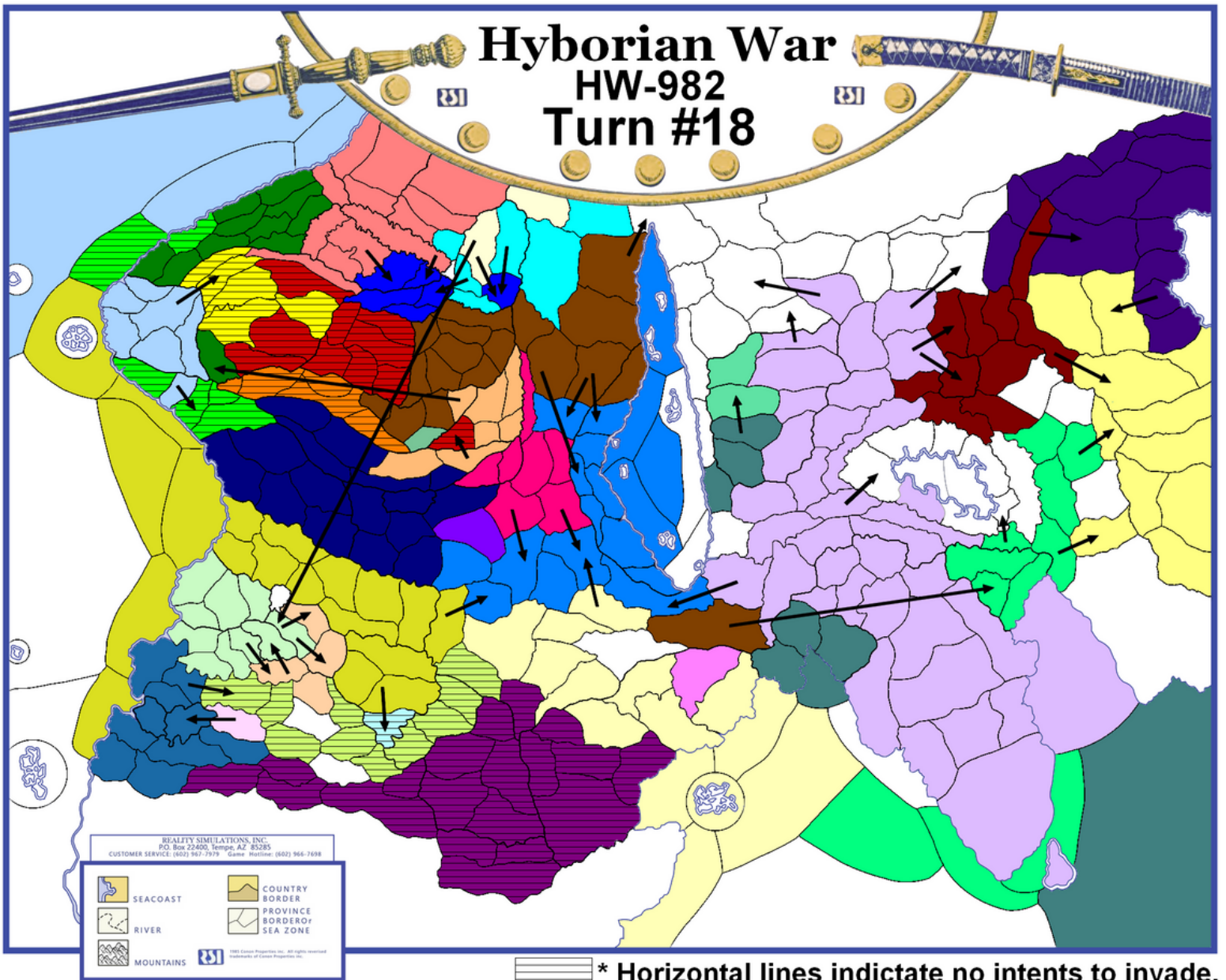
All of the various kingdom spotlights that explain how to try and play kingdoms in Hyborian War, in order to win, all all fine and dandy, but I much prefer to throw monkey wrenches into the best laid (and best prepared) plans of mice and men (mostly men). Contending against kingdoms played in predictable fashion flies in the face of reality, where the waging of war is concerned.

Playing Hyborian War over a period of many years has a tendency to spoil veteran players of the game. I try to provide a challenge to overcome for all of my adversaries in game sof Hyborian War that I play in. My function, as their in-game adversary is neither to just roll over for them, nor to make life easier for themselves or the kingdoms that they presume to play. I don't care about trying to win nearly so much as I care about defeating you, and ensuring that you do not win. There is no grand law of the cosmos that I must accommodate what my in-game enemies desire. If they want to grow fat and lazy in Hyborian War, then let then do so on someone else's watch, I say.

One of the things that I like to do each turn, after I receive my turn results from RSI, is to plot changes to the game's blue map that is included with my turn results. I used a colorable map that contains all of the provinces, and basically, I "paint" changes to the map in the colors that I choose to use to represent all thirty-six player kingdoms. This way, I have a handy quick visual reference to help me to stay abreast of and remember who controls what, without having to read through a bunch of text every turn, trying to track down specific bits and pieces of critical information. For peace years blue maps, especially, other information gained from other players, in the form of spy reports or, most importantly of all, prophecy reports.

Prophecy reports are, in a word, "the shit." This is especially the case where word prophecy reports (distinguished from kingdom-specific prophecy reports) are concerned. It doesn't tend to take many different prophecy reports, in order to fill in the blanks of what everyone (or most everyone) is doing (or plans to do), in the turn immediately following any peace years turn.

So far in HW-982, we haven't experienced any long peace years turns (closer to 30 years in length), even though we've already experience several different peace years turns. The length of time that a peace years turn lasts is a primary factor in how much your kingdom's royal treasury fills back up. War season turns tend to deplete kingdoms' coffers,



due to various kingdom expenses that have to be paid out of the kingdom's treasury. Much of the time, kingdoms that I play in games of Hyborian War invariably go under the axe of being played with a NONE level treasury. Having a NONE treasury, and to a lesser degree a POOR treasury, impacts certain things that you might otherwise want to do - such as the raising of troops, the paying of ransoms for imprisoned characters, and/or the paying of tribute (in a bid to enhance your kingdom's chances of successfully negotiating peace treaties with other kingdoms).

Turn #18's turn results revealed that seventeen years of peace raised Nemedica's royal coffers to an EXCELLENT level. Meanwhile, ever other Tom, Dick, and Harry kingdom around me seems to have netted a SUPERIOR amount of wealth in their respective kingdom treasuries. *The bastards!*

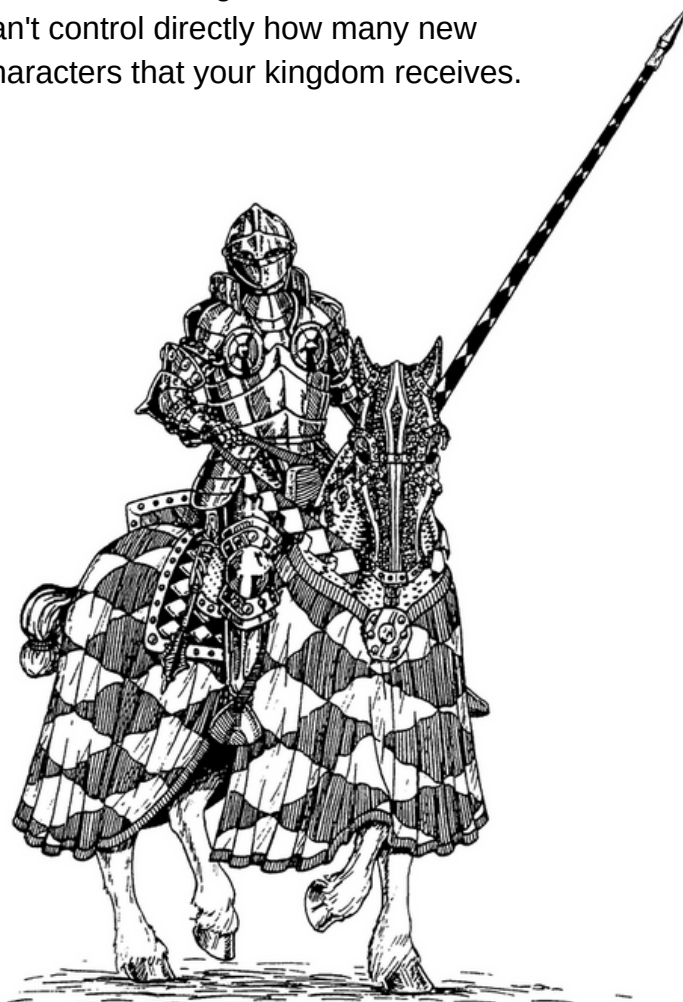
It is what it is, though. Oh, to be sure, I had numerous different characters actively ruling during this peace years - *eight of them, in fact*. I know this for certain, because I went back in, just now, and looked at my turn results for the turn (more than once). All ten of Nemedica's provinces have VERY HIGH loyalty to the throne. Nonetheless, several of my provinces "bear watching," my turn results say, via a report from my kingdom's chancellor (an in-game character) to me (the kingdom's player).

None of my kingdom's provinces appear to be even remotely approaching the point of open rebellion, though. Actively ruling and casting Bless spells on provinces are the primary means whereby players prevent rebellions from forming and spreading, over the course of the game. Actively ruling always seems like such a "waste" of a character's one-slot command slot, but if you were to never have any of your characters to actively rule, then rest assured, bad things could well happen to your kingdom - things which you may or may not be able to recover from.

Troop rebellions can sometimes cost your kingdom a LOT of troops. Not always, but sometimes. Actively ruling is the primary mechanism open to you, to prevent rebellions.

You may not always have Bless spells at your disposal. However, that's not to say that you can't ever succeed at persuading OTHER kingdoms to have their Bless spells cast on one or more of YOUR provinces. This is one of those instances where effective player-to-player diplomacy can benefit your kingdom directly.

So, how did things go for Nemedica, otherwise, during these years of peace? Well, on the character front, which is actually one of your main concerns as a player of Hyborian War, things went pretty well for the Kingdom of Nemedica. I didn't get as many new characters as I had hoped for, but the amount of new characters that I gained exceeded the amount of existing characters that I lost. You can't control directly how many new characters that your kingdom receives.



If I counted right, Nemedian lost two characters during the peace years turn, most likely from natural causes. Yes, in Hyborian War, your characters can and do age, with the passage of time. Technically they can die on any turn from old age (or whatever else natural causes encompass within the game's internal mechanics), but far more times than not, it's usually during a peace years turn. It sucks, when your characters die, even if they die from natural causes, rather than from an assassin's blade or from an adventure gone bad.

The sole exception to this general rule of thumb is that whenever you have a really sucky ruler (of a province or of the kingdom - provincial ruler or monarch), you may actually find yourself praying for that particular character to die, just so that you can name a replacement. Whenever you appoint a character to a rulership slot, that is a PERMANENT decision, one that only death can alter - *with the sole exception being in instances where you appoint an existing provincial ruler to monarch.* Sometimes when you're in one of those situations, the character won't seem to die, no matter what you try. It's always funny to see other players of other kingdoms find themselves in that position, though.

In actuality, I "lost" three characters during the peace years, rather than just two. One of them got captured, and is currently spending time in a dungeon, somewhere. Thus, characters become TEMPORARILY lost to you for most of their normal purposes/assignments, when they find themselves in a situation like this. You always have the option of either having imprisoned characters to rescue themselves, or you can dispatch another character to rescue them. Rescue attempts tend to fail as much as they tend to succeed, and characters can even die during rescue attempts gone bad. *Danger always lurks in the shadows, when you play Hyborian War.*

The two Nemedian characters that died during the peace years were NEME-2, a Noble named Istarius Aphenakos - a rather talented fellow in six out of seven skill levels, and NEME-10 - a Nemedian Hero who was a moderately decent character, but nothing worth writing home about, as far as heroes go.

What about the new characters gained goes? Are all of Nemedian's newest characters manly studs, just waiting to be dispatched to save the day? Um, no, not hardly. Some are decent, but others really aren't. That's usually how it goes, with the acquisition of a new batch of characters in Hyborian War. I gained six, which is an OK number of new characters, but you always want more, no matter how many that you receive. There's always MORE that you want to do, as a player in the game, rather than LESS. It's harder to do more with less, if you know what I mean.



Nemedia's newest characters include an array of diversity, in the form of agents, generals, heroes, nobles, and wizards. The character types that Nemedia received is certainly more well-rounded than the individual stats that the characters, themselves, received. *Life's always a bitch, it seems, where the gaining of new characters are concerned.*

Fortunately, none of Nemedia's best diplomats died, during the peace years turn. One of the Kingdom of Nemedia's key strengths at game start is its diplomatic corps, which is comprised of some of the very best diplomats in the game. A diplomat is actually a misnomer in Hyborian War, but what the term refers to is a character of any type that has a sizable rating in the skill level (also called ability rating) known as Diplomacy.

to be in the right place at the right time, and on alert and on your toes, ready for ANY development, even and especially the most unexpected of ones. My adversaries in Hyborian War are almost always the unintended recipients of my unplanned generosity towards them. More times than not, however, they simply aren't prepared. Either that, or they lack timely and complete situational awareness.

So far during HW-982, my errors have likely cost me multiple additional conquests of provinces, but when you make a mistake that bites you in the ass like that, all that you can really do is dust yourself off and try again. *Stay clam, and don't allow your own mistakes to be turned into psychological weapons by your kingdom's enemies. Persevere!*

HYBORIAN WAR™

Because I waited until the proverbial last minute to send my turn orders in to RSI for Turn #18, I ended up reaping what I sowed. I didn't double-check my turn orders sufficiently, and as a result, I failed to issue any intents to invade during the peace years turn, and now none of Nemedia's imperial armies can invade. Want to beat an experienced player of Hyborian War? Then always be on your toes and prepared, and this is a sterling example of how someone with as many years of playing the game as I have ends up flubbing a very critical part of their turn orders. This is how opportunities are created. As many simple human errors as players commit over the course of any given game of Hyborian War, opportunity is ALWAYS knocking. You've just got

Most mistakes that players make that take the form of simple human errors do not usually turn straight into crises or catastrophes. The bulk of them invariably prove to be manageable situations - *unless a player who makes such mistakes convinces themselves to freak out, yield can then sometimes yield a series of cascading mistakes.* Learn to be the eternal calm in the eye of the storm of war.

Players are always their own worst enemies, though. If you lose your nerve during moments/turns where mistakes are committed, then you're as good as done for, already. *The primary difference in how your kingdom fares is YOU!*

Name: Istarius Aphenakos	ID: NEME-2	Character Type: Noble
Age: ancient	Status: Dead	Gender: Male
Present location: The Northern March Region		Province of Birth: Belverus
Personal Combat : ADEQUATE		Assignment last turn: Actively Ruling
Diplomacy : EXCELLENT		
Rulership : GOOD		
Military Command : GOOD		
Heroism : ADEQUATE		
Intrigue : ADEQUATE		
Magic : NONE		

My diplomatic efforts that I commanded my characters to undertake during the peace years turn were largely, though not entirely, successful. My characters succeeded on two out of three attempts to negotiate peace with other kingdoms.

Both Olphir (who was steeled in some measure of distrust and ill will for us) and Shem (who were bitter men filled with hatred hardly disguised) ultimately signed treaties of peace with Nemedi, thereby ensuring that armies from those two kingdoms cannot invade Nemedian lands. The Kingdom of Ophir also succeeded in persuading Nemedi to sign a peace treaty with that realm. So, for the remainder of this upcoming set of war seasons, neither Ophir nor Nemedi will be able to invade one another. Develops of this nature simply free you up to worry about, and to deal with, other things. *There's always irons in the fire in Hyborian War!*

My attempt to negotiate peace with Zamora (who were also steeled in some measure of distrust and ill will for Nemedi), however, failed, and Zamora has already issued intents to invade Shadizar. *Mitra be with us, as the Zamoran worshippers of*

the Spider-God, Zath, scheme to reclaim Shadizar from Nemedian control!

Back on Turn #17, Zamora decided to launch a couple of raids into Shadizar, raids that went unopposed by Nemedian forces. On Turn #18, however, I ordered the detaching of twenty troops of Nemedian Knights, some of the finest of heavy cavalry in all of the Thurian continent, from an imperial army in Shadizar to that province's provincial army, PA-179.

And then when the peace years turn of Turn #18 came, four new raids by Zamoran forces encountered heavy resistance, resulting in nine Nemedian troops destroyed and no less than twenty-seven troops of Zamorans destroyed. My Adjutant-General, General Arklo Noirelle, lead the defense garrison in Shadizar during these raids, killing a great many, vastly more than Nemedi lost in its defense against said raids.

A side victory to these raids took the form of a Zamoran character, Yara Aharesus, being found among the dead in the aftermath of the first of what would prove to be four raids by Zamora, this turn.

Name: Tarrano Thespius	ID: NEME-10	Character Type: Hero
Age: ancient	Status: Dead	Gender: Male
Present location: The Flowing Desert		Province of Birth: Belverus
Personal Combat : ADEQUATE		Assignment last turn: Adventuring
Diplomacy : POOR		
Rulership : ADEQUATE		
Military Command : ADEQUATE		
Heroism : GOOD		
Intrigue : NONE		
Magic : NONE		

Since the last time that I wrote an article for this series, much has transpired. I have declared war upon Hyperborea, and hostilities between the Vanir of Vanaheim have erupted in the game discussion thread, over on The Road of Kings forum site. These deteriorations in foreign relations emanated in the aftermath of Nemedias Borderlander allies seizing control of the Hyperbor Valley from the accursed Hyperboreans.

One of the things that you can usually count on in Hyborian War is how predictable that other players turn out to be. Rather than diplomatically walking things back from the brink of confrontation, the Hyperborean player, ROKer AlwaysFPS, chose a path that was a combination of silence and feigned indignation. Now, Hyperborea is in over its head, it's ass in a bind from which only its diplomats can hope to extract it from the coming war with Nemedias.



Me? Oh, I love stuff like this! Just watching and observing as other players suddenly find themselves in the Chair of Reaction. What will they do?

Playing Hyperborea in HW-982 is my friend, Mason Bowering, who also goes by the ROK moniker mentioned previously of AlwaysFPS. Mason is a very intelligent fellow, and he is a true enthusiast of Hyborian War, even if he still lacks considerable experience, yet, that otherwise might serve him better than inexperience has.

Hyborian War players invariably tend to seek to accrue advantage unto themselves and their kingdoms, while simultaneously seeking to minimize disadvantage. And that, you see, is the *real* challenge of playing Hyborian War.

Instinctively, players of the game almost always tend to crave war, in some way, shape, or form. They tend to take offense easily. Any little slight will do. But in epochs of Hyborian War, player-to-player communications and interactions is where the *real* power lies. Any fool can get offended. Can you talk your way out of a war, though? Most players either never really try, at all, or they commit themselves to such in a halfhearted manner. And in Hyborian War, that habit can get your kingdom destroyed, or at a minimum, its fortunes ruined.

And why don't players expend more time and effort and energy trying to avoid and avert war than to get swept up in war?

Most likely, it's for a combination of reasons. At times, players are lazy. At other times, they just don't know how to go about walking things back from the precipice of military destruction. At still other times, players allow their pride to get the better of them. And some poor fools allow themselves to get offended, even to the point of their own kingdom's detriment.

In such instances, players have only themselves to blame, and not me. My function as an adversary is to challenge you, not pamper nor babysit you.



Watching your kingdom go down in flames is actually one of the most memorable experiences achieved during the course of playing Hyborian War. Getting in over your head, and then working through every little detail, in order to figure out ways out of messes that one gets themselves into, is a true treasure that many times comes along with being adventurous enough to play the game.

If Hyborian War has anything, it's variety, and it offers variety in spades. Heavy troops, light troops, even medium troops. Cavalry, archers, chariots, infantry, even pikemen appear in the game. Nobles, generals, heroes, priests, wizards, and agents can all be commanded by players and wielded against one another. A wide range of magical spells exist within the game, and casting these can be some of the most fun that can be found. *Black Death! Fire Wall!* These dire magics can make the opposing player wait in misery, if used in a timely and effective fashion to turn the tides of war, obliterating huge numbers of troops, at times.

In HW-982, there's so many things that I want to do, so many things that I want to accomplish, yet time is always of the essence. Wars come and go and fade, only to be replaced by new ones that are always brewing in the minds and in the schemes of players. And did I mention that there are thirty-six player kingdoms to choose from? That's a cornucopia of choices, and it isn't always easy to narrow them all down to a single choice. *Crom count the dead!*

Since I made a clusterfuck of my plans by not issuing intents to invade (and in some cases, not issuing movement orders for certain of my kingdom's imperial armies), I now find myself behind the proverbial 8-Ball. I've only myself to blame, though, but be that as it may, I still have to get my act together and decide what all that I want to attempt to do on the following turn.

Turn #19 will be a war season turn, the first of several in the next set of war seasons. Thus, while many other kingdoms are busying filling out invasion orders, I will be twiddling my thumbs playing catch-up. *Alas, Hyborian War is not for the faint of heart!*

Perhaps it is time to reincarnate the dead. I'll be moving some armies around, assigning and detaching troops, casting far sight spells, spying, protecting characters, to count a few of the many different activities I will be engaging in on the next turn.

If you've never played a game of Hyborian War before, you really should considering getting in on the action. Sure, there's a learning curve to it, but even the newest of players can do just fine, if they but learn the basics.

Live the most powerful legend of them all!
HYBORIAN WAR is a Play-By-Mail game where you control the destiny of the Hyborian Age of Conan. *Dare to rise to the occasion!*

www.reality.com



Which kingdom will you rule?



HYBORIAN™ WAR



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Game design ©1985 Reality Simulations, Inc.

www.reality.com



TribeNet is a massive, open-ended, play-by-email, civilization game with strategy and building elements, grounded broadly in the Iron Age / Medieval ages. The players determine the course of the game by their own actions. As the Chief of your people, you will conduct diplomacy, initiate trade, negotiate over resources, make treaties, form military and political alliances, and create the direction you wish your Clan to take in a persistent world.

TribeNet has a very long track record (running continuously since 1997), a vibrant player community of over 70 players, and a dedicated and reliable GM who processes turn results every two weeks like clockwork. The first turns are easy enough, but the game is supported by rules that allow for great depth, detail, and immersion as your play develops.



"Can your clan survive and become a civilisation?"



Web: <https://tribenet.wiki/landing>
TribeNet
 Discord: <https://discord.gg/XfkJueaSTH>

Play By Mail Facebook Page

I think the problem is the hobby has changed. Back in the day, it was normal for most players to be in different games with different companies all the time, and always looking for new ones.

As PBM has atomised, players have often stuck with just one or two companies they trust and enjoy - *and many of the others are just gone forever from the hobby*. So a forum which talks about the hobby in general is going to be quieter, because those players tend to be talking on the forums for the game or couple of games they now play.

I still think things might swing back and the hobby could grow again - *but it takes the cultural pendulum to swing. I don't think that's impossible, though*.

Steve Tierney

DungeonWorld GM

01/11/2023

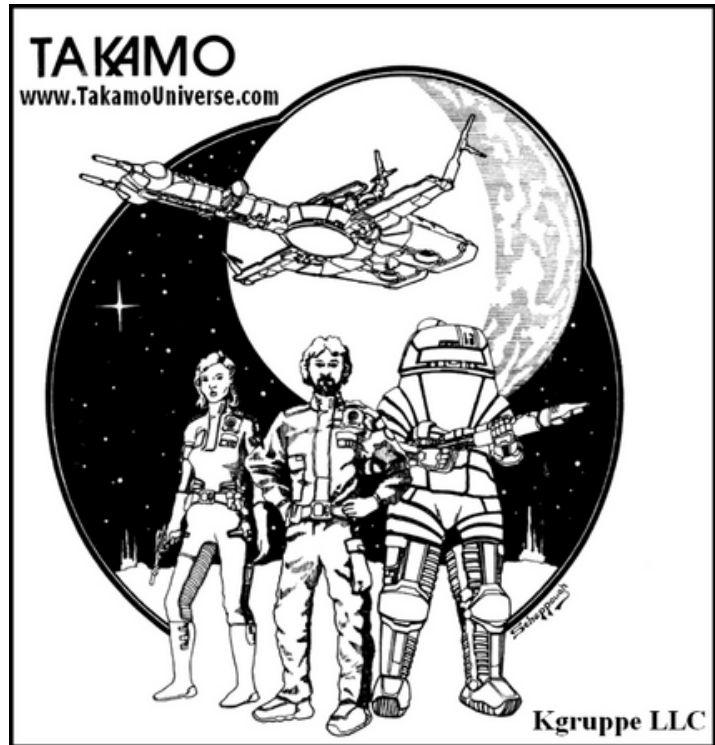
Play By Mail Facebook Page

Since I used to be very involved in PBM, but now barely participate, it's hard to comment on current events. More of a historian.

Rick Buda

Former Editor of Nuts & Bolts of Gaming magazine

01/11/2023



Takamo

The current Estra galaxy (where you played Undeadlord) has been running for about 8 years. Player empires that are not actively run by the player will continue to earn RUs and react to attacks, but will be otherwise dormant. In those cases, the dormant empire's allies will usually take the dormant empire's planets by subterfuge or direct attack. The dormant player record is still there so any accumulated RUs (money) are still sitting in the empire record. It might be better for an old player to just drop me a line and I will set up some new planets equivalent to the normal starting assets in a new part of the galaxy.

RandyR

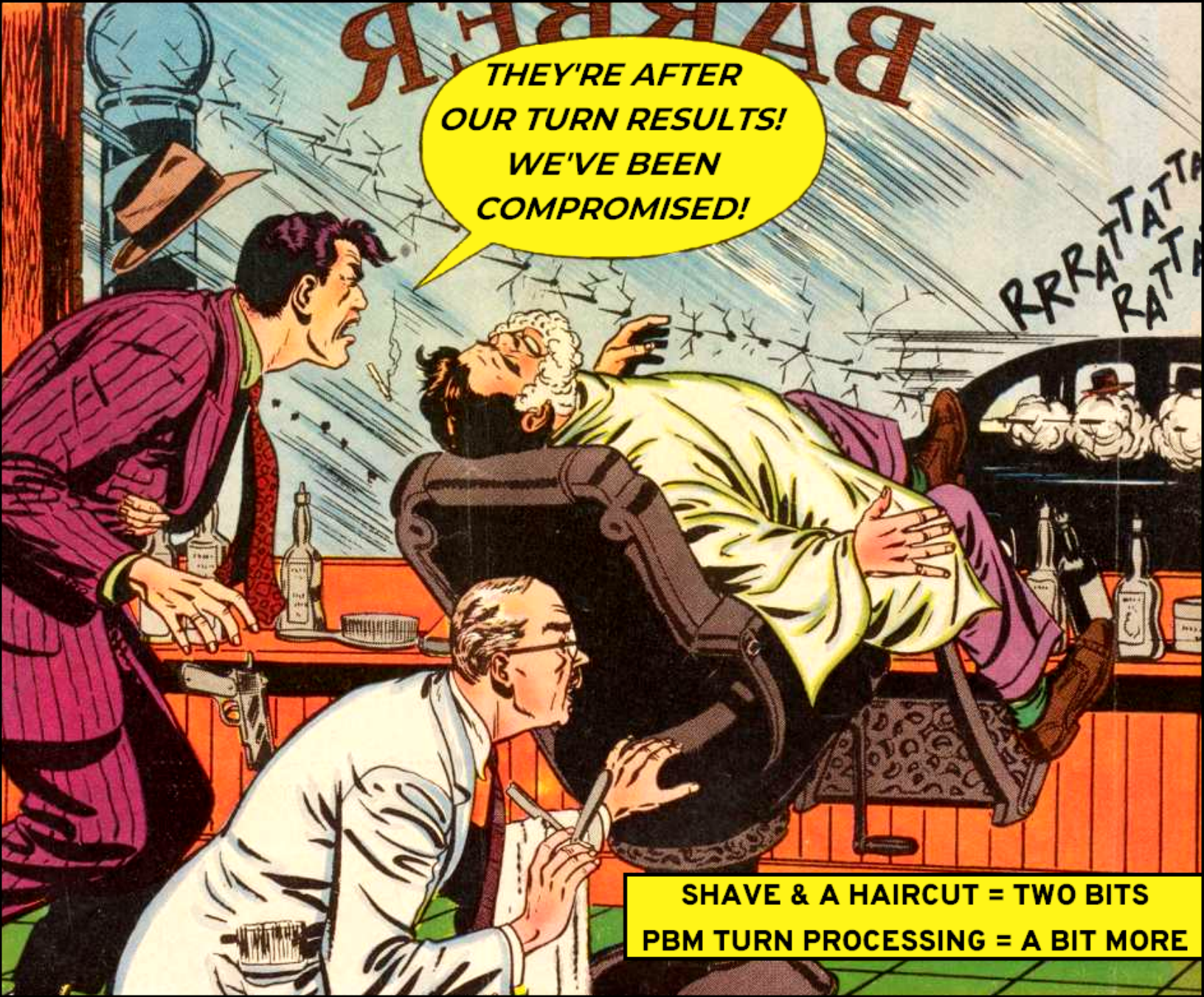
01/14/2023

Takamo

So I haven't played Takamo in a while and I wanted to get back into it, but it looks like I have been wiped out. Anyone know if its possible to start over?

Undeadlord

01/13/2023



KnightGuild

For the record I am a Pure RPGer, so SAs and Skills are my thing in this game and that is working. Now I am a War Gamer as well too, but that isn't my focus. You can do combat in this version of the game , BUT it will be extremely deadly. No more will players be standing behind Factional Regiments to do all the fighting and dying. It will be clans vs clans doing the dying, now. You want to fight? Then be prepared to pay the price. This not your pseudo Midgard of the past, this is the cold hard and nasty realism Midgard. The game is and can be great. It's still being fully flushed out, but the GMs are doing their best to flush out the system and tie it all together. There is a lot more to this game than has ever been there in the past, and much of it is coded, now. There is still more to go, but give it time. The key to this game is there are 3 GMs that are all D&Ders and DM/GMs running it, and Special Actions are a key to having fun.

DreamWeaver

12/18/2022

From PBM Companies & GMs



EAKING NEWS BREAKING NEWS BREAKING NEWS Bf

Harlequin Games

From legends@group.io

One Ring 9 - Free People's victory declared

Congratulations to the Free Peoples of Middle-earth!

And specifically, congratulations to the **Call of Gondor**, who have the highest number of Free People points

- 11 Ninzir - **Kelly Persons**
- 12 Falassion - **Kelly Persons**
- 18 Tedrick Eklund - **Warren McGaw**
- 14 Bjornen - **Stephen Rutland**
- 1 Erovaren - **Stephen Rutland**
- 16 Gondorkahn Warstride - **Mike Williams**
- 15 Dreadkill Warstride - **Mike Williams**
- 17 Scarill Wolfsbane - **Ram Zietek**

Middle-earth Games

From [Middle-earth Newsletter](#) (01/13/2023)

All Games Starting Soon

The following games are currently accepting setups, and due to start soon. Click on any of the links below full details or to sign up.

Champions of Middle-earth

Try a game of our 2 player module, now with rebalanced NPCs.

Game 953: 1650

Pre-aligned neutrals to ensure a balanced game.

Up to 2 nations per player.

One champion character per nation.

Northmen and Quiet Avenger have a 40 em.

10/24 nations available

Game 954: 1650 Gunboat

3 nations per player.

One champion character per nation.

Northmen and Quiet Avenger have a 40 em.

6 rewards per nation.

Possibility of shared results - TBD.

7/8 positions available

Game 257: 2950

3 nations per player.

One nation free as long as you have three nations in play!

8/8 positions available

Game 258: 2950 Gunboat

3 nations per player.

One nation free as long as you have three nations in play!

8/8 positions available

Game 619: Kin-strife

Up to 2 nations per player.

Pre-aligned or unaligned starting neutrals will be decided nearer game start.

13/14 nations available

Game 620: Kin-strife 3 nation Gunboat

3 nations per player.

New combos: Loyalists: 1/3/6 and 2/4/21, vs. Usurpers 11/14/15 and 12/13/22.

Boosted setups - 20% extra points for nation 1, 10% extra points for nation 2.

One nation free as long as you have three nations in play!

3/4 positions available

Game 416: Fourth-age

Up to 2 nations per player.

19/25 nations available

Game 418: Fourth-age 3 nation Gunboat

3 nations per player.

New Mountains of Mordor region groupings.

One nation free as long as you have three nations in play!

7/8 positions available

Dropout Positions

None at present.

Grudge Games

Ruben (2 person team), 1650 module.

Please get in touch if you and your friends fancy taking them on.

Or if you really want a challenge, why not play an entire side on your own – **discounts available!**

Live Weekend Game!

There has been interest in a weekend game, and as always, we are happy to try and oblige.

This is not going to be a face-to-face game, though we do hope to run one of these in 2023. Instead, it allows you to play from the comfort of your own home, but at the pace of a face-to-face game.

The exact details have yet to be fixed, but it will probably work something like this...

- *Gaming would take place later in the day on Friday, all day Saturday, and most of Sunday. (Exact times to be decided based on time zones of players involved.)*
- *Players receive both their and their allies' results, then have 45 minutes to write and return their orders.*
- *Diplos via Discord, but otherwise no contact with teammates.*
- *Format to be determined based on number of players, but probably 1650 12 vs. 12*

If you think you'd like to play, or have any questions, please do get in touch. We currently have around 6 players interested, and would like to have at least 6 a side.

NOTE: To read the entire Middle-earth Newsletter of 01/13/2022, then be sure to click [here!](#)

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

Boardgaming, Powered by Passion!

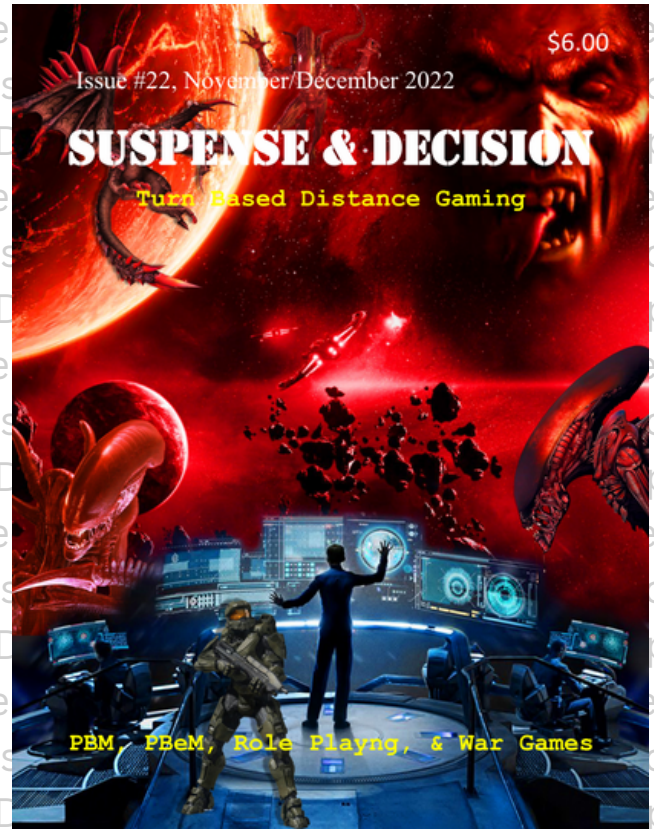
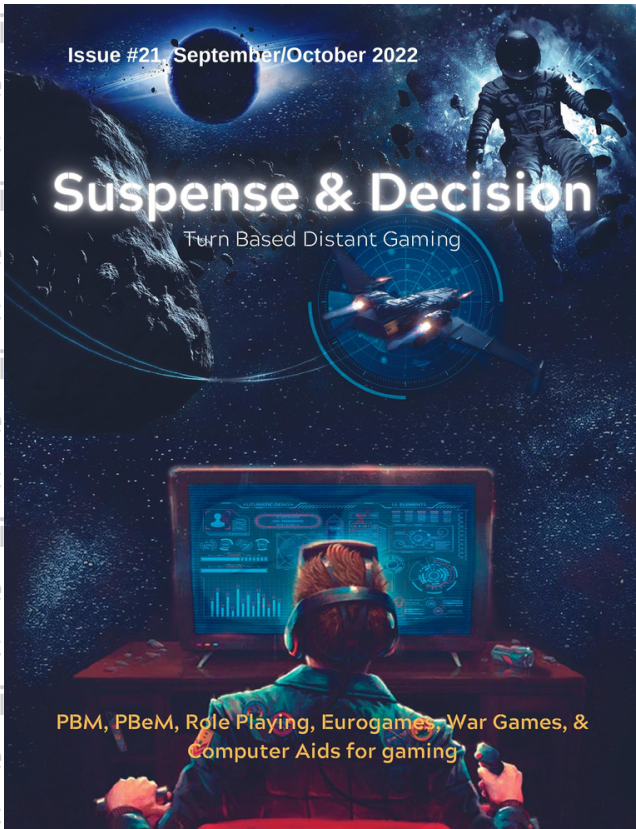


Tabletop SPIRIT

#18
WINTER 2022



**All I Want For Christmas Is...
Carrooka • BGStats • Histogames
and a Boardgame Museum!**



	<p>Suspense & Decision</p> <p><i>"Looking for information from the different game companies for the "Spokesmen Speak" column. If you have an article to submit, please do."</i></p> <p><u>editor@suspense-and-decision.com</u></p>
--	---

Subscribe to Suspense & Decision, today!

The Time Conundrum

Charles Mosteller

In a recent (as in very recent) response to an inquiry that I had made on the Play By Mail Facebook page, regarding perhaps trying to put together some kind of **Transgenerational Starweb Death Match**, former Starweb player, **Bill Hunter**, said something that got my mind gears turning.

"I don't think I will have the time to play, unfortunately."

Let me tell you, folks, that's like getting shot down by the **Red Baron**. But the big interest killer isn't Bill, rather, it's that timeless, ageless villain, the granddaddy of them all - *Time!*

Less than an hour before that, I had taken notice of Discord user, **Sporkles**, who had posted in the Atlantis Discord channel, the following:

"How time consuming are the turns?"

Discord user, **Luty**, was overheard a week ago, when he posted in the pbm-unearthed Discord channel, *"I don't know where Charles finds the time."*



Back on December 30th, 2022, in the SuperNova Discord channel, it was **Raven Zachary**, aka the most important man in PBM, who voiced about **Pete Dorman** of **Rolling Thunder Games**, *"Since Russ retired, he's been busy doing more work, so less time for the writing."*

Is it just me, or is there a pattern here?

People simply don't have time. Apparently, there's a time shortage. This is no time for a time shortage, people. *C'mon, man!*

Some people try to *find* time, whereas others have been known to *make* time. Rumor has it that some even *do* time. Time, time, time - There's always the same amount of time in every day, but from what I've gathered, there's not always the same amount of time in every year. There's that whole leap year thing, you know.

And some of us? Well, I highly suspect that we're *running out of* time. PBM certainly isn't dead, but could it be that PBM is in danger of getting *lost in the sands of* time? So, tell me, if people simply have no time to PBM, then what good would it do, if PBM were to ever make a strong comeback? *Take time to PBM!*



Atlantis: New Origins

atlantis-pbem.com



Miskatonic 4

Status: **Active** (closed to new players)

Atlantis Engine: v4.2.112

Ruleset: Miskatonic v1.0.35

Current Turn: #147 (March, Year 13)

Current Players: 2

Players Submitted: 0

Players Remaining: 2

Turn Frequency: All players submitted only

Time Elapsed: 5 days, 20.86 hours

Next Turn: n/a

First Player Submitted Reward: 50 unclaimed silver

Early Submitter Reward: 100 unclaimed silver (first 24 hours)

Atlantis Times:

Article Reward: 100 unclaimed silver

Rumor Reward: 50 unclaimed silver

Atlantis: Miskatonic

**ONLINE
ONLY**



Cisirth Dynasty [11] Orders: No file selected. NEWS

NEWS Password:

Martiniks Trade Guild [9] Orders: No file selected. NEWS

Atlantis Tools v1.103 (12/09/2021)

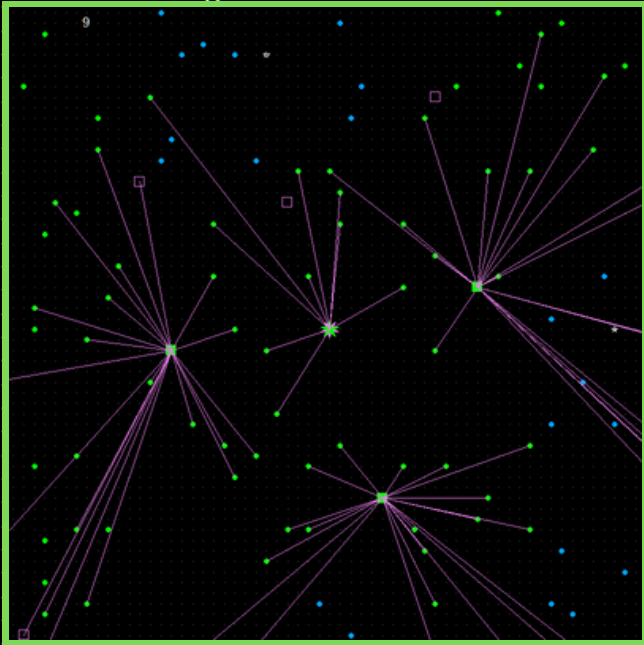
RickLoomis PBM



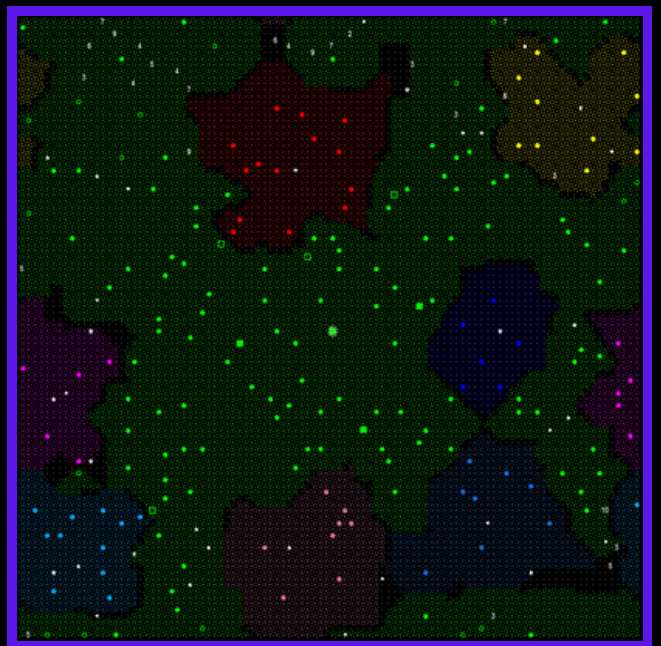
1970-2021: Celebrating 50+ years of PBM!

Play-By-Mail Games: Starweb, Heroic Fantasy, Battle Plan & More!

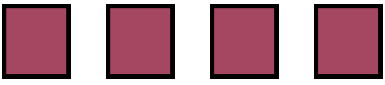
Explore! Expand! Exploit! Exterminate!



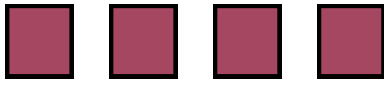
Galac-Tac



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



PBM Links



Now featuring highlighted games each issue!

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

DungeonWorld: Daemonrift 3 NEW

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

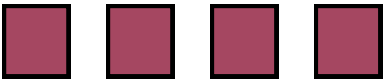
REN1493

Renaissance

Riftlords

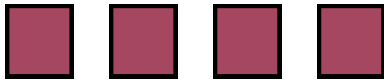
Rome is Burning





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

The Informative Play-By-Mail Magazine



Remembering Paper Mayhem.

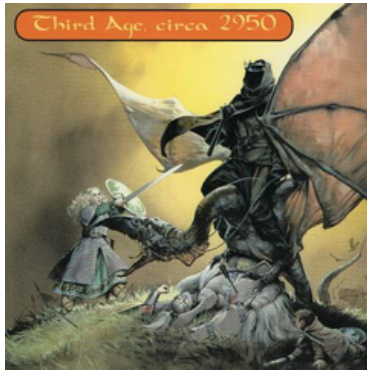
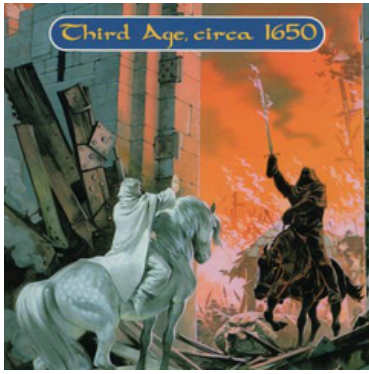


Other Links

Tabletop Spirit

To Win Just Once





MiddleEarthGames.Com



The Isles

PBeM RPG Game
the-isles.co.uk
Postal System or eMail

DUNGEONWORLD

DungeonWorld is a character-based multiplayer turn-based fantasy adventure game.

It is set in an epic world full of monsters, mayhem, swords and sorcery.

You can play DungeonWorld completely for **FREE** with a single character, or play commercially with as many characters as you like.

Whichever way you choose, all players are in the same continuous shared world. It's the biggest game of its kind on earth! *Enjoy!*



MADCENTRAL.CO.UK

DUNGEONWORLD

The Largest PBM Adventure Game Ever Made!



Guild House
This square is the guild house of one of the in-game guilds. Walk onto it for a description. Issue an 'L 2' order on it for more info on the guild.



Shallow Water
Waist-deep or shallower water fills this square. Some combat modifiers and low damage are possible. The square can be moved over as if it were 'open'.



Bottomless Pit
A terrible black pit fills the square. This terrain is impassable and should be treated like a wall.



Portcullis
A stout iron portcullis is here. Normally, these are open and can be treated as an open square. Rarely, they are closed. Look around the area for more info.



Bed
There is a bed in this square. See the rooms 'look' description for the state of the bed. The square can be moved over as if it were 'open'.



Stairs Down
There is a flight of stairs leading down. See the rooms 'look' description for more info. The square can be moved over as if it were 'open'.



Stairs Up
There is a flight of stairs leading up. See the rooms 'look' description for more info. The square can be moved over as if it were 'open'.



Courtyard/Market
This square is part of a courtyard or market area. Buy and Sell orders can be issued here as shown in "Courtyards" in this guide.



Locked Door
There is a locked door here. The square cannot be entered or passed until a rogue has unlocked the door.



Magical Trader
One of the enigmatic Magical Traders is here. Magical Traders very seldom move. All Buy and Sell orders can be issued while on a Magical Trader.



Wall / Sheer Rock
This square is completely blocked by a wall, or sheer rock and cannot be entered or passed through.



Unlocked Door
This square is filled with an unlocked doorway. It can be treated exactly like an open square for movement and combat purposes.



Crawlspace
This corridor is a rough low crawlspace. It can be treated like an open square, although hidden combat modifiers with long weapons do apply.



Treasure Chest
There is a treasure chest here. You can attempt to open it using a 'Z 60' order, although this can be very dangerous for the untrained. The square can be moved over as if it were 'open'.



Private Land
This square marks the edge of some private land owned by a noble or lord. It costs 2 Move Points to cross. Issue an 'L 2' order for info on the owners name.



Road
This square is a road. Travel on it costs 1 Move Point. Roads are useful for faster travel between cities and places of interest.



City, Castle or Keep
This square is a city, castle or keep of some kind. It costs 1 Move Point to cross. Some of these can be entered. Issue an 'L 2' order to do so.



Dungeon Entrance
This square is a Dungeon Entrance. It costs 1 Move Point to cross. Issue an 'L 2' order to enter the Dungeon.



Magical Place
This square is a magical place of some kind. It costs 2 Move Points to cross. Issue an 'L 2' order on it for more info on the magical place.



Broken Land
This terrain is a harsh open area covered in cracks, pits and ravines. It costs 3 Move Points to Cross.



Town or Village
There is a town or village here. This square costs 1 Move Point to cross. Some of these squares act as limited traders. A few (but not many) can be entered using the 'L 2' order.



Light Forest
This terrain type is woods or light forest. Hunting/Foraging is usually good here. Vision is reduced slightly if you end your turn in Light Forest. It costs 2 Move Points to cross.



Steep Hills
This terrain is tough going. Steep Hills make for slow progress, but do increase your vision when you end your turn on them. They cost 4 Move Points to Cross.



Gentle Hills
Pleasant rolling hills which slow progress a bit but increase vision when you end your turn on them. Gentle Hills cost 3 Move Points to cross.



Heavy Forest
This sort of terrain is hard to travel and often teeming with danger. Heavy Forest decreases vision when you end your turn in it. It costs 3 Move Points to cross and can hide IDs of characters in it.



Mountains
This terrain type is impassable. To cross a mountain range you must first find a pass of some kind.



Open Land
Can be fields, farmland, wasteland or just about any other sort of open area you can imagine. Open Land costs 2 Move Points to cross.



Body of Water
Water comes in the form of streams, lakes, shallow and deep rivers. It costs 4 Move Points to cross, although some types are impassable without a bridge or boat.



PBM

Unearthed



**Have you visited the new
PBM Unearthed website?**

