

PBM

Issue 27

Unearthed

The Mysterious Realm of Play-By-Mail Gaming

Now Published Twice Monthly!



February 5th, 2023

What was in that big box of old PBM stuff?

PlayByMail.Net

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February 5th, 2023

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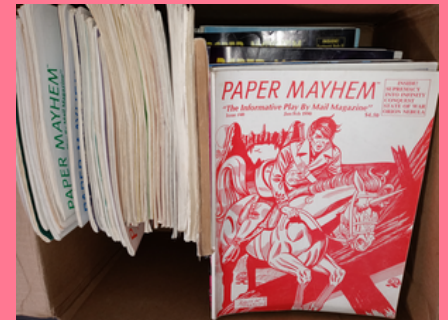
Editorial



Welcome to Issue #27!



And welcome to the realm of the bi-weekly PBM newsletter. The results of the PBM survey are in, the people have spoken, and I have listened. *God save us all!*



The big PBM news on my little chunk of the planet is that I was gifted a big box of PBM "stuff" by long time play by mail aficionado **Nazareth**, yesterday. And let me tell you, what a truly magnificent gift it turned out to be. I could get lost in this box for years on end.

I was also fortunate to get to spend a little time with Tony, just shooting the breeze about PBM. Tony now holds the "honor" (or should that be the "dubious distinction") of being the only fellow PBM gamer that I have ever met in person.

In between my episodes of lengthy rambling, Tony managed to squeeze a few words in edgewise on the subject of PBM. Even still, over the course of our discussion at a Chick-fil-A, I was able to discern that I was in the presence of a man who war a *real* PBM gamer. Nazareth's no PBM slouch! When Tony began to talk about power games and power gamers, I knew right then and there that this man knew more about PBM gaming than I ever would. He had been involved with PBM a decade or more than I, and where I talk about PBM, Tony has been playing PBM. *They're not one and the same thing.*

So, what's Nazareth like in person? Well, he's a really nice fellow. He's got a great smile. He quickly puts you at ease, and is easy to talk to. If you're sitting and talking to Nazareth, time flies by. He's also a patient man, for he put up with my rambling and disjointed style. *A special thank you to Tony and his wife!*



The Isles

PBeM RPG Game

the-isles.co.uk
Postal System or eMail

What Is ExIsles?

David Fair

And how do I get started?

I started ExIsles in prison in 2017, because I wanted to write creatively, and have people read my work, and run a game for people that didn't require sitting down together to play in an environment that makes such activity difficult. I based the concept for the game on *Morrowind: The Elder Scrolls III*, a video game I once played extensively. In *Morrowind* (Bethesda Softworks), you are a person who has been exiled to a large island, where the empire sends its criminals and other "undesirables", and start with nothing but the clothes on your back. In ExIsles, you play a character that has been exiled to The Lonely Coast, a frontier island in the middle of a stormy ocean, far from any mainland. How you got there is largely irrelevant, as no one in Wolverton, the only town along the coast with a harbor and docks, will care. What matters is how you will survive, including where you will stay the first night, and how you will earn (or otherwise acquire) an income to support yourself in the future.

When a new player wants to create a character to play in this narrative play-by-postal-mail (only) game, all that is required is a brief description of what type of character they want to run, and what type of story they want to help write.



One player sent me the following description:

Name: Mateus Rose. **Sex:** Male. **Height:** 5'8"
Hair: Dark Brown. **Age:** 22. **Weight:** 142 lbs.
Eyes: Blue/Grey. Quiet, well-mannered, bookish, essentially a good, kind man. May appear weak, yet does have a certain resilience. Good looking, in a sweet-not hunky-way! I like the details of how a person lives day-to-day, especially if they are either royalty, 'moneyed,' or servants of same - *think Downton Abbey!*"

From this, I wrote the following:

Backstory: Father was a well-to-do grain merchant, his mother died when Mateus was still young. Father remarried but Mateus never got on well with his new stepmother from the very start. Father

died under what, Mateus believed, were suspicious circumstances, which only caused his relationship with his stepmother to worsen. Before Mateus had a chance to prove his suspicions that his father died at the hands of his stepmother, she acted against him, getting to the authorities first, accusing him of being responsible for his father's death. After a swift case Mateus was tried and exiled, leaving his stepmother to claim his inheritance, as Mateus believes had been her plan all along.

The story has developed quite a bit over the past four years, and Mateus now finds himself in the company of Lady Tamsyn Locher, the daughter and heir of the reluctant king of an extinct kingdom, who now rules the Lonely Coast. Mateus has discovered that he has some kind of ancient magic within him, just awakening, and his life in the keep is non-stop surprises and trouble as he struggles to transition from a quiet life as a merchant's son to the boyfriend of a princess...

I encourage new players to write as much about the character they envision and want to run, as well as how that character feels about what is happening to him or her, but I am also quite prepared to simply offer options the player can check off for their next turn, if that is what they want. I tailor the game to suit each individual player, and there is no 'pre-set' plot or story line that needs to be met. In fact, other than a general idea of what might happen next, I never really know what is going to happen until the characters in the

story 'speak' to me, based on what the player sends back in response to the previous turn.

I am always accepting new players, and anyone can write to me to ask for more information, and/or send a character description. Although I have intended the game to be played by prisoners, non-incarcerated PBMers are also welcome. The standard fee per turn is \$3.00, with no hidden fees of any kind. Incarcerated and institutionalized individuals can play at a reduce rate of \$1.50/turn, and I will accept "mailable" stamps, money orders, institutional checks, and Paypal. No money needs be sent to receive further information, however, if they include a SASE, that would help. Any interested parties should write to me at:

David Fair

P.O. Box 88600
Steilacoom, WA
98388

I will respond to all inquiries with answers to questions, and then our co-operative story can begin!



From PBM Companies & GMs



EAKING NEWS BREAKING NEWS BREAKING NEWS Bf

Middle-earth Games

Middle-earth Newsletter - 01/27/2023

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 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.

E-mail

me@middleearthgames.com

Contact Form

[Click Here](#)

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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 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.

5/8 positions available

Game 956: 1650 All vs All

Bidding system to decide starting nations.

Rewards system.

Nations available.

Game 958: 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.

20/24 nations 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 621: Kin-strife All vs All

Bidding system to decide starting nations.

Nations available.

Game 416: Fourth-age

Up to 2 nations per player.

18/25 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!

4/8 positions available

Dropout Positions

None at present.

Grudge Games

Ruben (2 person team), 1650 module.

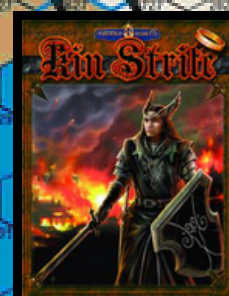
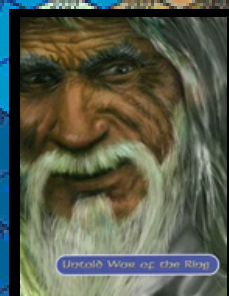
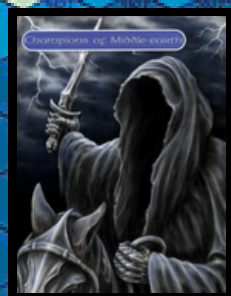
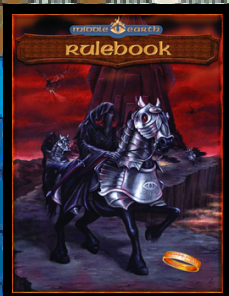
Please get in touch if you and your friends fancy taking them on.

me@middleearthgames.com

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

discounts available!

MIDDLE EARTH



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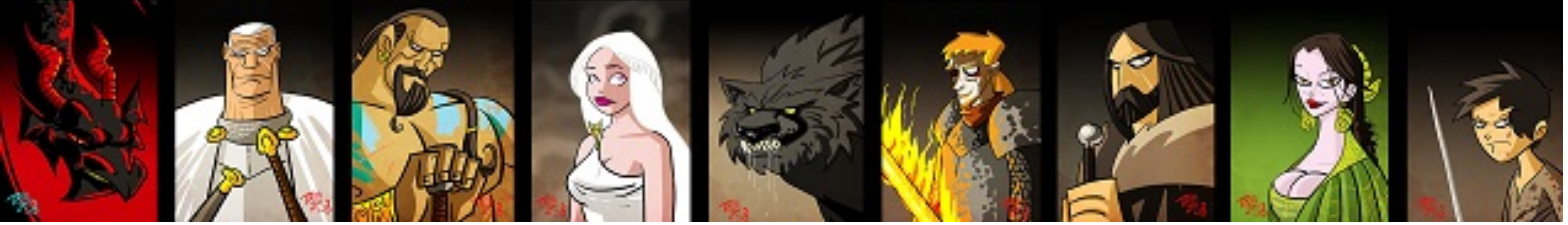
Clash of Legends

Fun and free strategic games since 2006

ONLINE ONLY

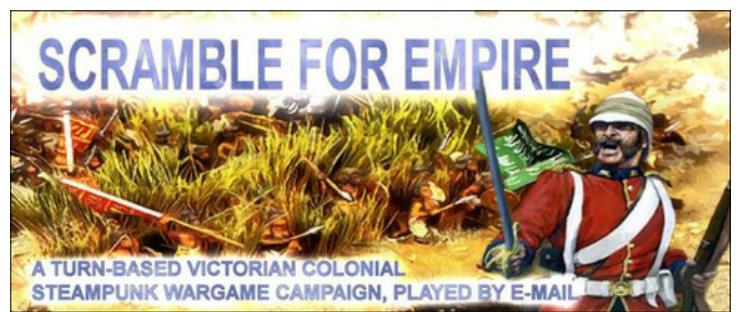


<http://clashlegends.com>



Atlantis: New Origins

atlantis-pbem.com



PBM Games I Never Played

This was Charles' idea

Richard Lockwood

I spent many years in the British PBM community, and, as you know, from previous issues, met some fantastic, lifelong friends.

But...

There were games I didn't play, or games when I got a free start up package, but never took it up. Or games that were just too expensive for a bloke on bugger all a week to play.

I'm going to start with the expensive one.

Delenda Est Cathago

(I hope I've spelled that right)

I would have loved to play this. A gorgeous Napoleonic wargame, run by a gorgeous lady called Judith Proctor. Depending on your starting position, you could play Belgium, or France, or England (or other European countries). And, as I recall, the bigger the starting position, the more you paid.

Now, my recollection is that if you played France (the biggest position), you would be paying around about twenty quid per turn.

Now, I saw some turns from Delenda, and the amount of detail you got in those turns was astonishing. But in the late 1980s, that was a shitload of money.

Mutant Wars

I was at a convention (what, you were at a convention Richard?!) when I stumbled (too much beer) across a stand selling Mutant Wars. A free startup, and a lovely package. I don't think it ever got off the ground.



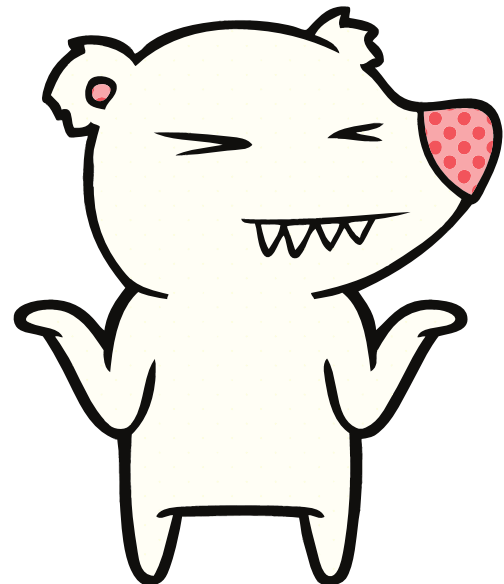
Startup package. Full colour, boxed startup, on a square grid system...

Calvana

I believe this was Steve Tierney at Tertium Games. It launched at about the same time I launched Xanoth, and was leagues ahead of what I was doing. It had beautiful artwork, a fantastic rulebook, but should've been huge. But as I've said before, SCHMRPGs will never make you money.

I believe there was an option from Steve Jackson Games to produce a Calvana edition of GURPS, but I know not what happened to that.

These are the ones I regret, about which I know stuff. There are plenty more, that frankly, I have no idea. (Charles, can you insert a picture of me shrugging my shoulders, please?)



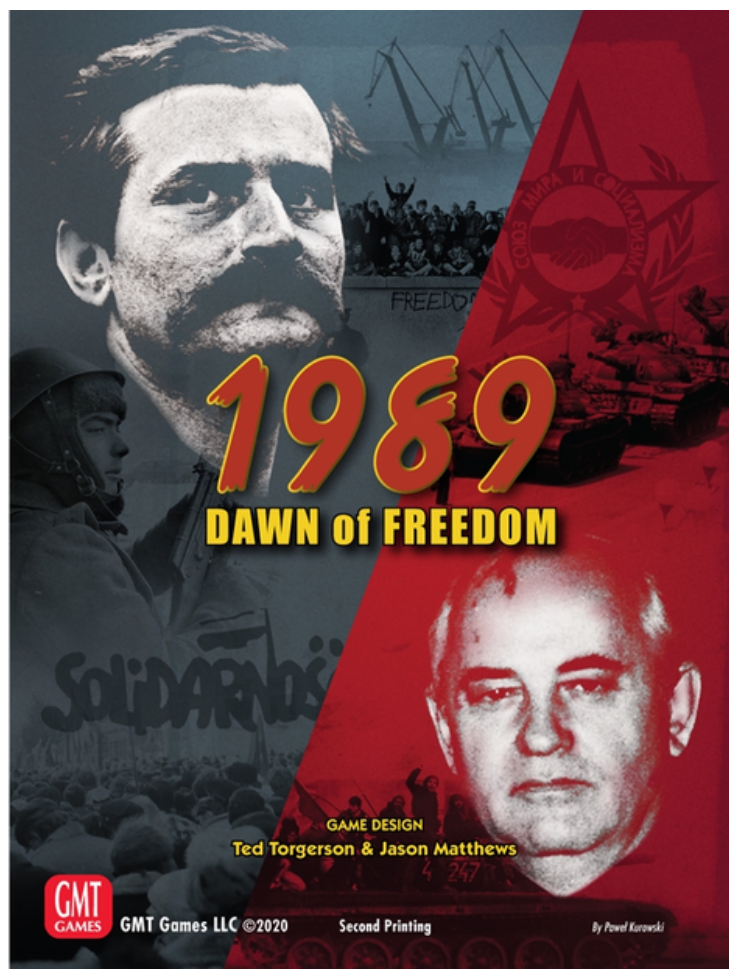
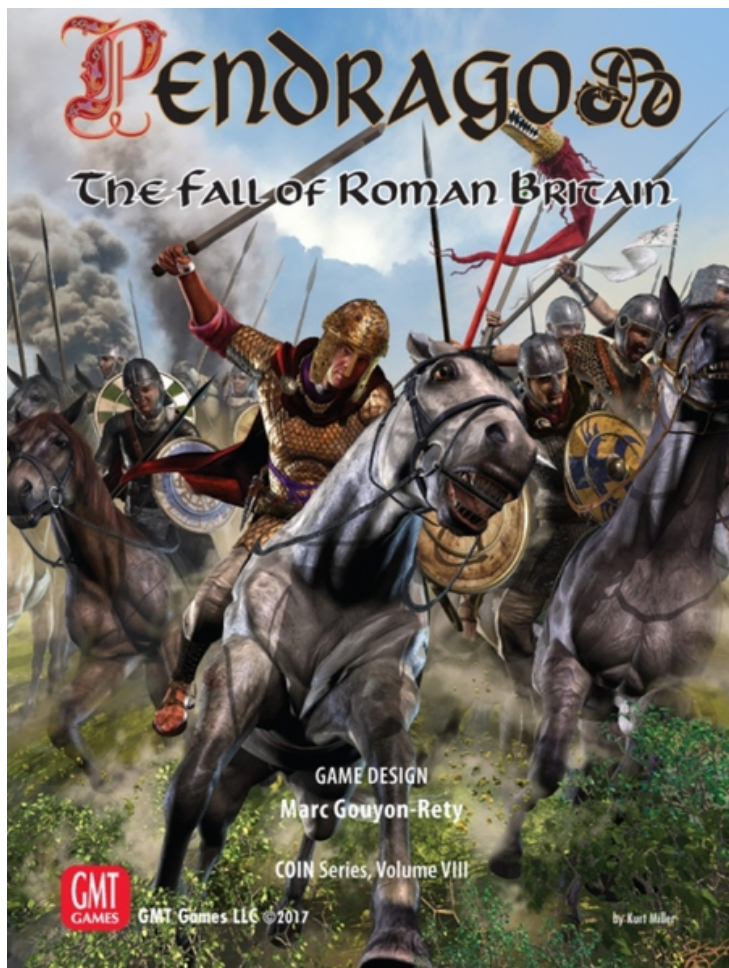
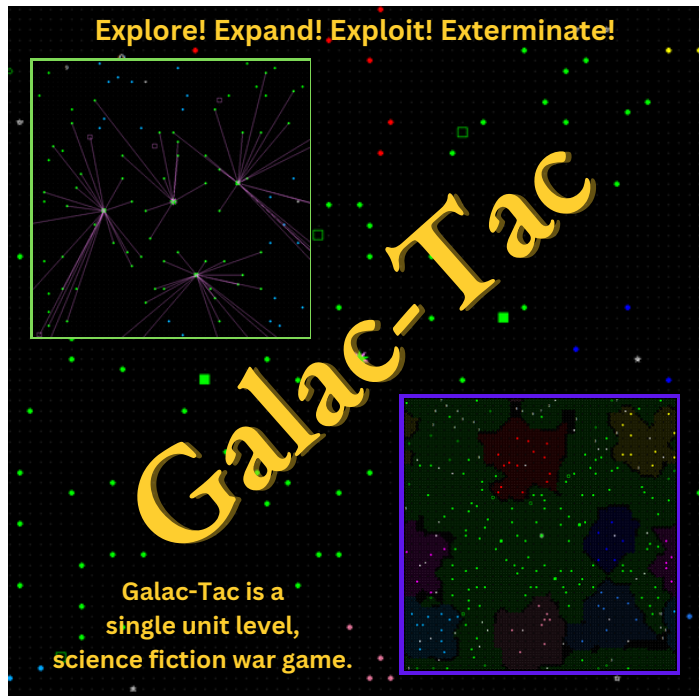
Editor's Note: *This is Richard Lockwood shrugging his shoulders.*

Revenge of the Many Legged Mutant Tiger Hounds From Outer Space. My friends Ruarigh and Sue played this, utterly bonkers, but more storytelling than powergaming.

All Time Full Contact Rockstar Boxing
I, and a few friends, came up with this one, at a London pubmeet, the day before the convention. I hand wrote the flyers, and got it voted in as second best sports simulation, and third best new game. Or something. A game that never existed.

Oh, and one game I always wanted to play, but never did; Raiders of Gwaras. Everybody told me how good it was, but I never signed up, Run by Mike Richards, who was (probably still is) a top fella, who also ran a PBM organisation, with a big chunky newsletter, the name of which currently eludes me.

I'm sure there are more I can think of, but that'll do for now. Anyone who played any of these games, tell me how good they were!!





Charles,

I know you aren't getting much feedback or many submissions for your publication, so I hope this will help. I would like to submit more often, but it is such a time-consuming process, as I've explained, I believe, that the delays don't suit your publishing schedule. Also, I am a little busy with work on *Civilize!*, for which I have just acquired two more beta-testers, for a total of four. I will see about putting something together for you as often as I can, though, because I want to support your publication, as well as see my name in print! (And drum up a little business, I suppose.)

Keep up the good work, and don't let the lack of feedback get you down! I share PBMU and S&D with my players in here, and encourage them to make contact; know you are being read, and your efforts are far from wasted!

Thanks, Sincerely,
Daveed

Editor's Note: *Daveed, you're in luck. While you are right, generally speaking, that I don't tend to get much in the way of feedback, I did conduct a PBM Survey recently, and in this issue of PBM Unearthed, you get to read some of this new batch of feedback that takes the form of survey results. I hope that you enjoy it, and my gut feeling is that you most definitely will. If nothing else, it will be a little different than what you*

usually find within the pages of this PBM newsletter.

Know, Daveed, that I appreciate both yourself and others out there who follow along with us here at PBM Unearthed, no matter where that might be. Some who play PBM games, or who find themselves to be developing a growing interest in the same, are incarcerated - and hence, limited in their gaming options.

However, there are just as many, if not more, individuals out there that lock themselves away and confine themselves to a wide variety of self-imposed isolations. Some suffer from various degrees of severity of depression, whereas others simply don't enjoy the luxury of robust social connections, or they live their lives in places that are physically isolated, and which provide them a reduced menu of options for gaming. PBM gaming is a friend to all such individuals, for it beckons unto all.

Thank you for sharing PBM Unearthed and Suspense & Decision magazine with others, there where you are. Hopefully, they provide bright spots in the lives of others, and especially for those who feel as if their lives may not have as many bright spots in it as they would otherwise prefer.

Irony being what it always is, this is also the issue where PBM Unearthed transitions from a weekly to a bi-weekly publication. It's not my personal preference, but odds are that real life considerations would have pushed PBM Unearthed in the same direction, anyway. Regardless of where our individual preferences lie, sometimes in life, change comes for us all. You know this, perhaps better than most.

I'm liking what I've been reading about *Civilize!* I encourage you and your playtesters to stick with it, and get the kinks ironed out of it, so that one day it will become a new option for those who crave more and better PBM games. *Thanks!*



PBM Survey Results



Question 66 has 37 answers (Open Text)

“What PBM company do you think provides the best customer service, currently, and why?”

"Rolling Thunder Games. Never had a problem fixing a problem with a turn."

"Rolling Thunder Games"

"MadHouse UK - regular updates and comments on facebook"

"I only play with Peter Rzechorzek currently - flawless service."

"The bulk of my experience is with Rolling Thunder. I have played their games for decades now and for the most part the customer service is good to a point. Errors and corrections to mistakes are usually taken care of as needed. "

"MEPBM, very responsive."

"Reality Simulations. I get an answer to any email in less than 24 hours. Bend over backwards to help customers get what they need. "

"Only have played Middle Earth but looking to play others"

"Middle-earth games. Always helpful and available via various methods."

"Knightguild - vast improvements over other games"

"KJC Games. I know many other players have had problems with them but they've always been ok with me."

"Only play KJC Games right now. Never had any major issues "

"Fire on the suns, a friendly and knowledgeable group. Often respond quickly to queries."

"Not really sure."

"RSI"

"Talisman Games is the best I've encountered in regards to direct emails. My experiences with Madhouse have been good in terms of customer service, as long as I've contacted them on Facebook."

"Don't know. "

"I have only played a few PBM games in my 30 years of playing, and Sam (Supersonic) is amazing. Well run business, deals with speedbumps well, corrects his errors, explains why he won't correct yours, rules clarifications, feels like I could easily go for a beer at the pub with him. 30 year association!"

"Flying Buffalo. They respond as fast as possible. They understand the realities of things beyond our control."

"Not currently playing any, but Agema was very good when I played."

"Loomis/Flying Buffalo - responsive and reliable"

"Reality Simulations - quick response - stays close to customers - friendly people"

"I don't have any dealings with any of them at the moment."

"Only playing one PBM after a long break so cannot say."

"Tribenet. Great community and GM always responds and encourages new players. "

"Not sure."

"Madhouse, interactive and very player orientated"

"The best email customer service is from Middle-earth Games, Rolling Thunder Games, and TribeNet. Those are the only three PBMs I've had 100% email response rates from out of probably 20 companies and GMs."

"From the ones I play, Clash of Legends. Much of it is self serve and automated. Turns are always on time. The game doesn't wait for "friends of the GM". Responses come fast and there is always new variants and scenarios."

"Talisman Games. I have had many interactions with them and they have always been polite and quick to respond."

"No idea"

"KJC Phoenix team are great. responsive and inventive. Peter at Tribenet is great, always wants to help the player."

"The only one that I have dealt with recently has been FotS and they are pretty responsive on Discord."

"Madhouse, the GMs are friendly and are willing to help players should something come up."

"SSV Graz

Always nice playing with them!"

"I loved Sloth Enterprises, but I realise it is not a going concern anymore. The friendly and enthusiastic staff were awesome."

"Middle Earth PBM.... Discord and email typically within 24 hours."

Question 67 has 21 answers (Open Text)
"What PBM company do you think provides the worst customer service, currently, and why?"

"N/A not played that many so can't say which one is bad"

"(no answer)"

"any KJC except PBSE"

"No idea"

"Alamaze is the only game I have played in the past 10 years. Rick has lost interest in doing anything with customer service and when I have used the link if I got any reply at all it took days an days. "

"Opposed to finger-pointing, 95% of PBM GMs and companies have bad email customer service. If a customer or a prospect sends an email, it should get a response, even if it's an "ok" or "done". This is the cost of doing business or being a GM. If you hate email, then delegate it to someone else to do it for you. You can't selectively choose not to respond to emails and expect your PBM to have a good reputation."

"n/a"

"Not sure."

"Only playing one PBM after a long break so cannot say."

"As above."

"KJC. They only seem to recognize one of their games."

"With extremely limited experience, I can't imagine any PBM still operating, decades from the Golden Years, that would have bad customer service...."

"Don't know. "

"N/A"

"None all I've played have been above par."

"N/a"

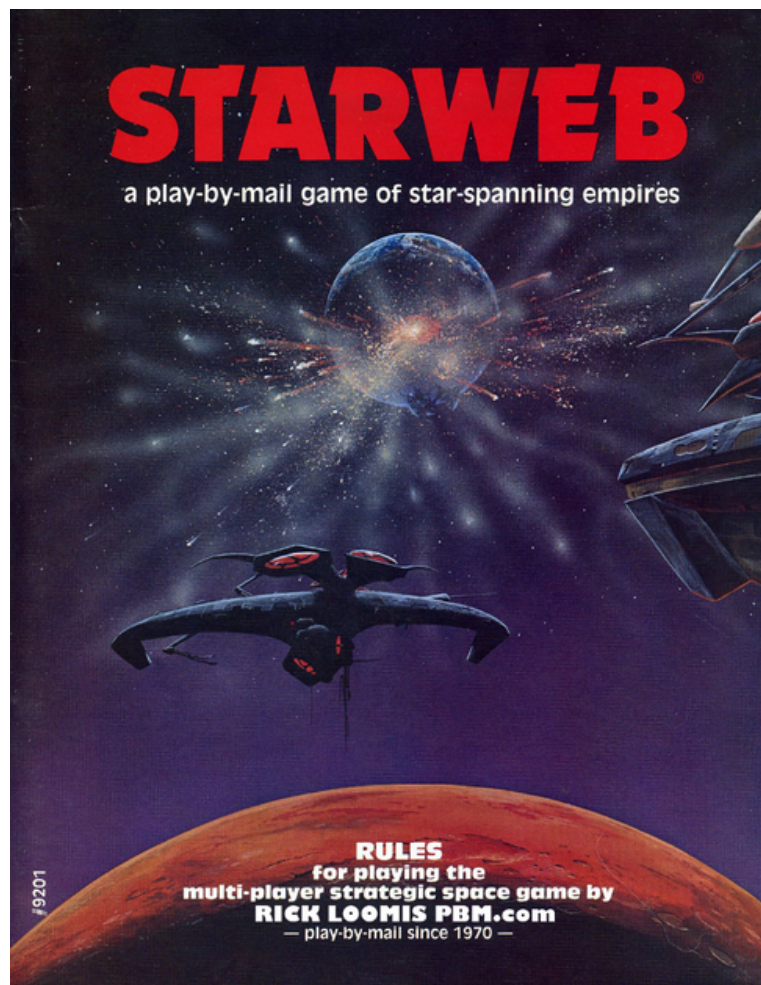
"NA"

"None "

"Can't comment."

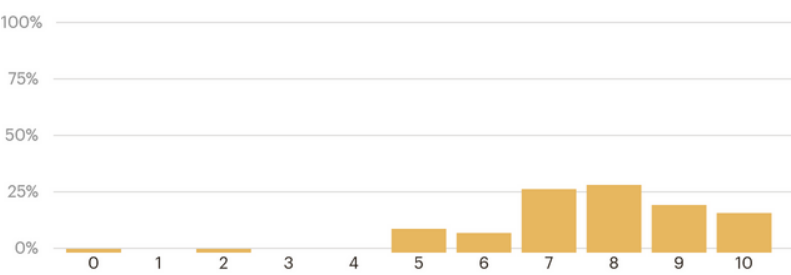
"KJC games - completely unresponsive"

"?"



Question 1 has 68 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.6

“All things considered, how would you rate PBM Unearthed as a PBM newsletter?”



Question 2 has 68 answers (Checkboxes)

“PBM Unearthed has published 26 issues, now. What do you believe is the best frequency of publication for it, going forward from here on out?”



Question 3 has 68 answers (Checkboxes)

“Do you like the repurposed comic book art that PBM Unearthed incorporates into its issues?”



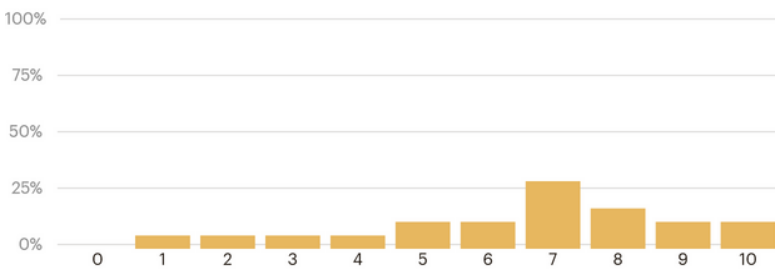
Question 4 has 68 answers (Checkboxes)

“Do you currently play any PBM games?”



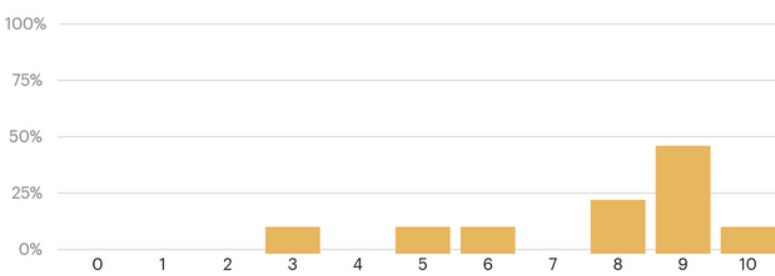
Question 5 has 20 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.5

“Rate Middle-earth PBM (only if you have ever played it).”



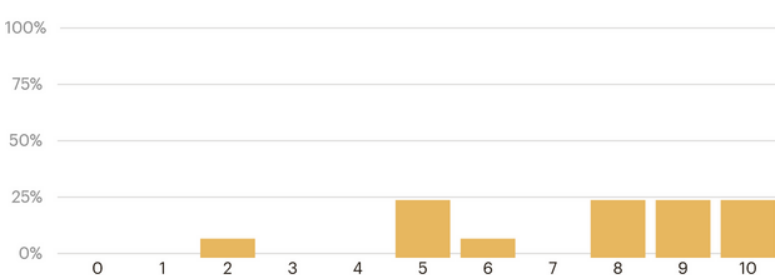
Question 6 has 10 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.6

“Rate Alamaze (only if you have ever played it).”



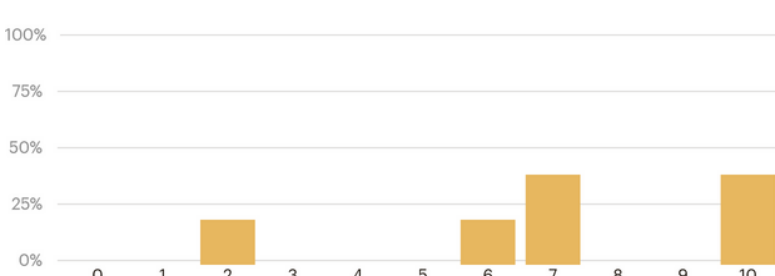
Question 7 has 14 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.4

“Rate TribeNet (only if you have ever played it).”



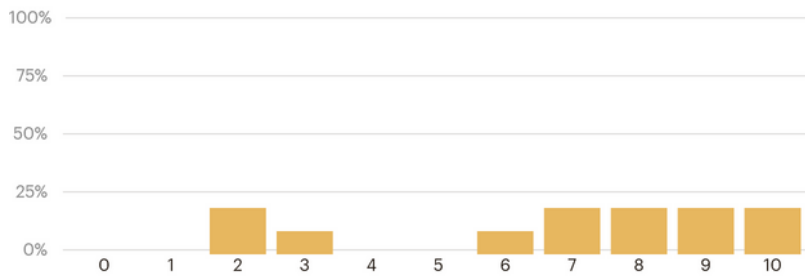
Question 8 has 6 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.0

“Rate KnightGuild (only if you have ever played it).”



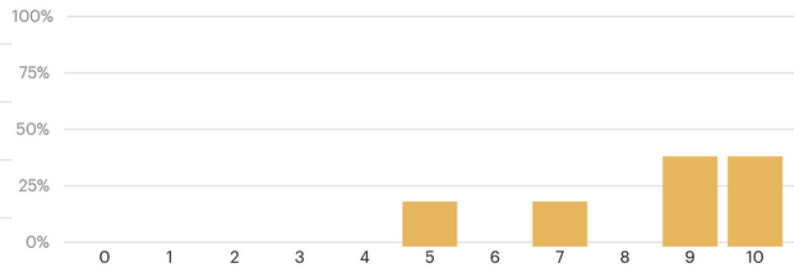
Question 9 has 12 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.8

“Rate Hyborian War (only if you have ever played it).”



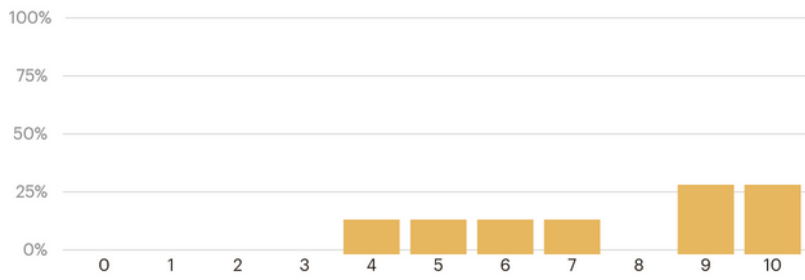
Question 13 has 6 answers (Range) Avg rating: 8.3

“Rate DungeonWorld Estates (only if you have ever played it).”



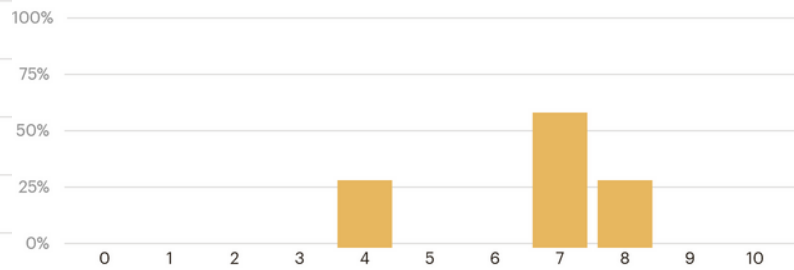
Question 10 has 8 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.5

“Rate Duel2 (only if you have ever played it).”



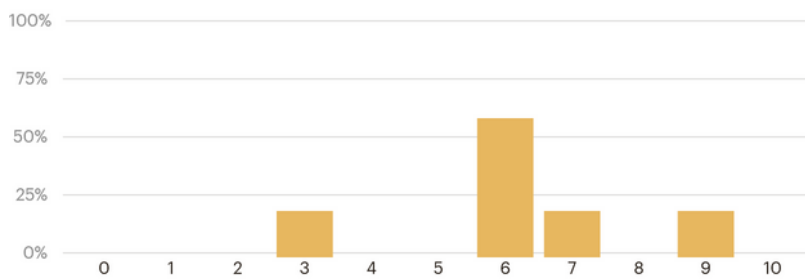
Question 14 has 4 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.5

“Rate Daemonrift 3 (only if you have ever played it).”



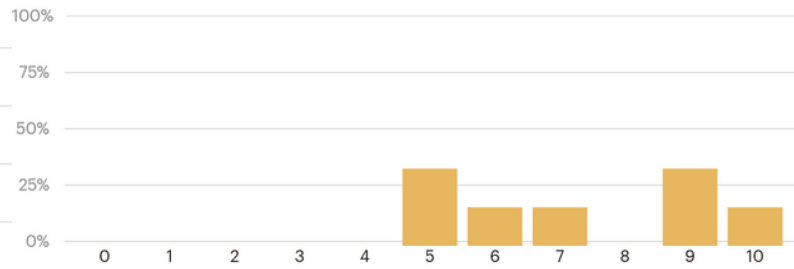
Question 11 has 6 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.2

“Rate Atlantis: New Origins (only if you have ever played it).”



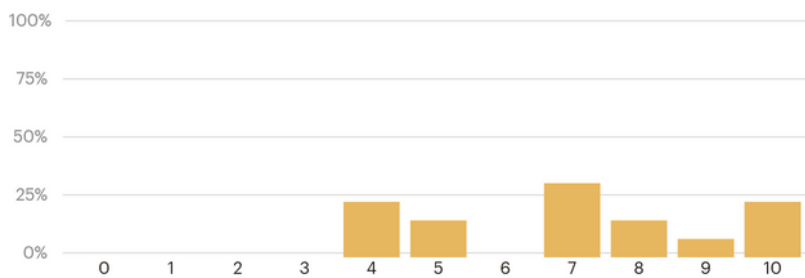
Question 15 has 7 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.3

“Rate The Isles PBeM (only if you have ever played it).”



Question 12 has 15 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.0

“Rate DungeonWorld (only if you have ever played it).”



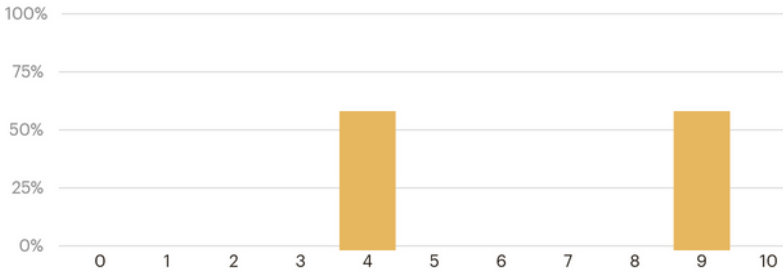
Question 16 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate ExIsles (only if you have ever played it).”



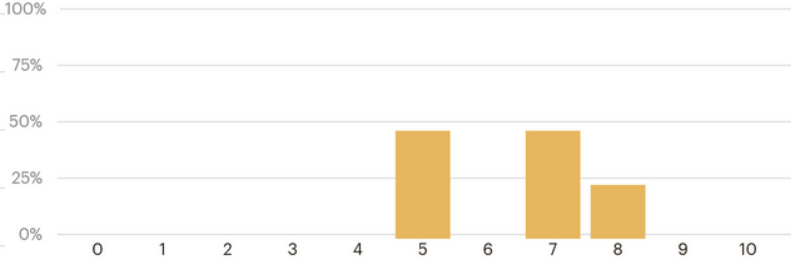
Question 17 has 2 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.5

“Rate Renaissance (only if you have ever played it).”



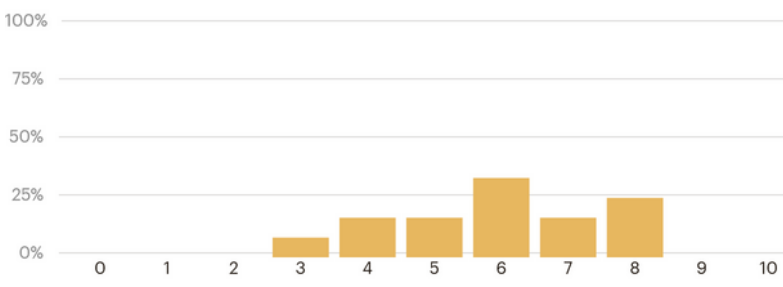
Question 21 has 5 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.4

“Rate Heroic Fantasy (only if you have ever played it).”



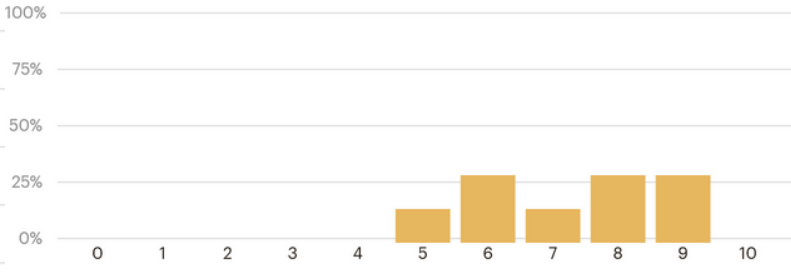
Question 18 has 14 answers (Range) Avg rating: 5.9

“Rate Monster Island (only if you have ever played it).”



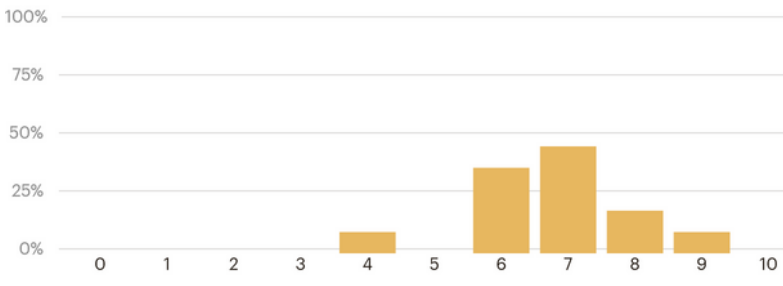
Question 22 has 8 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.3

“Rate Forgotten Realms (only if you have ever played it).”



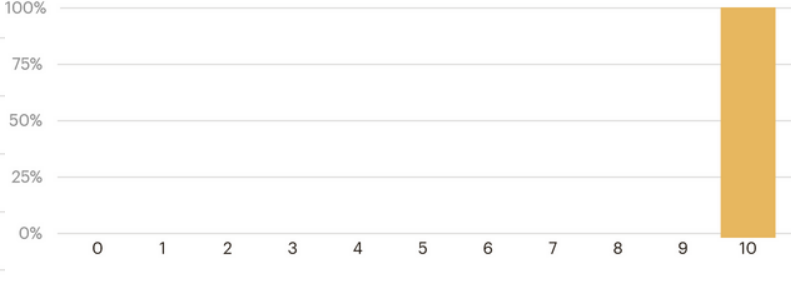
Question 19 has 13 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.8

“Rate Quest (only if you have ever played it).”



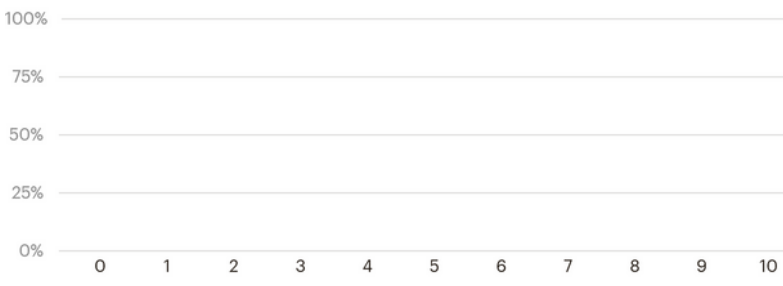
Question 23 has 1 answers (Range) Avg rating: 10.0

“Rate Clash of Legends (only if you have ever played it).”



Question 20 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate Quest of the Great Jewels (only if you have ever played it).”



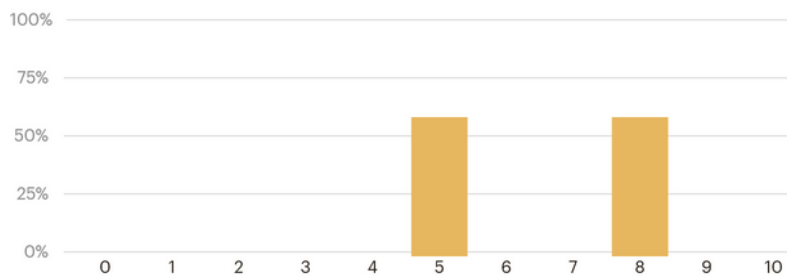
Question 24 has 1 answers (Range) Avg rating: 10.0

“Rate Eressea (only if you have ever played it).”

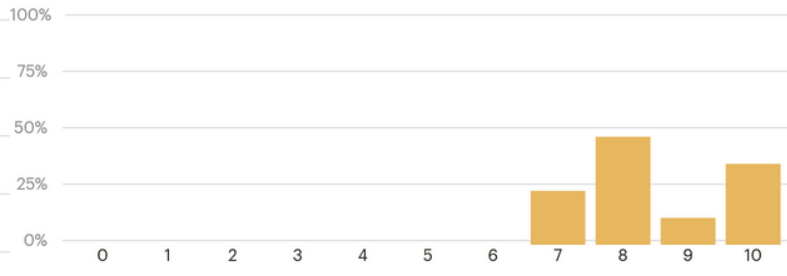


Question 25 has 2 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.5

“Rate Atlantis: Miskatonic (only if you have ever played it).” “Rate Diplomacy (only if you have ever played it).”

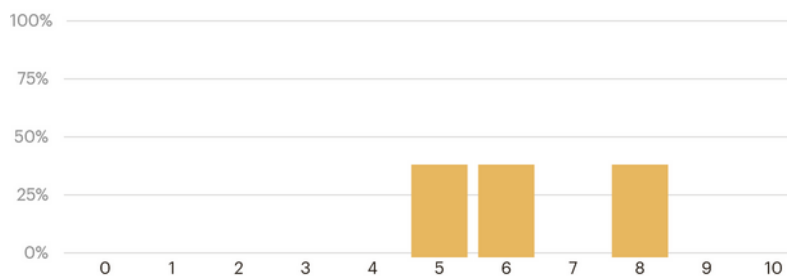


Question 29 has 10 answers (Range) Avg rating: 8.5



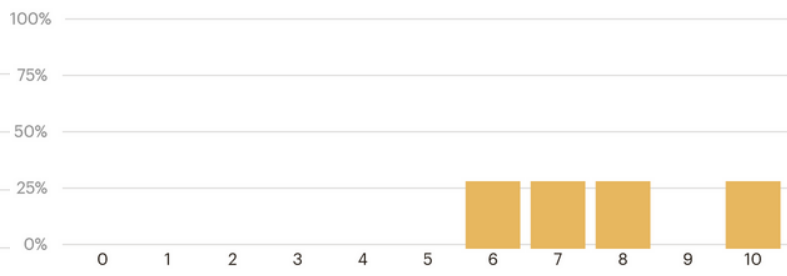
Question 26 has 3 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.3

“Rate Company Commander (only if you have ever played it).”



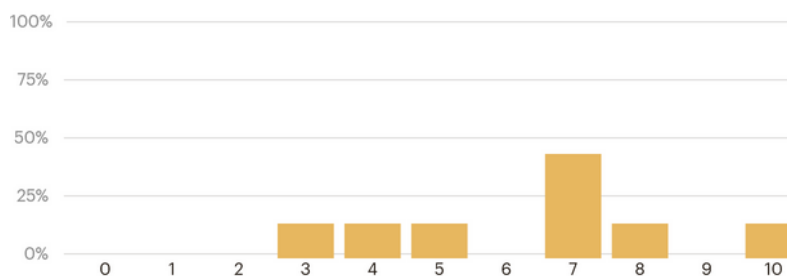
Question 30 has 4 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.8

“Rate Fire on the Suns (only if you have ever played it).”



Question 27 has 8 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.4

“Rate Starweb (only if you have ever played it).”



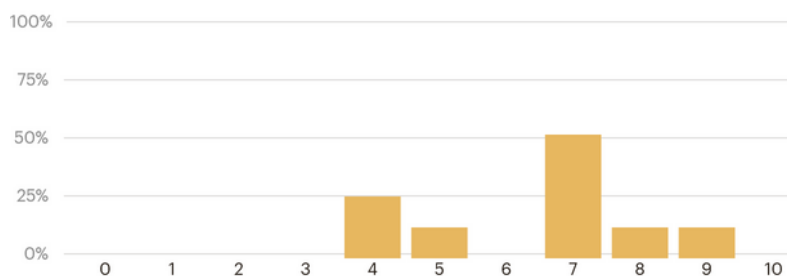
Question 31 has 1 answers (Range) Avg rating: 8.0

“Rate Les Petites Bêtes Soyeuses (only if you have ever played it).”



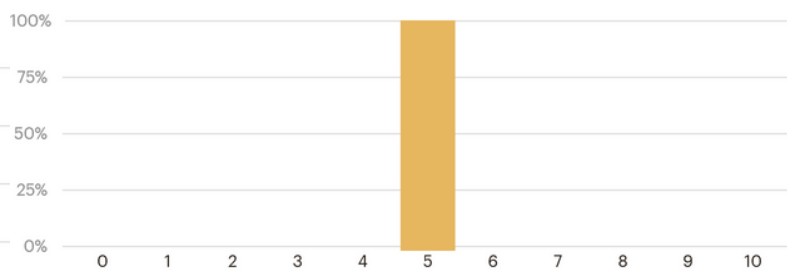
Question 28 has 9 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.4

“Rate Feudal Lords (only if you have ever played it).”



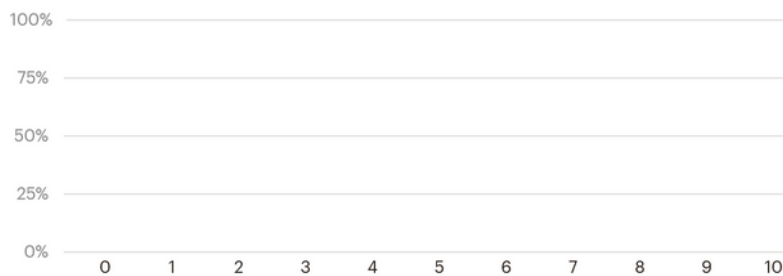
Question 32 has 1 answers (Range) Avg rating: 5.0

“Rate War of the Dark God (only if you have ever played it).”



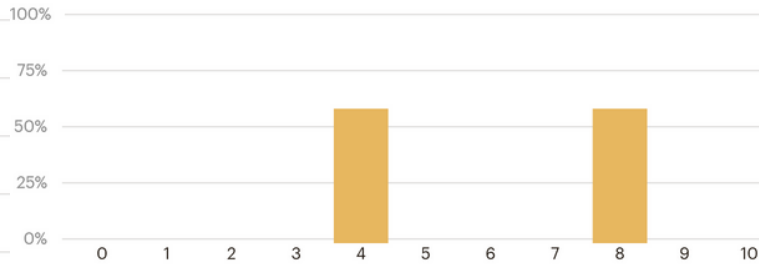
Question 33 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate The Glory of Kings (only if you have ever played it).”



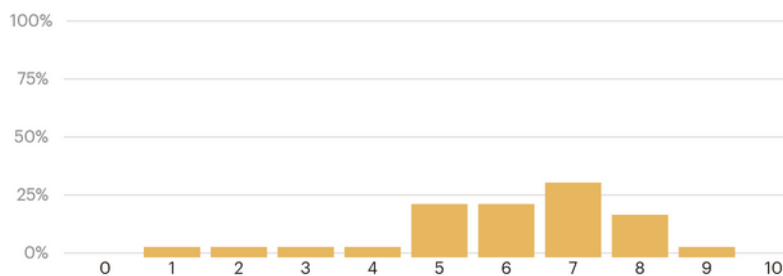
Question 37 has 2 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.0

“Rate Riftlords (only if you have ever played it).”



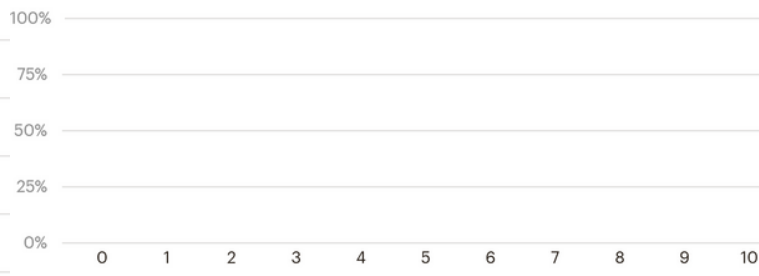
Question 34 has 26 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.0

“Rate It’s A Crime (only if you have ever played it).”



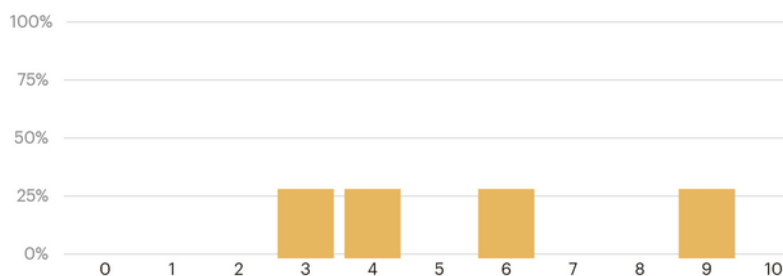
Question 38 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate Covert Operations (only if you have ever played it).”



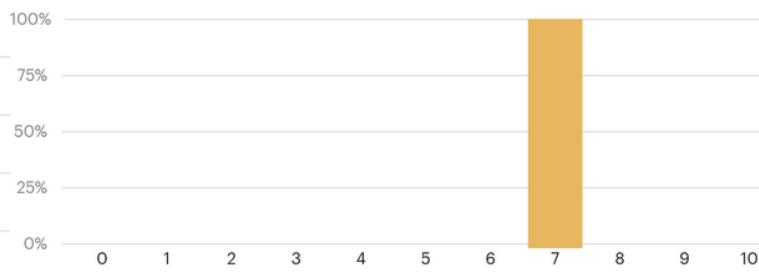
Question 35 has 4 answers (Range) Avg rating: 5.5

“Rate Liminal En Garde! (only if you have ever played it).”



Question 39 has 1 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.0

“Rate Rome Is Burning (only if you have ever played it).”



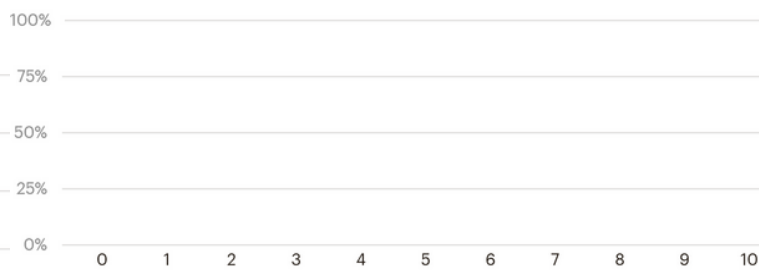
Question 36 has 1 answers (Range) Avg rating: 8.0

“Rate Lords of the Earth (only if you have ever played it).”



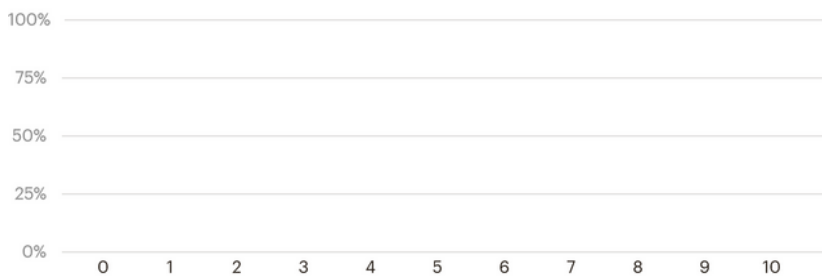
Question 40 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate REN1493 (only if you have ever played it).”



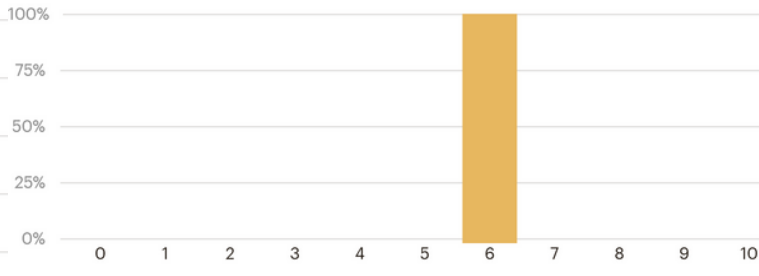
Question 41 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate Dark Age (only if you have ever played it).”



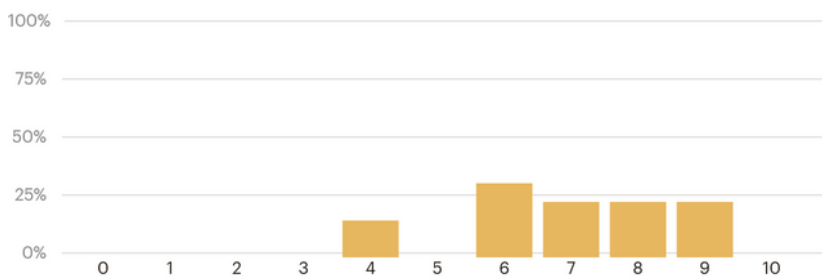
Question 45 has 1 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.0

“Rate Galactic Conflict (only if you have ever played it).”



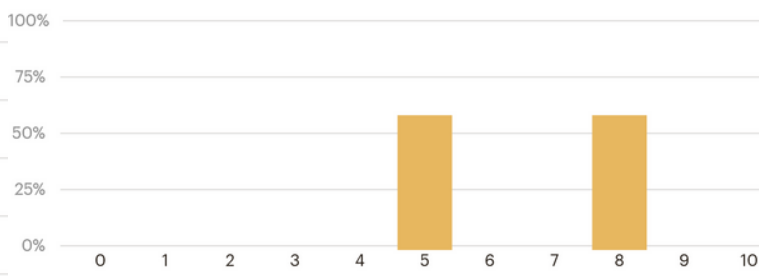
Question 42 has 15 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.9

“Rate Phoenix: Beyond The Stellar Empire (Phoenix: BSE) (only if you have ever played it).”



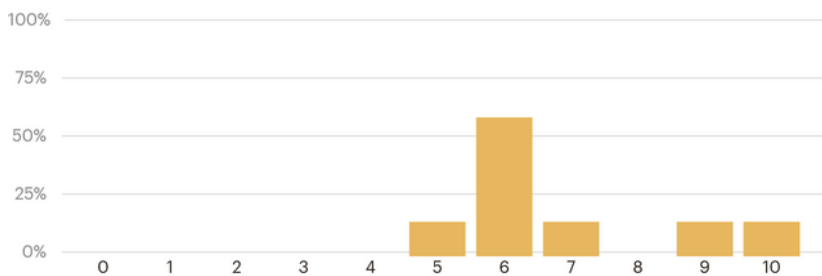
Question 46 has 2 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.5

“Rate Scramble For Empire (only if you have ever played it).”



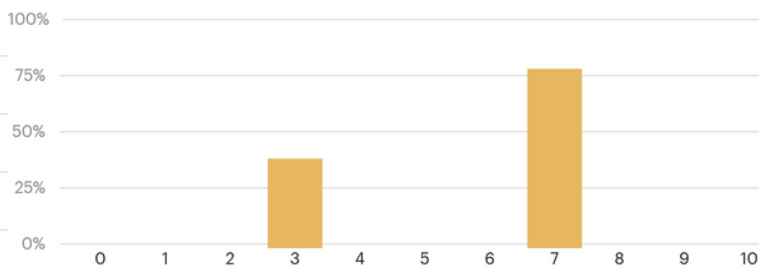
Question 43 has 8 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.9

“Rate Legends (only if you have ever played it).”



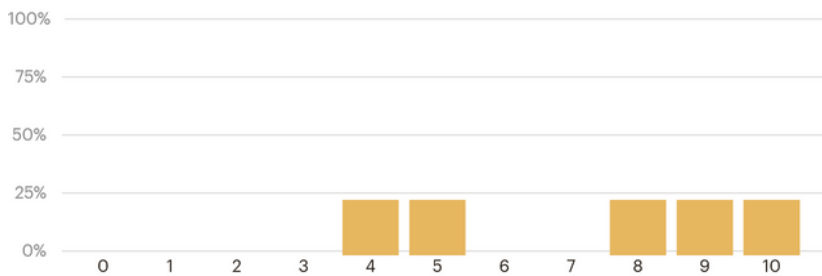
Question 47 has 3 answers (Range) Avg rating: 5.7

“Rate Star Fleet Warlord (only if you have ever played it).”



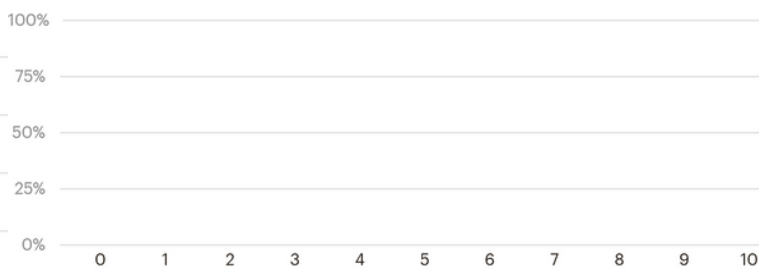
Question 44 has 5 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.2

“Rate Galac-Tac (only if you have ever played it).”



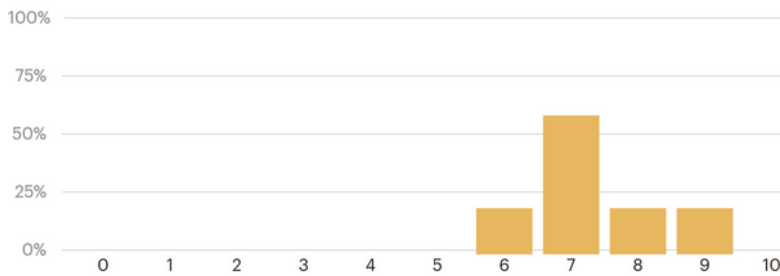
Question 48 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate Throne Of Cofain (only if you have ever played it).”



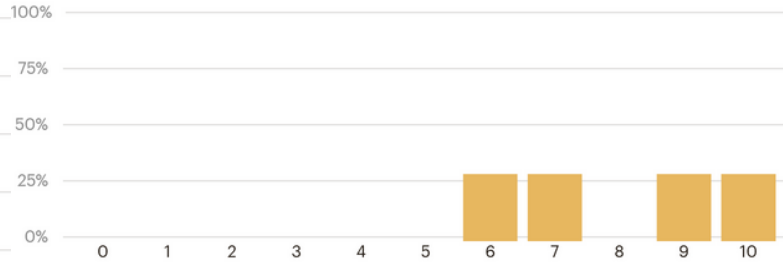
Question 49 has 6 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.3

“Rate Takamo (only if you have ever played it).”



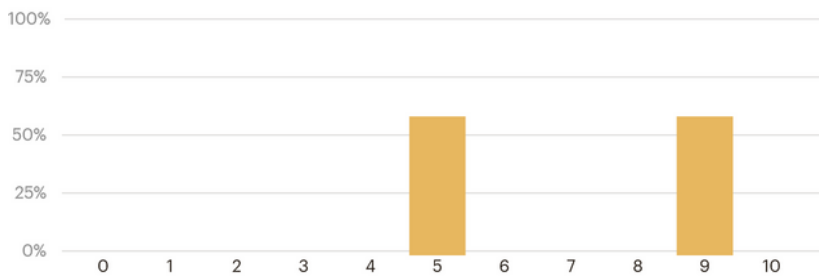
Question 53 has 4 answers (Range) Avg rating: 8.0

“Rate Austerlitz (only if you have ever played it).”



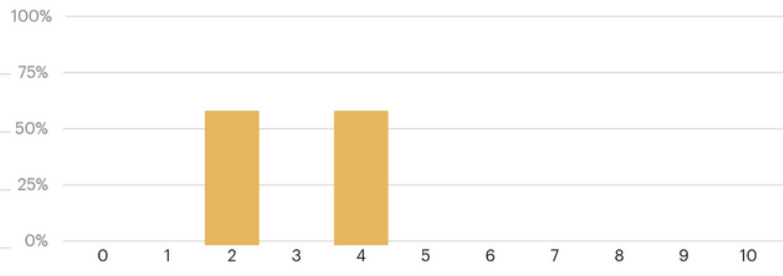
Question 50 has 2 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.0

“Rate World Wide Battle Plan (only if you have ever played it).”



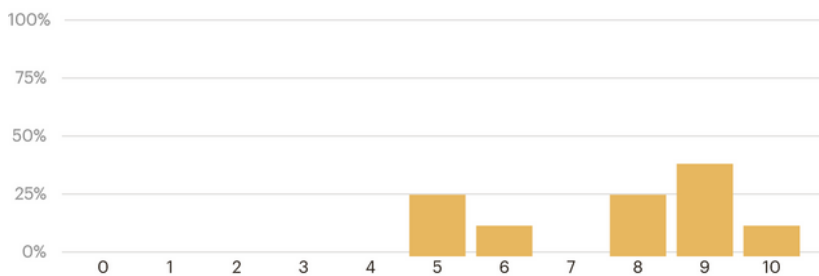
Question 54 has 2 answers (Range) Avg rating: 3.0

“Rate Nuclear Destruction (only if you have ever played it).”



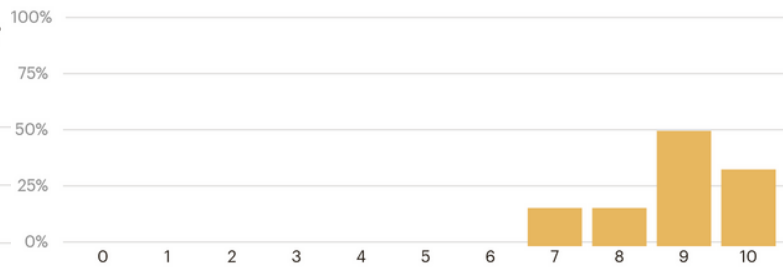
Question 51 has 9 answers (Range) Avg rating: 7.7

“Rate SuperNova: Rise of The Empire (only if you have ever played it).”



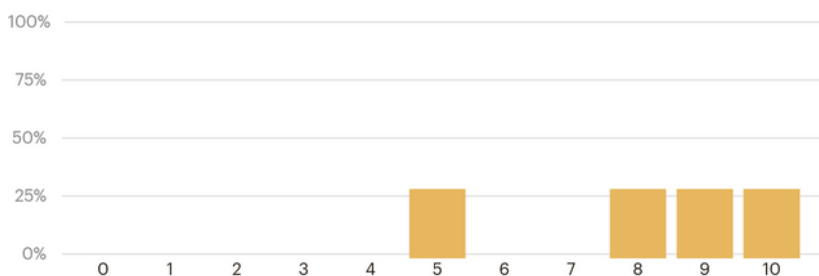
Question 55 has 7 answers (Range) Avg rating: 8.9

“Rate Ilkor: Dark Rising (only if you have ever played it).”



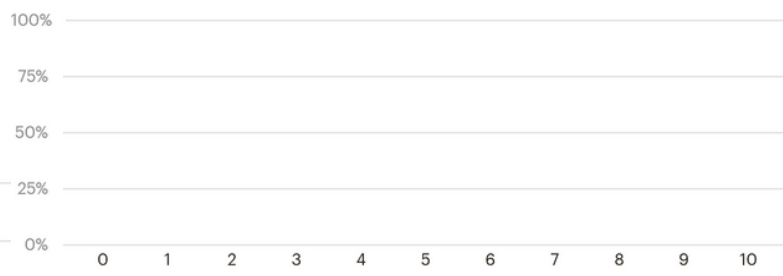
Question 52 has 4 answers (Range) Avg rating: 8.0

“Rate Victory! The Battle For Europe (only if you have ever played it).”



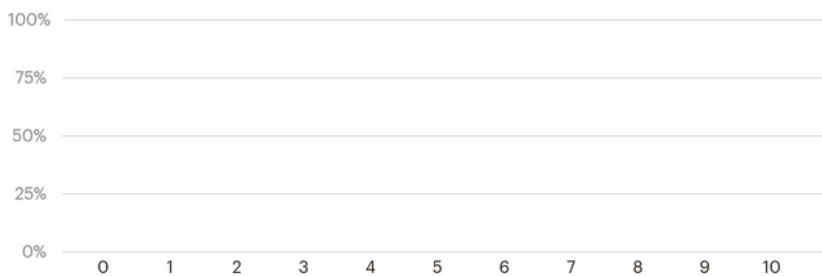
Question 56 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate Raceplan (only if you have ever played it).”



Question 57 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate Run Chase (only if you have ever played it).”



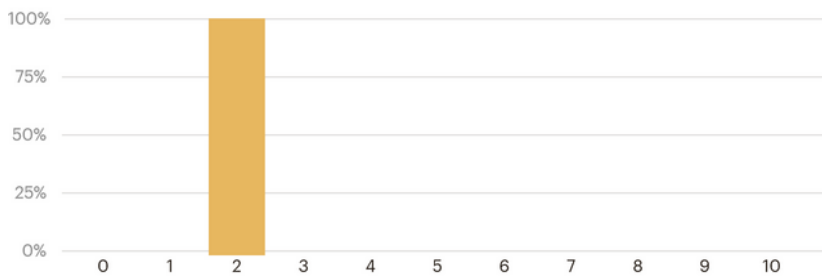
Question 61 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate Hoopplan (only if you have ever played it).”



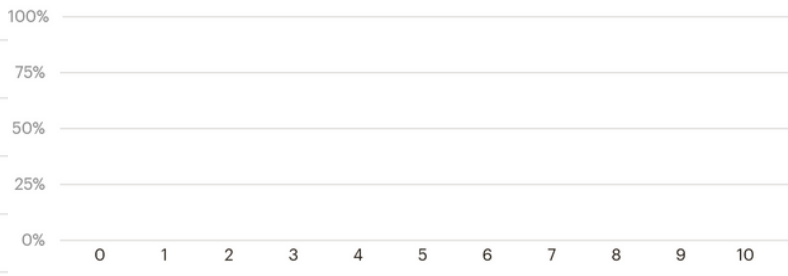
Question 58 has 1 answers (Range) Avg rating: 2.0

“Rate Soccer Star (only if you have ever played it).”



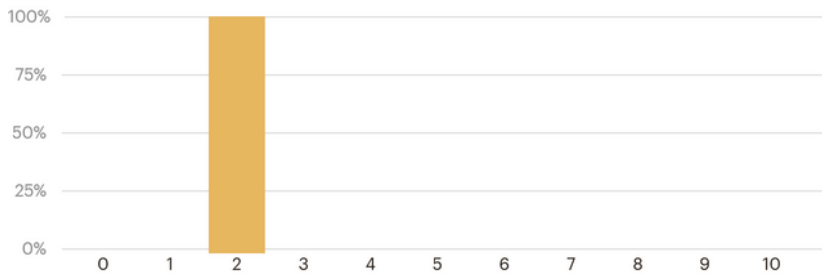
Question 62 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate Slapshot (only if you have ever played it).”



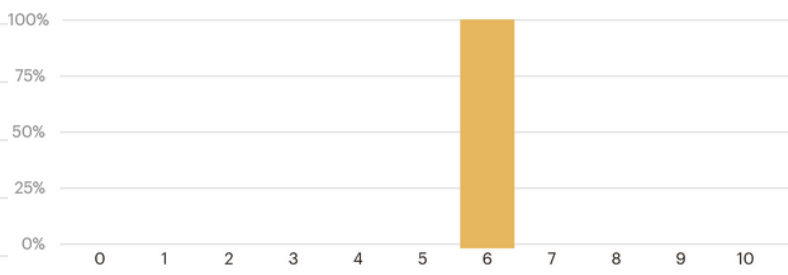
Question 59 has 1 answers (Range) Avg rating: 2.0

“Rate Soccer Stats (only if you have ever played it).”



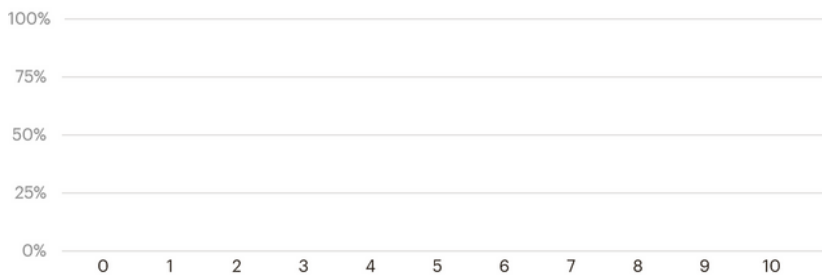
Question 63 has 1 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.0

“Rate RSW: Retro Space Wars (only if you have ever played it).”



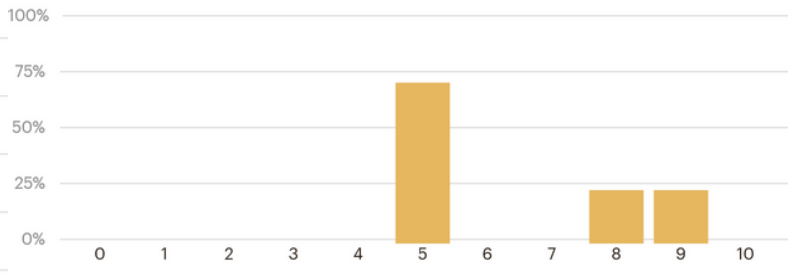
Question 60 has 0 answers (Range) Avg rating: 0

“Rate Battle Plan (only if you have ever played it).”

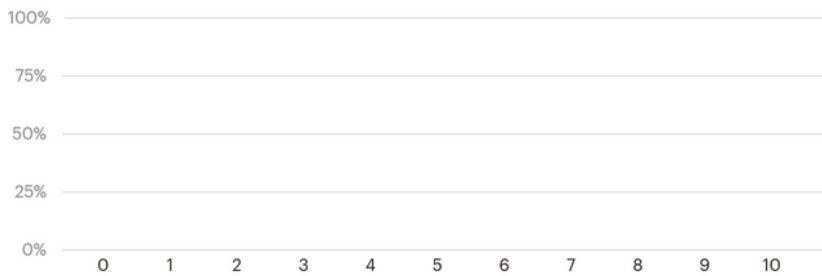


Question 64 has 5 answers (Range) Avg rating: 6.4

“Rate Adventurer Kings (only if you have ever played it).”



“Rate Empires (only if you have ever played it).”



The background of the advertisement is a large hexagonal grid. The tiles are colored in shades of green and blue. Various icons are scattered across the grid, including trees, mountains, a horse, a castle, a mine, a ship, and a person on a horse. The text 'Tribenet' is prominently displayed in the lower right quadrant, with the website 'tribenet.com.au' below it. Further down, a list of game actions is provided: 'build craft trade farm herd brew mine hunt sail fight explore scout spy research ...and much more!'.

Tribenet

tribenet.com.au

An open-ended, turn-based, play-by-email civilization-building game.

- build
- craft
- trade
- farm
- herd
- brew
- mine
- hunt
- sail
- fight
- explore
- scout
- spy
- research
- ...and much more!

Star Fleet

Strategic Campaign in the High Arena

WARLORD

0105	0305	0505	0705
		SN+SN	
0205	0405	0605	
	ES+AF		
0106	0306	0506	0706
0206	0406	0606	
	PG+AF	GP+NF	
0107	0307	0507	0707
			PL+NF
0207	0407	0607	
0108	0308	0508	0708
0208	0408	0608	
0109	0309	0509	0709
0209	0409	0609	



**Build your fleet and race for
for domination of the
Lesser Magellanic Cloud.**

**ONLINE
ONLY**

play-by-e-mail.com

30-1213: The LiftPort, Inc (410) and Harsh Reality (638) Corporations decided to have it out today over in hex 30-1213. In a 3 turn battle, the attacking fleet (F-POL (M) "Masterson" and G-BDD "Spinecrusher") destroyed defender (T-NDD "Aryx-1"). LiftPort, Inc, the attacking Corp, had a total AF of 54 versus a DF of 32.

Can you say retaliation?



Pursuit Map 1943

Evasive Return (TP to move to Return Box)

Return (TP to exit this box as determined by Return Box)

Wing (damage 1, fire 7-10, engine 5-10)

Rudder (3)

Elevator (3)

Turret (High/Low, even/odd)

Cockpit (High/Low, even/odd)

Engine (damage 1, fire 7-10, engine 5-10)

Cockpit (High/Low, even/odd)

Gunner (1)

Fuselage (1)

Storm Above the Reich

TP Track: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Pursuit Map 44/45

Evasive Return (TP to move to Return Box)

Return (TP to exit this box as determined by Return Box)

Wing (damage 1, fire 8-10, engine 5-10)

Rudder (3)

Elevator (3)

Turret (High/Low, even/odd)

Cockpit (High/Low, even/odd)

Engine (damage 1, fire 8-10, engine 5-10)

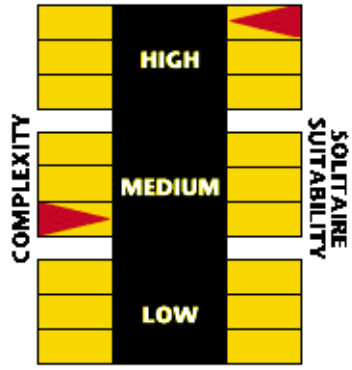
Cockpit (High/Low, even/odd)

Gunner (1)

Fuselage (1)

Storm Above the Reich

TP Track: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9



Storm Above the Reich: Breaking the Combat Box

Formation Map 7

Tail (5 to 7 O'Clock)

Flank (2 to 4 O'Clock)

Nose (11 to 1 O'Clock)

Attack Advantage (Evasive Return, Return, High, Level, Low, Return, Evasive Return)

Dogfight Box (Attack Advantage, Evasive Return, Return, High, Level, Low, Return, Evasive Return)

EDGE SPACE (Attack Advantage, Evasive Return, Return, High, Level, Low, Return, Evasive Return)

Be careful what you ask for. The fact is, you just might get it - *and then where will you be?*

You want less? It's always easier to give you less. You prefer reduced frequency? I've got you covered. You used to wonder why PBM companies don't advertise, anymore, but of late, you've just been seeing way too many PBM ads? Relax. I can take your pain away.

We live in a curious age. For years on end - *nay, decades* - the death of PBM gaming seemeth nigh. Some kind of invisible plague that many now call the Internet swept through like wildfire, incinerating what was once considered the Golden Age of Play By Mail Gaming. Hundreds of PBM companies gone, and perhaps close to a thousand PBM games cast into the Outer Void, the vast majority of which were never to be seen again.

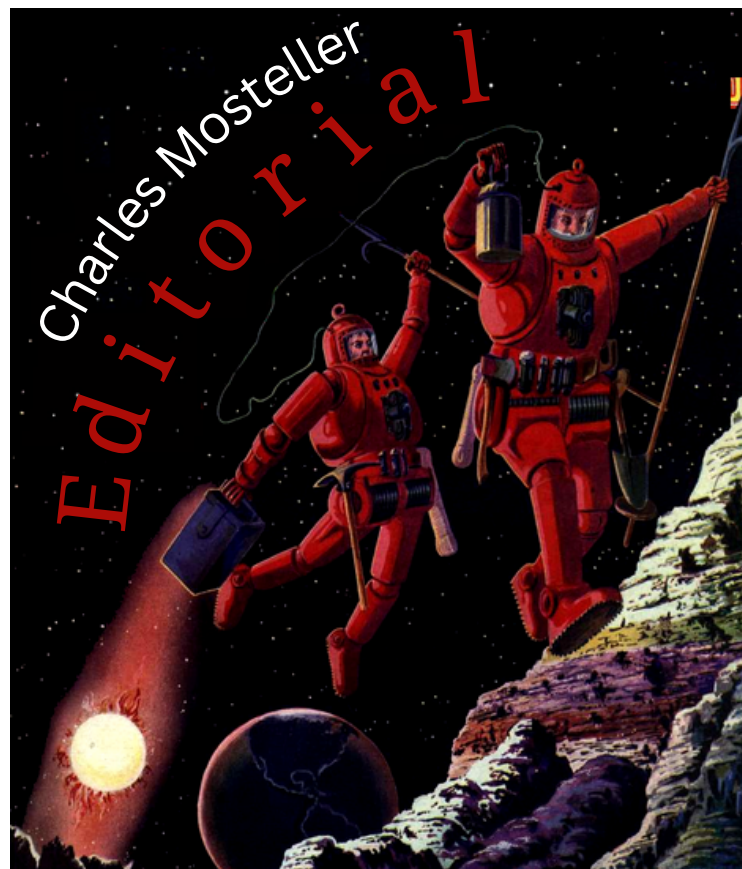
A new reality dawns.

How are you liking it, so far? I'll bet those PBM companies that survived the mass and overrated hysteria of the Internet's birth and toddler years just love the greatly reduced player base. For one or two of them, though (you know, the ones stuck in a time warp), business is still pretty darned good. People are still playing their games. Turn results are still going out. And these particular PBM GMs aren't even wearing rose-colored glasses.

Here we are, having arrived a little more than two decades into the 21st Century, and some idiot decides to abruptly and unexpectedly launch a PBM newsletter with, of all things, a *weekly* rate of publication. *Oh, whoever heard of such a thing!*

Truly, foolishness abounds. In the Realm of Play By Mail, it's either feast or famine. Give 'em a menu, and they'll choose famine.

Do you know what one of the big differences is between the PBM Realm and a nursing home? There tends to be way more energy in a nursing home.



Say what?! Did he just say what I think he said?

Damned straight I did! I said it, because it's true. You don't have to like it, of course, but the fact that you don't like it doesn't mean that it isn't true.

PBM Unearthed isn't for everybody. It's never pretended to be. There is no requirement that anyone like it. Heck, at times, even I don't like it. At least, certain things about it. Yet, I could pick up a copy of any PBM magazine from the days of old, and find all kinds of things about them that I either flat out dislike, or which could be greatly improved upon.

Did I just hear a big amen come from the back pew of the Big PBM Churchhouse?

If you've all grown this soft, this complacent, this downright lazy about PBM gaming, then my resort to the nursing home a little earlier in this editorial all of a sudden begins to take on the specter of a double entendre.

Go on. Turn the page. *I dare ya!*

What took you so long? You sure are slowing down. Hell, I had time to take a nap, just waiting on you to finally make it to this page. It appears that just getting here, just getting this far, turned out to be a struggle for you.

Want some popcorn? Go ahead. *I'll wait.*

Imagine, if you will, if you can, a vast barren plain. Or, if you prefer, imagine a world that looks only vaguely familiar, yet barren and desolate. And then imagine that those tasked with bringing this plain or this world back to life are individuals who have no life in them, who seem to have no real energy to draw from, who don't even really seem all that interested in the task that lies before them.

This is when the Big PBM Churchhouse gets quiet, huh?

One does not storm the PBM beaches by sitting on their ass. One does not lead the way by doing nothing. One does not usher in a new era of positive change by embracing the old status quo, by clinging to the crumbs of yesteryear's nostalgia.

Oh, dear! Has PBM Unearthed published, again? Already?! Why does he persist? I'm just not interested. I need my nap.

Hell, if you didn't move so slow, you could have already had a nap. I did. And I *still* beat you here. I was writing this long before you ever started reading it.

Publications of any type rely upon content. PBM publications are no magical exception to this general rule. If you don't like the PBM content that I provide, then send me something better. Send me something different. Who would have ever thought that the Age of the Internet and the Age of Information would mean that most otherwise literate people would suddenly all be stricken with a case of dysgraphia? If you don't know what it means, then look it up.

Boy, I sure am riding the margins on this page, huh? Yeah, well, that's just so that I can raise a little more PBM hell at you. *Speaking of which, where's Lockwood?*

He's been slacking, of late. Full of excuses. Telling me that the turn results for the PBM games that he's in haven't arrived, and that's why he hasn't been sending any articles for our readers, lately. Yet, amazingly, he can still carouse like there's no tomorrow, if the word pub enters the conversation.

How is it, then, that when Richard sent me the article last week (for inclusion into issue #26, but is only now appearing in issue #27), and his turn results still hadn't arrived, he was still able to manage the crafting of an article? *We're on to you, Lockwood!*

There sure are a lot of retired people across the PBM spectrum, for so few PBM articles to be getting written. Don't you sit out there, all snug as a bug in a rug, wherever you are, thinking that you don't have anything to write about. If you love PBM, then there's *always* something to write about. You can't sell that kind of crap reasoning to someone who writes about PBM a lot, you know. *C'mon, man!*

I'm debating whether to just provide an intermission, or plow on through with this long spiel of PBM ass-chewing. You'd never see Carol Mulholland, God bless her soul, talk about PBM ass-chewing, now would you?

Tell me, what is it that you *really* want? You want PBM to go quietly into the night? You want other games and other forms of entertainment to just kill it off, while you quietly peek at the scene of the crime through drawn curtains or blinds? Or do you just prefer to go and read about PBM in some stale, damp, cobweb-infested museum?

I love museums, by the way. I just rarely ever go to any. America's a big place, but it's not Britain, you know.

If Richard Lockwood has anything, anything at all, it's timing. I paused long enough to check on the PlayByMail.Net Facebook page, just now, and lo and behold, at some point less than an hour ago, Richard sends me a message. The part that I want to quote to you, though, is this:

Hello chap,

I've had my "The Isles" turn back, and while it's not enough for me to write an update

Un huh. You've done got caught writing a PBM Article without even having any turn results back. See, this is why you've gotta *always* keep an eye on Lockwood, because he'll try to slip one in on you. You see what happens, when he tries to slip one in on me, though. *Caught red-handed!*

And I think that he had something to do with that explosion in *The Isles PBeM RPG*, if you want to know the truth about it. It ain't like Lockwood needs motive. Besides, he probably thought that I had a character in the place.

What's that Michael Caine line in that Batman movie, though?

"Some men just want to watch the world burn."

Speaking of which, could it possibly be that everyone just wants to watch PBM burn? Oh, I know, for some it's just a matter of changing channels. After all, we're in the Age of Streaming Video, these days.

Flipping channels. That's what we have become. Channel flippers. Channel switchers. Entertainment switchers. In fact, human beings have always been fickle and curious consumers of entertainment and entertainment forms.

For better or for worse, the channels of entertainment have become so voluminous that we can neither keep up with nor find the time to take up the Gauntlet

of Play By Mail, anymore. We're too tired. We're too weak. *We've grown too damned old!*

Hell, some of us are dead, already, and don't even have the sense to know it. *Perhaps not quite as dead as Wayne Smith's golf score, though.*

By dead, I don't mean physically dead. Rather, we come across as PBM-dead, or lifeless within and across the play by mail spectrum. Not all of us, though. Wayne Smith, one of the oldest people in PBM, even in the current moment, has more PBM life in him than I've ever had, even at my PBM peak (whenever that was). *His PBM appetite is nothing short of absolutely voracious!*

Of course, he's always been a show off. But seriously, if PBM gaming was a Clint Eastwood spaghetti western, Wayne Smith would be the High Plains Drifter. This is a guy who, every day for years on end, lives and thrives on the spear point of keeping play by mail gaming alive. He doesn't just play PBM games. *Wayne Smith immerses himself in them!*

At least, until his wife catches him slacking off, and then assigns him to cat-sitting duties and all kinds of chores around the house, both inside and outside. And to think - *poor Wayne thought that he was retired.*

He can't retire from his wife, though (nor would he want to, nor would she ever allow it). Wayne Smith's love for PBM gaming and his love for cats overlap, and in more ways than one. While Wayne Smith is, unfortunately, a Clemson Tigers sports fan, he is also a saber-toothed tiger of play by mail gaming. You may *think* that you're a big cat of the PBM world, but Wayne *is* a big cat of the PBM world! I don't know if he's the biggest PBM cat on the planet, but beyond question, he's one of the biggest. I have no reason to doubt that he is also, hands down, the oldest.

In professional wrestling, the Big Cat Ernie Ladd was one of my favorite wrestlers, back in the day. He was a colorful character, he had lots of moxie, and he could

talk shit with the best of them. In a nutshell, he was one fine entertainer. You got your money's worth, with Ernie Ladd. *To me, PBM is a lot like Ernie Ladd.* Ernie Ladd, one time, was taunting another wrestler while he was talking to Gordon Solie, a wrestling announcer, telling him in his own refined way that he had a leg that needs going to the doctor.

That made me think of PBM gaming. PBM has a leg that needs going to the doctor. PBM's leg of complacency needs to be injured.

PBM needs to be grabbed and shaken. Is it alive? Is it dead? Or is it just playin' possum?

You know, like Wayne Smith, whenever his wife has something for him to do, Wayne tries to play possum. It never works, of course. His wife is way too smart for that. She's on to his old bag of tricks. Say what you may, she still lets the man play PBM games like they're going out of style.

One of these days, I might even teach Wayne how to play Hyborian War.

In fairness to Old Man Smith (or Smitty, as some people know him), Wayne's probably long since played in more games of Hyborian War than I have. Me? On and off, I've played Hyborian War a pretty long time. That's not the same thing, though, as playing in a lot of games of Hyborian War.

Hell, there's still people playing who played in some of the first ten games of Hyborian War. People like Mark Bradley Allen (HW-6) and Ernest S. Hakey the Third (HW-8??). How many games of Hyborian War have both of them played? How many games of Middle-earth PBM has Ernesto played in his time striding across the PBM Realm like a colossus?

Now, I've never met either of these two PBM fellows in person, but let me mention them in passing. If you're ever in the market for a razor sharp wit, or for someone who has achieved mastery in the art of

subtle delivery of humor, then Mark Bradley Allen is your man.

And this long-bearded Ernest Hakey fellow? He's one of the nicest people that you could ever meet, whether you meet him or not. Plus, too, this is a guy who knows the game of Hyborian War inside out (as much as the game can be known, anyway), and who takes time to explain things at length to players less knowledgeable (but who pretend to be), where Hyborian War is concerned.

For these are two of the true kings who dwell upon The Road of Kings. If you want to give Hyborian War a try, and you also want to get really good at the game, then that is the place that you should hang out at. Just don't be so foolish as to believe every last thing that you encounter, there. For not all advice about how to play Hyborian War is of equivalent value. *Indeed, fool's gold takes many forms.*

By now, you're probably tired of me just going on and on and on. Sorry, kids, but I've probably watched one too many Energizer Bunny commercials.

If you don't understand, look it up.

And on that note, I will bring this rambling spiel to a close. See? I took mercy on you, anyway.

Just a reminder - there won't be an issue of PBM Unearthed, next week. We're a bi-weekly PBM publication, now. Personally, I think that it will ultimately turn out to be one of the worst decisions of the contemporary PBM era. *But what do I know?*

Currently, I'm playing Hyborian War, and I've recently started trying to play Alamaze. What about you? Have you stepped out of your PBM comfort zone, lately?

Put your hand down, Wayne. I'm not calling on you.

God willing, PBM Unearthed will be back, again, two weeks from now. *Happy reading and happy gaming!*

Feudal Lords

Rick Loomis PBM



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